

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

I was not quite four when the first episode of Star Trek aired and so it was already reruns when I saw my first episode. I don't remember how old I was or which episode it was. I do remember that the Romulans were my favorite aliens on the show, and this at a time when Star Trek was the only science fiction show on TV. A channel devoted entirely to science fiction was as fantastic an idea at the time as anything featured on the show. When the books with new episodes began to appear I bought them. My favorite of the books was Diane Duane's *My Enemy, My Ally*. Unfortunately Joe tells me that Paramount stopped authors from exploring new characters such as the Romulan commander of Duane's book.

When I couldn't find anything with any new fun characters I stopped buying the books. (This is not limited to Trek books. It is hard these days to find stand-alone SF books unless perhaps in the juvenile section.) When I went looking for a Trek book as a gift for a friend, I found nothing approaching the quality of Duane's book and very little dealing with characters from the original series. My *Enemy, My Ally* is over twenty years old now but still a fun read. Duane skillfully draws parallels between the Romulan Empire and the Roman empire and does a very good job of making Romulan culture and society real. It is a real pity that it is so unlikely to find any more such books appearing in the Trek universe.

We should never forget that the SF channel and such good shows as *Stargate* owe their existence to Star Trek. If Star Trek had not proven there was a market for SF shows I think it is unlikely there would have been any more.

— Lisa

Gilliland, Marty Helgesen, Earl Kemp, Robert S. Kennedy, Trinlay Khadro, Rodney Leighton, Guy & Rosy Lillian, Eric Lindsay, Lloyd Penney, AL du Pisani, George W. Price, Alex R. Slate, Joy V. Smith, Rod Smith, Milt Stevens, John Thiel, Taral Wayne, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster

Comments are by JTM or LTM.

Trivia: 34
 Art:
 Sheryl Birkhead 19
 Paul Gadzikowski 2, 34
 Alexis Gilliland 22
 Trinlay Khadro 2

February 20, 2005 St. Photini.
 Great Lent begins March 14, 2005.
 Pascha (Orthodox Easter) is May 1, 2005.

Xanadu VIII (also DeepSouthCon 43) will be April 8-10, 2005 at the Holiday Inn Express, 920 Broadway, Nashville, Tennessee. The guests of honor are Mike Resnick, Jack L. Chalker (probably in spirit, given his parlous health), Tim "Uncle Timmy" Bolgeo, and Darryl Elliot.

<http://www.xanadufcon.org>

Apparently several faneds will be there, and a faned meal is definitely planned.

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Reviewer's Notes

When I was working at Western Kentucky University, back in 1981, I remember the immense pleasure of going to WaldenBooks and picking out the two or three new paperbacks I would buy every week, of those available. When I moved to Louisville eventually, by 1985, the problem was now that the local Waldenbooks and its equivalent, B. Dalton's, would order only two of a particular paperback, and if three of us wanted that book, sometimes a long drive was in order.

Nowadays, there are Borders, Barnes & Noble, and Books-A-Million, any one of which could tuck those Waldenbooks and B. Dalton's into a corner and forget it. A little travel brings us to David-Kidd in Nashville and Joseph-Beth in Lexington, similarly-sized (if not even larger), vendors of books.

And yet, far from having a correspondingly expanded selection, I have a diminished one. There aren't two or three interesting new paperbacks a week.

Why are the "cautious" works becoming so predominant?

I think we are seeing the results of the shift away from keeping up a midlist; only those works that sell big (tie-ins, Very Popular Big Names, and long-running series of whatever origin) have any persistence. And now we are seeing a shift to "processed" books.

What's going to happen when the manga generation goes on to something else, the media mob gets splintered into trying to follow series that get their own of 5000+ cable channels, and the game players have to spend all their time trying to buy the hardware upgrades for the hot new game?

Or maybe not, sometimes my brother the professor wonders if his students can even read.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



I think there's hope for the world. From the November 28, 2004 Tarzan strip:

Somewhat deranged survivor, holding Tarzan at gunpoint:

"This is a **thunderstick**, and it **kills!**"

Tarzan:

"**That** is a .375 Holland magnum, and it doesn't kill — the man behind it does."

If your local newspaper isn't so wise as to have the adventures of the Lord of the Jungle (something that Blair can't take away from him), check:

<http://www.comics.com/comics/tarzan/index.html>

Just out of curiosity for an interesting read, you might also check:

<http://www.comics.com/comics/pibgorn/index.html>

If you've read Ursula LeGuin's justified complaints about the maiming of *A Wizard of Earthsea* in the journey to film, you'll be not particularly surprised to realize the problems with Hollywood's devotion to multiculturalism. I mean, here's a fantasy story where the characters are "Third World" — and the cast turned out as white as sheets. Makes one tremble at the thought of an adaptation of M. A. R. Barker's Tekumel stories . . .

For the LeGuin article:

<http://www.locusmag.com/2005/Issues/01LeGuin.html>

And speaking of LeGuin: news item on the 70South web site:

"Keo Films in London have been commissioned to make 6 x 1 hour documentary films by the BBC, National Geographic and the History Channel (US) about the historic expeditions made to the South Pole by Scott and Amundsen in 1911/12. Filming will take place in April, June and July 2005, and will mostly occur in Greenland."

Now this will be something to see. Of course, it would be more fun if 1) LeGuin were to sponsor a team of women who would take a longer route, go fewer miles per day, and get there and back in less time; 2) *Weird Tales* and Arkham House would build a lost city full of

six-foot-tall albino penguins and shoggoths for the teams to explore; 3) Brenda Clough would offer to rescue anyone from the "Scott" team who wants to sacrifice himself for the guys . . .

Seriously, this looks as if it might actually be a "reality TV" show that would work out. They have to film in Greenland because of concern about the Antarctic environment.

The April 2005 issue of *ANALOG* contains an article titled "Analog Computing" (Pages 70-79) giving various breakdowns of those who have contributed to the magazine. It may surprise those with a historical perspective that Randall Garrett (and a vast host of pseudonyms) is only third in the list of contributors. First is "Christopher Anvil" (Harry C. Crosby) with 83 stories; second is Poul Anderson, with 74. (Garrett had 66).

The recent list, however, is less so. The top three, Jerry Olton (60), Grey Rollins (37), and Joseph T. Delaney (33), are hardly names to inspire any great enthusiasm. Other whodats in the list include W. R. Thompson, Stephen L. Burns, and G. David Nordley. It sounds like Darrell Schweitzer's characterization of the magazine as a top-paying market that attracted second-raters is not unfair.

Similarly, they listed the artists, and Kelly Freas (see below) was unquestioned Number One, with a hundred twenty-five covers and 480 interior illos. John Schoenherr was second, and Hubert Rogers, the old master from the *Astounding* days, was third.

They also broke down statistics by the author's/artist's sex. While the top woman was C. L. Moore (26 stories) and Pauline Ashwell was a gratifying second-place tie (21), the list also included the mediocre Maya Kaathryn Bonhoff (19). Indeed, a typical story from the recent *ANALOG* would seem to be a Maya Kaathryn Bonhoff story illustrated by the wooden-faced illos of Janet Aulisio (133 interiors and 7 covers).

Also in that issue was a gushing review by Jeffrey D. Kooistra of James P. Hogan's new book, *Kicking the Sacred Cow*, particularly praising his favorable view of Velikovsky. Given that Hogan has taken to recommending Holocaust Denial sites, the questionability of his judgment has increased. What's next for Kooistra, a rerun of the Shaver Mystery?

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Frank Kelly Freas**, on **January 2, 2005**. Born in 1922, Kelly began illustrating professionally in 1950, and won ten Best Professional Artist Hugos and one Best Professional Artist Retro-Hugo for his work; he was a guest of honor at Chicon 4 in 1982 and TorCon 3 (which he was unable to make due to an injury) in 2003. He was a regular contributor to *ANALOG*, one of the "usual gang of idiots" for *MAD* in the fifties, and produced art in a number of other venues, including the Skylab One crew patch. Who else would do a "Portrait of the Artist as a Martian" for the cover of Fredric Brown's *Martians Go Home*?

We'll miss him.

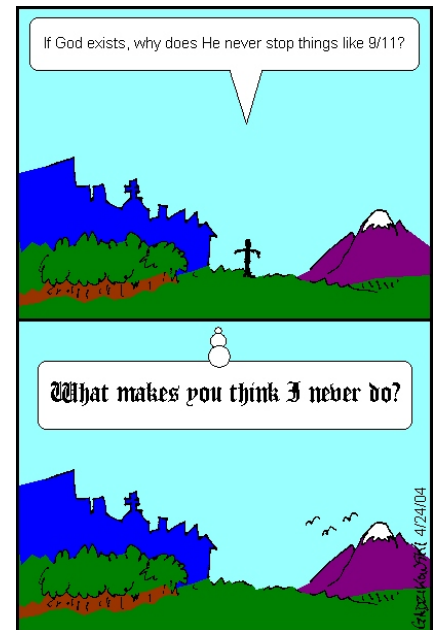
We regret to report the death of **Humphrey Carpenter** on **January 4, 2005**. He was best known for his biography, *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography* (1977, 2000) and the group study *The Inklings* (1978), as well as his editing of *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (1981, 2000). In later years he became disenchanted, calling the Tolkien-admirers "anorak-wearers" and otherwise becoming dismissive.

MONARCHIST NEWS

We regret to report the death of **Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands** in Utrecht Hospital on **December 1, 2004**. Born **June 29, 1911** to Prinz Bernhard von Lippe-Beisterfeld and Freiin Armgard von Sierstorpf-Cramm, the Prince married the then Crown Princess Juliana of the Netherlands (1909-2004; r. 1948-1980) on January 7, 1937.

The Prince served in the Dutch armed forces during the Second World War. His later career was marked by the Lockheed bribery scandal and his work with the Bilderberger Conference and with the World Wildlife Fund. He represented his wife at the funeral of their son-in-law Prince Claus in 2002.

We regret to report the death of **Grand Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte of Luxembourg**, consort of the abdicated Grand-Duke Jean (b. 1921; r. 1964-2000), on **January 10, 2005**. Born **October 11, 1927** to King Albert of the Belgians and Queen Astrid, the Princess married the then Hereditary Grand Duke on April 9, 1953. Their children include the current Grand Duke Henri.



ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME — Part Three

Some notes by Joseph T Major on Melissa Scott's

A CHOICE OF DESTINIES

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

Horatius

XVI

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
 Could the wan burghers spy
 The line of blazing villages
 Red in the midnight sky.
 The Fathers of the City,
 They sat all night and day,
 For every hour some horseman come
 With tidings of dismay.

XVII

To eastward and to westward
 Have spread the Tuscan bands;
 Nor house, nor fence, nor dove-cote
 In Crustumerium stands.
 Verbenna down to Ostia
 Hath wasted all the plain;
 Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
 And the stout guards are slain.

XVIII

I wis, in all the Senate,
 There was no heart so bold,
 But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
 When that ill news was told.
 Forthwith up rose the Consul,
 Up rose the Fathers all;
 In haste they girded up their gowns,
 And hied them to the wall.

XIX

They held a council standing,
 Before the River-Gate;
 Short time was there, ye well may guess,
 For musing or debate.
 Out spake the Consul roundly:
 "The bridge must straight go down;
 For, since Janiculum is lost,
 Nought else can save the town."
 — Thomas Babington Macaulay, Lord
 Macaulay, "Lays of Ancient Rome"

In our last thrilling episode, Alexander, the King of Macedonia and Asia, Shahanshah of Persia, Pharaoh of Upper and Lower Egypt, and so on, has found himself waist-deep in the Big Muddy Tiber, having defeated a Roman army, but not crushed them, and having fallen ill.

The Senate and People (well, the Senate), having realized that they really don't have a larger army than the Greekling and really don't have better commanders than him, are in a position where even demolition of the bridge won't suffice to save the power and majesty of Rome. They are backed into a corner, the only question is, how much do they have to give up?

When all else fails, look for another guy to go beat up on . . .

Chapter 9: Latium, winter (Peritos), to Rome,

late spring (Daisos), 31 imperial (325 B.C., AUC 428)

But after winning his victory, Alexander falls ill, and the affairs of Rome hang on a knife-blade. The Senate becomes dubious. The Friends have to keep up a pretense, both against the army itself (which, following the historical example, becomes nigh-mutinuous at the rumor that Alexander has died, with far better cause here in the middle of enemy territory than in Babylon) and against the Romans, who just might decide to fight on. All the while, Alexander is having prophetic fever dreams. He recovers, and begins the final effort to obtain the accession of Rome to the Alexandrian dominion — or to use their own word, "imperium". The Romans meanwhile take counsel at the situation and discuss the nature of this enemy at their gates. Evidently having three patricians defend the bridge against all Alexander's army, or the entire City make a withdrawal to Noricum (cf. John Maddox Roberts's *Hannibal's Children* (2002)) are not feasible plans of action.

Page 214 Ptolemy announced unblushingly that Hephæstion and he had been appointed by the king to handle the negotiations As chiliarch and vizier, Hephæstion would be a logical choice — "He too is Alexander". Ptolemaios was a Bodyguard and presumably trustworthy and trusted. Both were old friends of Alexander.

Page 216 Romans could never accept a king ruling them The memories of the Tarquins were just too ingrained.

Page 219 Alexander is the best general around — and the luckiest. . . We don't have anyone his equal No matter what Livy says.

Page 223 Who do you think you are? Krateros seems unwilling to recognize Hephæstion as the king's deputy.

Page 224 If Alexander dies, what can I get for me? The shadow of the Wars of the Successors hangs over them.

Page 224 They would defend Philip Alexander's rights against any of the Friends But the problem will be with Antipatros and his clan, including eldest and principal son Cassander (Kasandros; ΚΑΣΑΝΔΡΟΣ), back in Macedonia. Not to mention unrest in Greece, now that the "tyrannos" is dead, and the fact that the Romans just might see a chance now — cf. Fabius's "He won't live forever" [Page 220].

Page 232 to find a senator willing to adopt Ptolemy Considering that he has no surviving sons, one would think he would adopt Ptolemaios himself; on the other hand, the consulship of M. Fabius and M. Fabius would seem a little odd. Under Roman laws of adoption in such a case Ptolemaios's name would be something like "M. Fabius Caeso Ptolemaeus". Would

Page 232 his descendants marry into the Julii? a simple decree of the Senate A *senatusconsultum*, or "S.C." for short. Couldn't trust, I suppose, the civil tribunes. Under the circumstances it is interesting to speculate what Ptolemaios's Latin name was.

Page 232 Macedon could profit from Roman ways Thus setting the course for the future seen in the various Interludes.

Chapter 10: near Rome, early summer (Panemos), 31 imperial (325 B.C., AUC 428)

In a peculiar acculturation, the Macedonian camp near Rome has been palisaded (in Roman style) and developed a *vicus*, the village of hangers-on, merchants, whores, and the like, which appeared around established Roman military camps. Alexander has recovered, and now has to solidify the accord with Rome; while preparing for the next enemy. The Poeni (Carthaginians) have begun to probe for weaknesses and been defeated in Sicily, but the only valid strategy now is a strike at Kart-Hadsht (Carthage) itself.

Page 235 fortifying the area The Macedonians seem to have gone native; Roman camps were fortified, but not Greek ones.

Page 236 "Welcome, Cassius," he said, in Greek. "Khaire, Kassios," (ΧΑΙΡΕ ΚΑΣΣΙΟΣ), or literally, "Rejoice!"

Page 237 I could hardly divorce Darius's daughter Political considerations here; Alexander is claiming the succession to the King of Kings and so needs to hold on to Persia.

Page 237 I won't divorce [Roxane], either. Personal ones now.

Page 237 Hephæstion said, quite audibly, "Pity." Jealousy?

Page 238 But with Euridice dead, I'll have no other queen Euridice (ΕΥΡΥΔΙΚΗ), more commonly transliterated "Eurydice", was a common marital name among the wives of the Macedonian kings. Philip's mother was an Euridice and his last wife took that name.

Page 239 To admit other marriages would prejudice this marriage in Roman eyes. Like for example, "Helvius Cinna, tribune of the commons, admitted to several that he had a bill drawn up in due form, which Caesar had ordered him to propose to the people in his absence, making it lawful for Caesar to marry what wives he wished, 'for the purpose of begetting children.'" [Suetonius, The Deified Julius, LII]

Page 239 T i m a n d e r T i m a n d r o s (ΤΙΜΑΝΔΡΟΣ) A messenger.

Page 242 Reinforcements would have to be summoned from Macedon and Persia, as we see later [Page 247].

Page 248 The die is cast The Halycus (Halukos; ἉΛΥΚΟΣ) in Sicily, de

- facto border with Carthaginian territory, is not the Rubicon, except metaphorically.
- Page 249 **Come to bed, my friend.** Hephastion and Alexander were that way, it is reported. Is the word for “friend” some version of “eromenos”, “[male] lover”?
- Interlude:** Syracuse, early autumn (Hyperberetaios), 1895 imperial (A.D. 1539, AUC 2292)
- This scene from the empire to come is also set in Sicily, but the matters involved are rather different. A weak Emperor threatens to bring down the empire from within, and a diverse band of plotters work to bring about a change of ruler. In this section, Scott shows many things; the nature of the people within the Empire, the natures of its enemies, and the structure of the Empire.
- Page 251 **The Islamic kingdoms in Arabia** The Empire was presumably not exhausted by a war when Muhammad had his revelation. It would be interesting to learn what the emperor said when Muhammad ordered the descendant of the great Alexander to submit to Islam. (Presumably the ruler’s title is *shahanshah* (“King of Kings”) in the east and *basilaios* [Βασιλιάιός] (“King”) in the center, and probably *imperator* (“one with authority”) in the west.)
- One might well argue that this set of incidents would be butterflyed away by now, and arguably it should have. Yet one can’t imagine the Arabian peninsula not being influenced by the rise of a monotheism to its north.
- Page 251 **the enroaching Kievan vassal-states** Not all that awed by the Tsar of Aleksandergrad, evidently. The Rus seem not to have been overawed here as they were by the comparatively far weaker Emperor in Byzantion.
- Page 251 **the Germans and Scandanavians who troubled the west.** Along the lines of the Rhenus and Ister, presumably.
- Page 252 **The British engineer-captain** It looks like Massilia leads one into Western Galatia, and that leads one on to Britannia.
- Page 252 **Maximian Brennus, the big Gaul** As above. “Brennus” was the name of the Gallic chief who sacked Rome, according to Livy, but other sources make it to be no more than a title.
- Page 252 **Special Auxiliaries — the Western Empire’s equivalent of the Eastern Hypaspists** Would this be something like “*Extraordinarii*”, in Latin?
- Page 252 **Dymas Dumas** (Δυμάς) An officer of the Companions (Hetairoi), now with armored vehicles instead of horses.
- Page 252 **Agathon . . . Colonel of the Third (Foot) Successor Companions** Agathon (Ἀγαθών) Chiliarch of the Third (Epigonoi) Pezhetairoi, that is. **the treason laws had not been modified in any essential detail, except in the method of execution, since the founding of the empire** so if they lose, they face a fate similar to that of the Royal pages on Page 58.
- Page 253 **Laurentius Sergius Catalina** Interesting choice of name for a revolutionary. “How long, o Catalina, will you continue to abuse us?” was said in other worlds to another revolutionary named Catalina. He is subsequently and correctly referred to by his family name (nomen) of “Sergius”, not his cognomen of “Catalina”, even though it is the “last” name.
- Page 253 **coloney of the Twentieth Legion of Foot** It seems unlikely that the Romans would use “chiliarch” or its literal translation, “millurion” for a legion commander, and “tribune” seems to be ruled out. Perhaps the term is “legatus”. As for his command it would be *Legio pedites XX*. Apparently cavalry (i.e., armored vehicles) in the west is now designated *legiones equitorium*.
- Page 253 **Phraates of Susa** Completing an interesting ethnic roster of commanders and units — two Celts, two Greeks, a Roman and a Persian.
- Page 253 **the Persian Lancers** Not the Successor Companions (*hetairoi epigoni*)?
- Chapter 11:** Italy, summer (Loios), 31 imperial, to Carthage, summer (Loios), 32 imperial (325/324 B.C., AUC 428/429).
- Alexander and Fabius Caeso achieve the final settlement with Rome, with the rest of the year to prepare. The campaign against Carthage begins with the armies sailing to Tunis itself. Landing there entails a naval battle, not surprisingly, and although the Punics are skilled their enemies are as well — this is not the Romans who had to copy a stranded ship and train the rowers on dry land — and the result is inevitable. Once the armies land, and after an example of Punic ruthlessness towards some would-be defectors, the siege of Kart-Hadsh begins. One can imagine how Greek siege technique, as displayed in, say *The Bronze God of Rhodes* (1960) by L. Sprague de Camp, combined with Roman fortification skills, would work out and this description is another interesting part of the story.
- Page 258 **Fabius himself was reelected** An unusual procedure. The consulship of M. Fabius and Ptolemaeus? One wonders why Fabius didn’t get two nominees elected, and then have them name him Dictator with Ptolemaios as his Master of Horse.
- Page 258 **to fund only a single legion** The ordinary command for a consul would be two legions of Romans and a number of Latin (and other) allies. One wonders why they did not send off the less-reliable (from their point of view) allies. Moreover, some contribution from the Italiote League and from Syrakuse could be expected; the Tarentine cavalry, as noted above, was one of the more effective forces. Also, the prospect of enlisting Samnite troops seems not to have been considered.
- So Ptolemaios is bringing 4200 infantry and 300 cavalry to make up the ranks.
- Page 258 **Caius Domitius Mela appointed as one of the two military tribunes who would have command under Ptolemy. Cassius Nasidiensis was to be the other** A legion would have six military tribunes, but only one would be from the Senate.
- Page 259 **Alexander promptly appointed Coenus regent in the admiral’s place** Interesting that Koinos should be “regent” for Philippos Alexandros, the nominal garrison commander. Has Syrakuse accepted Alexander’s hegemony? (Such might be conjectured from the Interlude of Pages 251-255, which is set in Syrakuse.)
- Page 259 **Amnytias Amuntas** (ΑΜΥΝΤΙΑΣ) son of Koinos, a taxiarch.
- Page 260 **Proteas son of Andronicus** Proteas (ΠΡΟΤΕΑΣ), a trierarch (τριεραρχ), ship captain.
- Page 262 **Nearchus had lost a ship as well; he moved in to pick up its survivors** After the battle of the Arginusae the commanders of the Athenian fleet did not pick up their survivors. For this lapse they were tried and executed. Nearchos obviously has learned by this example.
- Page 262 **Pyntagoras of Cyprus** Puntagoras (ΠΥΝΤΑΓΟΡΑΣ), a Cypriot monarch and admiral.
- Page 263 **The royal engineers, Charias and Diades** Kharias (ΧΑΡΙΑΣ) and Diades (ΔΙΑΔΗΣ).
- Page 263 **the siege of Tyre** And now they are going after Tyre’s colony. It is amazing that thus far no one has mentioned Aeneas (Aineias; ΑΙΝΕΙΑΣ), the founder of Latium and ancestor of the Julii, and the Punic Queen Dido of Tyre and Kart Hadasht (Carthage).
- Page 265 **Simmias** Simmias (ΣΙΜΜΙΑΣ) A taxiarch.
- Page 266 **a Greek mercenary officer** The Carthaginians did not draw much upon their own population for the military. The actual Carthaginians were hoplites, like the Greeks. Also present were the pre-Carthaginian

natives, the so-called “Libyphoenicians”, who were also equipped as hoplites.

The main striking arm of the native Carthaginians at that time was the chariot. A force of 500 Punic chariots is recorded in 13 imperial (343 B.C., AUC 411) taking part in a campaign in Sicily.

Non-Carthaginians in the Punic army included Greek mercenaries, like the one just taken, primarily hoplites. An army might also include Iberians, who would fight like the Thracian peltasts in Alexander’s army. A Punic army would also include Numidian cavalry, which would be either hired by the Carthaginians directly or brought by allied Numidian chiefs.

Page 266 **Cleomenes** Kleomenes (ΚΛΕΟΜΕΝΗΣ) A commander in Punic service.

Page 266 **Deimachus** Deimakhos (ΔΕΙΜΑΧΟΣ) A commander in Punic service.

Page 267 **Balacrus** Balakros (ΒΑΛΑΚΡΟΣ), an ilarch of the Prodomi.

Page 267 **Two tau-shaped wooden structures stood before the burned area, a shapeless bundle hanging from each.** Crucifixion was a Carthaginian punishment as well as a Roman, a Greek, and a Persian one, though methodology differed in each case. The hired troops of the Punic armies often caused problems, which sometimes had to be settled very drastically. Gustave Flaubert’s *Salammô* is a fictionalized portrayal of such a resolution.

Page 268 **the Carthaginian commander had . . . decided to withdraw to the safety of the wall** After Khaironea and now the battle against the League in Boiotia it is clear that hoplites are outmatched against phalangites. Similarly, the chariots would be outclassed — news of their failure at Arbela should have reached Carthage. There may not be any or many Iberians in the army — they certainly would not have the affinity for Alexander that the Greeks had — but it does seem odd that the Numidians are not taking on the besiegers.

Page 268 **Perdiccas and Neoptolemus both volunteered to lead a direct attack** Making up for not being able to storm Thebes, presumably.

Page 269 **cities that had no reason to love Carthage and every reason to fear and to placate Alexander** Carthaginian governmental stability tended to be fragile; Kart Hadasht was an oppressive ruler over bullied smaller Punic and Libyan cities.

Page 270 **“Yes, Domitius?”** Classical Latin has no direct equivalent of Greek

“nai” (ναι) [“yes”] (or “okhi” (οχι) [“no”]), so a better way of phrasing Cassius’s response might have been found. “*Quis, Domitie?*” (“What, Domitius?”), for example.

Page 276 **Alexander had succeeded in setting up a regular trade with several of Carthage’s former allies** The Carthaginian league was very fragile politically. One problem with Hannibal’s strategy in the Second Punic War was that he acted as if Rome were an overbearing hegemon over the Italian cities, instead of an incorporator.

Page 276 **supplies still arrived, if irregularly, from the Iberian colonies.** Which could be a source of danger. Being trapped between the besieged city and a relieving army of Iberians and Numidians would be an interesting circumstance for Alexander. Darieos had been very immobile during the sieges of Tyre and Gaza.

Page 282 **These are Domitius’s men** Is it that Domitius is the legionary tribune and Cassius the consular one, or are they both assigned certain maniples?

Page 284 **“King’s work, Domitius.”** The scene where, to demonstrate the importance of the matter, Alexander himself turns the windlass in the siege tower is one of the most “Alexandrian” of the book.

Chapter 12: Carthage, late summer (Gorpiaios) to early autumn (Hyperberetaios), 32 imperial (324 B.C., AUC 429)

The siege grinds on, with the Greeks and Romans beset by thirst and hunger. What it is like inside Kart-Hadsht probably does not bear consideration. The alliance, if one can call it that, is not completely accepted by all the Romans either, and the already insubordinate Domitius Mela begins to act more like a Late Republican politician; the Punic make an offer to him and he accepts. While the resultant sortie and mutiny is not successful, it does put all the Romans under suspicion, as the Theban Sacred Band was when their city rose against Alexander. Alexander is nevertheless not so ungrateful and foolish as to hold Cassius responsible for the actions of his political foe, or to renounce the service of good troops. But this is a definite loss to the army, and a strain on the alliance.

Page 286 **His own century** Now wait a minute, Domitius is a tribune, not a centurion. If the century happened to be raised from among his own clients and tenants it might make sense.

Page 292 **Clitus is dead, and Hector** There was a Kleitos “the White” (ΚΛΕΙΤΟΣ) who was a commander in the army. This is not “Black” Kleitos, who was killed in the infamous drinking bout.

Page 292 **Alexander let the sarissa fall** Oops!

Alexander is riding, and the Companion cavalry carried the xyston, not the sarissa.

