

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

I have been watching the heartbreaking images of New Orleans and remembering the beautiful city it was. Things are so bad that rescue workers cannot do anything about the dead. The living are in such desperate plight that there may not be enough time to save them all. The levees are in desperate danger of breaking. There is no way to fix them with all the flooding. Authorities can't get the water out until they fix the pumps. They can't fix the pumps while they're under water. The whole Gulf Coast looks like a war zone. No food, no water, no electricity. I had thought New Orleans would have severe problems but I didn't imagine how bad it would be. The only ways out of New Orleans are helicopters and boats. Looting is rampant and will get worse as people grow more desperate.

I remember a magical night nearly thirty years ago when I stood on Bourbon Street listening to two jazz bands duel it out from opposing corners and my heart breaks for New Orleans and her people.

Less than a week after the hurricane, the once beautiful, elegant queen of southern cities is back in the stone age. Armed gangs roam what is left of her streets and defiantly shoot at police. It is scary to see how easily a modern city reverts to the jungle when its infrastructure is destroyed. More National Guards are on the way and hopefully they can restore enough order to get the survivors to safety. My heart says we have to rebuild the city. My head says we'll be rebuilding a death trap if we don't at least rebuild above sea level.

— Lisa

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The Breeder's Cup World Thoroughbred Championships are October 29, 2005 at Belmont Park in New York.	
Lisa's Birthday is October 30, 2005 .	
The Fast of Christmas begins on November 15, 2005 .	
Our Ninth Anniversary is November 22, 2005 .	
Printed on October 4, 2005	
Deadline is December 1, 2005	

Reviewer's Notes

An example of the two cultures came to light at Foolscape (held in Bellevue, Washington, on September 23-25) when the artist (on-line videogame, actually) guests of honor made the serious mistake of mocking the writer guest of honor. The only thing that they could have said that would have been worse was to say, "Hey, I downloaded all those stories of yours and they were great! When are you going to bring out that anthology they were talking about!"

What they did say about Harlan was bad enough. First off they didn't know who he was. Then, after having a verbal altercation over a performance at the con, the principal instigator proceeded to describe him as "senile", a "goblin" (now if he had said "glass goblin" . . .), and other things. Including "Harlan". **SIC!**

I think this is a further indication that the Internet community is about ready to detach itself and float off from the rest of the fannish world. They are losing contact with anything outside their own group.

The other problem currently under discussion shows how sensitive some people can get and how sensitive some other people can get. Because David Langford wondered if the effusive reviews comparing books to the work of a minor, self-published writer were of authentic origin, the *Ansible* archive and Glasgow University had some serious differences of opinion regarding their hosting.

Some people are desperate, to put it mildly.

According to all reports, Fans from the hurricane area have escaped. Somewhere (probably in his Love Camp in the Ozarks) Claude Degler is smiling. I like to end this with some good news for a change.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Happy **Eighty-eighth Birthday** (September 16) to **Art Widner!**

We got a pocsard from Kate Yule and David Levine of *Bento* in which they desperately proclaimed themselves “drowning in paper”, and requested a downsizing of their fanzine trades.

Some people evidently note no shortage of fanzines.

Saul Zaentz, the producer of the Ralph Bakshi adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (or demi-adaptation, depending on your point of view), has received his cut of the proceeds from the Peter Jackson movies. He owned the rights, you see. Peter Jackson, who did direct the movies, is next in line at the payment window.

When I was working in the Uof L library reference room *cough-cough* years ago, I had to file the newspapers, including the *Jerusalem Post*. I liked their editorial comic strip, “Dry Bones”, by Yaakov Kirschen. He’s still here:

June 3, 2005 / Iyyar 25, 5765

Scene: Moses and the Tablets of the Law

G-D: **TAKE THE TWO TABLES**

Moses: “And call You in the morning?”

<silence>

Moses: “Sorry.”

<http://www.drybonesproject.com/>

News and corrections on my niece’s big

fat Southern wedding . . . Jeff, her new husband, is not working in Dad’s business. Like half the people in the Major family, he’s a teacher. Jeff is *also* Sarah’s eighth cousin twice removed and ninth cousin once removed. As a courtesy to the newlyweds, I started checking his ancestry and discovered the relationship. They were amazed and astounded (while I was analogued) when I told them this.