Chapter 13: Carthage, early autumn (Hyperberetaios), 32 imperial (324 B.C., AUC 429)

The sortie seems to have been the last serious effort of the Punic forces, but it puts enough of a stress on the besieging armies that they are forced to decrease the tempo of their siege operations in order to recover. Then Alexander puts in his last effort to take the city, to find them suffering a peculiarly Punic end . . .

Page 298 **The few active conspirators — centurions and junior officers all — were executed.** Does “junior officers” mean the equestrian tribunes, or the “*immunes*”, the specialists?

Page 298 **The rest were formed into a special battalion** Presumably not a chiliarchy, but a *vexillation*. (“flag-unit”)

Page 298 **to earn the king’s trust if they could** A very light punishment. Disobedient Roman soldiers could be fed on lower-quality bread, ordered to camp outside the fortified camp, or in the most notorious punishment of all, be decimated — one man out of every ten chosen by lot and killed by the other soldiers of the unit. Those who had executed the pages [Page 58] would have understood this.

Page 301 **“What next?”** Diodorus describes a plan of action that includes a campaign against Arabia, followed by a march to Carthage, along the Libyan coast (a road was to be built along this coast all the way to the Pillars of Herakles), to Iberia, and finally to Sicily.

Page 301 **Alexandria in Egypt** Alexandria-by-Egypt.

Page 303 **lips moving as he sounded out the words** Reading silently was not thought of at the time. Why are the Poeni writing things on their darts in Greek? (Lead slingstones have been recovered with “from Philip” stamped on them, but these had been flung at Greeks.)

Page 304 **clutching a Roman javelin the pilum,** a heavy throwing spear, the weapon of the *hastati* and *principes*.

Page 309 **a line of figures with raised arms silhouetted against the fire** Immolation was not unknown among the Poeni; it was indeed their usual mode of sacrifice. The sacrifice of firstborn by burning, as noted in the classic sources, seems to have been confirmed by the archaeological discovery of cremated infants in pots in excavations of Poeni towns.

Page 309 **silhouetted** Anachronistic. Might not another term be used for this?

Page 310 **this was the last campaign** Chandragupta, beginning in 37 imperial (321 B.C., AUC 434) might beg to differ. The Galatians in 77 imperial (280 B.C., AUC 474) assaulting Thrace and Illyria and the Parthians in 107 imperial (250 B.C., AUC 504) attacking the Persian and Sogdian satrapies are still later.

Epilogue: Alexandria-in-orbit, summer (Loios), 1947 imperial (AD 1591, AUC 2344)

The final part of the book shows the results of the continuity of culture. There has been no fallback of commerce and knowledge, no Dark Age, and as a result the Empire is far ahead of our time. This chapter is set on an orbiting space station, and as the other interludes do shows many features of this Empire, social, political, and technological.

Page 311 **Alexander Maiorian** Alexandros Maiorianos (Ἀλεξανδρος Μαυροριανός), or something like that.

Page 312 **Air Companions** The air force, presumably.

Page 312 **winged star** Using the national symbol.

Page 312 **the scarab-and-wreath stamp of the Universities of Alexandria-in-Egypt, but some carried the fasces of the Roman School of Engineering, and a few were marked with the symbols of schools in Hausa, Africa** Reflecting the division between “Greek theory” and “Roman pragmatism”

Page 313 **a Hausa mother and a German grandmother** There is at least one political marriage here, but from the other interlude between Chapters 5 and 6 it seems that the empire now includes at least the Oil Rivers in northern Africa. Note again the differing standards on racial matters.

So what to say in conclusion? Scott’s grasp of Roman history is flawed, and using the real history would have added to her story. She perhaps has too few butterflies, too much adherence to the inertia of history.

On the positive side, she has a grasp of the nature of combat. She knows how to describe a battle; one has but to compare H. Beam Piper’s descriptions in *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (1965) with those in its other-written sequel *Great Kings’ War* (1985) to see the difference between good and bad description, and Scott is comparable to Piper. She can tell a good story and keep it moving, and for all the people involved one never feels swamped in a host of indistinguishable characters. She recognizes the scope; the people who would be involved are involved (at least among the Greeks and Persians, and there are equivalents to the Romans), the character list is not unrealistically pared down.

Evidently, the book didn’t sell well; it’s out of print. That is a pity.

BIG VANCE

Review by Joseph T Major of

LURULU

by Jack Vance [John Holbrook Vance]
(Tor; 2004; ISBN 0-312-86727-1; \$22.95)
Sequel to *Ports of Call* (1998)

For some reason Jack Vance doesn’t get the notice and respect that lesser writers do. It just doesn’t add up. He is a stylist of remarkable, indeed profound skill, describing in rich, fluid prose worlds of incredible complexity and depth wherein people of diverse and amusing character speak in mannered, intricate prose. He does not outrage the reader; he does not mire himself in glutinous tedium, indulge himself in incomprehensible dialect, betray himself with inane pointless comedy, or such other common contrivances of today’s Big Name Writer. It just doesn’t add up.

Vance moreover carries on the old tradition of Science Fiction, that of the Canonical Skiffy Universe, the worlds connected by faster-than-light ships, full of obscure peoples and ancient artifacts, where one can travel to an urbane core or adventure in barely-tamed fringes. (He lacks the sheer nastiness of some other writers, who present grim frontier areas with all the social connectivity, or perhaps I should say asocial disconnectivity, of, say, southern New Mexico — Arizona belongs to Zenna Henderson’s People, the ultra-nice Unitarians of outer space.)

This novel and its predecessor are set in the Gaeon Reach, the setting of Vance’s earlier *Alastor Cluster* (1973-78), *Demon Princes* (1964-81), and *Cadwal Chronicles* (1987-92) series and such stand-alone works as *The Gray Prince* (1974) and *Maske: Thaery* (1976). Our protagonists could buy Gersen’s magazine *Cosmopolis*, play hussado on Trullion, intrigue with Bureau B on or off Cadwal, and so on.

This volume begins with a brief explanation of the reason for its existence; Vance felt he had written to the desirable length in *Ports of Call*, but hadn’t finished the story. So he turned in that book, and then wrote this, which begins with a chapter-length reiteration of that book.

Given that longer lengths seem to be the norm these days, it seems somewhat surprising that Vance would have the clout to get a shorter-than-possible book out. Admittedly, it is annoying that this story is so dependent on its predecessor, and fortunately the Science Fiction Book Club has brought out one of its combined editions, with the two books in one volume.

Well, in our last thrilling episode, Myron Tany, the gosh-wow lad thrust into a mundane career by parental wishes, got his wish and went off on a space voyage with his eccentric aunt. Who kicked him off the ship in favor of a dubious adventurer. He found haven in the wandering freighter *Glicca*, with its crew of eccentrics, and even more eccentric passengers.

The plot of this volume picks up after a few of Myron’s ventures among the exotic worlds of the Gaeon Reach with more of the same.

The first destination of the *Glicca* is a world seemingly out of *ST:TNG*, where there are many strange and exotic laws, all most strictly

enforced and when broken, most severely punished. Having more sense than Trek people, Myron, Captain Maloof, and the other crew of the *Glicca* (both of them) and passengers take care to study this exotic world before launching themselves into it.

It seems that Maloof, like Myron, is searching for an adventurer who abstracted an elderly, affluent female relative. For all the vastness of space, he has an idea where to look, or at least a clue of the man’s origin. In this case, luck and perseverance bring him results. Similarly for Myron, who finds that his aunt is where she said she would be, and also isn’t surprised by her fate.

The route to these solutions entails passages through a number of exotic and exuberant worlds, populated by folk with that rich and varied tone. It’s rather like being plopped down in *The Number of the Beast*, where everyone spoke with that brisk, bright, clever manner; Vance’s tone and execution keep it in bounds, the bounds that Heinlein slipped. This is certainly a witty and even sly, but hardly vicious, culture.

Somehow I felt that Vance was getting tired, or perhaps worn out. (He is of a certain age, and nearly blind to boot.) Several of the problems of the previous book are resolved rather hastily, which may disappoint the reader.

He has not, however, lost his effervescence, his efflorescence, his exuberance. It’s worth joining the SFBC to get this in a complete volume, but worth reading anyhow.

WE CAN COME TOGETHER

Review by Joseph T Major of

GOING POSTAL

by Terry Pratchett

(HarperCollins; 2004;
ISBN 0-06-001313-3; \$24.95)

“A Novel of Discworld®”

This is a comic novel and the protagonist is hanged in the first chapter.

Now how’s that for an incongruous intro? For the background of Discworld® check the long article elsewhere in this. For our short-lived hero Moist von Lipwig, his type is obvious; he is a con man, coming to a deserved end. As he finally concludes, when having successfully dug a block out of the wall of his cell he finds . . . another block before him, and behind him the enthusiastic applause of the guards who had bet on him to finish digging before it was his time.

After this failure, it’s time, and he goes to the gallows. “It’s me, sir, Daniel ‘One Drop’ Trooper. I am your executioner for today,” the hangman says, and cheerfully requests Moist’s autograph — on the rope. If Discworld® had an eBay he could sell it on eBay. Then, still not believing it will happen to him, Moist is noosed and sent off.

For some reason, the admitting angel, or the judging god, or whatever being of the afterlife in charge of designating the newly deceased’s destination looks remarkably like Lord Havelock Vetinari, the tyrant er Patrician of Ankh-Morpork. Mostly because he *is* Lord

Vetinari. Do you know how hard it is to tie a noose so it will almost, but not quite, strangle a man? Evidently "One Drop" does.

Lord Vetinari proceeds to offer Moist a choice. He takes the blue pill, the story ends . . . wrong story. Moist can step out the back door and that's that. It is not outside the realms of probability that he will survive the fall. Or he can take this job that has been available for the past few years: postmaster of Ankh-Morpork.

Moist figures he can always get away. He tries. However, *There Is Someone To Prevent That*. Pump, the golem, who Talks Like That, You See. And he's very hard to stop, like just about impossible?

Well, if he can't get away, Moist has to try to make a job of it. The Ankh-Morpork General Post Office has been sort of derelict the last few years. Living there still are a half dozen elderly members of the postmen's guild, the usual assortment of English comical eccentrics, if that isn't a redundancy, who squat in the building, muse about the good old days, and look over the heaps and masses of undelivered mail. And Pump, his bodyguard, probation officer, and alarm clock.

It's at this point where events take a rather different turn. Moist, recall, is a con man. Indeed, two different and distinct plot elements turn on his having forgery tools. He is, in effect, in the fine tradition of Donald Westlake's Dortmund and Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat.

However, if this were a Dortmund story everyone would be an amiable, eccentric incompetent. Dortmund's escape from Pump would be foiled not because Pump Does Not Rest Or Stop but because Dortmund had slid on a fruit peel in the course of his escape and while recovering took up residence in an inn that fell apart when the golem leaned against it.

If this were a Stainless Steel Rat story, everyone in the government would be mind-bogglingly stupid. Jim DiGriz would throw smoke bombs about and flit with a substantial part of the Ankh-Morpork treasury in his pouches, while Vimes and Carrot (yes, the other people from other Discworld® stories are mentioned) would rush about shooting arrows and stumbling over each other and the equally hapless Pump.

But neither Westlake nor Harrison is writing this, and somewhat unexpectedly, *Going Postal* turns into a novel of redemption. Moist is carrying around one of those thousands of undelivered, moldering letters. By happenstance he finds himself at the address where the letter was supposed to have been delivered. It was a love letter, from a young lady to her beloved. The beloved is now an aging man with a family and a business.

Later on, the addressee hunts up Moist and explains the situation. He'd thought the girl didn't care for him, and had married another woman. She had thought he didn't love her any more, and married another man. Moist is expecting a pounding. But no, the postal customer goes on, their respective spouses have both passed on, and it's not too late for them to get married after all, and thank'ee for the help,

Mr. Postmaster, do come to the wedding.

With such an example to hand, Moist decides to make a go of it. The elderly postmen are rousted out of their warrens and sent off to deliver the mail. Pump Is Not The Only Golem and sure enough, the local golem rights association has a few more available to do the sorting and such.

The competition however intervenes. There is a mechanical telegraph service, the Grand Trunk. (Pratchett has done his homework; such things came into use in the late eighteenth century, "telegraph" meant something even before that minor painter Samuel F. B. Morse was born.) The management of the Grand Trunk has profited by the management lessons of Enron and WorldCom, and also follows the management methods of Vito Corleone.

If it weren't enough that the Postmaster is getting publicity and results (indeed, Pratchett recounts the invention of the entire stamp business, including commemoratives, stamp collectors, postmark collectors, and whatnot, in a way that would make Basil Argyros twinkle in delighted recognition, and then head off to the Master of Offices with this great idea . . .) he is also getting entanglements. That Adora Belle Dearhart from the Golem Trust (where do you think they hired the golems, at the Labour Exchange?) has been getting slightly more involved than the number of golems working in the Post Office would indicate. You see, she had a small familial difference with the clack (the telegraph, that is) company, something about being swindled out of all the rights to the invention. [SF Trivia: why did Margaret Spencer get a job at World Steel before she went off on *The Skylark of Space*? (Hint: It wasn't because they had such a great pension plan.)] The new postmaster is also having problems with the clack company. That fire in the post office building didn't set itself. She has golems, he has money. They can come together. And for other reasons, too.

The problem of the clack has to be settled. The problem has a solution, but it will take a lot of specialized effort . . .

At the end of Richard Powell's novel *Pioneer, Go Home!* (1957; adopted surprisingly well into the Elvis Presley movie *Follow That Dream* (1962)), Pop Kwimper, a man who has spent his entire life sponging off the government and various private charitable organizations, realizes wearily that by the flukes of fortune and happenstance, through his latest efforts at trying to get some more free goods, he has become a productive, worse yet **tax-paying**, citizen. Moist just might have a bit of sympathy for the old scoundrel.

There's no need to have read the other Discworld® novels to understand and enjoy this one, but having done so, one can see the worldbuilding Pratchett is engaged in. It's well to realize that the hero lives on, sometimes.

However, sometimes the background has jarring bits. I can understand that medieval-style Ankh-Morpork has printing, the mechanical telegraph, and the like. Having the currency be dollars is quite understandable,

even if it does leave the older reader wonder if he's been trapped in a campaign of Steve Jackson's *The Fantasy Trip* (a role-playing-game system where the currency was also dollars). But beer bottles? Cigarettes? *Decimal* currency? It's sometimes hard to tell whether PTerry is being lazy, or merely saving his imagination for the big show.

As when, for example, he actually does get a Hugo without having to pay off Peter Weston. I suggest making this event possible at Glasgow this August.

Why Pratchett May Get In Trouble

"Do you really think all this deters crime, Mr. Trooper?" he said.

"Well, in the generality of things I'd say it's hard to tell, given that it's hard to find evidence of crimes not committed," said the hangman, giving the trapdoor a final rattle. "But in the *specificity*, sir, I'd say it's very efficacious."

"Meaning what?" said Moist.

"Meaning I've never seen someone up here more'n once, sir. Shall we go?"

— *Going Postal*, Page 10

WHEN ADOLF CAME

Review by Joseph T Major of
INVASION!: Operation Sealion 1940
by Martin Marix Evans

(Pearson Education Limited; 2004;
ISBN 0-582-77294-X; £19.99, \$24.95)

One of the most vehemently-argued topics in alternate history discussions is *Fall Seelöwe*, Operation Sealion, the planned German invasion of Britain in 1940. Part of this stems from the obnoxiousness of some of the discussers, to be fair; all the same, some serious problems are generally recognized.

To even carry out an invasion, it appears after long and careful study, would have required a substantial diversion of resources and realignment of goals by the Nazi high command prior to the beginning of the war, which effort might have made it impossible to start the invasion in the first place. Without enough tanks or airplanes (their material, particularly engines, used to make landing craft), that is, it would have been much more difficult to defeat France.

Similarly, "operational" (the sphere between "strategy", the general conduct of a campaign, and "tactics", the effort on the actual field of battle) matters were less significant than they seem. Capturing the British Expeditionary Force through a non-issuance of the Stop Order to the speeding spearheads of the Panzers would have made little difference, there being still more troops in Blighty. Not to mention that said Panzers were remarkably low on supplies and lacking support; had Guderian got his go-ahead (see his memoirs *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (1950) [*Panzer Leader* (1952)]) the result would likely have been increased casualties for both sides but no decisive destruction of the Allies.

Even assuming the improvised armada of barges and whatnot (or the miraculous multirole

motor gunboats/landing craft/flak vessels that one of the discussers proposed) managed to put to sea, there would have been many hazards ere they stepped foot on the long-unviolated shores of Albion, natural and otherwise. They did not say "Continent cut off by fog" for nothing. Moreover, the German invasion fleet would make the transit at a slower speed than Julius Caesar's army had managed.

Not that the locals did not fear such things. The Great Invasion Scare of 1804 sparked off a tremendous outpouring of local militias, all absolutely certain that if Mounseer Buonaparte ever dared to set foot in England, they would personally see him off. Later that century they were less certain, there being no Nelson.

From *The Battle of Dorking* (by Sir George Tomkyns Chesney; 1871) on, foreign armies (usually German, but also others, the nadir being the nine different foes who made *The Swoop!* (by P. G. Wodehouse; 1909) upon defenseless, or defenceless, Britain) trod the shores of Britannia and wreaked havoc. In the tradition of the disaster novel that we associate nowadays with J. G. Ballard, the foe usually won, casting the proud Em-piah into the dust, as in the unusually serious *When William Came* by "Saki" (Hector Hugh Munro, 1914). Many of these writers, such as Chesney, were proposing an expanded army. Wodehouse was trying to do to the genre what Cervantes had done to the knightly epic with *Don Quijote*.

And so with this war as well. From *The Sound of His Horn* by "Sarban" (John W. Wall, 1952) on down, tales of the Great Invasion and its Dire Consequences were loosed on a public knowing that things were bad off and only going to get worse. Usually the invasion was tossed off as a casual mention, as in (say) Cyril Kornbluth's last story, "Two Dooms" (1958), where the heroic Führer Feric Jaggar, er Goebbels, having already made the Volk rise up and smite their masters and then smashed the Bolsheviks in a decisive battle, threw his victorious armies across the Channel in one fair swoop. Others presupposed some disaster, such as William Shirer in "If Hitler Had Won World War II" (*Look Magazine*, December 15, 1961) who had everything going wrong after the Panzers did not stop.

One or two voices crying out in the wilderness pointed out that many of these predictions of doom were as unsoundly-based as the many Invasion Scares of the previous war. Between recounting tales of Captain Horatio Hornblower, "C. S. Forester" (Cecil Lewis Troughton Smith) paused to give his opinion of what would have happened "If Hitler Had Invaded England" (*Saturday Evening Post*, April 16-30, 1960; available in *Gold From Crete* (1970)) and there would be no joy in Berlin, he opined. With somewhat more of a basis to work from, Richard Cox produced *Operation Sealion* (1974, 1977), a novelization of a wargame held at Sandhurst. Since Adolf Galland and Friedrich Ruge were among the judges, one can assume that the German side at least had fair representation. Oh yes, they still lost.

Factual books were less sure. Peter

Fleming's *Operation Sea Lion* (1957) stuck to just the known facts. (As a amusing reference, in Cox's book, Fleming appears as a secret agent sent into occupied England to carry out an assassination; right, he was licensed to kill.) Across the narrow seas, Egbert Kieser described *Unternehmen Seelöwe: Die Geplante Invasion in England 1940* (translated as *Hitler on the Doorstep* (2000)) focusing on the German preparations. (Do you notice a certain lack of imagination in titles here?)

Kieser might have found some satisfaction in reading Norman Longmate's *If Britain Had Fallen* (1972), which postulated an invasion and then showed the results (mass deportations, for example — something found in Shirer's article). This combined actual historical writing, in this case the details of the proposed occupation plans, with speculation, about the course of the invasion and its aftermath.

Marix Evans follows this pattern. He begins with a description of the preparations on both sides, and like "Forester" eschews improbabilities such as grotesquely one-sided air losses without cause, miraculous provision of multi-purpose small craft, the Channel being sealed with mines, moles, or lime Jell-O™, and the like, much less supernatural means (cf. *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (by Mary Norton; 1943 & 1957; movie adaptation 1971) and *Lammas Night* (by Katherine Kurtz; 1986)) as "Dion Fortune" (Violet Frith) claimed. One might have said that Fleming covered this, and Marix Evans inherits his work, adding to it the revelations in the code-breaking scheme of things that have made so much of the action of the time comprehensible, and so much of the writing out of date.

The historical background includes some conclusions that may be surprising to the reader. Marix Evans argues that the Allies actually fought rather well in Norway (Chapter One). It may be startling to read that in fact the French did not believe that the Ardennes Forest was impenetrable; they just didn't take the necessary measures to make it that way (Page 37). He also points out the very real problem that the Dunkirk area did not have the best kind of terrain to stage an armored attack into (Pages 42-43). Interestingly enough, one of his sources for the low evaluation of the preparedness of the French is a Boer War veteran; *Commandant* (later Colonel) Denys Reitz, after a career with Slim Jannie first fighting the English and then fighting alongside the English, reporting to Smuts (and then the public) on the conduct of the war (*No Outspan*, 1943).

But on to the actual invasion. The Point of Departure is the lack of the Blitz; that is to say, the *Luftwaffe* does not waste time terror-bombing the cities, but continues the assault on the airfields. The usual argument, that they would wear down the Royal Air Force and/or bomb the Chain Home radar stations, is not the case, Marix Evans argues; if the positions in Southern England became unsustainable, Air Marshal Dowding had plans to fall back to the Midlands and prepare to call on the remaining (just under half) fighter squadrons stationed in the North if needed. As for the radar, the

stations were not easy to destroy.

Then, on September 21, the word *Seelöwe* goes out, the invasion flotillas form up off the European coast, cross the Channel without interference from ungrateful locals or stormy weather, make the delicate maneuvers needed to get into landing order, and land the first wave. Marix Evans gives a beachhead by beachhead description of the landing.

The landing forces consolidate their beachheads against formidable British (and other; one scene describes a drive-by shooting by New Zealanders) opposition, while the tanks of the second wave are ferried over. The invincible Panzers make a drive towards London and then . . .

run out of supplies and surrender.

Kenneth Macksey's *Invasion* (1980) has an inexplicable cowardice (the word isn't too strong) on the part of the Royal Navy to intervene in the Channel. At least Macksey gives us explicit descriptions of this bizarre behavior. Marix Evans merely handwaves away the Navy's lack of action.

Several of the Net-based discussions have called this scenario into question, shall we say. The late and lamented Alison Brooks, once one of the guiding lights of the soc.history.what-if newsgroup, produced a useful analysis of these and other points, saying of the Rhine barges the Germans would be using for transport:

. . . The barges were mainly those designed for use on the Rhine, with a shallow freeboard. They sink in anything above Sea State 2. The wash from a fast-moving destroyer would swamp and sink the barge. (Correct: the RN could sink the lot without firing a shot).

<http://www.flin.demon.co.uk/althist/sea11.htm>
[Emphasis added]

But Marix Evans has the Royal Navy not even bothering to go into the Channel. He does not even bother to discuss the reason; he merely posits such inaction. Given that the battleship HMS *Revenge* bombarded German assembly ports during the run-up to the invasion (planned invasion), not to mention a number of spoiling actions by smaller ships, I really think this thesis can't be sustained.

At least he does properly identify the supply problem. The ports in the proposed invasion area simply did not have sufficient capacity to supply the units landing with the tonnage they required for operations. (Macksey blithely refers to a massive air-transport operation, far beyond the capacity of the *Luftwaffe*'s transport planes.) Later in the war, the Allies could transport supplies over the beaches, but this took substantial development and investment which the Germans did not make (and perhaps could not have made).

A further comment reported by Brooks (see above) was that one of those Sandhurst map exercises was done without any RAF or RN effort. The Germans lost. This does tend to contradict the cheery assertions of, for example, Kieser, not to mention the various memoirs.

The story does end a bit abruptly, with the

surrender of the leading units. Some details of the mop-up, and the long-term results might be interesting.

While the maps do cover the topography of the beachheads, some that also showed the military situation might have been useful. Thanks to the miracle of Photoshop, there are actually pictures showing the Germans in action on British soil, and not having to use clips from *It Happened Here* (1966), Kevin Brownlow's AH documentary of an invaded Britain, either.

The non-fiction section is a useful updating of Fleming's work. The fiction section is written in the same dry, factual style employed in the non-fiction section. One might well imagine it a brief history of the invasion and battle, in much the same way that Sobel's *For Want of a Nail* is a history of the North American continent in the time-line it describes. However, given its lapses and lacunae that "Forester" could not have known of, and for all that it is done in a "novelistic" style, "If Hitler Had Invaded England" is still more plausible.

"An hour ago the last organized unit of the Nazi army in England made its surrender among the ruins of Rye. There are still scattered German soldiers in the woods and fields of Kent and Sussex. Their lives will be spared, and I call upon the Local Defense Volunteers to be merciful, however justified they may think they are in exacting vengeance for our burned villages and slaughtered civilians. Let us reserve our vengeance for Hitler and the guttersnipe crew who surround him. Today they know the first taste of defeat, and that is a taste with which they will become more and more familiar in the days to come."

— "If Hitler Had Invaded England"

NELSON SAID "LET IT BE!"

Review by Joseph T Major of

TO RULE THE WAVES:

How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World

by Arthur Herman

(HarperCollins; 2004;

ISBN 0-06-053424-9; \$26.95) and

ALBION:

The Origins of the English Imagination

by Peter Ackroyd

(Anchor Books; 2002, 2004;

ISBN 0-358-49773-3; \$16.95)

I had thought Sir Henry Curtis was a fine fellow, but this Sir Flavius Blume he knew was even bigger and fairer. We were at Sir Henry's house and I had been telling them the story about Ayesha the Arab woman. He burst out, "Lord what fools these mortals be!" I admire a man who can quote Shakespeare so fluently, but then he said, "I know of her. This is why — Quartermain, you must meet the Lady."

I had forgotten it, but about a month later this fancy trap drives up, and Sir Flavius gets out with the tallest woman I

ever saw, and another man I wasn't sure was elderly or young, because he had grey hair. He introduced her as Lady Crown, and him too but I have forgotten. She had her hair done up in braids wrapped around her head and it was that same golden hue.

She started querying me about that Ayesha. I would tell them something and they would all talk in some foreign palaver like I never heard. Then she said, "I apologize for this, Mr Quartermain, but there is a reason I have been sent here."

I thought they were from foreign parts but she said, "No, we are from here but my husband and I left for a while." . . .

After that they started talking about the Navy. I should have asked Captain Good to be on hand. When I had mentioned him she confessed to having some admiration for sailors. "Lord Nelson —"

"Nelson was a fine fellow, and that Hamilton woman was clever, but lewd," her husband said. "Not nearly as bad as those two chaps who talked our legs off about everything, though . . ."

— Not by Sir H. Rider Haggard

I don't know why (Leigh Kimmel might) but for some reason the most evocative comment I've ever seen on a certain battle is:

At noon the *Victory* flew Nelson's last signal: 'Engage the enemy more closely.' 'Now,' he said, 'I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and to the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty.' A few minutes later the *Royal Sovereign* came within range of the enemy and Captain Baudoin's 74-gun *Fougueux* fired the broadside that began the battle of Trafalgar. And though it was Nelson's intention that his lee column should be the first in action, such was Collingwood's enthusiasm, and his understanding of his Commander-in-Chief, that he called to his flag captain, 'Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!'

— *Nelson the Commander*, Geoffrey Bennett, Page 267

The author of *How the Scots Built Civilization* has given a context for Mr. Scott. There is an overarching connection to William Harrison's quest to find the *Longitude* (by Dava Sobel, 1995), the wanderings of *Barrow's Boys* (by Fergus Fleming, 1998), and the famous victories of *Nelson the Commander* (1972); Herman explores and discusses what was needed *To Rule the Waves*.