Lucifer’s Footfall: The Forge of Shiva Department: A large meteoroid or small asteroid, depending on your definition, exploded above Antarctica in September of 2004. The body weighed about 1000 tons. The closest station was the Japanese Syowa station on East Ongul Island in East Antarctica, the impact point being about 550 miles or 900 kilometers distant. Joseph Zagari, an observer at the Australian Davis station, was first to notice the dust from the object, and observers at Mawson and Casey stations confirmed these findings.

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

And speaking of Japan in Antarctica, on October 15, the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge will welcome Hilary Shibata to deliver a lecture on Shirase Nobu and his polar expedition on the *Kainan Maru* of the forty-fifth through forty-seventh years of Meiji (in gaijin terms 1910-12), in connection with the release of the English translation of Shirase’s book.

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

The “You Wouldn’t Want” series has an interesting addition: *You Wouldn’t Want to Be on Apollo 13!: A Mission You’d Rather Not Go On* (written by Ian Graham, illustrated by David Antram; Salariya Book Corporation; 2003; ISBN 0-531-12311-1 (hc), 0-531-16650-3 (pb); \$27.50 (hc), \$9.95 (pb)).

Astronomer Michael Brown of Caltech, the discoverer of Planet Xena, has been given access to the most powerful telescope on Earth, the Keck Telescope on Mauna Loa, Hawaii, ten meters in effective diameter. (Hubble fans hold your pens — I said *ON* Earth.) Observing the planet, he has noted

that it has a satellite of approximately 155 miles in diameter. By determining its orbital period and altitude, it will be possible to discover the exact mass of the tenth planet.

Oh, and he named the satellite “Gabrielle”. Is it musical, yellow-capped, and annoying? They should of course invite both Lucy Lawless and Renee O’Connor to the official naming, and I hope Professor Brown thinks of this.

While on the trip to Lexington where we saw the winners of the Hambletonian and of the Yonkers Trot battle it out to see who would win the Kentucky Futurity, I reread *Cold Burial* (2002) by Clive Powell-Williams, the story of Jack Hornsby the Canadian venturer.

What struck me was how much Jack’s philosophy of planning for a trip was so very much that of your typical fantasy novel. Usually the Fantasy heroine (it used to be hero, but that’s another story) sets off on her Quest with only a crust in her wallet and a song in her heart. Anyone with any equipment gets it stolen by bandits, destroyed by a storm, dropped down a ravine, etc.

Hornsby didn’t pack essential things, botched the things he did pack (i.e., losing several thousand dollars worth of fox skins because he didn’t tan them properly, and sticking his partner with the costs of the trip), and had a somewhat happy-go-lucky attitude towards events. He felt that any expedition that didn’t have a disaster wasn’t worth it. Presumably if some seer had told him he would starve to death on the Thelon River he would have been utterly delighted.

BIRTHS

There have been so many deaths it’s satisfying to do the opposite. We are pleased to announce the birth of **Dillon Archer Bestler** on **August 31, 2005**, son of Ian Bestler & Kim Coleman and grandson of **Leah Gadzikowski**.

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Michael R. Sabella**, father of Robert Sabella, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on **August 19, 2005** at

the age of 80.

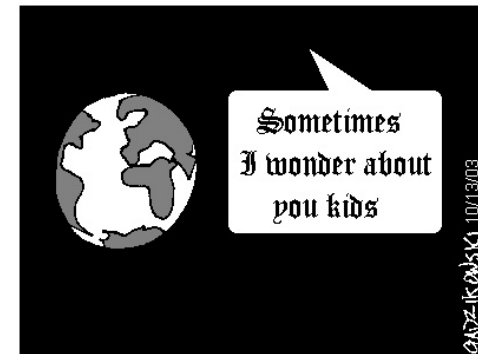
Our condolences to Bob.

MONARCHIST NEWS

“Lord John Brabourne”, the producer of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Sink the Bismarck!*, *Damn the Defiant!*, *Death on the Nile*, and *A Passage to India*, died on **September 23, 2005**.

Let’s rephrase that. **The Right Honourable Sir John Ulick Knatchbull, Bt., Baron Brabourne**, movie producer, died on **September 23, 2005**. He is survived by his wife, **Patricia Edwina Victoria Mountbatten Knatchbull, Countess Mountbatten of Burma**, daughter and heir of Lord Louis Francis Albert Victor Mountbatten, Earl Mountbatten of Burma — yes, in this case, both the “Lord” and the “Earl” are correct, since Dicky Mountbatten was the son of a Marquess (Louis Mountbatten, Marquess of Milford Haven, né Prince Louis von Battenberg) as well as having a title of his own; unlike his son-in-law, who was formally “Lord Brabourne” and informally “John Brabourne”. Dicky used to register Pam at hotels in Germany as “Pamela, Prinzessin von Battenberg” as if those *dreadful* events in 1917 (“Arrived Prince Jekyll, departed Lord Hyde”) had never happened.

Their son, **the Honourable Norton Louis Philip Knatchbull, Lord Romsey**, has inherited the titles. The Knatchbull baronetcy dates back to 1641.



THE MOON IS HELL

Commentary by Joseph T Major

THE UNIVERSE IS ALL THERE IS, BOYS
 THE UNIVERSE IS ALL THERE IS, BOYS
 THE UNIVERSE IS ALL THERE IS, BOYS
 BUT COSMOLOGY MARCHES ON!
 GLORY, GLORY, HALLELUJAH!



Thanks to the SFku list I have learned something worrisome. The current proposal is to send astronauts to the Moon by 2018. As you know, the men who did go will be the ages below, if they survive.

Apollo 11 — July 20, 1969

Neil Alden Armstrong (born August 5, 1930) — 88 years old
Edwin Eugene "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., Ph.D. (born January 20, 1930) — 88 years old

Apollo 12 — November 19, 1969

Charles "Pete" Conrad, Jr. (June 2, 1930 — July 8, 1999)
Alan Bean (born March 15, 1932) — 86 years old

Apollo 14 — February 5, 1971

Alan Bartlett Shepard, Jr. (November 18, 1923 — July 21, 1998)
Edgar Dean Mitchell (born September 17, 1930) — 88 years old

Apollo 15 — July 30, 1971

David Randolph "Dave" Scott (born June 6, 1932) — 86 years old
James Benson Irwin (March 17, 1930 — August 8, 1991)

Apollo 16 — April 20, 1972

John Watts Young (born September 24, 1930) — 88 years old
Charles Moss "Charlie" Duke, Jr. (born October 3, 1935) — 83 years old

Apollo 17 — December 11, 1972

Eugene Andrew "Gene" Cernan (born March 14, 1934) — 84 years old
Dr. Harrison Hagan "Jack" Schmitt (born July 3, 1935) — 83 years old

<http://varifrank.com/archives/2005/09/tauntine.php>

There is a great deal of angst over this decision. Typical are comments of the sort that "why does it take so long?"

This stems from the SF of the sort in which the aged professor, his beautiful daughter, the handsome assistant, and the comical "ethnic" assistant build a spaceship in the back yard (unless it's British, in which case the aged professor, his wholesome young niece and nephew, the dashing ex-RAF pilot, and the crochety but lovable old gardener build a spaceship in the garden) and fly to the Moon. Well, we've just seen the first steps.

What is missing? We live in a different regulatory environment. The new rockets will have to be developed in an environmentally safe manner, the development will have to be done by a multicultural diverse workforce, and so on and so on — and lawsuits will wait at every turn. (Once, in a bitter mood, I imagined that the Mars Landing Module would have to have a ramp wide enough for the thirty-seven representatives of all races and genders that composed the crew to all step off first simultaneously.)

Not to mention that the mission will require developing new technology, which once it gets into use will be scorned as being obsolete. Remember Alan E. Nourse's "The Martyr" (*Psi High and Others*, 1967)? One of the Great Men given immortality was the Chief Designer of the proposed interstellar space ship, and one of the signs of the error of their ways was that he was always having the ship torn down so it would include the latest technology. He had all the time in the world.

Consider moreover: After Apollo 11, von Braun devised a far-reaching plan. The Sally Ride commission proposed . . . much the same. How much was done on either? What assurance is there that this time will be any different? Already the proposal to cut the budget deficit has put the Mars plans on the list items to be deleted.

What happened with the X-Prize? A lot of announcements were made. Only one craft even flew, and it was built by one of the best airplane designers in the world and funded by

one of the richest men in the world. It was built specifically to win this contest; it has no other utility. Even the *Spirit of St. Louis* could be and was flown around the U.S. (the reason that Lindbergh couldn't do that in the 1940 Presidential campaign in *The Plot Against America* (2004) was that the plane was in the Smithsonian, not that it wouldn't fly).