"When Britain first arose above the waves . . ." the song begins, but this starts a little later, with John Hawkins and Francis Drake having a little difference of opinion with colonial

authorities in Panama. One could start anywhere from the *comes litoris saxonici* ("Count of the Saxon Shore") all the way to Pepys, to be honest, not to mention Alfred the Great, Henry V, or Henry VIII, for that matter. But the Elizabethan navy is the one with the best connection, yet the earliest starting point.

The mission of Hawkins and the *Jesus of Lubeck* is a miniature of the impulses that drove these men; making money, and seeing something new. These patterns recur over the centuries that follow.

The names alone are themselves a kaleidoscope and a work of history — Sir Francis Drake; Samuel Pepys; George Anson, Lord Anson; James Cook; John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich; Horatio Nelson, Viscount Nelson of the Nile and Hillsborough, Duke of Brontë; Sir John Barrow, John Arbutnot Fisher, Lord Fisher of Kilverstone; Sir Philip Vian . . . not to mention Churchill and even Thatcher. Some of the little people are surprising. For example, Captain John Parkins, who served in the Caribbean until he retired in 1805, was black, and the son of a slave, if not a former slave himself. Herman points out that the navy was a route by which talented and ambitious people could better themselves socially.

Moreover, Herman discusses more than the commanders. Pepys laid the foundations for a powerful and effective navy while writing a diary. He had the sort of categorizing and organizing mind that Turtledove's "And So to Bed" (1986) celebrates; he was, after all, Samuel Pepys, F.R.S., Secretary of the Royal Society. Sandwich may have gambled and wenched (and stuck meat between slices of bread) at an appallingly gross rate, but he worked as hard or even harder at building an effective navy, by among other efforts a technological innovation! He may have put bread on meat, but he also put copper on ships' undersides, thinking outside the box and creating a force multiplier.

But more than just the people; the needs of the navy drove politics and technology. From the problem of Ship Money (which led to an even more authoritarian regime that exacted even more) to the solution of the National Debt, the funding and maintenance of a proper navy was a crucial need of the English (later British) government, and its solutions entailed development of a liberal economy and polity.

Similarly, the needs of sailing and of maintaining a fleet drove the advance of technology. Sobel's *Longitude* describes in detail merely one problem and the technology developed to solve it; the needs of shipping created a demand for new methods of organization, new means of communication, new forms of construction.

The final chapters are scanted, but then, having shaped the modern world, the Royal Navy now faded away into the mists of South Georgia and the Drake Passage. That is, the last chapter is about the Falklands War.

There are some problems with the last chapters. For example, Herman says "Britain . . . had not built a single new cruiser since 1941; no new aircraft carriers since 1940." Neither of

these statements is true: the fleet carriers *Implacable* and *Indefatigable* were launched in 1942, along with no less than fifteen light fleet carriers launched in the period 1943-5, for example. His source for this is Corelli Barnett's *Engage the Enemy More Closely* (1991), which I have also seen criticized for poor treatment of the Battle of the Atlantic. Then too, Herman seems to have a thing about not saying "Royal Navy", which it's been except for the period of the Commonwealth.

Herman ties together many different fields of expertise in discussing the influence of British seapower upon history; his work is a model for extrapolating on other expansions.

But what were they defending, anyway? Not Prytain, the Keltic land; not Britannia, the Roman province (or provinces, technically), but *Albion*, the land of the Angles and Saxons, to begin with. The author of *London: The Biography* now turns to the land that Lun-Dun, Londinium Augusta, is set in.

He begins with the trees. Patrick Curry's *Defending Middle-Earth: Tolkien, Myth and Modernity* (1997, 2004) discusses Tolkien's love of trees and his deploring of the devastation wreaked in the name of modernity (and Curry goes even farther); Ackroyd begins by describing the images and ideas of trees in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Ackroyd then tackles concepts in a cascade of ideas, going from the land to the language to the literature to the lives. It is not surprising, yet it is invigorating, for example, to learn of the bawdiness of early English writing; but then, the bawdy, earthy, sensual English culture of even the Georgian era (where John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, could also be "Jemmy Twitcher, Rape-Master General of England") was far more typical of that nation than its prim, proper, and chaste Victorian successor.

Or even petty things, where one learns that "Mandy Cohen" (Terry Jones) of *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (1979) is far from being a decadent post-sixties exemplar, "Dame Edna Everage" (Barry Humphries) hardly a modern degeneracy; dressing in drag is a very Olde Englysh Bing (Pages 293-299).

When the monks weren't anticipating Mandy and Edna, they were praying seriously. Ackroyd has a substantial section on the religious feelings of the Anglo-Saxons. They weren't originally Christian, but became so, and the author describes their religious writings, art, and architecture. The Venerable Bede was highly respected throughout the Christian world, even though he never left Northumbria.

Women's religiosity is also a significant factor. Ackroyd discusses their faith, their complaints about being restricted, and their freedoms. (He refers to a sixteenth century dramatist named Joanna Lumley. How *Absolutely Fabulous* or *The New Avengers* would translate to the era of Good Queen Bess and Dowdy King Jamie is an interesting matter to contemplate.)

After a section on the Renaissance and its influence — going to "Chiantishire" [Tuscany] is not a modern thing — Ackroyd discusses a

man influenced by Italy: Shakespeare (and no, not Bacon, Marlowe, Oxford, Elizabeth, or Bill Bloggs). In turn, the Elizabethian theater segues into the historical impulse, and then into the naval one.

This is about where the strictly historical phase really comes to an end; Ackroyd follows by discussing various social themes, such as "Melodrama", "Philosophy: Mockery and Learning", and gardening. The book ends with a return to the original theme of language.

This is not quite a history, neither is it absolutely a "geography" (as I learned geography in school, aeons ago, where we discussed the amusing costumes of other countries; but more seriously, their social mores and societies in general), but some of both. Ackroyd's span of examples covers from Caedmon to Tolkien, from the nameless illustrators of Old English sacred texts to David Hockney; the beginning comes back to the end.

Albion is ever failing, ever fading, yet it still lives in memory, with its own indelible imagery.

Ackroyd cites the poetry wherein a warrior is laid to his rest, *Beowulf* and others. These people still honor warriors after a battle (like, say the Barents Sea, where the destroyer HMS *Onslow* participated in the defeat of a much more powerful German force):

On 4th February the *Onslow* arrived back in Scapa Flow to receive more surprises. The battleship *Anson*, which had provided the wireless link with the Admiralty during the battle, was leaving with Admiral Fraser on board, and Marchant altered course to give her a wide berth. He was startled to get a signal from the battleship saying *Pass close to me*.

As the *Onslow* approached they could see where the decks of the great battleship were black with men, and over the loudspeakers they heard: 'Three cheers for the *Onslow* — Hip, Hip, Hurray! Hip, Hip . . .'

They were still recovering from their gratified embarrassment when they approached Switha and met the battleship *Malaya* coming out. Once again the little destroyer was cheered as she passed. A few moments later came the order that the *Onslow* was to steam past all the ships of the fleet now at anchor to receive their congratulations. She had been away for forty-three days; she had fought bravely in defence of a convoy. Though only a few men knew it, and they were in Berlin or at Fort Wolf [*Wolfschanze*; Hitler's East Prussian headquarters], she had played a great part in defeating the German surface fleet.

— Dudley Pope, *73 North: The Battle of the Barents Sea*, Pages 285-286

IS ALL YOU NEED

Review by Joseph T Major of Ann Rule's
*KISS ME, KILL ME
and Other True Cases*

(Pocket Books; 2004;
ISBN 0-671-69139-2; \$7.99)
"Ann Rule's True Crime Files #9"
<http://www.annrules.com>

"There's nothing you can do that can't be done," John, Paul, George, and Ringo sang to the Blue Meanies, sending them in rout. If only the problems recounted here were solvable by putting a hole in the shell around Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band! These are promises of love that turn bad; it's easy to end a life, it seems, all too easy.

The title story, **Kiss Me, Kill Me**, is about a cold case that was solved through DNA analysis. Told that way it seems so flat; but the story of the brutal murder and rape of Sandy Bowman, and the long search for her killer, is an example of the problems of an investigation. Perhaps not surprisingly, there were many suspects; though for Sandy, not the usual one. Her husband was indeed somewhere else at the time and so did not have to suffer being a suspect on top of everything else.

This is a case that Rule has a slight personal connection with. Fortunately, it's not through knowing the murderer. John Canaday had been caught for other murders and then DNA analysis tied him to the Bowman murder. As a result, he got a third life sentence. As Richard Pryor says, "He doin' triple life! How the [DELETED] do you do triple life!?"

The Postman Only Killed Once but that was because they caught him before he began his plan of covering up his crime with a series of sex murders. Fortunately for his potential victims, the police could quickly disprove the alibi of the mail carrier she calls "Dale Carrier" and arrest him for the murder of his wife. The case had many of the appurtenances of a steamy mystery, except it was the ordinary police who forestalled the murderer.

What's Love Got to Do with It? Norwegian immigrant fisherman Karsten Knutsen might have asked, had he not been found dead (long dead) near a riding trail in Washington state. He had been picked up by a woman who was on a fling — and her boyfriend, who was not the most reliable of folks (a bigamist, for example). One mistake can ruin a life. Or two.

Old Flames Can Burn or worse. Steven Mallory had known the two roommates back when they were all kids in Yakima, and dated one and then the other. So when he went home with them it was quite unexpected that he strangled one and stabbed the other. And indeed there seems to be a total lack of remorse, emotion, or motive; it's more a surprise that death comes when it does.

The Lonely Hearts Killer had, for what it is worth, been the inspiration for the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program. Los Angeles police detective Pierce Brooks took to heart the Holmesian dictum about crimes: "There is a strong family resemblance about misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger ends, it is odd if you can't unravel the thousand and first." (*A Study In Scarlet*, Chapter

Two). By getting such details, Brooks noticed a strong family resemblance about the deaths of several young women — and from there, found the other resemblance, their meeting with Harvey Glattman, a man who loved well, but not too wisely.

The Captive Bride was a poster girl for the archetype of a possessive husband. Unfortunately, the woman Rule calls “Kaitlyn Merriam” found out too late that her husband wanted to own her — and if he couldn’t have her, well . . . The problem with the list of very incisive and painful characteristics of a possessive husband that Rule gives is that the women most likely to need to heed it are the ones least likely to encounter it, or believe it.

If you thought you had had a **Bad Blind Date**, at least you survived; Victoria Legg didn’t, and she ended up dead in a park in Seattle. Her murderer was brilliant, but with a very stressful family life (his father having survived the Bataan Death March was one of the less stressful incidents), and not surprisingly was diagnosed as schizophrenic. But he looked so normal.

The Highway Accident was an almost-successful coverup for a murder, but the neighbors heard the wife’s last screams before the husband loaded her body into the car to take it out and crack it up. But because they did, the police were able to see all the evidence of the fatal struggle. And then the husband’s prolonged life of deception came out. Perhaps again, since he got parole after only ten years and got a job with the state. (This essay was printed in *A Fever in the Heart and Other True Cases* (1996) but is reprinted because of its relevance to the Peterson and Hacking cases.)

You Kill Me — Or I’ll Kill You the murder said. Or said he said. Because they wouldn’t kill him, one woman was slashed to death and another slashed open, but amazingly lived. Then his masochistic fantasies came out. Not to mention the crime fan who knew he was innocent, innocent, married him, and got him out of the pen. There are some kinds of love that are just a bit strange.

“Where is Julie?” asks Ann, breaking her rule to never write about an unclosed case. Julie Weflen was a power station operator for the Bonneville Power Administration in Washington. On September 15, 1987, she was kidnapped from a station she was checking. In spite of an intensive police search, and an even more intensive search by her husband (Rule makes the comparison with the lackadaisical “effort” of Scott Peterson, and think O.J.) she has not been found, dead or alive. What touched Rule most was the intense grief Mike Weflen, Julie’s husband, suffered and suffers.

Love can mean many things to many people. When it involves two people, sometimes their views can be very different — and even fatal. Such differences can poison the most beautiful of relationships.

One of the more bothersome points that Rule keeps on raising is how many of these killers have been paroled.

THE ZING

Review by Joseph T Major of Joel Levy’s **THE SCAM HANDBOOK: The Secrets of the Con Artist** (Barnes & Noble Books; 2004; ISBN 0-7607-5345-8; \$9.95)

At the end of “The Zing”, the *MAD* satire of a certain George Roy Hill movie (*MAD* #171, December 1974, Page 11), Harry Goniff announces lugubriously that they have just taken Dull Irishman for \$500,000, but it’s cost them \$700,000 to do it. If scams like this wire job (described here on Pages 114-115) were only the subjects of amusing movies, it would be one thing. However, when earnest and eager Nigerian bank clerks inform you that a confidential source has identified you as a reliable person to be trusted with moving \$127 MILLION DOLLARS out of an inactive bank account, ten times a day, such scams are somehow no longer amusing.

Levy’s handy little book contains a variety of information. He begins with a description of the people involved: the con artist, the mark, the police. The psychology of the con artist is not a pretty one; they show many of the symptoms of sociopathy, and one can say that the con man has the same attitude, except his exception to “humanity” extends to fleecing them, instead of killing them. (See Edna Buchanan’s description of con men and killers in *The Corpse Had a Familiar Face* (1987).)

The mark, by way of contrast, is too trusting. Perhaps not surprisingly, both con men and psychics use “cold reading”, and incidentally Levy lists “psychic detectives” as a form of con man. After reading of how grieving parents and spouses have been diverted by the futile, bland assurances of psychic detectives (“She is near water.”) it is not hard to go with this argument. More than that, the Mark wants to believe: yes, the widow of Emperor Palpatine does indeed want me, yes yes me, to help her get a fortune of Cr127 MILLION credits out of the Coruscant Galactic Bank . . .

Levy describes the organizations that exist to counter this. The mark has to know where to go and what to do (Fred Fitch, the hapless if not witless protagonist of Donald Westlake’s *God Save the Mark* (1967) has memorized the telephone number of the NYPD fraud department); there are both governmental and private resources available (e.g. Fay Faron, the author of a previous book in this line, *Rip-Off: A Writer’s Guide to Crimes of Deception* (1998) and proprietor of the Rat Dog Dick Detective Agency (<http://www.ratdogdick.com>), whose investigation of a particularly murderous scam by Roma do-it-yourself widows is described in Jack Olsen’s *Hastened to the Grave: The Gypsy Murder Investigation* (1998)).

After a chapter on the “Anatomy of a Scam”, the core methods and methodologies, Levy gives more detailed descriptions of them. He begins with the old classics, such as Three-Card Monte and the Pigeon Drop. He lists various “affection” scams, from Sweetheart scams (the Roma crimes Fay Faron investigated added murder to this) to faith healing (James “The

Amazing” Randi’s *The Faith Healers* (1989) needs updating, because there are always new faith healers out there, but still gives you the how and why). Gambling scams like “The Sting” (which perhaps should have been “The Wire Job” as noted earlier), all the way to the famous Ponzi Scheme (which was not invented by Charles Ponzi) show how mock finance can be profitable. Finally, in a topic not covered (of course!) in David W. Maurer’s classic *The Big Con* (1940, 1999), Levy discusses various Information Age scams such as identity theft (he must be British, since he says “the con man visits the Public Records Office” (Page 146) and not the county courthouse), Phishing, and the ever-popular Nigerian 419 Scam.

Interleaved among these general topics are more specific ones. Short reviews of movies (including, yes *The Sting* (1973)) give the reader something else to watch. The delicious details of various historical con men such as Ponzi, Oscar Hartzell of the Sir Francis Drake Inheritance (see also *Drake’s Fortune: The Fabulous True Story of The World’s Greatest Confidence Artist* by Richard Rayner (2002) for more), or modern cases such as Enron and Ivan Boesky are discussed in small but useful sidebars. As a reminder of how weak the boundaries can be, Levy also cites the murderous family of Sante and Kenny Kimes (Pages 38-39). For more on this Elektra-fying pair see *Son of a Grifter: The Twisted Tale of Sante and Kenny Kimes* by Kent Walker with Mark Schone (2001) and *The Mother, the Son, and the Socialite: The True Story of a Mother-Son Crime Spree* by Adrian Havill (1999) for more — the latter was the basis of the movie, *Like Mother, Like Son* (2001) which starred Mary Tyler Moore as Sante (this sure ain’t Laura Petrie or Mary Richards!).

The book has a short glossary, but unfortunately no bibliography. Levy is concerned that the book might be perceived, or worse yet actually used, as a guide to conducting scams. Its intent is to educate the would-be mark in what he or she faces. (Of course, those who need it will, like Doyle Lonnergan of *The Sting*, figure they won’t be scammed, or like Fred Fitch of *God Save the Mark*, not believe it’s relevant to their case.)

Excuse me, there’s been some question about my eBay account and I have to confirm my information. Since I don’t have an eBay account this will be pretty hard . . .

HEALTH ISSUES

by Joe

Friday, December 3, 2004

Got up at 5:25. This is my vacation, and I’m getting up at 5:25. Is something wrong with this picture? I can’t eat either, so at least I got through my morning preparations quickly enough. Got to the hospital on time, processed through at Medical Imaging, and we began just before 7:30.

This day’s examination is a stomach-emptying test. I eat something that is radioactive. It was just like Dilbert to make himself a superhero costume and go sit down by

the nuclear reactor in the hope that he would become a superhero. No such luck.

The radioactive food was scrambled eggs, which I will eat but am not thrilled about, “hot” or not. (Besides being “hot”, they were at least hot; i.e., not only radioactive but also freshly cooked.) So I more or less directly swallowed them. Then I watched the technician who brought them wrap up the bowl, fork, and table pad to be discarded. They are radwaste, you see, and need special treatment.

They took a preliminary scan right away. The schedule is one initial scan, one at one hour later, one at two hours later, and one at four hours later. Then there came the bad news: I can’t eat or drink anything else until the imaging is over. Ugh.

With not much else to do, I asked if I could get my laptop. They let me, so here I am writing this in real time.

The one-hour scan seemed satisfactory. Without a trip to the car to get things, the time waiting after that seemed to be longer. There was a television in the waiting room. It is very boring to hear an actor make the same points about his filming on the network morning show and then the syndicated talk show. Think of what it must have been like for him to have to tell the same stories over and over again . . .

There was an older woman sitting in on the two-hour scan, and when she looked at the images she observed that there didn’t seem to be anything left in my stomach. A brief conference ensued, then the woman — a staff physician, I presume — came back and told me that normal stomach-emptying rate was sixty percent or more at two hours. Mine was 99+%; there was nothing left to view. So on that note, I left early, and went to get something to eat at Dooley’s Bagels, renew my driver’s license, make the first payment on the new car, and go see our cousin-in-law Ruby Nell, who works near where I do. (Yes, “our.” You knew I would have to get in a family reference. Ruby’s late husband Bob was indeed a relative of mine and a relative of Lisa’s.)

Friday, December 10

As you will recall, when I first picked Dr. Y., the then senior partner of Dr. H. back in 1985, it was because his office was not too far off the way from my walk between the Naval Ordnance Station and my apartment. Back in September, the practice finally moved, and is now in the same office building where the orthopedic specialist I’d seen back in 2002 for that shoulder trouble had his Louisville office.

I had breakfast at Dooley’s, did some shopping at Sam’s Club (including getting the envelopes to mail lastish and thish) and then got over to the doctor’s in time (eleven). However, I had forgotten the list of blood tests Dr. K. wanted me to have, so I told the clerks and they called his office.

After a short wait, the nurse called my name. She took my weight and blood pressure, both of which were apparently very good. In the roundup of medications taken I observed that it was coming time for the B12 shot, and she excused herself, went down the hall, and came

back and gave me the shot.

Dr. H. came shortly thereafter. He opined that my losing weight was a good sign, especially at this time of year. I asked about the prostate matter, and he told me that one of the blood tests would be for prostate-specific antigen (PSA), and they would do the physical test during the colonoscopy. There is enough personal indignity involved in that test that a little more won’t matter, I suppose.

The phlebotomist tapped me for three vials. She was rather pleased with the state of my veins. After all that time when I was little getting immunizations and noting how much it hurt, it should be noticed that technology has advanced here. It still hurts, but hardly at all.

Found out afterwards that our Christmas schedule has changed but that’s another story.

Monday, December 13

Appropriate day. Dr. H. called with the results of the blood tests. First the good news; my PSA levels are extraordinarily low. The tests Dr. K. wanted seem to have come out all right.

I said it was an appropriate day. My blood sugar is elevated. It’s needle time.

Friday, December 17

Dr. K. sent the various papers. I show up at seven in the morning for the CT scan. Now I had one of these when I had the attack of Bell’s Palsy. Why is it that modern medical equipment has that certain *FAMILIARITY*? I can imagine Rotwang standing in front of the computer keyboard, chortling contentedly as the ring of the CT scanner engulfs Maria’s fair form, watching the data accumulate for the CAD/CAM system to create a new shell for Futura (in *METROPOLIS 2005* with Forrest J Ackerman as the Oberbürgermeister).

Ahead of this, Dr. K. also put me on some other drugs. I got the prescriptions filled and complained that the co-pay on one drug was twice what co-pays normally were. The pharmacist’s assistant looked at the label and informed me that the insurance company had paid more than **six times** as much as that. Eek! Eek! Eek!

This is a steroid. So much for my career in professional baseball. This also entails more blood tests. Dr. K. kept on stressing how there was a possibility of nausea, so I should start on half-doses and work up. Well, there’s no nausea thus far.

Now for the CT scan: I got up at six in the morning and went to the hospital. They’re getting to know me there; the clerk at the outpatient registration recognized me and so did the man who took me over to the hospital proper.

Not Medical Imaging this time, though we went by there; one floor higher. After a few minutes in the waiting room a technician showed up, gave me two cups of sort of cherry-flavored Kool-Aid, and told me to drink it down, as it would help them image my innards. The stuff had a somewhat harsh aftertaste. (Oh yes, as usual, nothing to eat after midnight.)

They gave about half an hour for the stuff to

work its way down. I switched the television in the waiting room from ESPN to one of the local channels. The big news was that there had been another murder that investigators thought had been done by the same person who killed JonBénet Ramsey — i.e., not her parents. I doubt this will satisfy the “The Ramseys did it” bunch; I read comments by the profiler for the state in the declaration-of-innocence trial Dr. Sam Sheppard’s son got for his father, and the man had clearly fixated on Dr. Sam as the killer and interpreted all the evidence in that light, and probably would have done the same to W. H. Wallace had there been forensic profiling in Liverpool in the twenties, though at least the case against Wallace was so *prima facie* absurd that he was let off on appeal. (See *The Man From the Pru* (1990) starring Jonathan Pryce, then read Jonathan Goodman’s *The Killing of Julia Wallace* (1969).)

After half an hour of news and weather, the tech came back, led me down the hall, and started asking about allergies, reactions, and drugs taken. I have to lay off the metformin (a diabetes drug) for two days unless I really don’t mind losing those kidneys.

She put a shunt in my left arm. I jumped a little when the needle went in and she noted the scar tissue in the vein (with all that bloodwork it isn’t surprising). Once the shunt was in place she put an initial drug into it and of course me. Then she left me to wait a bit.

The wait wasn’t long (to get ahead of myself, I was out of the hospital by 8:30) and I was soon led across the hall to Dr. Rotwang’s lair er the CAT scanner. The technician there told me to lie down, lower my trousers (just wait till the colonoscopy) and they would start work on Futurus the robot (Now stop that!) that is start the scan in a moment.

She then connected a dye container to the shunt, told me to put my arms above my head, and stepped off to start the process. Which was rather quiet. The hardest part was holding my breath during the scans. They had recorded announcements and little cartoon images to help point this out. There was one scan to establish background and then the main ones. Again, they told me that the dye would give me a warm feeling; didn’t feel a thing.

After two runs (one without dye and one with) they pronounced the scan done. The tech unfastened the dye container, took the shunt out and put a gauze pad over the needle hole, and asked me if I could find my own way out, which I could. Then off to breakfast at Dooley’s.

Tuesday, December 28

I had had to shift around appointments when I learned that the colonoscopy people only worked on Thursdays. Then, I had to help dig Lisa’s car out. When we want to go see family, it snows. (Nine inches in Louisville, more where we wanted to go. So much for our Christmas schedule.) When I have to learn how to stick needles in myself, it warms up.

I got down to the doctor’s office in time (quarter to nine) and then had to wait an hour. The appointment was with Ms. M., the practice’s nurse-practitioner. She showed me

how to use a blood glucose testing meter, got me one (those things run from \$20 for a low-end one to \$90 or more, then there are discounts, rebates, and other stuff), and then dug out the insulin pens.

That's right, pens. You cock it, dial up the dose, stick the needle into yourself ("Quick, Watson, the needle!"), and push the button. *SNAP* I don't feel the needle going in. The problem is that I have to keep the stuff refrigerated, which will be interesting at hotels the next time we go on a long trip.

I don't know why, but the examination room had a pad with a checklist of symptoms of depression. Looking it over, I found I had most of them. Didn't mention it to Ms. M. for obvious reasons.

Got cash, bought gas & groceries, and went home for lunch and a nap.

Wednesday, December 29

In preparation for my Great Spiritual Experience, when the high priests will look deep into my self, I was required to fast and purge myself. I was supposed to eat nothing but clear liquids, and of course nothing after midnight. Seeing soft drinks on the list of "clear liquids" is a surprise — I suppose they mean 7-Up, Sprite, and the like, not Diet Coke, Dr. Pepper, etc. ("Did you drink only clear liquids?") "**SURE DID, THREE SIX-PACKS OF JOLT COLA!!!**")

Last time (about twelve years ago) I had an argument about the drugs involved. They wanted to sedate me, a mix including Valium. A friend of mine got addicted to Valium. One shot probably wouldn't hurt, but it's the principle of the thing. So they stuck the tube (well this is a family fanzine), took snips out of my colon, and so on; the pain was not quite as bad as the cramps I had been having. I even went to work afterwards. This time, the coordinator at Dr. K.'s office put me down as no sedation.

And of course no insulin.

I spent the afternoon drinking something called "NuLyteLy" that is supposed to clear me out, one eight-ounce glass every fifteen minutes. It did, too. For some reason I was cold, and without appetite. Oh well. (The NuLyteLy was supposedly more palatable chilled, and I also drank three 2-liter bottles of Diet 7-Up.)

I got calls from the hospital and from Dr. K.'s office. The doctor reminded me of my appointment, as if I'd forget. The hospital caller asked a long list of questions. She kept on going too fast for me to answer.

Thursday, December 30

This was the day I got abducted by aliens, taken into a strange cold place, and subjected to a very intimate and personal probe. Alas, I can't sell it to the tabloids. (I never quite figured this out: The abductees claim that they heartily distrust the government, but if they mention any significant piece of evidence, the story concludes with "A man came by, saying he was from the government, and I gave my item of proof to him." Excuses, excuses.)

Up betimes at 6:20; Lisa and I got dressed

and we went on to the hospital. Signed in at half-past seven, got taken (for \$50 for an outpatient procedure), and went on to the examining room, which for a change was in the same building, indeed just across the hall. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I had to persuade the nurse that no, no, I did **NOT** want sedation.

The paperwork took incredibly longer. I got undressed in a changing room, put on the Standard Issue Embarrassing Backless Hospital Gown (though in this case there was a good reason), and waited. They let Lisa wait with me for a while, and she took custody of my wallet, change, keys, pen, cell phone, and wedding ring. After a while the nurse came in, got me to lie down on the rolling stretcher, took my blood pressure, and put in the IV shunt. No, no, no, I did **NOT** want sedation.

Last time I changed in the main examination room. Now they had to take me on the stretcher. Gnnnn. Why couldn't I walk? Well, they had the needle in and the saline solution connected up and it might have pulled out and there would have been lawsuits. The stretcher was a quite fancy apparatus, and with the labels replaced appropriately, would have done well in the medlab scene of *SW:ESB*TM. ("Han, it was like kissing my sister." "Yeah, right.")