Considering rockets that didn't fly, there was the Rotary Rocket plan, as described in *They All Laughed at Christopher Columbus* (2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. I #6). The story of the building of the Roton Rotary Rocket was very much like the moon landing plans of pulp fiction; brilliant, eccentric, scorned innovator, dedicated workers working hard and playing hard, secretive site . . . and they never even got a working design. It was more fun to build a presentation about the wonderful rocket they were going to build than to build a rocket.

How much like the former than the latter are proposed private space flights? Consider that no one has flown that way since the second and final flight of Bert Rutan's Space Ship One. All those announcements? I used to read *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics* and they had all sorts of announcements about the wonders of science and engineering that were forthcoming. Recently, they introduced columns on what was in the magazine 25, 50, and 100 years ago. It's embarrassing; since so much of that "forthcoming" stuff is, well, still forthcoming . . .

If there were a constituency there would be a response. But for those space advocates who don't like to play "Kings of the High Frontier" (a methodology about as effective at getting into space as wearing a coonskin cap is at making a three-year-old a bear hunter) the guiding plan seems to be "build it and they will come", because you see, all the people they talk to agree that space is so thoroughly right that no one can possibly have any disagreement with that idea.

Outside the bubble they do. Read Robert Park's *Voodoo Science* (2001) where manned space travel is dismissed as a pseudo-science, right up there with cold fusion and homeopathy. And this is a book about science by someone who knows about it

When I typed in "apollo moon landing dates" for a Web search, the first response I got was a site that claims that the landing was

a fake. "Do you hear that, Mr. Anderson? That is the sound of inevitability. It is the sound of your death."

FACIAM UT ANIMUS MEUS SCRUTETUR — PARS I

Review by Joseph T Major of
 ROME

<http://www.hbo.com/rome/>

CAESAR TIBI PROPOSITA
 MAXIMI MOMENTI PRAEFERT
 I

Argumentum

Gallia, terra in partes tres divisa
 * Cisalpina
 * Transalpina
 * Oblitus sum tertiae
 II

Consilium

* Visere
 * Videre
 * Vincere
 III

Sequela

* De bello stultum librum scribam
 * A nonnullis irrumatoribus occidar in Foro
 * Acetaria et mensis accipiet a me nomina
 IV

Conclusio

* Faciam ut animus meus scrutetur
 * Quid illa femella Cleopatra?

— *Lingua Latina Extrema* (MMDCCCLVII), Henricus Barbatus scripsit, paginae XLI-XLII

Caesar's PowerPoint Presentation
 I

Topic

Gaul, a country with three parts
 * Northern Italy
 * France
 * I forget
 II

Plan

* Make a visit
 * Have a look-see
 * Take over
 III

Follow-up

* Write a stupid book about it
 * Get assassinated in the

Forum by a bunch of
assholes

- * Salad and month get
named after me
IV

Conclusions

- * Get head examined
- * What about that Cleopatra
dame?

— X-treme Latin (2004), Henry Beard,
Pages 41-42

Across the Hellenic oikumene, it is the first year of the one hundred thirty-second Olympiad. In the tiny land of Judea, it is the thirty-seven hundred and twelfth year since the creation of the world. In the far-off Middle Kingdom, the land of the Seres, it is the second year of the Kan-lu [Ganlu] era of the Han Hsüan-ti [Han Xuandi] Emperor. In Rome herself, the City, it is AUC DCCIII, the seven hundred and third year since the foundation of Rome. In some years to come, it will be known as 52 B.C. (or B.C.E.) And the *res publica Romae* is about to tear itself apart.

This co-production of the British Broadcasting Company and Home Box Office tells in racy and vivid, if not livid, detail the story of the bloody, tumultuous years in which the *res publica Romae* became less public and more Roman, so to speak. Viewers should be warned that there are plenty of obscene graffiti, naked women, sex, violence, sudden death, crucifixions, blood, cruelty, and all the things that make life worth living.

Episode One: "The Stolen Eagle"

a.d. V Kalendas Septembris
(August 28)

As when, for example, we see legionary Titus Pullo (Ray Stevenson) being flogged at a cart's tail. But that's only a prelude to the surrender of Vercingetorix to Caesar (Ciarán Hinds), who then learns that his daughter has died in childbirth. Caesar uses that and other items to persuade his son, no son, Brutus (Tobias Menzies) that the army in Gaul only wants to go home. [You do remember those stories about who Brutus's father really was. Perhaps Caesar should have mentioned in that context the mysterious loss, indeed complete disappearance, of the three cohorts under that scouring young officer Marcus Aemilius Scaurus from Mediolanum.]

So, of course, Brutus reports home to his

mother Servilia (Lindsay Duncan), delivering Caesar's love letter, and of course the news gets around to others, including the newly-widowed Pompey (Kenneth Cranham), formerly Caesar's son-in-law, and the ambitious Atia (Polly Walker), Caesar's niece. Acting on the news, Cato (Karl Johnson) and others began working on Pompey and Cicero (David Bamber) [who can't even have Gordianus the Finder inform him on the situation!].

Atia has some other ideas, too, involving her children. While she sends her son Octavius (Max Pirakis) to Gaul with a present for Caesar, she nags her daughter Octavia (Kerry Condon) to get a divorce in order to marry Pompey. She's not too thrilled about the idea but goes along. She goes along with letting Pompey bed her before wedding her, too. (We've seen Atia herself naked previously, first rewarding Timon (Lee Boardman), the horse dealer who brought the present for her uncle, and then taking a bath afterwards. For what it's worth, "Roman style" is woman on top.)

Meanwhile, back in Gaul, Caesar gets robbed, of his personal standard. He makes a big fuss about its loss, assigning Marc Antony (James Purefoy) to recover it. In turn, Antony assigns Centurion Lucius Vorenus (Kevin McKidd) to do the job [I guess Caecilius Metellus was busy in Rome], and he pulls Titus Pullo out of a cell to go along, after crucifying a couple of Gauls to find out where to go.

Pullo's judgment is that the whole thing is intended more as show than as actually doing anything. Nevertheless, by good fortune and bad luck, or however you want to put it, they find the thieves who stole the Eagle. Also Caesar's present from his niece, a beautiful Arabian horse. Also the person delivering it — Octavius, who had been taken prisoner in an ambush by Gauls. Also the person responsible for the whole affair, a slave conveniently marked with Pompey's name. Two trained Roman soldiers can take out a bunch of barbarian thieves without even breathing hard. [I wonder if Pullo's full name is "Titus Iunius Pullo", and will he have a descendant who will be garrisoning the Antonine Wall until some really un-Roman folk come along . . .]

Meanwhile back in Rome Pompey gets married. To Cornelius Scipio's sister.

I think this is the ending of a beautiful friendship.

(The events here are a trifle compressed. From the initial scene one would get the impression that Pompey and Caesar were the consuls, which rather sets at naught the subsequent maneuvers by Caesar to duck an indictment. Pompey is sole consul, which somewhat stretches the rules. Also, the events here were somewhat more spread out. Finally, Octavian has a profoundly, indeed fantastically adult appreciation of the situation; I mean, the guy was a God, but not that sort of God.)

Episode Two: "How Titus Pullo Brought Down the Republic"

pridie Nonas September
(September 4)

And all he did was get sent as an escort to the soon-to-be Tribune of the People Marc Antony on his way to Rome. Pullo wants to drink and gamble. (The comment he makes about "all the smoke" refers, I would think, to hemp. That's right, he wants to take up with Marinus Cheechus from Hispania and that guy from the land of the Seres, Chongus!) Vorenus wants to be with his wife, Niobe (Indira Varma). After a rest stop for Antony (you'd think he would at least have *paid* the shepherdess he was having against the tree, but no) they arrive at Rome. Octavian invites his rescuers to dinner at his mother's, citing the ancient Roman virtue of even the most noble considering the soldiers their equal. But then after eating they go their separate ways.

Vorenus finds his wife with a babe in arms. She explains *very quickly* that it's his grandson, and she thought he was dead when his pay deductions quit coming. They make up (after all, he's got eight years back er, well, absence to make up for) and then try to get some sleep.

On the other hand, Pullo spends some time in a *lupanar* (more naked women, this is getting very interesting) and then goes gambling. When it turns out that the other guy is running in trick dice, Pullo gets very angry. Very very angry. But even he can't defeat a whole tavern of thugs without injury.

Grue warning: The next scene is a very realistic, i.e. bloody, trephining. Roman medical science was more advanced than you think, except in the anaesthetic department, and after some emergency surgery at the Vorenuses' (oh all right, Vorenorum), pulling things out of his brain, Pullo will live.