When we got into the examination room, about ten minutes before nine (there were two clocks there and they disagreed; doesn't that make you feel all warm and tingly about modern technology?). Dr. K. was there, but he left for a while to get some notes. The techs and nurses were all talking about the snow and what music they wanted to play while Dr. K. was out. They put heart monitor patches on my chest. Nowadays they have an interesting little pulse monitor which goes over the finger; it's like a clamp. One of the nurses nevertheless took my pulse the old fashioned way.

Then he returned, they darkened the lights, and the spectacle began. Dr. K. seemed unsurprised about my not wanting sedation, but then I'd gone over this with him two weeks ago.

They got me to roll over on my side and then Dr. K. pushed the tube in (see above about family fanzine). There was a screen on one side of the room which showed what seemed to be a pinkish and rather elderly sewer pipe. Well it is fifty years old. I felt rather full of (see above about family fanzine) with a few twinges, but hardly ones needing me to be totally unconscious. In fact, one of the nurses commented about how calm I seemed: heart rate 72, blood pressure 125 over 84. (These are very good numbers in general. My blood sugar, on the other hand . . .) This was why I wanted to stay awake; I wanted to look!

And listen. Patients who have been inadvertently only partially sedated sometimes report a rather crude level of byplay among techs, nurses, and doctors during treatment or examination. Since someone who wasn't part of the gang was listening, they kept the comments reasonable. Dr. K. complained that one patient had called him "un-Louisvillian". "Un-American" he could take, after a fashion (he's an immigrant), but he resented being called "un-Louisvillian".

Finally, after some pushing and pumping to get round the turns, we got to the cecum. The tech pointed out a nice little slot which, he said, was the aperture to my appendix. Just keep closed, buddy, that's all I ask. (Herbivores have a huge appendix. Humans have a very small and non-functional, some might even say dysfunctional, one. What does that say about vegetarianism?)

And then, the point of the exercise; the ileum. Another name of Crohn's Disease is "ileitis". Sure enough there were little ulcers and damage scars all over the intestinal tissue there. Now the supposedly disagreeable part began; Dr. K. began taking samples. It seems "biopsy" applies to the living, too. A little pair of jaws on a rod would dart forward, snap at the flesh offered up to it, and sometimes come away with a bit, but usually leave a little red mark. Since I couldn't feel a thing it was all rather detached.

Dr. K. gradually pulled the tube out, taking samples along the way, and finally had it all the way out. He had the tech press me to get out the air that he had blown in to spread out the colon, and pointed out that I might be gassy for a while. Then he thanked me, took his departure, and left me for the nurses to wheel out to the recovery room. They expressed amazement at my endurance. What was there to endure? I've had worse cramps.

They got me to the recovery room, where I could sit up, and got Lisa. I got dressed, Dr. K. came by, and we arranged that I should get an appointment in about two weeks, once he had sorted out all this information. The main nurse came in, informed me that I had set most of her debriefing information at naught because I wasn't zonked out, said I was to call if I did have excessive bleeding, and wished me a happy day.

It was about twenty past ten, and so Lisa and I went to Dooley's to eat brunch (I drove). She had to work that night; I sent off an email describing some of this and spent the whole rest of the night fielding answers. So some of you have already read about some of this.

The next morning we went to Henderson, but that's another matter.

Monday, January 17, 2005

Right before this appointment, I got a very painful rash on my elbows. Was this a reaction to the steroids? EntocortTM [busesonide] and azathioprine, if anyone **really** wants to know. Incidentally, taking azathioprine and lisinopril may cause anemia. Dr. Cook, should I keep on taking these medicines?

It was a bitterly cold morning I got out to the office in time, filled out a new information sheet (it has spaces for the patient's email address and cell-phone number; how times change), and was brought in.

Instead of seeing Ms. M. I saw a trainee, Ms. S. (The same name as several of Lisa's uncles and aunts; I was reminded of how Cousin Bennett had encountered a clerk at the hospital named "Cayce" and sure enough, she was married to our Cousin Tom.) I showed her my list of blood-sugar levels, and she advised I

increase the insulin dosage. But the circulation in my feet was fine. She recommended an additional medicine for the rash, and advised I come back in two weeks. (On February 1, really a little too late for this.)

Said hello to Dr. H. on the way out (he was in the hall), got more gas and groceries, and home before ten.

Incidentally: Going from one place to another in the hospital was always as direct as possible; there were no renovations going on. The cafeteria was always open. No one babbled on unstopably about irrelevancies. Indeed, the staff uniformly demonstrated an acceptable and even admirable level of competence.

This means I may *never* get into a Connie Willis novel.

Also, I take seven different kinds of medication (plus the insulin). I take all kinds of pills, but don't get all kinds of thrills, and I'm sure I won't get my picture on the cover of *The Rolling Stones*.

NAKED CAME PUBLISH AMERICA

by Joe

Back in the hot sixties, when Jacqueline Susanne and Harold Robbins were pounding out potboilers featuring lust among the affluent and trendy, *Newsday* columnist Mike McGrory decided to see if he could get even lower. He enlisted twenty-four other writers he knew to write a totally sleazy, utterly trashy novel about a woman who gets revenge on her husband by having affairs with every man in the (unbelievably diverse) neighborhood. Much sex, suicides, sex, breakups, sex, changes of life, sex, hysteria, and did I mention sex, ensues. The book became a best-seller — and then the hoax came out, and it became an *even bigger* best seller.

Unfortunately, its effects did not include a stop to the spread of trashy novels. The era of Jackie Collins, Jean Auel, and the like, not to mention the spread of the Romance genre, was yet to come.

Fast forward to the present. Our favorite Print on Demand publisher, PublishAmerica, is getting public notice! They say that all publicity is good publicity, as was observed when Immanuel Velikovsky's works of amusing speculation were denounced as scientific nonsense and became bestsellers as people bought them to find out what the fuss was all about. Since he was writing to prove a thesis, and what those buyers concluded in general was that he was a tinfoil-hat brigade charter member, perhaps all publicity is not good.

Martin Morse Wooster (thanks) sent me an article from the *Washington Post Book World* for January 23 reporting some observations on this (PA, that is). What they had to report was not much more than was already seen on the Net and the like; they do not edit, they do not publicize, you can't get their books from bookstores unless you special-order them, and so on. Also the "cultish" attitude, where the writers are encouraged to trust each other but not those nasty outsiders. Particularly SF & F

writers, who are particularly unfit.

Jim Macdonald told Steve Silver who told me about a response to this. A group of some thirty writers got together and composed a "*Naked Came the Stranger*" style work; each one writing a chapter, the head writer revising it to eliminate any good writing, and then submitting the resulting mess, er manuscript to PublishAmerica under the title *Atlanta Nights*.

The manuscript is actually available on the Net. I looked at the opening chapter. At least I could read it, unlike *Curse of the Vampire*. But it was rather dull (again I know this was intentional). In an in-joke that may have gone over the publisher's head, the cast of characters was listed and putting together the initials of their names gets "PUBLISHAMERICA IS A VANITY PRESS".

This scheme leaked out, as such things will, and PublishAmerica abruptly withdrew their acceptance. Jim very kindly sent copies of both the acceptance and the withdrawal letters. The latter had the somewhat convenient excuse that there were chapters that didn't quite seem to make sense. I don't want to reprint these letters for obvious reasons. The acceptance letter is rather gushy. I feel a bit sorry for someone who really wants to be a writer, gets such an acceptance, and thinks he's on the road to something big.

This is a fine joke, to be sure, but all it really proves is that certain organizations will accept anything. Why shouldn't they? Their costs are low enough that they would make a profit on just about any book they produced — hoping that the author will get all his friends and family to buy it, not to mention the naive local paper which will herald the Published Local Author.

The fine folks at PA deserve this, while the writers can congratulate themselves on a good jape; but will it change anything? Indeed, it would seem to reinforce the cultic belief that those SF & F writers are a nasty, tricky, untrustworthy lot. Going by the *Post* article, their reputation is low enough that nothing can particularly hurt it.

Oh, well, see for yourself, if you have the stomach. The various parts are at:

<ftp://ftp.sff.net/pub/people/doylemacdonald/sting/>

For the manuscript itself add to the end of the above "[Manuscript.rtf](#)"; for the contract with PA add "[Contract.pdf](#)". Thanks to Martin, Steve, and Jim for the information.

PHAR LAP

Australia's Legend
by Lisa

Phar Lap was actually foaled in New Zealand but he will be forever remembered as Australia's horse. Like Seabiscuit, he raced in the dark years of the Depression.

His co-owner, Australian trainer Harry Telford, bought him as a yearling on his pedigree alone much as legendary breeder Federico Tesio often bought mares.

Telford was a bit short of money so he had

to persuade an American businessman to buy the horse. The businessman, David Davis, volunteered 190 guineas. Fortunately for Telford, Phar Lap only cost 160 guineas. Telford was very happy until he actually saw the "big gangly beast" with a wart covered face. If Telford was not pleased with the sight, Davis was definitely not a happy camper. Telford soothed him by offering to train the horse for free in exchange for "two-thirds of the winnings — if there were any."

In 51 starts, Phar Lap was to win 37, be second three times and third twice. Telford got to keep two-thirds of 56,425 pounds and \$50,000 U.S. dollars.

Physically Phar Lap was close to Man o'War's red but noticeably taller at just over seventeen hands. His most noted victories were the Agua Caliente Handicap, the Melbourne Cup, the AJC Derby, the Victoria Derby and two runnings of the WS Cox Plate.

After Phar Lap had won "virtually every major Australian race, many of them twice" Davis wanted to send Phar Lap after the rich races in America. He was to win the \$50,000 Agua Caliente Handicap but he was never to return to Australia. He died in Menlo Park, California on April 5, 1932.

"He died over seventy years ago, yet Phar Lap, along with the bushranger Ned Kelly, is among Australia's leading national legends. As much as he defied the odds when alive, Phar Lap has consistently amazed the doubters by converting and seducing each new generation with the story of how he lived fast, died young and left a beautiful corpse."

His death was shrouded in mystery and some rumors had it gangsters had poisoned him. For those interested, there is a book titled *Phar Lap* by Geoff Armstrong and Peter Thompson. Allen & Unwin, 236pp, \$59.95. Sixty dollars is a lot of money for one book, so those interested in it might try to have a local library buy it.

Source: website of the Museum, Victoria Australia.

<http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/pharlap/>

THE APPALOOSA

by Lisa

The Appaloosa is not an obscure breed nor in danger of extinction any longer. I chose to write about them now because I have seen them at the Horse Park and been intrigued by their beauty and history.

Appaloosas were first bred by the Native American tribe, the Nez Perce. They are famous for their striking, often beautiful spots that distinguish them from most of the other breeds. It is not clear whether they were bred from Spanish or Russian horses. They are noted for calm nature, stamina and intelligence.

As a result of the Nez Perce War of 1877, the Nez Perce lost their horses to whites who did not appreciate the horses. By treaty, they were supposed to keep their surviving horses but the winners ignored that particular legality.

It was 1938, more than sixty years later, that

Oregon farmer Claude Thompson founded the Appaloosa Horse Club and began to restore the breed. As a result, there are now over a half million registered Appaloosas.

Sources: Appaloosa Horse Club

aphc@appaloosa.com

Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center

2720 W. Pullman Road

Moscow, Idaho 83843

Web Site: <http://www.appaloosa.com>

E-mail: marketing@appaloosa.com

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF PRATCHETT

by Grant C. McCormick

These days, one of my favorite authors is the English writer, Terry Pratchett. Mr. Pratchett had the good fortune to be born on April 28, 1948, in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England, in the United Kingdom. He has been writing professionally for several decades now (first story published at age 13, first commercial sale at age 17, first novel [the fantasy *The Carpet People*] published in 1971).

As the above shows, from his teen years to the present, Pratchett has always been a writer. Starting in 1965, he worked for the Buckinghamshire Free Press and wrote reviews for a publishing company. From 1980 to 1987, he worked for the Central Electricity Generating Board as Publicity Officer (saying Good Things about three nuclear power stations). Since 1987, he has been a very successful full-time professional writer. Most of his output has been fantasy, but he has written two science fiction novels (*The Dark Side of the Sun*, in 1976; and *Strata*, in 1981). In 1990, he coauthored (with Neil Gaiman) the novel *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter*.

What Terry Pratchett is best known for is his Discworld series. This body of work, based upon the absurd premise of a flat world balanced on the backs of four elephants who, in turn, stand on a giant turtle, has won a worldwide following that is only approached by J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth and Piers Anthony's Xanth. Starting with *The Colour of Magic* (1983), and (as of this writing) running through *Going Postal* (2004), he has thirty-three Discworld novels in total, three of which are classified as Young Adult (*The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents* [2001]; *The Wee Free Men* [2003]; and its direct sequel, *A Hat Full of Sky* [2004]). Most bookstores do not include copies of these three with the other Discworld books, and have them filed in Children's Books or Young Adult only. (These three have also won several awards, including the Carnegie Award.) All of Pratchett's novels are known for their humor, their excellence in writing and characterization – and the loyalty that they have generated among his fans.

For your convenience, I am including a list of the Discworld books published to date, at the end of this article, in chronological order. Note: these are the novels only, and do not include such things as Pratchett's Discworld short fiction, the *Discworld Guide*, any of the Discworld maps, *The Science of Discworld* or

its sequel, etc. The books in the Discworld series are divided into several sub-series, involving recurring sets of characters. It is possible that some of the independent novels may serve as the seed of future sub-series. Most (though not all) of these books are set in the great city of Ankh-Morpork (think London, Lankmar, and New York City all rolled up into one), largest city of the Discworld and jewel of the Sto Plains, a walled, circular city which is as much a character within the Discworld books as is any person.

The first book in the series, *The Colour of Magic*, is essentially a humorous parody work. Divided into shorter sections, it has sections that spoof the works of Fritz Leiber, Anne McCaffery, H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and others. The second book, *The Light Fantastic*, is the first that has a continuous plot and story (involving Cohen the Barbarian, a Conan-clone seen in his eighties). Both of these works have as their framing device the assignment of the Wizzard [sic.] Rincewind as the tourguide to the Discworld's first tourist, Twoflower, and the misadventures that they get into. This plot device is dropped in the later works (though Twoflower makes a reappearance in *Interesting Times*).

The next three books, starting with *Equal Rites*, start to get into the true Discworld mode, though at this point Pratchett has not yet closed in on his vision. In my opinion, only with the sixth novel, *Wyrd Sisters*, do you start getting the Real Discworld. Also, the series as a whole shows a consistent rise in the level of development and consistency of writing.

The other subseries within the Discworld books include the *Witches* (Granny Weatherwax, usually with Nanny Ogg, Magrat Garlick, and sometimes others, in the small Kingdom of Lancre up in the Ramtops); *Unseen University* (UU, the Discworld's preeminent institution of Higher [Arcane] Learning, with its unique faculty, in the heart of Ankh-Morpork); *the Watch* (the adventures of the Ankh-Morpork City Guard, and their commander, Sam Vimes); *Death* (the stories involving Death [tall fellow, rather boney, scythe, hourglasses, rides a pale horse {named Binky}], the Taker of Souls) and his Granddaughter [Susan]; Genghiz *Cohen* the Barbarian (mentioned above), the archetypal Barbarian Hero **well** past his prime, who seems like a joke until you remember that he's had decades and decades of experience in **surviving**; the *History Monks* (a small group of little yellow men who live in an enchanted valley high up in the Ramtops, who observe and record History – and who sometimes have to erase and re-write); and *the Chalk* (the adventures of the young girl, Tiffany Aching, as she learns to become a witch in the sheep country of the Chalk, near the border of the Sto Plains and the Ramtops).

All of these books are excellent, and all of them should be read (preferably in sequence, because there is real and true character development occurring in the extended story, and events in earlier books definitely have implications in the later ones). *The Last Hero* is a lavishly illustrated (by Paul Kidby) graphic

novel, and has appearances by most of the regular characters in the entire series. *Eric* was also originally published as an illustrated novel, though I have only seen it in the standard, non-illustrated, format.

Many of these books have "themes". For example, *Wyrd Sisters* has a theme of theater, with an emphasis on Shakespeare (particularly *Hamlet* and the Scottish Play). *Eric* is a humorous retelling of Faust and Homer and Dante. *Soul Music* is Rock-and-Roll. *Maskerade!!!!* is Opera. *Small Gods* is Religion. *Hogfather* is Christmas. *The Truth* is Newspapers. Going Postal is the Internet and the Dot-com mania, and the Post Office. Both *Wyrd Sisters* and *Soul Music* have been made into animated mini-series (in England), and are available on VHS and DVD.

It is **very** difficult to say which is the best book in the series. The best I can do is a top six, which includes (in chronological order only) *Wyrd Sisters*, *Reaper Man*, *Small Gods*, *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents*, *Night Watch*, and *Going Postal*. But every single book in the series is well worth reading, without exception.

Good Omens (with Neil Gaiman) is not a Discworld book, but still has much of the same "flavor" as the Discworld series. I find that people who like either one will inevitably like the other.

The science fiction novel *Strata* is an interesting "prequel" to the Discworld books. It is **not** fantasy, and overtly has **nothing** to do with the Discworld. But it does involve some interstellar explorers who discover an obviously-artificial Flat Earth (and I don't mean any old generic flat world, but a Flat Earth). It is **very** Nivenesque in both plot and writing style, and can rightly be called a fusion of Ringworld and Discworld.

All in all, Pratchett is an excellent read. What more can any author (or reader) ask for?

#	Book and year published	Sub-series
1	<i>The Colour of Magic</i> (1983)	Rincewind
2	<i>The Light Fantastic</i> (1986)	Rincewind
3	<i>Equal Rites</i> (1987)	Witches
4	<i>Mort</i> (1987)	Death
5	<i>Sourcery</i> (1988)	Rincewind
6	<i>Wyrd Sisters</i> (1988)	Witches
7	<i>Pyramids</i> (1989)	Independent
8	<i>Guards! Guards!</i> (1989)	The Watch
9	<i>Eric</i> (1990)	Rincewind
10	<i>Moving Pictures</i> (1990)	Independent
11	<i>Reaper Man</i> (1991)	Death
12	<i>Witches Abroad</i> (1991)	Witches
13	<i>Small Gods</i> (1992)	Independent
14	<i>Lords and Ladies</i> (1992)	Witches
15	<i>Men at Arms</i> (1993)	The Watch
16	<i>Soul Music</i> (1994)	Death
17	<i>Interesting Times</i> (1994)	Rincewind
18	<i>Maskerade!!!!</i> (1995)	Witches
19	<i>Feet of Clay</i> (1996)	The Watch
20	<i>Hogfather</i> (1996)	Death
21	<i>Jingo</i> (1997)	The Watch
22	<i>The Last Continent</i> (1998)	Rincewind
23	<i>Carpe Jugulum</i> (1998)	Witches
24	<i>The Fifth Elephant</i> (1999)	The Watch
25	<i>The Truth</i> (2000)	Independent

- 26 *The Thief of Time* (2001) Death
 27 *The Last Hero* (2001) GN Rincewind
 28 *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents* (2001) YA Ind.
 29 *Night Watch* (2002) The Watch
 30 *The Wee Free Men* (2003) YA The Chalk
 31 *Monstrous Regiment* (2003) Independent
 32 *A Hat Full of Sky* (2004) YA The Chalk
 33 *Going Postal* (2004) Independent

I wish to thank T. Lee Harris for editorial and proofreading assistance in preparing this article.

LATRO IN THE MIST

by Gene Wolfe

New York: TOR, 2003

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

Back in 1986, I was given a copy of *Soldier in the Mist*, a fascinating novel of an ancient warrior with a curse that allows him to remember only what happened in a day: once he slept, all his memories disappeared. This is a wonderful work, but with a bit of a cliffhanger ending that left me wanting more. I never ran across the second volume, *Soldier of Aretê* (these were pre-Amazon days) and soon I had moved onto other tales. Imagine my delight when *Latro in the Mist* turns up: a compilation with both titles in one fat volume that satisfies my craving for completion.

Latro was a Roman mercenary who hired himself out to King Xerxes of Persia. During a battle, he had the bad judgement to fight on the grounds of the shrine of the Earth Mother, who cursed him with the loss of his memory, not just from the time of the fight, but for all his adult life and every day after. The book is a translation of archaic Latin, written on scrolls that were Latro's memory aid: notes to remind him every morning of who he was and what he had done. An interesting story concept and one that both presents us with the character's history and still leaves plenty of plot growth. The foreword provides background of how the scrolls were found and also on the period of history involved. Latro means brigand or pawn and is obviously not the soldier's real name. What is real and not real is a problem for Latro because his curse has the added feature of allowing him to see and talk to supernatural beings. He will soon learn that his discussions with the river-man, golden god or comely nymph are not something others can share. If you have a background in Greek mythology, you will quickly be able to put together the clues Wolfe gives us as to who this being are, but keeping a myth reference book nearby is not a bad idea.

This is a quest story, with the hero definitely seeking himself in the most blatant terms. To escape the curse, he must journey far and make amends to the Earth Mother, with the help of a fellow soldier and a slave girl who was gifted to him by a God. Wolfe takes us to the world of ancient Greece, from war and magic, gods and adventures. And although this is an adventure story, it is also a Gene Wolfe story, with all the complexity you would expect. Like much of this

author's writing, this is not a light work and will require some concentration, but you will be well rewarded with a fascinating tale that brings new life to old myths. The characters are well rounded and you will soon be rooting for Latro and all his companions, as their dreams and hopes are revealed. I am not disclosing a great deal of the plot because I don't want to spoil any of the surprises in the story. Wolfe furnishes many delights in these two stories and some may require a second or third reading to reveal.

If you are like me and read *Soldier in the Mist* but never found the sequel, rush out and get *Latro in the Mist* now: you won't be disappointed. If you have never run across these jewels before, you are in for a treat! Join Latro on his journey and you will see ancient Greece and her myths in a new way.

LIGHT THIS CANDLE: The Life & Times of Alan Shepard

by Neal Thompson

(2004; Crown Publishers: \$27.50 hc)

A book review by E.B. Frohvet

Alan Shepard was born November 18, 1923 in New Hampshire. As a child he breezed through schoolwork with little effort — he skipped two grades and was always the youngest and smallest in class. He was fascinated with airplanes and traded odd jobs for flight lessons at the local airfield. As World War II approached, Alan's father wanted him to enroll at West Point. He wanted to fly. An uncle's compromise led him to apply to the Naval Academy instead. His academic record was average but his competitive drive helped; Shepard, only an average natural athlete, earned a letter in varsity crew through sheer hard work. On a Christmas 1942 visit to his sister, he picked out the prettiest girl at a party and set to win her: that Louise Brewer had a boyfriend did not discourage him. They were married in 1945.

In those days the Navy required all junior officers to serve a year of surface duty before they could apply for flight training. Alan Shepard served out his year as a gunnery officer on the destroyer U.S.S. *Cogswell*: the war ended before his year was up. Still, he applied eagerly for flight school at Corpus Christi, Texas, and moved on to flying combat aircraft with the old Vought F4U Corsair. An ugly, twitchy, overpowered aircraft, the Corsair was the most difficult to fly of the last-generation propeller fighters; if you could fly a Corsair, went the motto, you could fly anything. Shepard loved the ugly plane and was good at it.

By 1950 he was picked as a candidate for the Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland. As usual Alan Shepard was, at 26, the youngest. Soon he was pushing the limits of experimental jets. Could a McDonnell F2H Banshee pull high speed rolls with external fuel tanks? Apparently not — Shepard coolly piloted the damaged aircraft to a safe landing. His talent led him to take goofy risks, flying under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, or buzzing civilians at the beach, which earned him a letter of reprimand. In retrospect, he regretted the years at Pax River; the Korean War also ended before

he got a chance to fly combat, which irritated him later, when his record was compared to a Marine pilot named John Glenn who flew combat in both wars.

In October 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite. The space race was under way. NASA was quickly organized, and made a list of ace military test pilots. The field was narrowed to 32; after harrowing medical testing, the "Mercury Seven", the first American astronauts in training, were chosen. It was to have been six, but the committee could not decide between two candidates and finally accepted both. It was quickly apparent to all that Shepard and Glenn were the elite even among this crack group. Shepard was eventually chosen for the first American flight: John Glenn was bitterly disappointed, but swallowed his pride for the program's sake. Shepard was eager to go by the beginning of 1961, but scientists kept calling for more tests. (The more things change . . .) When the Russians launched Yuri Gagarin into space on April 12, 1961, Shepard was livid.

Alan Shepard's successful suborbital flight (the less powerful Redstone rocket, which could not propel a capsule to orbit, was chosen for its superior reliability) took place on May 5, 1961. After delays ran the launch hours past the scheduled 7:00 time, the annoyed Shepard barked at Mission Control, "Why don't you fix your little problem and light this candle!" When the mission did launch, everything worked. On a subsequent visit to the White House, President Kennedy told Shepard that he was thinking about authorizing a program to fly to the Moon. The astronaut replied confidently, "I'm ready."

Shepard was capcom, the ground voice speaking directly to the astronaut, on John Glenn's orbital flight in February 1962, and Scott Carpenter's in May, and talked both through problems to a safe landing. At that point the Mercury flights were almost over and Project Apollo, to go to the Moon, was on the drawing boards. Alan Shepard assumed he was atop the list for those missions, but dizziness pulled him from the flight list. He stayed on at NASA in a desk job, where he was called "the icy commander" (and worse things) for his attitude. Determined to get back in space, Shepard underwent experimental surgery to cure his inner-ear problem, and it worked. He basically assigned himself to the Apollo 14 moon mission, and no one dared argue the point.

They left for the Moon on January 21, 1971: Shepard with Ed Mitchell and Stu Roosa. Shepard at age 47 flew the lunar lander Antares. He was supposed to abort the landing when the ground radar failed. Whether he would have defied NASA and tried to land blind, fortunately did not come up: resetting a circuit breaker brought the radar back on line, and the mission proceeded smoothly. After the triumphal return to Earth he received the coveted promotion to rear admiral, promptly retired from the Navy, and spent much of the rest of his life in mainly successful business ventures.

Despite the golfing stunt on the Moon, he remained frustrated that he was never really very good at the game.

By all accounts Alan Shepard was a difficult man to know. He could be charming one day and brutally rude the next. He was proud of his record for self-control — but wept at Gus Grissom's funeral. When the flyover at the service broke off in the proverbial "missing man" formation, he muttered to a friend, "I hate that goddamn formation." This from a man who once flew upside down past an admiral's review! It was generally agreed he was a ferocious womanizer and cheated on Louise regularly; but they stayed together, and the marriage grew stronger with time.

He was diagnosed with leukemia in 1996. Nothing much could be done. Alan Shepard died in a California hospital in July 1998. His wife, who had a heart condition, died barely a month later.

THE CLOWNS OF THE GODS

by Morris West.

Review by Rodney Leighton

400 page paperback published in 1981. Jean Marie Barrette is elected Pope Gregory XVII. Seven years later, he receives a vision of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ and is directed to spread the word of the hell God is planning to visit on earth. Of course, the Vatican won't have that and he is forced to abdicate.

He enlists his friend Carl Mendelius, former priest turned husband, father of two, scholar and professor. Carl is attacked by a CIA goon but survives. Jean Marie leaves his retreat and visits the almost dead Carl in whom he infuses strength. He goes to France where he learns he is under government surveillance. He goes to England. He writes stories; messages of the judgement day and final reckoning disguised as funny stories. He gives a speech to a bunch of folks and as he is about to reveal the details of his vision, he has a major stroke. Strange, that, he thinks when he recovers a bit, just as I thought at the event: he is ordained to spread the word and then is struck dumb as he is about to speak it.

A very competent therapist named Mr. Atha appears and Jean Marie makes an amazing recovery. Meanwhile, Carl has mostly recovered; he and his family have moved to an isolated valley which his son Johann discovered after it was pointed out to him by Mr. Atha. He and Jean Marie head for this valley shortly before Christmas and discover a small village, with a lot of the folks whom Jean Marie has recently encountered, all of whom know Mr. Atha. An explanation is demanded. Well, this is Christmas Eve; as Roman Catholics, they prepare for midnight mass. Tomorrow is Mr. Atha's birthday.

There are small enclaves all over the world, set up by Mr. Atha at his father's bidding. All religious folks should have figured this out by now. Jean Marie is unconvinced. But he is finally persuaded. He begs for more time for the inhabitants of earth to work out their difficulties. Mr. Atha says he will think on it.

Meantime, the president of the U.S. (who else?) has his finger on the button which will

send nuclear bombs at Russia, at midnight, new year's eve. But he changes his mind. Suggesting, of course, that He changed His mind. Quite good book.

ORIGINS: Fourteen Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution

by Neil deGrasse Tyson
and Donald Goldsmith,
W. W. Norton and Company, 2004,
345 pages/indexed, \$27.95,
ISBN 0393059928

Reviewed by James C. Sullivan

The universe is the topic of discussion. From the smallest fraction of a second after the Big Bang down to the present day, the Cosmos and its development is explored in detail. Galaxy formation, particularly that, the Milky Way, is examined next. That's followed by a study of our solar system, which includes the Sun and its nine planets, among them, Earth, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and the five others. Moons orbiting these planets are reviewed, also.

Earth comes in for special attention from its creation at the time of our solar system's founding, about 4.7 billion years ago, to modern times. The biology on Earth, life in its various and evolutionary forms, is covered as well.

A great number of words in this read are devoted to the question: "Is there life elsewhere in our solar system, galaxy, or universe?" And the authors respond: The likelihood seems strong that there is life out there because of the vast multitudes (read, billions and more) of other solar systems and galaxies. Other life forms, however, may not resemble any living thing that earthlings are familiar with.

Over thirty pages within the book are devoted to color photographs of astronomical objects in space, some taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. To say that the photos are breathtaking would be an understatement. A glossary of space terminology is also included in this volume.

This book was produced to coincide with the PBS series, *NOVA*, which broadcast the televised version of the book's contents.

"Yes, the universe had a beginning," write the authors. "Yes, the universe continues to evolve. And yes, every one of our body's atoms is traceable to the big bang and to the thermonuclear furnaces within high-mass stars. We are not simply in the universe, we are part of it. One might even say that the universe has empowered us, here in our small corner of the cosmos, to figure itself out. And we have only just begun."

An astrophysicist, Neil deGrasse Tyson is New York City's Hayden Planetarium Director. He appeared in and helped narrate the televising of "Origins" on *NOVA*.

Donald Goldsmith, the other author, lives in Berkeley, California, and from there writes about astronomy.

This volume is recommended reading.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

M-Azing

Review by Johnny Carruthers

The two newest candy bars from M&M/Mars, M-Azing, are easily described. Miniature M&M candies are imbedded in a bar of milk chocolate. The top of the bar is molded with the various M&M characters from the commercials.

The M-Azing bar comes in two varieties; Peanut Butter and Crunchy. In the Peanut Butter bar, the M&M candy shell covers tiny bits of smooth peanut butter. The candy shell provides the crunch, and slowly releases the flavor of the peanut butter to the taste buds.

With the Crunchy bar, inside the candy shell are tiny bits of what tastes like the center of a malted milk ball. Again, the candy shell serves to release the second taste slowly. You first savor the smoothness of the milk chocolate before the malted milk ball flavor makes its presence known. And it should come as no surprise that this bar has the crispier texture of the two; a firm and resounding crunch between the teeth.

With both of the M-Azing bars, there is no chocolate in the mini M&Ms. Part of it, I am sure, is the mini M&Ms are probably too mini to have more than one component to their centers. It would also seem rather pointless to have miniature chocolate M&Ms imbedded in a milk chocolate bar. And since the chocolate is on the outside of this product, the famous M&M slogan of "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand" does not apply here. It melts in your hand quite readily, as a matter of fact.

I did not see the words "limited edition" anywhere on the wrapper, so I am assuming that these new additions to the M&M/Mars product line are permanent additions. It would be interesting to see if they try more varieties of the M-Azing bar. I for one would really be interested in a bar that had dark chocolate M&Ms imbedded in the milk chocolate.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Reese's Extra Smooth & Creamy
Peanut Butter Cup

Review by Johnny Carruthers

Variations on the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup seem to be one of Hershey's favorite sources for limited editions. This is at least the third variation that I have seen on the shelves this year, and there were at least two last year. I have no definite reason why there have been so many variations on this particular candy bar theme. My best guess is that it's one of Hershey's most popular candy bars, and Hershey thinks that consumers would be more inclined to try one of these limited editions.

The Extra Smooth & Creamy Peanut Butter Cup is still peanut butter covered in milk chocolate. It's a slightly different milk chocolate, though. As the name implies, the chocolate has a creamier taste than the regular Hershey's milk chocolate. It has a slightly lighter color than the regular milk chocolate as well, and has a slightly smoother feel as it melts on your tongue. If I'm not mistaken, it's the same milk chocolate that can be found in

Hershey's Symphony bars.

Since this is so close to the original Reese's Cup, this limited edition will does not seem likely to become an ongoing part of the Hershey's product line. In other words, enjoy this one while you can, and hope that Hershey decides to bring it out again some time in the future.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Zero

Review by Johnny Carruthers

This time, I'm not reviewing a new candy bar. The Zero bar has been around for a number of years. It was first introduced in 1920, as a matter of fact. Over the years, it has been produced by a number of companies. Currently, it is produced by Hershey.

The Zero bar starts with a block of chocolate nougat. Blended in the nougat are chopped almonds and peanuts. On top of this is a thin layer of caramel, and the whole is covered in white fudge.

No, not white chocolate – white fudge. Until recently, candymakers in the US couldn't call something "white chocolate," because the FDA didn't recognize the term. To the FDA, something calling itself "chocolate" had to contain a certain percent of chocolate solids (also known as chocolate liquor). White chocolate doesn't contain any chocolate liquor, only cocoa butter. Therefore, the FDA would not allow you to call it chocolate.

The nougat in the Zero bar is quite a bit stiffer than the nougat I've encountered in other candy bars. It gives the bar a chewier texture. The chopped nuts give the bar added texture. They don't add much in the way of flavor. The taste is dominated slightly by the chocolate of the nougat. But only slightly – the white fudge battles for equal time for your taste buds' attention. Unfortunately, the caramel's flavor gets lost in the shuffle. It probably adds chewiness to the bar's overall texture, but it does nothing to stand out among the other competing flavors.

Unlike some of the other candy bars I've reviewed recently, Zero is a permanent part of the Hershey product line. I've found it in most of the grocery, drug, and other stores that carry the other Hershey bars.

FANZINES

Argentus Special Edition

Steven H Silver, 707 Sapling Road,
Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA
shsilver@sfsite.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>
<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>

Beyond Bree December 2004, January 2005

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 #6 January 2005

David Burton, 5227 Emma Drive,
Indianapolis, IN 46236-2742 USA
catchpenny@mw.net

<http://www.efanzines.com>

Requires a password to download,
available from David at the above, or
available as hardcopy for The Usual or
\$2.00.

Challenger #21

Guy H. Lillian III, 8700 Millicent Way
#1501, Shreveport, LA 71115-2264 USA
ghliii@yahoo.com
<http://www.challzine.net>

eI #17 December 2004

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

The Galactic Route

Guy H. Lillian III, Post Office Box 53092,
New Orleans, LA 30153-3092 USA
ghliii@yahoo.com
<http://www.challzine.net>

A one-shot on his Worldcon trip. He
even saw his family.

The Knarley Knaws # 109 December 2004

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

MT Void V. 23 #23 December 3, 2004 — V. 23

#31 January 28, 2005
Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge
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Nth Degree #12

77 Algrace Boulevard, Stafford, VA 22556-
8608 USA

Opuntia # 56 Hogmanay 2004

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2E7 CANADA

Placeholder

Jason K. Burnett, 3204 Cypress Street,
Metairie, LA 70001-5222 USA
BritHistorian@aol.com

A one-shot for FAPA (available on
request) explaining why there hasn't
been an *All Sinking, No Power*. Good
luck to Jason.

Steam Engine Time #4 January 2005

Bruce Gillespie, 5 Howard Street,
Greensborough, VIC 3088 AUSTRALIA
gandc@mira.net
Jan G. Stinson, Post Office Box 248,
Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA
tropicsf@earthlink.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Usual or in Australia Aus\$40/5
issues, overseas 5 issues for \$30 or £12.

Trap Door #23, December 2004

Robert Lichtman, Post Office Box 30, Glen
Ellen, CA 95442-0030 USA
locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Available for The Usual or \$5.

Vanamonde # 563-572

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

Visions of Paradise # 101

Robert Michael Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor
Court, Budd Lake, NJ 08728-1023 USA
bsabella@optonline.net
<http://adamosf.blogspot.com>
<http://visionsofparadise.blogspot.com>

Richard Dengrove, Guy & Rosy Lillian,
Tom & Anita Feller, and we will all be at
Xanadu. Anyone else get in touch with us here
and we will try to set up a fanzine dinner.

THAT TIME OF THE YEAR

Yes, Friendly Readers, it's time again for
Hugo nominations!

"I have Hugos. You have lots of money.
We can come together," and nominate Terry
Pratchett's *Going Postal* for Best Novel.

For a fair fight, we need to put up again the
climatic space opera, the thrilling next adventure
in the world of *Singularity Sky*, Charles Stross's
Iron Sunrise.

Tom Veal recommends for Best Fan Writer
the sadly underappreciated **John Hertz**, who
emits a *Vanamonde* from Shalmirane, er for his
APAs on a weekly basis.

I recall being croggled that none of the then
existing fine Canadian fanzines and fanwriters
were considered at Winnipeg. And locals
similarly got shafted at Toronto. There is still
time to nominate **Lloyd Penney**, or the
indefatigable **Garth Spencer**.

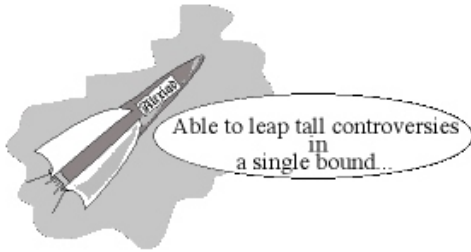
Guy Lillian has struggled against problems
to bring out (in a manner of speaking) yet
another *Challenger* for the new year; it should
be mentioned for Best Fanzine. While **Sheryl
Birkhead** continues to languish, unappreciated
by those who nominate for Best Fan Artist.

And please . . . let's not even mention the
Dire Trio (JB, JF, and the dreaded DL).

Tom Veal reports from SMOFCon that
"Kevin Standlee *emphatically denies* any
intention to organize a ConJosé 2012 bid.
Emphatically."

I do know the way to San José but it's a little
out of my reach. All you fen out west have a
good time at ConJosé 2 in 2012.

Letters, we get letters



From: **Richard Dengrove** December 2, 2004
2651 Arlington Drive, #302, Alexandria,
VA 22306-3626 USA

Here are my comments on *Alexiad* Oct. '04. That is a problem. To what extent do conditions and to what extent do people make history. If Alexander the Great had not existed, would Petros the Great have conquered the world, and done it better? Or was Alexander one of a kind? If Lee had won the Battle of Gettysburg — would the South have won the Civil War? Would there be a Confederate States of America right now? Or would the South have lost anyway?

We know when Franco died, that was an end of Fascism in Spain. That is evidence that individuals make history. However, around World War II, a lot of places were becoming totalitarian Germany, Japan and Russia did. That is evidence that conditions make history. I can only conclude that sometimes it is the person and sometimes it is the condition that makes history.

What if the war weary Soviet Union and the United States had decided to fight one another. What if Germany had won World War I. I am willing to accept that there are an infinite number of alternate timelines. All these things have happened. Also, there are an infinite number of outcomes. In one, a victory by Hitler has to have turned out for the best. In another, peace for the last two hundred years has to have turned out for the worst. That is what happens with infinite outcomes. However, infinite outcomes are not the idea behind alternate history. The idea is to make a point about the present. I hope someone writes Joseph's proposed alternate history about Germany winning World War I, and Hitler being nipped in the bud. There have been too many alternate histories written about Hitler winning.

Well, Germany actually doesn't win the War. There's just one less fatality . . .

That is what World War II vets have told me: we have a tendency to overestimate the Nazis. I can understand. We have a high regard for the Germans to begin with. Also, it helped that the Blitzkrieg strategy did succeed in conquering most of Europe. Because of both,

we tend to forget deGaulle invented the Blitzkrieg and Uncle Adolph later ran the German Army into the ground. With spying, we outdo ourselves. The legend is the Nazis ran the most efficient spy machine ever. As Joseph shows, that is nonsense: they botched mission after mission. When you think about it, it has to be nonsense. How could a government based on the superiority of its race spy effectively on other "races"? It would always be underestimating them.

The Battle of Dorking (1871) the first SF? What about Johann Kepler's *Somniurn*, about a trip to the Moon? It was in manuscript by 1610 and published by 1629. On the other hand, did Sir George T. Chesney write any other science fiction novels? Looking at the Library of Congress catalog, that seems the only one. Otherwise, he wrote books about India. Come to think of it, is *The Battle of Dorking* even science fiction? It didn't seem to have any actual science fiction elements from what I read of it?

The Battle of Dorking wasn't the first SF but it 1) presented an extrapolation of the effects of technological change on society (when it was written it was a "future war"), 2) led to something. Lucian was writing a comic fantasy satire of travel books like, say, Pytheas.

On second thought, I am being too harsh to Joseph. We need a little hyperbole now and then. I shouldn't take things so literally. You complain that the authors of an anthology *If Rome Never Fell* do not mention the problems that led to Rome falling. Once I overdid it with the problems that led to Rome falling. I advocated a theory that had the disadvantage of being completely counterintuitive: namely, that Rome fell because of crop failure in Gaul. What makes it counterintuitive is the fall of Rome was a great event and crop failure seems such a small one. Sometimes people love counterintuitive theories, but not the one I told the theory to. He grimaced so much I decided to change the subject.

You complain that Sheryl Birkhead got only half the nominations she needed to get on the Hugo Ballot. Send me the form so I can nominate Sheryl too. On the other hand, don't ever be tempted to vote for my *JOMP, JR*. I just publish it for a small circle of friends and correspondents. I don't want it to have a wider circulation.

Jan Stimson tells why she hasn't gone to WorldCon. Basically, it is too big. I agree. The only con I go to consistently is DeepSouthCon, which is a co-con with Xanadu this year. And I go there entirely for socializing. I go to shmooze with members of the APA Southern Fandom Press Association, whom I have written to all year. It is astonishing how few panels I go to. I had the embarrassment last time of writing to someone I met there and not realizing he had chaired the co-convention, Libertycon.

And we are going as well. Shall

we have a fanned dinner?

Alexis Gilliland believes the Romans were, by their own lights, justified in killing Jesus. And they knew what they were doing. Later on, the Christians re-edited the accounts to exculpate Christ. If so, they may not have edited the accounts that well. When I read the New Testament, I thought Pontius Pilate was being manipulative and hypocritical. Of course, this is probably my Jewish upbringing. What seems two-faced may merely have been bad re-editing. That was par in those days.

Robert Lichtnian has trouble with the idea that the Bible is true literally. He is not the only one. I once borrowed a book from the library where theologians talked about Creationism and Evolution. Each page was scrawled on in pencil by a Creationist Fundamentalist. Finally, on one page, an author pointed out that a lot of the Bible cannot be taken literally; it is metaphor. The Creationist Fundamentalist agreed, and scrawled no more in the book.

Lloyd Penney points out that the older his reject the younger fans as fakefans. I agree with him that what these fans want are new '60s fans. The problem is that the '60s were forty years ago. Compounding the problem, you can never go home again. If these oldsters actually met a young '60s fan, they still would not be satisfied. They would be meeting a young fan with their old selves.

Robert Kennedy cannot seem to read enough about the Da Vinci Code and its antecedents. For me, the 1999 article in *Gnosis* magazine about the Priory of Sion is enough. Plus a website here and a website there. Whenever the Priory of Sion is mentioned, it is the occasion for an awful lot of logorrhea.

Also, Robert Kennedy discusses how elections are being stolen in the U.S. 1960 must have been low point for that. I hear that Nixon would have brought Mayor Daley's vote stealing into court except that the Democrats would have sued over vote stealing downstate in Illinois.

Now about Joe's comments on my letter. Joe claims that, in *Clockwork Orange*, the difference between Alex's meliowing with age and his being conditioned is the difference between his getting older and being a machine. In short, as I said, not free will vs. determinism but nice determinism vs. not-so-nice determinism.

Joe refers me to the IMDB site for information on the Captain Z-Ro show. I am sure the reviewer Latronic is right: Captain Z-Ro was made for kids. Of course, I was a kid when I watched it.

Also, I agree the plots were predictable. If I remember correctly, it was basically the same plot in every episode: Captain Z-Ro struggles so history can go forward as it is written. The only thing I disagree with Latronic on is that, antedating the show, the plot was old and worn out. I know of no one else who has ever used that plot.

Joe points out that Donald Morris has nothing about the eclipse in his account of the British war with the Zulus. However, I doubt

that the British troops did not think the eclipse would help them. That "savages" are always afraid of eclipses is such a hoary myth that I have even heard of it. During the age of imperialism, it certainly would have been the last hope of an outnumbered imperial army.

Again, Morris doesn't mention it, neither do the other sources I've seen (such as Roberts's *The Zulu Kings*). From Morris's description the battle was going not too badly until the Natal Native Contingent ran out of ammunition and broke, and the impi exploited the penetration.

I hate to say it, but that Texas sized brag by "Josephus" sounds like par for the Ancient course. The capture of Jesus would have been a military operation of sorts, and military operations were always exaggerated. You can see it in the Bible. I have heard you can see it in most Ancient historians. It was a rhetorical flourish.

I can understand why Joseph accepts the account of Jesus attributed to Josephus's *History of the Jews*. Many historians these days accept it and bristle anyone does not. How much is their desire for proof Jesus existed, and how much is actual proof? They claim the evidence is on their side: the earliest version of Josephus's History talks about Jesus. There is a problem here in that era of interpolation and forgery. When Josephus wrote in the First Century A.D., no one important was speaking about Jesus. When the earliest known manuscript was "copied" in 341 A.D., Jesus was on everyone's lips. If someone earlier had noticed that Josephus talked about Jesus, it would not be a problem. However, that apparently was not the case

January 25, 2005

I enjoyed the December *Alexiad*. I really like the heavyweight things you have had in your issues. And some of the lighter things too.

Amid all your footnotes of Melissa Scott's *A Choice of Destinies*, did you tell why Alexander decided to go the west rather than the east, especially since the East was richer? Was he moved by a beautiful Etruscan slave boy, as some suspect the Persian boy, Bagoas, moved him? Did he hear rumors of Atlantis popping up again and treasure being found there? Tell us true. If you have already, tell us again.

One thing led to another:
Thebes to Syracuse to Taras to
Neapolis and then to Rome.

I head elsewhere William Tenn's stories tended to be in answer to others stories and novels. It is obvious "The World of Null-P" was in answer to Van Vogt's *World of Null-A*. You find his "Lamp for Medusa" is in answer to Pratt & DeCamp; "Of Men and Monsters" is in answer to Campbell's typical theme of humanity triumphant; and "Errand Boy" only in

answer to the left-handed monkey wrench joke. I wonder what the stories without an apparent foil were in answer to.

My fingers crossed that they can get rid of your Crohn's disease without the dreaded operation. On the other hand, my wife knows some people who have adapted just fine.

About your review of *Shadow War*, is it their idea or our idea that all of political Islam works together to trash the America? For instance, is the al Qaeda/Iranian axis their idea or our idea? It is true they both struggle to institute Islamic theocracy in the Middle East, and ultimately the world. As far as I can tell, however, al Qaeda and the Iranians have not made up their minds to work together. At the behest of bin Laden, the Taliban executed the Iranian envoy. On the other hand, in Iran, sometimes al Qaeda are free to come and go, and sometimes they are under house arrest..

Another question is is a Saddam/bin Laden axis their idea or ours? As far as I can tell, bin Laden made up his mind to reject an alliance. He could not in good conscience ally himself with a secular tyrant; only religious tyranny.

It is true when push comes to shove, all these factions will cooperate to thwart us. Also, if we don't distinguish within political Islam, and alienate nonreligious Arabs besides, push certainly will come to shove.

You were looking at ideas; I suspect Robert Kennedy was just looking at covers. He takes me to task for claiming Hitler was Right Wing. It says right on the name of his party "socialist"; and that is left wing. However, I think Hitler is xenophobic, militaristic and racist enough so that he deserves the attribute Right Wing. Certainly not Right Wing as in advocating untrammelled free enterprise; not by a long shot.

Also, there is room for disagreement. The sociologist Seymour Lipset disagreed with both of us. He claimed that Nazism had enough socialist elements so that the Right in it and the Left balanced out. He called it Middle of the Road Extremism.

By the same token, the dictionary definition of Fascism, which echoes its syndicalist origins, had nothing to do with the real practice of Fascism. Apparently, it got its actual agenda from the Italian Nationalist Party.

About the new *Amazing Stories* of Johnny Carruthers' review, it won't work. It has been proven time and again that written words are far down in media fan priorities. Naturally, movies, videos, gaming are higher; that's the idea behind being a media fan. *Amazing Stories* has already failed as a short story magazine for gamers. There are better strategies. A new *Amazing* could appeal to literary types who do in fact read what they think is literature. Of course, there are too many artsy magazines for them. Also, a new *Amazing* could appeal to those who are nostalgic for the old pulps and slicks. That would not only include the dwindling old timers who actually read them but also young timers who are nostalgic for a world they never knew. I remember loving reprints like that in the '60s and '70s.

And now they've "temporarily

suspended" publication because they got such a great response. Right!!!

— JTM

From: **Earl Kemp** December 17, 2004
Post Office Box 6642, Kingman, AZ
86402-6642 USA
earlkemp@citlink.net

Joe, thanks, and especially for the WARNING!

Yeah, I know, it's me. I owe you a LoC, or a number of them, but I could never made them happen. Most of it is your fault, too, so live with it. If you were somehow a more reasonable man [narrow in scope, shallow in depth, commonplace, Iraq qualified], not so capable and not so productive, it might could be easier for me.

As it is, when each issue arrives, I rip the envelope open eagerly. Then, at my very first opportunity, I sit down and read the entire issue through from front to back, nodding my head in agreement here, razberrying there. and making mental notes about the LoC I'm going to right Real Soon Now.

Never happen.

That's why you should drop me from your mailing list, Joe.

Also, I have to admit, I'm really obsessed about *eI* and working on it (and keeping off the streets thereby and hopefully out of trouble) and it takes up far too much of my time and there's no way it could be a valid excuse for not communicating with you but it is in control, not me.

You do it all right, Joe (Lisa helps) . . . so just keep on doing it.

It's comments like that which will keep you ON the mailing list. I like replies, true, but I also hope to stir people into thinking . . . mentioning books you should read, people you should meet, the like. I hope that if the Denver WorldCon bid wins, you will decide to come there so we can finally meet face to face.

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** December 17, 2004
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com
<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

Thanks for all the news items and website URLs. I was elated to hear the good news about the C.L. Moore & Henry Kuttner literary estate. Bryan Burrough's *Public Enemies: America's Greatest Crime Wave* and the Birth of the FBI 1933-1934 sounds intriguing, and I'd enjoy seeing *The Looney Tunes Golden Collection Volume Two*.

Part Two of All Roads Lead to Rome is an education. (Great Scott! There's a part three?!) Thanks to Lisa for the in-depth look at *Raptor Red* and its author, Robert Bakker, who

was also a consultant on *Jurassic Park*. I've never heard of Utahraptors.

I'm glad you liked my piece on Raptor Red.

—LTM

Good look at the history of the time in your book review of Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (AH in which Lindbergh becomes president). Other good and thorough reviews include Turtledove's *Curious Notions* (May I post an excerpt of your review in the Turtledove folder on the AOL SF Authors board?) and the Ann Rule true crime book, *Green River, Running Red*. (She was profiled in *Writer's Digest* recently, as I recall — a very interesting article about her books and the killers she documented and why she chose the ones she did.) *The Forensic Files of Batman* sounds intriguing also.

Thanks to Lisa for the report on Windsong Legacy winning harness racing's Triple Crown. I hadn't heard that, but it might have been in the sports section (I hope).

Now if Breyer will just make a model of him.

—LTM

And thanks to Rodford Edmiston for his article on dating objects by methods such as dendrochronology, etc. I enjoyed the *Amazing Stories*, *Dreamwatch*, and candy bar reviews by Johnny Carruthers too. (I'll try the Reese's Inside Out, but I'm happy with the current version.)

LOCs: I loved Trinlay Khadro's illo of Cellach and Megumi. To Robert Kennedy: I finished *Heroics for Beginners* recently; and I love Pratchett. (I have most of his books.) To Marty Helgesen: Thanks for the suggestion re: the Fforde books. I haven't read any yet and will try to read them in order.

Amusing recommendation for SubStandard quality products by Grant McCormick. And *The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins Will: Shakspar* was most impressive. (I'm not well read enough to know which play it's an adaptation of.)

Maister Shakspar recycled scenes from "The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" into his later works. (The play was never performed due to the number of actors needed.) For example, the scene printed was reused to create battles for "Julius Caesar" and "Henry V". Right!!!

Btw, I hope your medical tests turn out well. (The oddest thing was your work rules!)

You're working on a Heinlein book? Can I post that in his folder? Any more background info?

The book is a collection of my essays on Heinlein's juvenile novels. It should be out this year.

— JTM

From: **John Thiel** October 15, 2004
30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904-2950 USA
thiel@dwci.com

Thanks for listing my netzine in your fanzines listing. Number 7 will be up January 1; I hope you'll have a look at it and list it in your next issue.

That's a very lively review of *Amazing Stories* by Mr. Carruthers. I'd point out to him that *Amazing* has been through plenty of strange changes in the ups and downs of its long career. A Spiderman still for a cover is not unknown in the field. It's a shot at publicity. It's like when Palmer changed the title of *Other Worlds* to *Flying Saucers from Other Worlds*, or when *Science Fiction Digest* featured the Creature from the Black Lagoon on its cover: merely attempts to interest a wider range of readers. I'm glad to see the magazine back in business.

You cite Palmer. I say two words: "Shaver Mystery". When Palmer started publishing stories of deros in caves, readership shot up. None of it sfnal, but if all you want is readership . . .

Ah, an Alexis Gilliland cartoon I can see! Page 31; that might cause a computer crunch at that. Out of relief at understanding its topic, I shook back my clothes all around and let a laugh form and be had. That's a heavy-handed topic, existentialism.

Reading Knight's *In Search of Wonder* gave me the impression that it would not be worthwhile to attempt to write professional science fiction. Is a writer's work actually objectionable? And why would the author of *Hell's Pavement* want to roast the book except to use some of the fire's so readily available to him? Anyone who gets a bad review has a complaint coming, I would think, if he wants to make one.

Herbangelism, to the best of my knowledge, was commenced in APA-H, where it was mandatory for every major proposition to be a hoax. So I don't think it need be taken seriously, not that it is.

You want I should bop you with my lollipop?

— HP, er JTM

I was glad to find another piece of unexpected entertainment on the back cover.