Marc Antony finds his situation a little more interesting. Part of it is, of course, the welcome Atia bestows on him. (Such a mother-in-law . . .). Part of it is the elaborate and cryptic ceremony in which he is named a Tribune of the People; if you ever wondered where fraternal orders got their rites from, now you know. He has delivered Caesar's compromise proposal; he can have a single, not powerful province, disband the rest of his army, and run for office from there. The Gauls are singularly lacking in very sacred temples of the Gods for Caesar to violate, and he isn't going to emulate the rest of the errors Pompey made, either [did he read the learned and trenchant commentary by Asimannus the Judean, *Pompeius Resque* ("Pompey and Circumstance"?)].

Pompey is not particularly pleased with the maneuvers, and threatens to pull out and head for Hispania (where he ought to be anyhow, but that's another story). Cato and Scipio explain their scheme; they will call for Caesar to disband his legions, give up his provinces, and come back to Rome for trial. Then Antony will veto the resolution. These events will pass on to Caesar the idea that he isn't universally loved, without sending him over the edge. Having convinced Pompey, they then work on Cicero, who reluctantly agrees.



However, their plans just don't work out. After the resolution is introduced and voted on, the Caesarian faction starts a brawl, several people are hurt, and Antony never quite gets to say his say. Fortunately, the session was not adjourned, it's still the same legislative day in spite of the fact that night has intervened, and in the morning they can continue the meeting and let the Voice of the People speak.

Just to make sure, Antony heads for the

Senate House with every Caesarian partisan he can get as escort, including Pullo, pulled from his sickbed, and Vorenus, pulled from his marital bed — well, marital insula, where he has been laying down the Law both left and right on his family, including making the child's father make an honest woman of his daughter.

Less than honest people are in the crowd, such as the survivor of the guys who cheated Pullo. Who attacks him, starting a general brawl. So much for getting to the Senate House peacefully, or indeed at all. (Why Antony was violating Rome's sword-control law! *Cum gladii proscriptae erunt tum soli proscripti gladios habebunt.* [When swords are outlawed, only outlaws will have swords.]])

The Caesarians flee to Ravenna, where Martinus Paduei. . . well, where Caesar's *legio XIII* is encamped. (The rest of the army is in Gaul, watching Asterix, Obelix, and the rest of the village. . . that is, in Gaul.) Caesar does some clever public relations work, having Antony show up all mused and bloody from being beaten up by the *optimates*, rewarding Titus Pullo for his effective self-defense, and so on. And without even an *Alea iacta est* ("The die is cast", a quote from Menander, and why did they get rid of the one line everybody knows?) Caesar and his army cross the Rubicon into Italy proper. Pullo gets to ride in an ambulance wagon, along with the wounded Vorenus.

This invasion stirs up Rome. The news even penetrates to Niobe's flat, whereupon she quiets the squalling baby by. . . breast-feeding him. This Niobe hasn't been a Penelope.

(They're cutting down on the cast again, not mentioning Curio, the other Tribune needed for a veto. For the truly fanatical, Vorenus is referred to as "first spear centurion". Clumsy, but it more or less renders *primus pilus* — the senior centurion of a legion.)

Episode 3: "An Owl in a Thornbush"

a.d. III Idus September (September 11)

Vorenus has recovered sufficiently to be sent out on a reconnaissance mission with Pullo and some Ubii cavalry, Germans in Caesar's service. They very well might be using the term *Himmelfahrtskommando* ("doomed mission", lit. "Heaven-going

squad"), since the idea is to head straight for Rome until they meet opposition. Vorenus certainly thinks they are bound for the afterworld, but by way of crosses. (There's no sign of Xena, so he shouldn't worry about that.)

The first encounter isn't very oppositional, when they blunder on a Pompeian recruiting camp Pullo draws his sword, shouts, and rides at the enemy, followed by all their escort. The Pompeians flee, thus proving that surprise and audacity can make up for numbers. It also helps to have an opposing force consisting of kids led by elders.

During their bivouac for the night, Vorenus and Pullo start wondering about the stars. Vorenus explains that they are hundreds of miles up above the earth. Pullo wants to go and see them; perhaps if one could find a large enough bird. . . . Vorenus thinks this is absurd. (Now if an *orbis volantis* oh all right "flying saucer" landed in front of them and a furry creature that sang got out. . . .) Pullo also tries to explain the clitoris.

Their surprise attack provokes a panic in Rome. Pompey meets with his associates and informs them that Rome is indefensible. The troops closest to hand used to be Caesar's and can't quite be trusted. In short, it's bug-out time. Confusion ensues.

Atia decides to hold a party and invite all her friends. Timon (last seen getting a really good bonus from Atia) gets asked to provide security. This is needed, as Octavia sneaks out to see her true love Glabius (Roberto Purvis) for one last time. This turns out to be the case, as after he rises from their coupling, sated, gets dressed, and goes out, he runs into Timon and friends, who kill him. There's too much violence in the streets.

Atia's party has a lot of would-be crashers. The Pompeian mob is knocking rather hard, and the guest list, which includes Servilia and Brutus, begins to have a discussion of who will kill whom in order to keep them from being violated by the mob. (They wouldn't have been surprised by Masada, except perhaps that it was superstitious Judeans who were acting with all the resolution of noble Romans.) Octavia won't let her mother kill her, and that really disappoints Atia. She may have been wishing she had invited Vorenus and Pullo.

Part of Pompey's evacuation plan involves getting the money out of the Treasury. However, it turns out that the guy

charged with taking the cash to Pompey had some diametrically opposite ideas of his own. Unfortunately for him, he and his escort ran into Vorenus's patrol along the way to the north. However, after disposing of everyone except the young woman one of the escort decided to grab up and bring along, and one guy who is a really fast rider, Vorenus orders the men to keep on going, since they haven't encountered any real resistance, going on away from the ox cart (with all the cash).

This would be a real disappointment to Pompey, who we see riding along in a melancholy refugee caravan with his subordinates and family. One can understand Cato walking, but why Cicero? [Gordianus couldn't find him a horse?] Also there is a litter, with Cornelia and Pompey's two younger children. Pompey cheers up the troops about the forthcoming doom of Caesar, just as soon as they get the money from the treasury.

Back in Rome, the talk of suicide becomes passé when, in response to the sudden silence outside, Timon looks out the front door of Atia's house to find that the square is remarkably empty (and badly littered; including at least one graffiti saying the Latin equivalent of "Atia Sux."). Servilia and Brutus go home and Atia begins receiving visitors. If you ever wondered where that scene in *The Godfather* came from where Don Vito begins receiving visitors and tribute, here it is. ["Domina, this is Antonius Soprano, a relative of Marc Antony from Sicilia, and he wants your permission to whack someone. . ." to borrow from another HBO show.] This only gets interrupted by the arrival of the late Glabius, which gets Octavia into quite the stir.

In another part of the City, Brutus and Servilia begin discussing what to do about Pompey's order that anyone who doesn't support him is a public enemy. He decides to go with Pompey, and is shocked that Mother isn't. She's been waiting eight years for Caesar and isn't about to run away.

In another part of the City, Vorenus and his patrol ride into the Forum, which is quite empty (and littered), and post Caesar's proclamation of amnesty and neutrality. Then he hands his sword to Pullo, announces he's resigning, and goes off to try to make up with his wife. Who has been very concerned with being attacked, with keeping her lover away, keeping her daughter calm, keeping her "grandson" from crying, and so on. When we

last see them they are embracing.

Pullo wants to find that girl, so he rides back, and is fortunately successful. Kindness is its own reward. Or was it finding all the gold in the cart that she was tied behind? However, he hears Caesar coming, so it's time for him to split.

Episode 4: "Stealing from Saturn"

a.d. XIV Kalendas October (September 18)

We open our scene in the Pompeian camp, on the road to Capua. The lot of them are depressed, wondering why it is that they are running away from Rome when they have right and justice on their side, while Caesar only has an army. One man in particular is not having a good time, but that's because Pompey's son is torturing him to find out where the money went. Someone with a wacky sense of humor decided to alter history, combining Pompeius's two sons into one for literary efficiency. The two sons were Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Sextus Pompeius Magnus; the character here is "Quintus Pompey", "five" instead of "six".

Meanwhile, back in Rome, Caesar has to clear matters up with Jupiter Optimus Maximus. One would think that as Pontifex Maximus, he would have an easier time of it, but il Papa Re ("Pope-King" for those who don't know Italian, referring to the Christian Pontifex Maximus's i.e., Pope's, secular authority) he ain't. They don't have kings in Rome.

Caesar has declared martial law in Rome. We see patrols of legionaries marching around through deserted streets (except for one scene where Vorenus's little girl runs to get a sacred trinket for their party, dashing past marching soldiers with all the unconcern of the young), past for example graffiti showing Caesar. . . well this is a family fanzine, but see the comment about Atia above and this one is illustrated.