From: **Taral Wayne** December 20, 2004
254 Dunn Avenue Apt. 2111, Toronto, ON M6K 1S6 CANADA
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You may as well tell Lloyd Penny not to take it amiss that he wasn't in on the groundwork of the Corflu bid for Toronto he heard about second hand. I only heard about it myself fairly recently, and second hand. Welcome to the Has-Beens club. Or maybe it's just that it only takes

two or three people to run a con as small and relatively informal as a Corflu. If I've heard right that Catherine Crockett and Colin Hinz are behind the bid for 2006 (?), that would be just about all the concom they need. At least for now. If they win, maybe they'll want more of a hand. Murray Moore ran Corflu in Toronto with Catherine & Colin as the only concom he needed, though as I recall, they welcomed Lloyd & Yvonne for assistance on registration. Lloyd arranged special nametags. Mayhap the opportunity will arise again.

Other than that little note about being in the same boat with the Pennies, not much else caught my eye I'm afraid. I only read a handful of SF & fantasy books a year, and don't have much use for a lot of reviews. I do eat chocolate, but cost pretty much dictates what sort of that commodity (as well as how much) I consume.

Alexander — a thug with charisma. Look at the sort of folk who most admired his career — Caesar, Napoleon, Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler, and Oliver Stone.

December 21, 2004

Every now and then I think I'd like to do another issue of *New Toy* — the last was about 1988 I think — but the fact is I couldn't possibly afford to give away one or two hundred copies at more than a dollar postage each. No do I think I could find time to mimeo anything, though I still have one machine and some supplies left. Xeroxing the issue would push the cost even further out of reach.

In the Good Old Days I put every penny I had into pubbing... other than a pittance for used paperback SF to read. Now I like collect Roman coins, and see most movies by buying a used copy of the videotape, and like 1/18 scale die cast cars on my shelves — money that used to go into fan pubs. That's probably happened to a lot of us.

There may also be a subtler problem. What has anyone got to say that's worth writing about? Work? Family? Reading? Pretty ordinary stuff, and I'd rather read my own books than read about what other people read.

That's what the Good Old Days were really about. Things weren't very different then, I suppose. *We* were different. Things mattered more, whether or not they really did. Who was bidding for the worldcon, what Gordy Dickson's next book was about, how much Bob Silverberg was paid for his last book, was *Locus* really a fanzine or not — we cared. Now I at least, largely don't.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** Dec. 15, 2004
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA 22204-1552 USA

Thank you for *Alexiad* #3.6, with its usual range of good stuff, which arrived on the seventh day of Hannukah. Enclosed are five replacement cartoons. Last weekend was Philcon, which seemed smaller than previous years with fewer huckster, fewer parties, and about 750 paying members. For Lee, the

highlight was a tour of the *Titanic* exhibit at the Franklin Institute, for which Dr. Charles Pellegrino served as the docent.

Marty Hegelsen disagrees with my view of the Gospels, which is not surprising. However, my point was that in composing the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were constructing a text of Jesus which was necessarily incomplete — what Marty calls “(making) up an imaginary Jesus.” In doing so, the Apostles were surely mindful of the needs of the early Christian Church and whether they were self-edited or reviewed by a committee, the Gospel text of Jesus has a point of view. Even if everything they included was true, that does not mean that what they chose to leave out was false or nonexistent. So what I have attempted to do in a sketchy and incomplete way is suggest an alternate text of Jesus. If Marty prefers the text of Jesus offered by the Gospels that is his privilege, but claiming that the success of the religion based on his preferred text demonstrates its truth is a non sequitur, at least without the enforcing ability of the Holy Inquisition.

In making a joke on SubStandards, Grant McCormick touches on military specifications, a subject with which I have more than a passing acquaintance from my years with the Standardization Division in the Federal Supply Service. MILSPECS were (and probably still are) often gold plated, to perform beyond any reasonable need. There was, for instance, the coffee maker designed for the C-5A cargo plane, that would continue to make coffee after a 10-g crash which would likely kill everybody on board. The B-1 bomber, which Carter cancelled, and Reagan reinstated, was a fiasco and a disaster because the Air Force added all sorts of bells and whistles without upgrading the engines to carry all that extra weight, and when the engines were finally upgraded it also became necessary to upgrade the airframe. Not to mention the \$600 toilet seats, etc.

What else? Merry Chnstmas, y'all.

Not all gold-plating is MILSPEC or other, or even real. I was just reading a refutation of the “Space Pen” legend — the guy who developed it did so without any government money, much less \$2,000,000, because the pencils the NASA astronauts used (like their Soviet opposite numbers) would break. So much for that.

— JTM

January 16, 2005

Speaking of evolution, *The Economist* for January 15, 2005 cites a study by researchers at John Moores University in Liverpool, England, to the effect that the heart muscles of men deteriorate as they grow older, while the heart muscles of women do not. The medical specifics — between the ages of 20 and 70 men lose one-third of the contractile muscle cells in the heart wall while women lose hardly any — is in agreement with the commonplace observation that women tend to live longer than

men. The effect of estrogen was eliminated, since there was no change observed in women going through menopause.

The scientific discussion of the matter was kind of inclined towards the idea that the women's enhanced survival was due to the contribution they made towards raising their grandchildren. However, it may be that the wrong question was being answered. Why would an evolutionary change that weakened the heart as the male grew older have been conserved? Because perhaps, maybe, just possibly — the grandchildren of grandfathers dying young had a higher survival rate. That way, the grandmothers not only had more time to take care of said grandchildren, but there was also more food to be shared around. We don't even need to speculate on grandpa's bad behavior; the tribe survived better without the old fart, and that was that.



From: **Trinlay Khadro** December 15, 2004
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Megumi sends her regards and wishes for a new year of “interesting smells”. :-)

Lisa — I'm sure the clothes will be well appreciated by someone. I recently received some hand-me-downs from one of my oldest friends in Milwaukee. It's all nicer that what I'd buy for myself and highly appreciated.

I'm sure they're more appreciated now than they were in the attic, at least. They weren't doing anybody any good up there.

—LTM

As you wax poetically enthralled with Antarctica I recall a glaciologist friend's tale of a highly prized fruitcake at Yuletide in the Antarctic station.

Will the Nihon 07 worldcon be a good place for “how many fans can we keep in a room”? I'm just fine with a futon on the floor.

Years ago I got a few film-art credits in a History of Animation course. It was a great, fun course and one of our texts was *Chuck Amuck* by Chuck Jones. I kept that one.

The Klass stories sound fascinating. “Mistress Sary” sounds familiar: maybe came across it in something like a *Weird*

Tales/Amazing or some such anthology.

Re: Harry & Harry . . . well, y'know as the US spread westward men went out first, but not ALWAYS without their women and children. Then again, there's also several surviving stories and records of families in the colonial period “in the frontier” and contact with the natives, and the occasional adoption/abduction.

But Alucius and Wendra were going off to confront the bad guys. You know, fighting and all that.

Re: health report — I spent a week on a coterol-steroid to bring a fibro flareup under control. I felt WAY too good :-), but despite side effects, I'm still doing OK. I've also started in a program through one of the Milwaukee area hospitals (referred by my pain doc). I'm getting integrated care from several disciplines, nutritionist, reiki (very cool), massage, physical & occupational therapy and psych care . . . I'm just getting started with it, but I'm feeling optimistic and already it seems to be helping. I've also taken up a tai-chi class once a week.

It does turn out that KT has fibromyalgia as well. She's got good support from Children's Hospital and is participating in their acupuncture study. One treatment so far and she's doing better.

Bill Breuer: wow — so if a boat wake, smoke from houses and an oil refinery can be seen from over 100 miles up; I guess that answers the question of Whether The Great Wall Is Visible From Space. (Which I've heard since some point in childhood several times and thought “Well, it's long but not particularly WIDE, so that's not very likely . . .”)

Cuyler: I so have to come up with some kind of spider cartoon. One of the most interesting “just say no” sorts of things I've ever seen was a series of web prints from spiders on drugs. “Clean” spiders made the usual beautiful web. LSD etc. resulted in crazy webs. My brain is telling me they said something to the effect of “We'd like to show you a web from the spider on pot, but she couldn't get started on one till she sobered up.” Years ago it was on some kind of TV show and later seen as a book. I wonder what the spiders thought and whether they should have signed tiny releases. :-)

I'd much prefer the spiders, in general, to what the spiders eat. (Likewise, as for bats, anything that eats that many bugs in a summer evening is a friend of mine.)

Lisa: I think spiders of many species hibernate. The crawly that gets me jumpy are centipedes: but I've had one of those trapped in my sandal, with my foot, while I was driving and it was stinging away. It felt like my foot was on fire.

The crawlies that bother me the most are wasps. I got stung badly as a child and have no qualms about killing them, with the exception of a relatively unaggressive species called

dirt-daubers.

—LTM

Cuyler: I've always figured cats worship Bast (and by extension serve as Bast's clergy in their households).

Re me: Social Security Disability is still pending — I'm waiting for a hearing with the administrative law judge. Lawyer says that's the point the approval will come through.

Gas prices are currently down to \$1.75 per gallon. Still terrible.

Thanks for plugging *Civil Serpents*. It's easy enough to "self publish" when one has access to a printing method (photocopy, ditto, lead-type press . . .) :-). Though I have to admit, at best, I'm not even big enough to call myself a "small press". I'm more like a micro-mini-art press. :-)

Do we ever really think of it and remember that 'zines, for the most part, are self-published?

EB — re: cousin's elderly cat: Kitten food is formulated to be easily digestible, taste appealing, and is packed with extra calories . . . any of the three, but most likely the combination got the ol' guy eating again. Perhaps he was having a digestive problem? We keep Uncle from losing weight, not only by keeping an eye on his diet in general, but to make sure meals include something sweet, and he takes a cup of pudding (like moms pack in lunch for kids) with his pills. He's recently added Ensure milkshakes into his snack rations. Uncle often comments that food doesn't taste as good as it used to, or that his gut is bothering him, so keeping him snacking appealing things has really helped him.

Milt: Thanks for reminding me. In *The Cell* I was happy to see Dr. Deane's compassion (is her association with the saint a western version of Tantra?) as a main element to the solution. I tend to get a kick out of that kind of thing. :-). Mind & head & brain solutions rather than gunfight, carchase solutions.

Or when the Prisoner, in "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling", let Seltzman swap minds and escape in the Colonel's body. Though Bugs Bunny had done that trick first (in "Hot Cross Bunny" (1948) — Google is my friend).

Joseph re: comment to Taras: Who was reading *Ayesha: The Return of She* and *The Time Machine*?! :-). Chicks like me . . .

Though I suspect the POV from "the Home Front" gave a more distant/filtered view of the action. Possibly also expanding the character base and putting some issues at a "safe" distance.

Robert K: We've likewise recently discovered Pratchett's Diskworld. We only bought a few, but have borrowed quite a few from friends and the library. I've particularly enjoyed *Equal Rites*, *Weird Sisters*, and *Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, oh and the one with the tourist Two-Flower . . . is that *The Color of Magic*? . . . and anything with Rincewind and/or Leonard of Quirm. *Jingo* was

a hoot. I'm currently reading *Monstrous Regiment*. I don't know about you, but I have the intent to read as many as I can get my hands on. Mr. Pratchett's work is addictive, oooh. *Time Thief* was great fun too.

Sheryl: Have you considered making your own chocolates? I've never done it, so don't know how big of a deal it is. Years ago a co-worker had a side business making chocolates at home. One might also try the local "health food" co-op. There are so many people out there with nut allergies, you'd think nut-free treats would be more common.

Re comment me: *CSI* and *Cold Case*, etc. often do take artistic license.

In the fibromyalgia support group one sometimes hears of a marriage that collapsed under the pressure. The attitude of "in your head" also affects some medical providers, and I suspect if it WAS "all in the head" we wouldn't have so much trouble getting medication that helps. So many of "the standards" for pain either do nothing or next to nothing. Sometimes when the flareup is particularly bad, not much of anything helps. Or a lot of things help, but just a tiny bit. Things that shouldn't be so diring also tend to exhaust us. For example, the trip out to Children's with KT once a week wears her out for the next day; and I'm driving. I find myself scheduling things like grocery shopping for days I'm not doing anything else. (OK on Tuesday I go to Brookfield for a 10 am appointment and I need to nap in the afternoon as soon as I get home . . . then I gotta wake by 2:30 so I can pick up KT from school at 3ish.)

Yep, I can see all that stressing out or annoying a spouse who might even perceive, like the ex-boss, the exhaustion as laziness.

I have found that with care to keep my activity level "in balance" I can avoid the three-day to a week in bed with a bad flareup.

George W. Price: could the idea in *Brighton Rock* be "marry me (and support me) or I'll testify to what I saw . . ." Like Joseph noted: reality and what the author knows *may* have little to nothing to do with what the characters know.

And sometimes the author doesn't know. There was the story I heard about the contemporary role-playing campaign where the characters were in Louisiana. They met a "county sheriff". Knowing that Louisiana has "parishes" instead of counties, they assumed he was a faker and acted accordingly, much to their loss. The moderator hadn't known about the situation in Louisiana.

—JTM

Al: On the other hand, André's optimism may have been what carried him through the day and helped him survive as long as he did.

My parents were having a hard time with the idea I just couldn't work any more and was applying for disability. Once I got the denial letter from Vocational Rehab, I think they had a better understanding and have been very helpful.

It was quite a job for ME to recognize my limitations and I'm still struggling to make peace with them. At least I know that fibromyalgia isn't going to kill me.

Grant: Thanks for the "Standards" giggle.

From: **Lloyd Penney** December 20, 2004
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I know of a lot of birthdays around this time of year Yvonne's was yesterday, Joe's is coming up, my mother's is on Boxing Day, her father's was on Christmas, and her mother's was on December 23. The joys of spring, I guess. Anyway, *Alexiad* V3#6, WN 18 has arrived, and after the birthday celebrations and other family commitments, I finally have a little time to get moving on a loc. Besides, it's -24°C outside, far too cold. Brisk and invigorating!

It is difficult to take things that you've made an emotional attachment to, and simply give it up or away. Rational? Not really. Human? Very. I hang on to some clothes I cannot wear any more, mostly because they were made for me. Some are shirts Yvonne made, and some are socks my mother knit for me. I'm sure someone else could wear them, but these were hand-made, and I don't want to hand them off in a cavalier fashion. I keep them with fondness and appreciation for something made just for me.

It will be a pleasure to see Moore and Kuttner back in print how could a husband of any kind dislike his wife's work, and refuse to let it back in print? Three competitors for 2008 — we've forgone Worldcons for the future, but if it's in Chicago or Columbus, you never know. We've been to the last three Chicons, and it would be a shame to break the streak.

Especially as it would have been free money for him. Some people just don't make sense.

Henry Welch's Ditto in 2005 is so tempting, but I think I'll have to say no. I have no guarantees I'll be able to afford that convention at that time. Besides, I have to concentrate on saving money, not spending it. I'm sure those who go to the Milwaukee Ditto will have a fine time.

Trinlay's granny would be absolutely scandalized to find out that not only do we read at the table, but often we eat on the coffee table in the living room and watch the news on TV. Horrors! At least we have no pets to feed under the table.

My letter of comment the special dinner to award Burt Rutan with the X Prize did take place, but we were not there. As a senior associate of the the Z Prize Foundation, Yvonne was ready to go, but one of Yvonne's bosses forbade her to go. At the last minute, he went instead. (Actually, the price of attending the ceremony was so expensive, Yvonne would have had to charge it. She'd written a Silver Book for the X Prize Foundation on how to

manage the special celebrations, but they didn't use it. All we get now are more demands for more money, so we're a little disillusioned with the whole group. I start a new job in the New Year, at Canada NewsWire, a industrial news dissemination service. After about 2-3 months of training, I'll be going on the night shift, which might change a lot of things for me, including my involvement in just about anything. I'll see what happens, but at least I'll be back to work, which will be a refreshing break from the usual unemployment.

I haven't read Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*, but I did find it recently at Bakka Books, our local SF book store. The staff there were amazed to see how seriously some people took it, and they rightfully sell it in a fiction book shop.

It's popular to have the "this is a novel but the facts are true" blurb in a work so the author can say something without being held responsible for it. I'm reminded of the comment Stanley Baldwin [the Earl Baldwin of Bewdley] borrowed from his first cousin Rudyard Kipling: "Power without responsibility — the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages."

—JTM

To Bill Breuer: To the best of my knowledge, there are no SF&F conventions in New Brunswick. There might be a gaming con somewhere in Saint John or Moncton, but there haven't been SF&F cons in the Maritimes for a number of years.

To AL de Pisani: Gay marriage will soon be recognized in Canada nationwide. I remember the weddings I went to at Torcon lots of happy people got married that day, and there lots of people happy for them, and good for all of them. There's the usual group who will want to deny this ceremony to gays and lesbians, but IMHO, it's for two people who wish to devote their lives to each other, and be happy. Besides, after the way hetero couples have battered the institution of marriage, I have no doubts that homo couples will treat it better.

I guess I am done it's not as long as I'd like, but it's not bad, given how close it is to Christmas. Yvonne and I wish you both the best holidays ever, and we can get back to relative normal in the New Year. See you then.

From: **E.B. Frohvet** December 15, 2004
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City MD 21042-5988

The over/under for *Alexiad* arriving in the first half of the month (arbitrarily defined as on or before the 15th) is 13/4, or 76%. The over/under for *The Knarley Knaws* is 28/12, or 70%, though that may be misleading as in some instances *TKK* arrived the last day of the month before the month in which it was customarily due. No other fanzine of my acquaintance is regular enough to make such a number meaningful.

I am unlike you, Lisa, in that I have almost no tendency to cling to (or even acquire) things for which I have no use. When/if it falls to me to dispose of the innumerable useless trinkets that clutter my mother's home my cousin and I will keep the few that have actual or sentimental value, and the Salvation Army will probably get the rest.

I envy you your attitude. It is getting easier for me to part with books, however, and books are the main clutter here. I would like to get the book population under control so that the next generation won't have to deal with more than 13,000 books.

Good for Carole Ann Rodriguez, to see to the reprinting of the works of C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner. A few were reprinted in the 1960's and 1970's; I still have the Ballantine *Best of C.L. Moore* anthology and a paperback edition of *Robots Have No Tails*. Next up: to find who owns the rights to Clifford Simak's works, and get them back in print also!

Now if we can just get John Taine's books back in print!

—LTM

It is not surprising that King Juan Carlos should give an order of chivalry to King Simeon. In his exile after being evicted by the Communists after World War II, King Simeon lived for many years in Spain, his wife is Spanish and his children grew up there.

"Space News": Supposing the project gets that far, which seems unlikely, do we really need eight years of research to pick a lunar landing site? The entire Moon has been mapped, almost to the square meter.

Some book reviews to follow; should reach you the first week in January . . . So, are you guys going to Ditto?

We'd like to but that comes up between the insurance and property tax payments, so it'll take some careful budgeting. We can but try.

Ned Brooks: "Space Ship One" is suborbital, which is a dead end except for tourism. However, I believe it is designed never to approach the atmospheric speeds which require the thermal protections that failed Shuttle *Columbia* so disastrously. It is, after all, several generations of technology ahead of the brute-force shuttle.

Joseph: Should I not ask what it is you expect of a towel rack, other than that it hold the towels?

We expect them not to come crashing down when we take the towels off them.

—LTM

Dune Warriors does not seem to be the title I recall of the bad sci-fi remake of *Seven*

Samurai. Perhaps it was so awful no one would admit to the source, or maybe it was retitled on being released to DVD?

Dainis Bisenieks: I will not get into literary criticism with you, save that you cite as a "sentence" a passage from *Ulysses*. A sentence contains a verb. (That's grammatical criticism.)

Ah, keep me posted as to where I can mail-order a copy of *Heinlein's Children*. While I am by no means as knowledgeable on the subject as you, I anticipate some entertaining arguments.

Taras Wolansky: I believe "Cheesecake Factory" is a national wholesaler; I am not aware (or we don't have them here) of them as a retailer. Certainly the name would suggest scantily-clad waitresses, as at "Hooter's". Fair is fair, someone should open a burger place, "Beefcakes" with hunky shirtless waiters. I recall on a sitcom the store which featured shirtless clerks to attract a clientele of young women; whether that was reality-based, I don't know. At a local restaurant I frequent, there seems to be an informal competition among the waitresses as to who can wear the tightest khaki slacks. I don't say anything, I just drink my beer and enjoy the view.

Robert Kennedy: Both Freemasonry and Templars play substantial roles in Katherine Kurtz's "Adept" series; the Masons also in the same author's *Two Crowns for America*, which offended me because [SPOILER ALERT] it portrayed the Founding Fathers of the American Revolution being stage-managed by a European Masonic/Jacobite cabal. In real life, both my grandfathers were Masons; my paternal grandfather was a Past Grand Master.

And reading Count Piniński's description of his royal ancestor at that time, it's clear he wasn't quite up to doing anything like in the book. But would Kurtz read *The Stuarts' Last Secret*?

Alex Slate: A writer in *Car & Driver* used to refer to shift levers being "on the floor, where God intended shift levers to be".

Sheryl Birkhead: If the 2007 NASFiC were to be held in Ocean City, Maryland, I could probably be persuaded to go. How about you? You can ride down with me; I'll even spring for lunch. Are there not plain Hershey Bars (without nuts) any more?

Al du Pisani: I did indeed enjoy Bujold's *A Civil Campaign*. Two of her last three books (I haven't read the third) suffered the same problem, a miraculous conclusion, as if the author had reached the number of words she was contracted to produce, and just gave up on resolving things logically. I don't say that's the case; that's just the impression I got. However, Bujold has written so many good stories that I'm inclined to cut her some extra slack.

Marty Helgesen: I agree with you. But then, I'm not one (of the many) arguing that every word in the Bible is literally and exactly true and means literally and exactly what it says. In 16th Century English. As the woman preacher who said she saw no need for the Revised

Standard text, because, if the King James Bible "was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for". That Jesus did not speak 16th Century English was beyond her: it was right there on the page!

Apparently, now, one can renew one's driver's license in Maryland by mail or internet without that pesky need to show up, pass a vision test, demonstrate any level of competence . . .

From: **Brad W. Foster** December 22, 2004
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA
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Another great, meaty issue of reading. (Just sorry I had no contribution to it this time, but that's my fannish guilt jumping up!)

I can appreciate your comments on the circular route of money from and then back to the government. When I took over the paperwork aspects of my father-in-law's life when he got ill, I was amazed to find out that, with his main source of income now from Social Security and military pensions, money the government sends to him, at tax time he still had to pay tax money back to them . . . I mean, couldn't they just take that out before mailing it to him? Naw, that would be too logical I guess!

And I agree with your clean and simple comment of "Was this really necessary?" in regards to the remake of *The Flight of the Phoenix*. That was, no, -is- a wonderful movie. All I can tell from the previews is they have added fight scenes and motorcycles and "action". I wouldn't be surprised if there isn't at least one shot of people walking slowly toward us in slow motion as things explode behind them in great billowing clouds of smoke and fire. You know, something the kids can relate to. I've always wondered about this need to take older movies that are quite good and re-do them. Why not take some of the bad old movies, the ones that had a core idea, but the skills not to pull it off, and remake those? Of course, that would take creative talent, and maybe some caring about the whole process. (Wow, when did I get so freaking bitter??)

Because that would take some mental effort on the part of the production people.

As per usual with an issue of *Alexiad*, a number of the reviews have gotten me interested in seeking out the books. In particular, I've added to my "seek-n-read" list *The Atrocity Archives* and *Shackleton's Forgotten Expedition*. Thanks for covering the wide range of titles you do each issue!

On the Candy Bar Reviews, I don't recall if the new Mazing (I think I've got that name right) has been done yet? The TV commercials are certainly nicely different, but when finally tried the bar myself a few weeks back, had to shrug. A chocolate bar with M&M's in it. OK, nice gimmick, but so what. Of course, I'm a Three Musketeers fan myself, usually not interested in experimenting much on the candy

rack when I only allow myself to pick up one once in a blue moon.

Keep 'em coming, I'm always pleased when the latest issue shows up in the post office box.

Thank you.

— JTM

From: **Alex R. Slate** December 23, 2004
9223 Lasater Street, San Antonio, TX 78254-2418
alex.slate@brooks.af.mil

Well, here we are again...

EB: There was a schlocky SF, or in this case sci-fi, version of *Seven Samurai*. I believe it was called *Battle of the Planets* or something like that. If my memory serves me correctly I seem to remember it starred the actor who played John-Boy Walton. (Regarding Joe's response — I don't remember anything called *Dune Warriors*.)

That was *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980), produced by Roger Corman, with Richard Thomas ("John-Boy" in *The Waltons*) as "Shad", Robert Vaughn as "Gelt" (he had played "Lee" in *The Magnificent Seven*, essentially the same character), as well as George Peppard, Sam Jaffe, and Sybil Danning, with John Saxon as the villain, Sador.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080421/>
— JTM

I'm also not aware of any plans to phase out the C-5. The C-5 and C-17 and the C-130 are all meant to fit into a different niche.

In my time we did use wilco, but very sparingly. Roger was simply an acknowledgement, wilco (short for will comply) was only specifically used in response to specific action orders.

Joe: Surprisingly I got the name of the strip right, how 'bout that? Incidentally, I knew about the strip because my father has (or had, though I hope he still does) and normal sized hardback containing the collected strips. Loved it as a teenager. If he hasn't already gotten rid of it, I hope to someday get hold of that book for myself.

Grant: Shame on you, all that on specs to set up a pun! I'm not sure that Milspec has the same meaning any more. What you are referring to are actually the old detail style milspecs that were common up through the 80s and into the 90s. Actually it was in the 80s (and even mid-70s) when milspecs started to lose the cachet of being considered "of the highest quality." This was when the technology world actually started being driven by the consumer and not the military economy and when milspiced items actually often began to lag behind commercially available items when it came to the level of technology, particularly in the area of electronics. It was in the 90s when the military actually started to forgo the use of milspecs and standards. Nowadays, it is the use

of commercial specs and standards that is encouraged.

Well, I think that's going to do it for this ish. Keep well everyone . . . happy holidays and wishes for an outstanding New Year to all.

From: **Guy & Rosy Lillian** Dec. 25, 2004
8700 Millicent Way #1501, Shreveport, LA 71115-2264 USA
GHLIII@yahoo.com
rmlillian@bellsouth.net

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE . . .

Guy & Rosy (& Jesse) Lillian wish every one of you the very best of Christmases, with the hope that 2005 will bring joy to us all.

We are late with this greeting because we are moving — to a new job and a new address in Shreveport, Louisiana. It's not the way we wanted 2004 to end, but it's the way it is, and we hope to hear from you all in our new digs.

Our new home will be at 8700 Millicent Way #1501, Shreveport, Louisiana 71115-2264. Our new phone number is not available yet, but for the time being you can still reach us at our e-dresses, rmlillian@bellsouth.net and GHLIII@yahoo.com.

Soon we hope to get life back to normal, but until we do, let this little note sustain our friendship and keep us in touch. May you, your families, your friends have a wonderful Christmas Day and a splendid 2005!

Yes indeed, and see you in Nashville.

—JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Dec. 21, 2004
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8093
mmwooster@yahoo.com

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 18.

All right, why do King Juan Carlos and Dr. Otto von Habsburg both give Orders of the Golden Fleece? Which award is the "real" one and which one is the fake one?

They are both heirs to the Dukes of Burgundy, from which the order stems. Hence neither order is fake, except insofar as Austria does not recognize Otto's grants while Spain definitely does recognize Juan Carlos's.

I'm sorry to hear about Joe's medical problems. Any disease that involves daily injections and swallowing barium is a serious one. Let's all hope the medical procedures go well and that Joe keeps his medical problems under control in 2005!

As for the dispute between paper fanzines and netzines: I'll judge the difference between them by their content, not by whether I get them in the mail or through the net. If a netzine is on the Hugo ballot, it should be well-edited and interesting. I have no problem with *Emerald City* winning the Hugo. Cheryl Morgan is a good writer who is interested in

both sf criticism and fannish topics. She turned out somewhere between 400-500 pages of material in 2003 (not including a blog I don't read). I have no idea how she turns out her zine *and* reads 10-15 books a month *and* does her mundane job. Not having seen *SF Revu*, I can't comment on it, but I would hope that a Hugo-nominated webzine would be worth the time it takes me to print it out and read it.

I've seen a lot of reviews of *The Plot Against America* but Joe's is the first I've read that Roth made a great many dumb errors that a good researcher would have corrected. Not knowing the British occupied Iceland is pretty stupid if you're going to have a Hitler-Lindbergh summit there. So too is having Lindbergh fly around in *The Spirit of St. Louis* if the plane was in a museum at the time. (Gee, why doesn't Roth have a scene where Lindbergh and his cronies break into the Smithsonian, and Lindbergh leaps into the plane, turns on the engine, and flies it out of the building while no one notices?) Is the book at least well-written? Or is it just dumb?

Let's just say that I could read it at The Red Mile while watching the races and not miss anything of either. Roth is too important to be edited, I guess — and that would include fact-checking.

— JTM

E. B. Frohvet asks how people who don't know about fandom can find out about it, given the lack of publicly available information. Peter Weston, in *With Stars in My Eyes*, says that British fans in the 1970s would stick little notices in library books, an activity which would leave library guards inspecting the books to see if something suspicious was in them. (The guards never found anything.) I've run a local sf club for 20 years, and when membership falls off, I place notices in our local alternative weekly. I've gotten many, um, "interesting" replies, but have brought two people into fandom who would otherwise never know about it. You've got to be *active* about recruiting new fans; being a passive whiner is not an option!

From: **Henry L. Welch** December 28, 2004
1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI
53024-2017 USA
welch@msoe.edu
<http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Thanks for the latest two issues of *Alexiad*. The earlier of which has languished too long between reading and loccing. As is often the case I didn't find any particularly compelling comment hooks with your zine which is a problem I seem to be having of late with many other zines.

As far as Ditto is concerned I'd like to thank you for continuing to plug the convention. A flyer will be distributed shortly confirming the weekend of Oct 14-16, 2005. I'm trying to make a special effort this year to attract beyond the usual suspects and to hopefully drag a few away

from GAFIA (e.g. Brian Earl Brown, Cy Chauvin, Tom Sadler, and others). Anything you can do to promote the con or to provide names and addresses for my mailing list would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you're employing the abundant addresses provided throughout this publication. As for our own attendance, see the comment I made to Frohvet. Let's try to get him to come, too.

—JTM

From: **Eric Lindsay** January 3, 2005
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fijagh@ericlindsay.com
<http://www.ericlindsay.com>

Here is an account of our year that I should have written a week or so ago.

Happy New Year to all of you, plus somewhat belated Season's Greeting.

Our 2004 was crowded with travel. Way more than I wanted to do.

We had a few days in Sydney at the end of January, and various fans there attended a birthday dinner for me on 2 February.

We flew from Sydney to the USA, spending February and March 2004 there. Helping Jean's mother move was the major reason, and Jean managed to get me a free companion fare (I'd rejected one the previous year). I was also able to visit Silicon Valley and Florida. We both visited Las Vegas for Corflu. Write up is in Geg 101.

On my last day in Las Vegas I bought an Apple Macintosh portable computer. I'd been looking for some way to defenestrate Windows for a considerable time, but Linux didn't seem to cut it for easy desktop use. I haven't regretted dumping Windows.

Jean was heavily involved in writing documentation for the Writer component of OpenOffice.org She self published a book on OpenOffice Writer.

In late April we visited Canberra for Conflux, the Australian National SF Convention (write up in Geg 102). It was well organised and very enjoyable. We continued to Sydney for Jean's Online Documentation conference in Manly.

Jean spent lots of time updating her book about writing online help for a new version.

On June 5 we set out to drive around Australia. Had a great time, until the floods and rain caught us in West Australia. We returned a few weeks earlier than expected on 14 August, after 71 days on the road. Write up will be in Geg 103. Jean already has her report on our *Avalook* site starting at <http://www.avalook.com/trip2004/part1-2004trip.htm> Downloads take a while due to the number of photos included.

On day 9 of driving around Australia Jean got email from O'Reilly publishers, expressing interest in publishing her OpenOffice.org Writer book. On day 16 she sent them the revision. She seems to have been working on OpenOffice (the

free alternative to Microsoft Office) stuff ever since. You can obtain OpenOffice.org Writer via <http://www.taming-openoffice-org.com/>

Jean also completed her book about online help *Is The Help Helpful*, published by Hentzenwerke. You can obtain the book from <http://www.jeanweber.com/books/ithh.htm>

Jean had another conference in Canberra in late October, and was able to stay with our former neighbour Betty.

Jean made another trip to the USA to visit her mother in November, and I stayed at home (thank goodness). I went sailing on one of the weekends, and had a great time, despite variable wet season weather.

In December I joined a protest march down the main street and attended the rally. This was protesting giving a foreshore position to a hotel, with the usual council secrecy. Mindful of front page photographs of cash changing hands between developer and mayor at Strathfield council, some of us were hoping local photos were available, but it seemed this wasn't the case. Still, the protest was just like the '60's, including protest songs.

And here in the US (if it's happened in Louisville, it hasn't come out yet) the big thing is using public domain to take property to give to developers for casinos and the like.

I pinched a nerve in my neck in mid December, and went through Xmas pretty much unable to move my left arm due to the pain. This has happened before, and takes a long time and a lot of physiotherapy to relieve the problem. This time I am trying a chiropractor who Jean uses, and recovery seems quicker, but more painful (I'm not sure I like getting my neck twisted off). I discovered my medical fund didn't cover this, so now my hip pocket is also hurting.

Fannish publications have been very slow and infrequent, although I have managed to continue in ANZAPA, FAPA and FLAP. Rough drafts are always on the web, as that is my backup scheme.

<http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg98.htm>

December 2003. Another drive to Brisbane in 2003 for a conference. Many rants, often on local politics. Book reviews, many of non-sf thrillers, some non-fiction. LoCs. About 92k. <http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg99.htm>

May 2004. North island of New Zealand tour in September 2003, rants about the end of printing, advertising expenditure statistics, book reviews (sf, general fiction, computer books, general non-fiction). Lots of LoCs. 84k. <http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg100.htm> (not yet available)

AirTour around Outback Australia, Arnhem Land and various Aboriginal art communities, in August 2003. Short version only in PDF at the moment.

<http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg101.htm> (photos not available yet)

June 2004. USA trip in February and March

2004. Helping Jean's mother move. Visit to Silicon Valley area, wine tours, various fans. Potlatch in Seattle. Visiting Florida, Haldeman, Sims, various fans. Back to Seattle. Las Vegas and Corflu.

<http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg102.htm>

Not yet ready. Will have Conflux Natcon trip to Canberra in April 2004.

<http://www.ericlindsay.com/sf/geg103.htm>

Not yet ready, as I need to add photos to the rough draft. Our trip around Australia starting June 2004.

Travel Plans for 2005.

Arrive Sydney on Tuesday 1 February. Mongolian BBQ dinner (I hope) on Wednesday 2 February to celebrate my birthday.

Jean flies to San Diego for a conference, and to see her mother Friday 4 February, and I return to Airlie on Saturday.

Eric returns to Sydney Saturday 19 February. Leaves for USA on Thursday 24 February to attend Potlatch and Corflu with Jean. Eric leaves USA Thursday 10 March, returning to Airlie 12 March (if I don't miss the only available Virgin Blue flight on Saturday). Jean returns from USA a few weeks later after an additional conference in Las Vegas.

We expect to attend Thylacon in Hobart in June.

If you ever get to Louisville we will take you to Imperial Palace Mongolian BBQ Buffet. They make the stir-fry to order, in front of you.

January 9, 2005

Lisa said "Yuck! Stephen King".

I can understand Lisa's reaction. I read a whole bunch of Stephen King back in the 1980's. Not to my taste at all, so I haven't read more, but the guy can write well. I recall he used to turn up at some SF conventions, until he got too popular.

I also read and enjoyed From a Buick 8 and have others in the to read pile. I read Christine but didn't like it that much. I don't intend to start collecting Stephen King because there are simply too many of his books and I just don't have the money or the space.

But I agree that he can write.

—LTM

Joe complained that the "hourly labor charge was \$78."

The last remaining local electronics magazine has a serviceman column. Some years ago they had an analysis of costs, and concluded that you would go broke as a one man operation on less than \$50 an hour, and if you had staff you needed at least \$70 an hour. Their figures appeared realistic. Overheads kill you in small business.

And the equipment has proliferated. The 1982 Mustang I

had when I courted Lisa could be fixed in a driveway but the 2003 Taurus needs computerized repair gear and the like.

— JTM

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** December 30, 2004
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catsmeouch@yahoo.com

I thought I'd written but don't see any notes. Thanks for the info on the costs for the projected Japan Worldcon — not in the cards, well my cards at least — but nice to know and follow!

Lisa — well, the model horses are only things, too — *BUT* I know what you mean. When I moved, I unpacked (before the move) all the collection I has stored up in the attic. It wasn't easy, but I "tossed"/donated all that were damaged/broken and decided which to make the trip with me. It was sad to see how few actually made the final cut after all those years.

We have a limited amount of space, due to the 13,000 some books piled downstairs. But it was still not easy. It is even harder to pare the book collection down to manageable levels.

I paid the second of two property tax installments a few weeks ago. Just what everyone needs while trying to pay off the holidays. *SIGH*

Professor Klass was the advisor to the SF club at Penn State when I was there working on my M.S. I have to humbly admit that I was unaware of the breadth of his writings. The club "zine" was named *Hostigos* — for the area — but that's the best I can recall.

Both William Tenn and H. Beam Piper; you can't say your club was out of touch with its local roots!

Hmm . . . air emboli . . . I presume you refer to drastic sequelae to insulin injecting? For what it's worth — to kill a rabbit one would need to inject 30cc of air into a vein. For a human, well, you can do the approximate math — then too, insulin is going almost anywhere *except* a vein.

Apropos of absolutely *nothing* — a client asked about cremation for his horse (something we both hope is years away but . . .); an off-the-track thoroughbred she uses for dressage. So, I did some calling — presuming you can *get* to the crematorium, for a 1500-pound horse the process itself is \$900-\$1000 (halter/blankets must be removed; if shod, they will remove, polish, and return them), a burial box is \$40-\$50 (remains are about fifty-five pounds and fit in the box the size of a large placemat — 12" high), if you want a memory box — they are specially made (oak or cherry) — \$165-\$250. So it can be done but it's not pocket change. Oh yeah — these prices are direct — crematorium/owner — no middle man.

Sounds as if Sorraia breeders would benefit from artificial breeding programs (if foals from such programs are recognized) to try to diversify

genetics as much as possible.

I was looking for the Hershey's double chocolate bar (saw the EMPTY box at Walmart) — think I'll quit looking since I'm not a fan of dark chocolate.

FYI — According to the FDA (??is that right??) white chocolate is *NOT* classified as chocolate (I second that, I do *NOT* like it), since the ingredients do not meet the definition.

Never heard of the Inside-Out cup — hmm — same ratio?

Seven out of eighteen on the fanzines — not too bad and still very good news on the zine front, numberwise.

Trinlay — Kemp ice cream is available here (Maryland) intermittently.

Dainis — I realize the "limited" definition of portable as pertaining to the generator. It just seems a misnomer of sorts at that weight.

New Year's Eve, December 31, 2004

The generator is in a frame that has wheels. It did *not* come with the wheels on — THAT was fun! — and there are folding handles that increase the mechanical advantage, but they aren't "quite" long enough. Add soggy ground to this and the term "portability" becomes even less appropriate! So I bought (\$250) a long APPROPRIATE extension cord and the generator can stay in the shed. Next problem is the weight of the *cord* — it's LOOONNG — but I don't need to really move the generator once I got it positioned so it exhausts out the door and get that sucker cranking! The current went out after a recent storm with high winds but I set my criteria (getting dark AND cold) — current came back on before I had to find out if I could remember the starting sequence. Maybe next time . . .

Dainis — if you are going to a worldcon, check, let the concom *know* you'd like to be on a panel about _____ (be specific if you can) — you never know . . . if they have that topic, you may get a chair!

Volunteering for the program can be difficult, but it's rewarding.

I second Lloyd's observation about the current spread of zine production versus the individual response rate (oh yeah — goin' down!)

"Speaking "as a fan who has not been to a con in a long time, I think that most Worldcon attendees are not fanzine fans — their main (sole??) SF interaction *IS* the Worldcon, hence they have no common threads and sense of history. Well, that's *my* theory. Ahem — if "we" could hook a large number of the attendees on zines, then things might change. As it is, "we" will continue to nurture the little flame that is our history (heart) and make sure it doesn't get lost.

I miss the reference to the series *Jeremiah* — I have not heard of it (don't get cable and am not a "real" media fan) — so I'm assuming it was a cable series?

Right. It's on Showtime.
<http://www.jeremiah.tv/>

I have been near Ocean City, Maryland, on a field trip to Assateague/Chincoteague for aqueous geochemistry. I also got a fairly close look at the ponies when I was a senior vet student doing an externship at the State labs in Salisbury (my mother's cousin Dr. Smith was a State vet and I stayed with them while I was there and he drove me to take a look).

FYI — called Hershey — they said all their chocolate is certified one way or the other about peanuts — this is not entirely right. If their products don't say, then they are safe (except things like peanut crunch) — so all the plain (at least) kisses and all the plain chocolate bars less than six ounces are safe for those with peanut sensitivities.

Well, just a few more hours until '05 begins — hope it's a good one.

On the second, we had a belated birthday dinner with my niece at Texas Roadhouse (me 50 she 23); it's all downhill from there.

— JTM

From: **Rodney Leighton** Dec. 21, 2004
 11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
 Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
 CANADA

Thanks for *Alexiad* 3/6 which arrived yesterday. I would say I read about 70% of this one. Man, you do have troubles with health.

Will I keep on going? If S/he pays attention to such silliness, S/he probably knows. I suppose I do. I have, after all, been contemplating departing this hobby since before you were married. Every time I get close something happens to bring me back. The fact that I am getting so senile I set this machine so that it beeps right around here and then periodically ignore it so that I end up with a messy page and wasted ink printed on nothing is sometimes aggravating; sometimes annoying; sometimes very frustrating and sometimes just a cause to shake my head at my own idiocy.

This actually mirrors my feelings about SF fanzine fandom except that fandom occasionally produces something positive or even delightful. Three weeks ago I received, in a seven-day period, sf fanzines on four days. Two of those days had no mail delivery. I got a bundle of his apa zines from Marty Helgesen and enjoyed reading them all that evening. Next day brought a bundle of secondhand fanzines from my friend who sends such things sporadically; one was Garth Spencer's zine, most of which I have yet to read but I enjoyed reading the rest. Next day brought a zine and some books from California. Saturday & Sunday are non delivery days. Monday brought a copy of FAPA #268 which Milt Stevens kindly sent me which was a fun experience; read almost all of the zines; enjoyed most; pondered, briefly, trying to find the money and try to join and now have to write a report on all this for *TKK*. Tuesday brought 3

issues of *Dagon* which John Boardman sent due to a comment Tim printed in *FOSFAX* #210. I liked those, too.

I was, for about 4 days, all hyper; contemplating joining FAPA; thinking about trying to get back on some of the mailing lists I have been dropped off of; maybe even soliciting some fanzines. But now I am back down to earth. I note in your fanzine listings that less than half of them are for real fanzines, of which I have seen all except one; have been dropped by some, in one case by request. I miss *Banana Wings* but they dropped me years ago and I can't blame them for doing so.

I'd be curious to read your criteria for being "not a real fanzine". I would imagine that, for example, you would find Earl Kemp's zine eI interesting.

A couple of months ago, I was at the point that I was going to tell each of the six or so publishers who send me their fanzines that I would be happy to receive them; I would read what portions of each issue I wished to and then pass the fanzine on to someone else and that if I reached the point of reading less than half of a fanzine, I would write and inform the publisher of that fact and suggest that s/he/they drop me off the mailing list since it would be a selfish, mean-spirited thing to allow anyone to mail me fanzines if I were not reading more than 50%. But they needn't expect to hear from me otherwise. I suspected that this would drop me to about three titles. Seemed perfectly acceptable. Yet, every fanzine that appears, I am happy to see and read most of them quickly, as soon as possible. A different friend printed about five of them off the ether and sent me the copies; a couple were of no interest but I liked the rest. This suggests, perhaps, that I should make an effort not only to keep getting those I receive but to get more. But . . .

I have a few books stacked up here; I ponder a couple of possible submissions to you, although none of them are books which fall within your domain of interest, as far as I know. I have a couple or three books about political things; novels about electing presidents and Superior Court judges. I ponder possibly doing some sort of review and sending it off to Tim. But I suspect that shortly I will mutter something nasty and distribute those books among the boxes intended for each sister someday; and the neighbour. It looks as though I am going to have a half hour or so many mornings in which I can type things. If I ever get caught up on correspondence, I might do something.

At the moment, I am intending to write some sort of thank you letter to anyone who sends me fanzines, and if that extends to something that the publisher considers a loc, so be it. As you can see I am no longer going to make it easy if I wanted this to appear in *Alexiad* I would have used new paper, printed on one side, made it a bit neater and printed it right side up. Since I don't care, I use paper that suits me, don't worry TOO much about running over the edges and such. If you feel like turning it into a loc, fine,

go ahead. If you read it and toss it into the dumpster, that's okay too.

I wish you wouldn't sell yourself short so. You have a very penetrating insight, for example, that contributes greatly wherever you appear. And your experiences are intriguingly different.

Dec. 25

In the interim . . . I have a basket upstairs which came when I bought this house, from the realtor, filled with useless things like tea bags, coffee cups and health foods. I keep it by my chair and toss books, zines, mail, flyers, stuff like that in and empty it as necessary. Down here, in the basement, is this machine, and the recycling bag. And the wood stove. So, I went to empty it yesterday and found some books in it and typed up the enclosed. I may do another page before I mail this. If you want it/them for *Alexiad*, I may do more. Or maybe not.

It's a funny thing. Guy Lillian sneers at me for talking about quitting sf fandom for five years, although I think it has been longer than that. Others agree with him. Yet, it's an accepted, perfectly accepted practice for people to simply disappear. Some publishers, you included, send copies of their fanzines to people who rarely if every respond; or whom you know read less than half of an issue and I wonder why. Henry says *TKK* runs about 75 copies per issue. There are about 20 people who appear periodically in one form or another; maybe 20 publishers. Where are the other 30? Why do they still receive copies? More, to me, why do you, or anyone, send to anyone who reads less than half an issue? Why do I run over the margins at any time, much less two sentences in a row?

The question is "which half"? I can't tell what may be of interest to someone, but I can't tell beforehand what may be of interest to me in someone else's fanzine. But half-read is quite enough to satisfy me; what I want more is responses.

A friend of mine decided he had no interest in fandom; for one year, every fanzine he got went into a box, unopened. At the end of the year, he tossed the entire thing box and all, into the trash. I gave him hell. But he is now showing some interest again and everyone will happily start sending him fanzines again if he starts being somewhat active. Everyone would be happy to welcome Benoit Girard back, with open arms, and no sneers, complaints or reluctance. Well, there would likely be lots of "What happened?" questions. But I'm sure that if Benoit resurfaced, everyone would be happy. Is it more wrong to admit to having problems with fandom and contemplating quitting, even doing so periodically, for years, than it is to simply vanish from sight?

People often have personal problems; that's why there's the term "FAFIA" **FORCED** Away From It All. I understand that Benoit has had to relocate under pressure, for example.

— JTM

Ah, who knows? I know I have to have some breakfast and then I am going to go cut down some trees.

Some of the books I have been reading: *Criminal Intent* by Sheldon Siegel. 400 page paperback published last year, this is a page turning novel which centers on family and evil. Formerly married law partners Mike and Rosie still work together; share their daughter and various other things. Rosie's niece is accused of murdering her husband. Her brother gets involved in a bribery/extortion scheme and then a sting. Their law partner's 18 year old son is accused of dealing Ecstasy. Everything gets resolved, except there are 2 finales, both of which are somewhat surprising.. I picked this one up thinking it was a Sidney Sheldon novel. I will be looking for more of Siegel's books . . . 4 to date, I believe.

The Onion Field by Joseph Wambaugh. 443 page paperback published in 1973. A true story of a couple of hoods, a couple of cops; the night they came together and the long, terrible aftermath. One of the young cops died in the onion field while the other one was ruined for most of his life. The machinations of the killers and their lawyers are bizarre at the least and repulsive at the worst. A rather intriguing look at the so called justice system.

From: **George W. Price** January 16, 2005
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Your review of Turtledove's *Curious Notions* ("Crosstime Traffic, Book 2") wonders how Alice Dalgleish (who edited Heinlein's juveniles for Scribner's) would have reacted to it. Yes. When I read *Gunpowder Empire* (Turtledove's first in the series), it struck me that it must have been written as a juvenile, although I saw no clue to that in the cover and interior blurbs. But the writing seems simpler than Turtledove's usual — the sentences are shorter and less complex — and the sexual content is toned down. I also noticed that very little really happens in the story; it is little more than a travelogue of the alternate-universe Roman society. Well worth reading, but definitely a juvenile. I presume *Curious Notions* is the same?

Somewhat more happens — consider the comparison to Piper's "Temple Trouble" — but basically, yes. Turtledove is having a bit of fun sticking in references; e.g. "subflexive fasartas", taken from a throwaway line in *The Door into Summer*.

* * * * *

Alexis Gilliland says, "In '68 Dolly and I looked in on the Baycon masquerade, but not for long. The band was **LOUD . . .**" I too was there, and remember it with very mixed feelings.

(For the youngsters among us, back in those days the masquerade was actually a masquerade ball, with the costumers on the dance floor mixed in with the rest of us. This was only shortly before attendance grew so much, and costume presentations became so complex, that the masquerade changed to its present form of a staged spectacle presented to a seated audience.)

I already disliked rock music, and that Baycon band was a particularly loud and loathsome specimen, so as soon as the costumes were all seen, I fled into an adjacent vacant room. And there I met a very attractive lady who was also escaping the noise. We started talking and hit it off very well indeed, so well that we shared a room at the 1969 Worldcon in St. Louis. I lost track of her some years later, but it was a very pleasant relationship while it lasted. And I owed it all to that revoltingly-loud band. Sometimes good does come from evil.

My feeling about rock music is summed up in a story about a teen-age boy and girl who are standing chatting on a sidewalk. Around the corner, where they can't see, a big truck full of empty steel barrels is laboring up a steep hill. Another big truck full of plate glass is starting down the hill. They collide and turn over and their loads go smashing and crashing down the hill. When the youngsters hear the noise, the boy turns to the girl and says, "Darling! They're playing *our song!*"

* * * * *

AL du Pisani describes how the South African courts found that because the South African constitution forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation, Parliament must allow gay marriage. As in the U.S.A., this seems to be a case of twisting the law to reach a pre-desired outcome. In this country — and I suspect in South Africa also — the traditional marriage laws do not discriminate against homosexuals at all. Gays and straights have always had exactly the same rights. That is, within certain limits such as being adult and not already married, a heterosexual man has the right to marry any woman who will have him. And a homosexual man, within the same limits, has exactly the same right to marry any woman who will have him. He can even marry another homosexual, if he can find a lesbian who is willing. Obviously, this is not what they want. The object is not to "end discrimination," it is to *redefine* marriage in a way that makes their sexual peculiarities socially acceptable. That is to say, a brand new set of rules tailored for gays. In fact we might say "separate but equal."

I wonder how long it will be before Muslims (and Mormons!) start claiming that "nondiscrimination" requires us to allow polygamy?

Well, according to Robert Spencer's Dhimmwatch site (<http://www.dhimmwatch.org>) recognizing polygamous marriages

is already on the way in Eurabia. However, I don't think the mainstream LDS Church will go for it any more; according to Jon Krakauer (*Under the Banner of Heaven*) they're even harder on it now than the feds are!

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** January 18, 2005
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It rained before and after New Year's Day; but not on New Year's Day. The Tournament of Roses and the Rose Bowl Game are truly smiled upon.

But, then on Sunday, January 9th I awoke to a torrential rain. My back yard was a lake, the patio was flooded, and the garage was flooded. It just kept raining, hard. I started building an ark. What a mess! I had rain gutters installed a couple of weeks ago. Maybe that helped, but you wouldn't know it. And it just kept raining. Actually, it was a series of several storms. My problems were nothing compared to what happened in other areas. A number of people dead. I'm not sure if there's an overlap; but it looks like between 12 and 20. Destroyed streets, property, and houses. Here in Ventura County it looks like our strawberries and celery (our two major crops) have been destroyed.

North about 25 miles, still in Ventura County, the coastal town of La Conchita had a massive mud slide that destroyed some 10 homes, damaged another 20, and took the lives of some 10 people. A problem here is that the people who live there know that they live in a dangerous area. It appears that the people are willing to do so because it costs them less to live there than in nearby areas. Apparently the people who live there are more oriented toward Santa Barbara than Ventura.

Well, the rain has now stopped. What I don't understand is that there is no provision to trap the rain water for our use. It's just allowed to run off into the ocean. I would have thought that The Powers That Be would have come up with a way in which to trap the water for our use after the last huge rain storms several years ago.

Governor Schwarzenegger has declared a state of emergency in seven Southern California counties

On Wednesday, January 12 I drove to Woodland Hills (in the San Fernando Valley) for my company retiree club board and regular meetings. That normally about 30 minute drive on the Ventura Freeway took me almost 1 1/2 hours. The problem appeared to be that city streets were so severely damaged that people who usually took those streets were forced onto the freeways.

Starting yesterday we have Santa Ana winds. Not appreciated as it will dry things out. Also, it is about 80° during the day and only goes down to 70° or so at night. I really hate this weather. I'd rather have the rain storms.

We had rain and warm weather that week, though the "warm" was high in the sixties, not eighties. But before and after it got down to the teens at night.

One of the TV programs that I always watched, *Booknotes* with Brian Lamb (C-SPAN), has ended after 15 years. It will be greatly missed. I remember one author Brian interviewed who said he was not used to being interviewed by someone who had actually read his book. That tells you a great deal about Brian Lamb. He has replaced *Booknotes* with a program at the same time called *Q & A* in which he interviews interesting people. It's probably easier on Brian as he does not have to read so many books.

LOSCON 31 (November 26 – 28, 2004) was quite enjoyable, as were the previous ones I've attended. It was at the LAX Marriott which is a much better hotel than prior years at the one by the Bob Hope (a.k.a. Burbank) airport. It is about 57 or so miles from my home to the hotel and I made it in good time both ways, which was a great surprise.

Five purchases were made at the convention. Four of them were: Tom Smith's CD "And They Say I've Got Talent", Heather Alexander's new CD "Uffington Horse", a t-shirt, and a painting. The painting is by Joseph O. Mueller and is of an eagle protecting the American flag. I was the only bidder. I bid on another painting by Mueller that was of an eagle protecting the American flag from a dragon (obviously the People's Republic of China), but I was outbid. The fifth item resulted from Brad Linaweaver convincing me to purchase J. Neil Schulman's *The Robert Heinlein Interview And Other Heinleiniana*. Brad wrote the Foreword and both he and Neil autographed the book.

I went to programs on Heinlein, Star Trek, Time Travel, Alternate History, Private Space Exploration, Spaceship One: Advocating Manned Space Flight, *Farscape*, and a Heinlein reading by Bill Patterson from his forthcoming Heinlein biography. There were only two of us, other than Patterson, at the reading. The other person was David Silver, President of the Heinlein Society. There were probably only two of us because it was at the end of the Convention. Also, I went to the Ice Cream Social and the "Lux Presents: A Spaceman's Home Companion". I skipped the Masquerade. Too bad Joe wasn't there as there was a panel on Heinlein juveniles. I missed it for the one on Private Space.

During the panel on Time Travel (I think it was that panel) the movie *Groundhog Day* was mentioned. I then mentioned the movie *12:01* (1993) which was met with blank stares and dead silence. Apparently none of the people present had heard of the movie and I guess that I'm one of the few people who have seen it. It's based on a short story by Richard Lupoff (*12:01 PM*) and stars Jonathan Silverman, Helen Slater, and Martin Landau. I like it better than *Groundhog Day*.

Groundhog Day

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107048/>
12:01

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0106188/>
Also:

12:01 PM
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098962/>

Oddly enough, IMDB links the latter two to *The Lathe of Heaven*, but not to *Groundhog Day*.

I signed up for *LOSCON 32* which will be held this year at the same hotel.

I didn't much care for the original *Battlestar Galactica* years ago and didn't watch it. Neither did I care for the movie a few months ago. But, I did watch the new two hour program on January 14. I still don't much care for it and will not watch future programs.

One of my Navy shipmates who attended our reunions died of cancer on January 1. Our group (there are now 15 of us) met up after some 40 years and he's the first one of us to go.

With all the hands-free cell phones, how do we really know people are talking on their cell phone instead of with the voices in their head?

Joseph T Major: Concerning your review of *Shadow War* (p. 14), Tom Tomorrow appears in the *Ventura County Reporter*; our free weekly county "alternative" (i.e. Socialist) paper. Frankly, I rather enjoy the paper. But, Tom Tomorrow has a lot of hate inside him. I have written a number of letters to the paper over the years and they have printed the majority; including my latest. One of my letters they printed was concerning the claim by Tom Tomorrow that Al Gore won the popular vote in the 2000 Presidential election. I stated that he was mistaken, that no one won the popular vote. Gore only won a plurality.

I sent a copy of your "Health Issues" (p. 16) to my friend who also has Crohn's Disease.

Let's hope he doesn't faint when he sees what I have this.

I have *Eagle Against the Sun* by Ronald H. Spector in my collection. Yes, he does make a short reference to Rear Admiral Kemp Tolley (then a Lieutenant). As for the *Panay* incident not causing war with Japan—the time wasn't right, the Japanese apologized and gave restitution, and perhaps FDR wasn't ready. I firmly believe that the three ships (the *Lanikai* involving Tolley) were part of a deliberate attempt by FDR to draw an attack by the Japanese and get us into the war. I am convinced that the evidence is overwhelming that FDR wanted the Japanese to attack the Philippines in order to get us in the war.

Johnny Carruthers: I enjoyed your review of *Dreamwatch* (p. 20) and am considering subscribing. I need another magazine like I need a hole in my head. ☺ It appears that *Tru Calling* is dead and I, for one, will miss it. *Lost* is a truly strange program. I guess someday we'll find out what is going on. *Farscape* was one of the finest SF programs ever on TV.

Trinlay Khadro: As much as I would like to go to the Worldcon in Japan, I cannot afford it either.

From: **Sue Burke** January 19, 2005
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The discussion of Worldcons in the last issue reminds me: I want to go to this year's and it's probably time to send in my membership and start to ponder logistics and lodging. Since I am on the Old World side of the pond, Glasgow is about as close as Worldcon is going to get. Still, it won't be cheap, and some of my Spanish friends are waiting for the more reasonably priced 2006 Eurocon in Kiev, Ukraine, "and if it's at war by then, prices will be even cheaper," says León Arsenal. He's an author, editor of the Spanish magazine *Galaxia*, and has an odd sense of optimism.

Here in Spain, 2005 is the 400th anniversary of the publishing of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, and at a recent meeting of Madrid's SF club, León brought a copy of the IV Centenary edition of "Quixote", a lushly footnoted and analyzed text, which we passed around, reverentially admired, and didn't spill beer on.

"Quixote" made a mark on Spanish literature that lingers today. A few club meetings back, I discussed this with Alejandro, editor of a 'zine. "The problem with Spanish science fiction," he said, "starts with *Don Quixote*. Of course, it was a satire of the fantasy adventure novels of its day, and ever since then, perhaps because the satire was so biting, Spain has been the home of realism in fiction."

I remember reading in Lin Carter's book *Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings* (1969, 2003) of how there had been a grand genre of epic sagas, descending from *Amadis de Gaula*, complete with spinoffs, shared-worlds, and all the other stuff you see in today's SF&F. (Well, maybe not media tie-ins.) Reading too much of that stuff was what drove don Alonso loco.

He added that the rejection of science fiction and fantasy extended to science as well. "Science has been for barbarians and outsiders," he said ironically. "We in Spain have spiritual strength."

But the barbarians have scaled the walls, and these days there's a strong and growing community of enthusiastic writers and readers.

In the subway one day, I sat next to some kids around 12 years old who were debating whether "Harry Potter" was better than "Quixote." They decided both were good: "Harry Potter" dealt with problems relevant to their own lives, while "Quixote" was funnier and they could visit the places mentioned in the text, and, a girl said, "Toledo is as beautiful as the book says."

And the Spanish edition is

Harry Potter y la Piedra del Filósofo, not "Piedra del Hechicero". Sólo en los EE.UU.

— José Mayor

From: **Milt Stevens** January 19, 2005
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While I was reading Johnny Carruthers' review of the first issue of the "revived" *Amazing Stories*, I found myself thinking about Hugo Gernsback rapidly revolving in his grave. One might compare the editorial in this new *Amazing* with the editorial in the real first issue of *Amazing Stories*. Of course, Gernsback had a product which he hoped to sell. However, it was a NEW product and not an imitation of something that had come before it. Gernsback had been a pioneer in publications for amateur electrical and radio experimenting, and *Amazing Stories* was also a pioneering effort. Gernsback had a fair amount of evangelical zeal about what he was doing, and that sort of spirit has a certain appeal. By comparison, the current publishers are just looking for something that might sell for whatever reasons it might sell. Lacking any real ideas of their own, they imitate.

Am I going to buy the new *Amazings*? No. This is a bigger decision for me than for most people, because I have an exceedingly long run of *Amazings*. It isn't complete, but it does go all the way back to volume one, number one. Heck, I even have a copy of the issue where the editorial is devoted to attacking me personally. But all things come to an end, and this publication doesn't sound like anything I feel compelled to collect. I already subscribe to *Starlog* and have for decades. That might surprise some people, but I have at least a reasonable interest in some science fiction and fantasy in movies and on television. However, I don't need another *Starlog*.

Unfortunately for print persons like me and I suspect you too, media is the primary means for people to get their SF these days. Compare the attendances of Dragon*Con and Worldcon.

In another Johnny Carruthers review, I can see the difficulties of compiling a really complete encyclopedia of superheroes on film and television. The first problem is defining a superhero. Most people probably think of superheroes as those characters who might also be referred to as the underwear heroes. Presumably, the Shadow and Mandrake the Magician also wore underwear, but not the right sort of underwear. Tarzan probably didn't wear underwear at all.

In Joseph's review of *The Forensic Files of Batman*, he mentions some topics I have thought of over the years. I once thought of writing an article titled "Subpoena Control at the Justice League of America." Real police spend lots of time in court. Superheroes never seem to spend

as much as an instant in court. (Of course, superheroes wouldn't be making time and a half overtime for off duty court appearances either.) Real police have to abide by all sorts of search and seizure restrictions. Superheroes don't seem to bother with such trifles. If a real police officer bops some dude with a six cell flashlight, there are cries of brutality and excessive force. A superhero can throw somebody through a downtown highrise, and nobody even murmurs about it. Jeez, the public sure is one way about things.

If, as the song says, you don't tug on Superman's cape, would you even consider serving a subpoena on him?

—JTM

In the letter column, Joseph opines on the demise of the Hugo banquets. Actually, the everybody in con running knew there were major problems of both cost and logistics for a number of years before they finally disappeared. The cost of chicken deceased at a banquet had reached \$20 when that was more than the at the door cost of the entire convention. This led to the Ranquets being established as a low cost alternative. Also, there aren't a lot of places that can do a banquet meal for a thousand people, and only a few of those can do it well. When there got to be significantly more than a thousand people who wanted to see the Hugo Ceremony, the banquets went from chicken deceased to dead duck.

As to the seating at banquets, I seem to recall from my days of doing hotel relations for cons that eight and ten are the only options there are. You could physically seat twelve people at one of the round banquet tables, but you wouldn't like the results.

As to George Price's comment on my comments on the novel *Brighton Rock*, it was the character Pinkie who believed, correctly, that the woman would feel obligated not to testify against him if he married her.

From: **Taras Wolansky** January 27, 2005
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Another entertaining *Alexiad*. The Shakespearian excerpt from *The Lord of the Rings* is a classic! Now: when will the play be finished?

1592, as I recall.

Lisa: Raptor Red is indeed a cool book. As I recall, the white pterodactyl is so old that it has grown whimsical, adopting Raptor Red and her family out of curiosity. Bakker suggests that a post-reproductive animal is no longer driven so strongly by its instincts.

Yes, the pterodactyl was an interesting character.

—LTM

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

Joe: Your review of the Philip Roth alternate history leads me to the conclusion that mainstream critics and readers simply don't care if he gives them a "slipshod presentation of history". Any more than they care if a mainstream writer dabbling in SF gives them a slipshod presentation of science.

The only things that matter are whether it is in harmony with contemporary politics and perhaps the literary quality. Thus the denigrating presentation of whiny little Phil Roth and his rotten family — to fit in with today's zeitgeist of Jews being despicable. Not to mention that a lot of people seem to have thought the plot against America had a certain contemporary alignment about it.

Rodford Edmiston: Excellent article on geochemical dating.

E.B. Frohvet: "Do you roger that?" is way too personal a question! (Or have I been reading too much faux-Elizabethan fantasy?)

"Do you roger that?" sounds rather kinky, actually. . .

—JTM

Joy V. Smith: *Dreamscape* is a good movie. Like a lot of mainstream sci-fi it doesn't entirely work out the implications of its premises. If the President can be attacked telepathically via his dreams, then the Secret Service will be hiring telepaths!

From: **Rod E. Smith** January 28, 2005
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In re. *Flight of the Phoenix*, the final stunt for the original movie went horribly wrong, perhaps because the pilot was intoxicated. Which may be why the sequence shown of them arriving at the oil field ends with a simulated crash behind a dune.

When I saw the film in the theater (the Capitol, downtown on Main between Lewis and Anne [in Frankfort]), it began with a clip showing Paul Mantz's crash trying to do a stunt. The DVD has a more restrained tribute.

—JTM

I did proofread my JOHT, honestly I did. So why are there so many clumsy phrasings and typos? I blame the buildup to the holidays...

Cuyler "Ned" Brooks doesn't see what *SpaceShip One* is good for. Many people said the same thing about Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic. Today's routine

intercontinental airline flights have a direct link to that adventure. There is similar potential for follow-ons to this first private flight into space. While this small craft is barely suborbital, a larger version — enjoying economies of scale — could fly anywhere on Earth in under 90 minutes. In *Halfway to Anywhere* G. Harry Stine performed a detailed economic analysis which convincingly demonstrated that there was a profitable market for such a capability.

SpaceShip One did indeed have thermal protection for re-entry. The heat load was far less than that experienced by a vehicle returning to Earth from orbit, of course, and even much less than a long-range suborbital vehicle would endure. It was more on the order of that required by the Blackbird family of Mach 3+ aircraft.

All you spider folk: A couple of years ago, one Spring, I had a spider which persistently build a large web between the two shrubs which flank my front porch steps. I never did figure out if it was after me or the mail carrier.

Trinlay Khadro enthuses about the C-130. Yes, it is a great plane, but for staying power it still takes third or fourth place. It has been said that when the last 747 is flown to the desert boneyard, a DC-3 will be used to retrieve the crew. There's at least one plane (as per an article I read a couple of years ago) made in Russia which has been in production longer than the C-130.

Marty Helgesen mentions Herbie Popnecker. Those are wonderful comics, set in an interestingly, wackily stilted world. (Herbie, in disguise, doing a folk dance for Khrushchev, who is thinking "Now that's cutting a rug!") Herbie having a crossover with AC's barely-legal copy of the Specter, who thinks "This guy's more supernatural than I am!") As for biblical inerrancy, when someone uses "It's in the Bible!" as their only justification, I point out the admonition by the author of Hebrews against blindly trusting the spoken or written word, but rather to think for ourselves and pray for divine guidance.

A few years back someone announced plans to remake *Forbidden Planet*. My reaction echoed that of many other fen: "No, no, no! They got it right the first time! If you want to do something with the concept make the sequel!" Nothing more has been heard on the matter, as is usual with such things. However, there definitely is potential for a sequel. How, you might ask, since they blew up the planet at the end of the first one? Easy. The explosion was faked. Go back and examine that last scene in the Krell lab. The Id monster never touches Morbius. Moreover, the very concept of a planetary self-destruct switch — much less one which is easily activated and can't be turned off, in a place where children would be running around — is absurd. Morbius is exhausted, not dying, but he realizes his daughter won't leave as long as he stays. So he pretends to be mortally wounded and the captain goes along with it. Once the ship is away, he uses the great machine to fake the explosion, then to conceal the planet. The sequel could begin fifty years later, with a routine patrol of the Altair system finding the planet is back.

If I may be permitted a commercial moment, I'm buying a new car, and as part of my economizing to help pay for it am selling off some of my less-desired collectibles. Does anyone know if there's a local market for 30+ year old bundled issues of *Analog*, copies of the US Perry Rhodan books, hardcover Tom Swift, Jr. books, etc? (The *Captain Marvel* comics and such I'm keeping unless things turn truly dire.)

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** January 27, 2005
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Ah yes, things. Things are in the saddle and rule mankind. The question is, which is to be master — that's all. I am slowly gaining the mastery of what Besty left behind. A gazillion crochet squares are now all in one lace; something will eventually be made of them. I incline to let actual family relics be, but it would be nice if an actual use could be found for the many, many napkins and other linen (vintage ca. 1900) with CNG on them in large, flowing letters — that's Cara N. Gibboms, one of Betsy's grandmothers.

The most astonishing relic — did Besty even know she had it? — was found at the bottom of a large old wooden chest, otherwise containing "dress-ups"; with newspapers of 1921 (the large letters of "Overland" first caught my attention) and 1946, it was a quilt in pristine condition. No clue to its history exists. The papers were both Philadelphia papers.

Both papers (only a few sheets) had "funnies", dispersed in 1921 and taking up whole pages in 1946. I sent them to someone who would be interested. I found them as unamusing as the ones we have today; the one change for the better since the 1920s is that a physical reaction of surprise is no longer shown in the last panel.

But in the 1920s they didn't have "FoxTrot". What other strip would have the line, "Oxygen turns into a liquid at -297 degrees Fahrenheit," (01/29/2005) as the setup for a gag, much less at all?

Which reminds me of the vocabulary cartoonists allegedly had: names for the various lines and whatnot expressing motion, impact, etc. There was an article — which I have seen, but where? — about these words, which seemed at the time quite believable; but later it was revealed that the author or the informant had made them up. In the same way, y'know, that "pride of lions" etc. arose during a medieval weekend party (and the Nine Muses, like the Eight Reindeer, originated in a poem). Can anyone trace this history for me? A neat joke if those words subsequently began to be actually used . . .

Have Jasper Fforde's books been cited in connection with the Sidewise Award? The "real world" of the books is, after all, an alternate history (with the ChronoGuard still busy at the Great Work of Time), though with strong elements of the purely fantastical. But the

Neanderthals were a fine example of alien modes of thought.

The books are on the semi-official list at the Uchronia website (<http://www.uchronia.net>). See also Fforde's own website: <http://www.thursdaynext.com/>

I have done my part in spreading the glad tidings: two people so far have bought the books, and several have had one or two as presents from me (Ned Brooks, who *didn't* like the books, supplied a couple). For books not marketed as genre, these caught on with fans mighty fast.

At Philcon one of the panels was on collecting, the limits of. Me, I'm a bookaholic in the sense that I need to get a fix every so often; but almost everything I get on the cheap is dispersed to friends or Eastern Hemisphere SF clubs. Some of the burden of ownership thus devolves on others; I have been known to weed my library of books I don't expect ever to read again. All my books are on shelves! Great expanses of bare floor are visible! Some placement in double rows, smaller books in front, has been part of the plan from the start, but on the other hand there is room to add more. Order prevails, though not among Recent Acquisitions.

The one newsmagazine worth reading is *The Economist*, in which almost nothing is written about entertainment and entertainers. A recent issue did have a piece about musicals that were playing (and what was also to the point, making money) in London, and at the end it was noted that we might in time have a musical of *The Lord of the Rings*. Is such a thing, necessarily not done in three installments, possible? The "Camelot" part is easily imaginable, but my imagination balks at the rest. Scenery reeling by in the background to represent all those miles and miles of walking? A chorus of orcs, like the wicked witch's troops in "The Wizard of Oz"? Gollum delivering a patter song? There comes to mind a spoof in one of the earliest Tolkienzines; it was titled "Hello, Frodo!"

MAD Magazine did a Lord of the Rings musical ("The Ring and I": MAD #210, October 1979).

—JTM

I am glad to see that publication of the "Falco" books *is* catching up in the U.S.; at the library I found *Scandal Takes a Holiday*, which declared itself to be a September book; so I'm sure we'll see the next one this coming summer, same as the Brits.

Forthcoming Books in *Locus* had nothing on Jasper Fforde on either side of the Big Pond, though a new work is promised for 2005.

From: **AL du Pisani** February 1, 2005
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As always, it was a pleasure receiving *Alexiad*. It makes me feel a little bit more in touch with the world.

I did not take a holiday over Christmas: Was not up for one. And ran out of money, after incidental expenses related to having to fix my car after it was broken into.

On the work front, I am still looking for a new job. I have tried a couple of new places, but it looks as if companies are very slow in responding in general, and respond slower to people seeking jobs.

It is still a blessing that I have so much to do outside of work, and that things there are in much better shape. Even so, I wonder how much longer I can carry on like this. As long as I have to, I guess.

In South African news, it looks as if Thabo Mbeki and Desmond Tutu managed to paper over their differences, because after the initial flare up I mentioned last time, it has gone silent. Shabir Shaik is still on trial for bribing Jacob Zuma, and the ANC Youth League have now come out in favour of having Jacob Zuma follow Thabo up as president.

Cosatu, the ANC's partner, is still chafing under the restrictions it seems the ANC is keeping them under, and is currently making trouble by planning to go to Zimbabwe again, and talking to their organised labour counterparts. Last time a Cosatu delegation went, they got kicked out of the country within two days. Currently, the ANC government is asking Cosatu not to go to Zimbabwe.

Speaking of Zimbabwe, the ANC have now come out saying the Robert Mugabe must go, but that his party, ZANU-PF, should still maintain power. Thus seeming to confirm a analysis of the ANC's approach to power in Africa: The only legitimate governments in African countries, in Perpetuity, are those formed by parties that used to be "liberation movements".

I have a great fear: That the only way the ANC is ever going to give up power in South Africa, is when it is taken from them in revolution. I have to admit that this possible scenario looks as if it is decades away, as there does not seem to be any legitimate "resistance" developing.

Although, the way the ANC is behaving, it looks as if they will create one: For instance, a newspaper columnist have said that the only way to explain some of the ANC leadership's more bizarre statements is to assume that they are at war with any and all opposition parties. Things are not getting any clearer when the police swoop in and arrest the top structure of the South African Museum of Military History, and confiscate a couple of armoured cars, and talk tough about wanting to confiscate the museum's 155mm guns. So there you have the police drag off some elderly people, one of which is recuperating from eye surgery, and want to charge them with owning dangerous weapons. The state prosecutor declined to press charges, the next morning, after they had spent the night in jail. And still the police are full of bravado about this nefarious plot they spoilt. And the Minister of Defence is backing them to

the full. Why? Because it seems that the Defence Department made a bookkeeping error when the museum got the armoured cars. According to the Defence Department they destroyed the armoured cars.

It is out of such silliness that movements are born which kill people.

Joseph, I like reading your reviews, especially the in depth look at books that have been running in *Alexiad*. I keep on thinking to myself that it is a pity that I will most likely never see most of the books you review.

Unfortunately, the right woman has not crossed my path. And I regret it.

Until some fifteen years ago I was in the same position. Good things can happen, too.

— JTM

E. B Frohvet: There is a difference between knowing that a C5 Galaxy is one of the largest aeroplanes in the world, and walking (and walking and walking) underneath one.

Good luck and good wishes to all

From: **Marty Helgesen** February 1, 2005
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA
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I remember hearing Walter Winchell on the radio when I was a child. His opening that I heard was "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. North and South America and all the ships at sea. Let's go to press!" Of course, it is possible that he varied it over the years.

He was also the narrator for the TV series "The Untouchables". One pair of episodes was made into an early TV movie (sort of), "The Gun of Zangara", about a Mob plot to assassinate Mayor Cermak of Chicago. The cast list included (besides Robert Stack), Richard Deacon (the craven boss on "The Dick van Dyke Show", not the spy writer), Frank DeKova (Chief Wild Eagle from "F Troop"), Lee van Cleef ("A Few Dollars More" and "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"), and, of course, Winchell.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0311238/>

As you know, Mayor Anton Cermak of Chicago was killed by Giuseppe Zangara while sitting next to President-elect Franklin Roosevelt. Did Roth?

— JTM

I saw William Tenn at Noreascon. A highlight was hearing him read his story, "On Venus, Have We Got a Rabbi". The accent Tenn used added to my enjoyment, but I am a New Yorker.

Ned Brooks wonders about the beatification of Emperor Karl, saying he finds it hard to imagine a saintly emperor. There are some canonized kings and queens (more queens than

kings), but not very many I think. Of course the pool of Catholic monarchs is a lot smaller than the pool of Catholics in general.

Most of the accounts I've seen of his beatification give only sketchy summaries of his life, but the general sense is that both in his personal life and in his official life, before and after he became emperor, he seriously tried to put his faith into practice, working for peace and for social reform. A few hours before he died he told his wife, "I would like to tell you now in all clarity what I am all about: all my endeavours are directed at the goal of discerning the Will of God and doing it, as nearly perfectly as possible." There are more detailed accounts of his life, but I haven't read any of them.

Like E. B. Frohvet I heard and used "Roger" but not "Wilco". I heard, but never used, "Over and Out" which is a contradiction. "Over" means "I have finished my transmission and await your reply." "Out" means "I have finished my transmission and am ending this communication." (That probably is not the exact wording in the manual, but is close enough.) I, too, heard "roger" as a noun and a verb, and I don't mean the British verb.

Congratulations to Joy V. Smith for the success of her house book.

I've read that early cons had banquets because the hotels required them as part of the contracts. Apparently, without a banquet other things would have cost a lot more. I don't know how accurate this statement is.

My thanks to Robert Kennedy for mentioning those books on grammar and related matters. I've been too busy to look for them yet, but I intend to.

"The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" is an occasion to mention "Monty Python: The Fellowship of the Ring", which is very reminiscent of "Monty Python and the Holy Grail". It's also rather long, but one can skim if need be. It can be found at:

http://www.xenocorp.net/H_bardCorner/MPFotR.htm

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

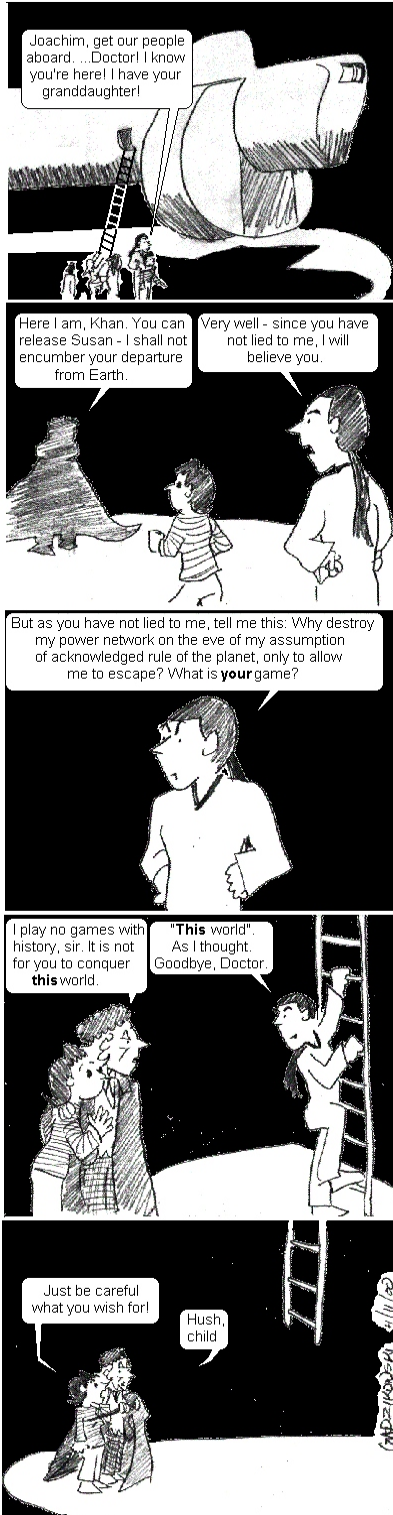
Jim Sullivan, with thanks for his acceptance and appreciation for the sample copy.

Carolyn Clowes, who is busy writing and so cannot spare time to read.

For everyone's information, the complete manuscript of Heinlein's *Children* arrived at our house on January 18 for the last round of editing. Stay tuned.

SPACE SEED EPISODE 0

by Paul Gadzikowski.

**“How the Brigadier Met the English Colonel”, or: Flashman and the Frog**
(Part Three)

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café.

I see that the sufferings of the unfortunate people of the boat, fleeing Cochin-China, have come to the public notice again. Cochin-China! How I recall that place. It was a very hot and humid land, where one's thirst was great — that new Bordeaux that I hear so much of! Sir, I am indeed your debtor.

You must know, then, that towards the end of the third year of the war, the allies were despairing that the Japanese had been allowed to bring troops into Cochin-China. It was certain, there were a few men there in whose hearts there still burned the flame of resistance to the Nazi iron heel and their Japanese followers. But how to reach them? Of an equal certainty, the cowardly authorities controlled all forms of communication.

Or not all. One could go there in person. Only the most daring, resolute, and skilled could repair thence, and so I went with a light heart. But this mission required a second man, one who could watch and handle such matters as might arise, and who else but my gallant landlord, the noble Commandant Flashman?

After having to travel the length of Germany and up through Norway, all to cross the North Sea in a fishing boat, on which I had the privilege of watching Gérard heave up his last month's dinners over the side, I said no, not again. Not even considering those Norse lasses, some of whom were very friendly indeed for the Allied cause. Well, not until peace broke out.

I had settled down into home, with a posting to the Firm's Broadway office, reading signals from German generals wishing each other a happy birthday. They gabbed worse than my mother-in-law. Then one ominous day I got a summons from the Chief.

A life of deceit works well. If I'd been really showing how I felt I'd have been trembling hard enough and fast enough to bore a hole in the floor. Old Iron Man Flashy, hero of a dozen difficult scrapes, presented a good image, though.

“You have been to the States, I believe?” he said.

Bloody Hell I'd been to the States. What a teenage lad, wanting nothing more than a visit to some of that grand thug Capone's houses of joy, did to find himself pinned down between the police and the Dillinger gang, both blazing away . . . “Yes, sir,” I said.

“Very good.”

For a moment I entertained prospects of great lashings of nylon stockings, all the better to part the legs that would wear them. Then the Chief went on, “Your cover will be that of an American prospector, searching for petroleum in French Indo-China.”

My heart sank into my boots in anticipation, and sure enough he went on, “You will be the liaison with the French Major Gérard, as you have worked with him before . . .”

In matters of secret service, understand, one must strike a pose. Thus, with much regret, I was forced to dress and act like a man from the provinces. The brave Commandant Gérard was laid aside, and Engineer Etienne de la Chevaux, a prospector from the province of Louisiana, set forth to explore the resources of Tonquin, Annam, and Cochin-China, with his partner Mr. Harry Jones from this apparently lost American school in the province of Indiana.

— Not edited (or “edited”) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or George Macdonald Fraser

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

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