Everyone else is celebrating. Vorenus is going to throw a party to announce his startup. Atia is going to throw a party to announce her uncle's coming back to power. Guests can be a lot of trouble. Servilia, for example, who is trying not to act like Caesar won't like her.

Throwing a party is hard on the nerves. For example, Atia has to rebuke her son, Octavian, for not eating his goat's testicles. (And you thought you had it hard when you had to finish your oatmeal before you could

go out and play.)

Vorenus also has to confront an obstacle to his IPO; Marc Antony has been dragged out of Atia's bed and hasn't bothered to dress (*now* we get a naked guy), but while he's getting scraped clean he cheerily offers Vorenus promotion and a signing bonus — the position of *praefectus* of the *Evocati*, the recalled veterans, and ten thousand sesterces (HS [X with a bar over it]) — to return to service. Vorenus won't take it, he has resigned. (Better be careful or he could end up in Pagus ["Village"] where he would be Numerus VI, also known as C [for Captus {"Prisoner"}].)

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined. Let there be dancing in the streets, drinking in the saloons, and necking in the parlor. Caesar arrives at his niece's party with his wife, Calpurnia, and with an escort of lictors. In a subtle comment, he has himself announced as "Proconsul of Gaul and Imperator of the northern armies". This last doesn't mean "emperor", not yet . . .

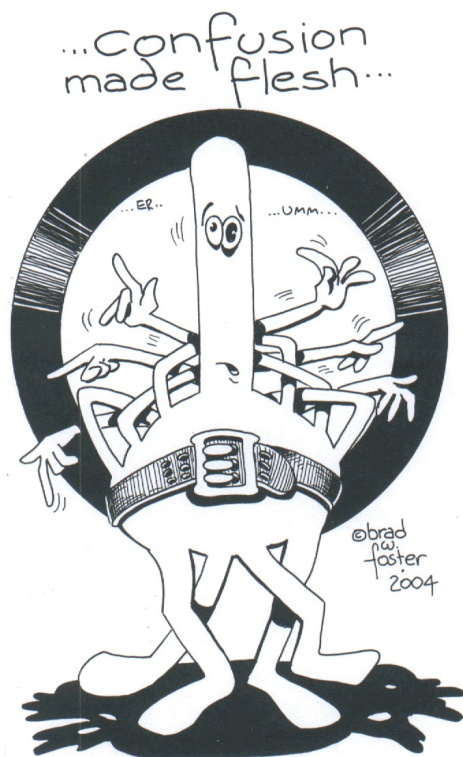
He's already unnerved his secretary, whose name is Posca (Nick Woodeson), not "Machiavellus", with his liberality over paying off people. (See *The Prince*, Chapter XVI, "Concerning Liberality and Meanness", for some comments on Caesar's financial extravagances.) Now he has to bribe the Chief Augur . . . that is, give the man's wife a proper birthday present! Perhaps two hundred thousand sesterces? She has very extravagant tastes, you see . . .

A somewhat less extravagant party is going on at the humble insula of Vorenus and Niobe when her brother-in-law Evander shows up. Since Evander is also the father of Niobe's little boy (remind me to tell you about Daniel Boone's wife and her brother-in-law sometime) this could cause stress, and during their departure they manage to topple a table and smash the bust of Jupiter. This is a Bad Omen, and everybody goes home.

Pompey has a volunteer to go get the money. Quintus infiltrates the City with a squad of Scythians, posing as corpse pickers. For some reason nobody will look at them too closely. They find the house of Vorenus, too late for the party, which is just as well, and proceed to hold Vorenus and Niobe hostage for the money. Since Vorenus hadn't bothered to look in that cart in the first place, he is both confused and helpless. (Where's Xena when you need her?)

Someone else who was too late for the

party proceeds to show up: Titus Pullo, along with his latest acquisition, the slave girl Eirene (Chiara Mastalli), that is (last seen tied behind an oxcart full of gold), throwing around money. Which proves helpful when confronted by Quintus and his goons. They go for the gold he throws all over and he and Vorenus proceed to whip them.



As gratitude, Vorenus persuades Pullo to go tell Caesar where the money is and bring along Quintus as a bonus. Somewhat unwillingly, he goes and does so.

Atia's party is a bit dull. (It needs Gabrielle playing the lyre.) It becomes livelier with the new party-crasher and his news, and with some pleasure, Caesar sends Quintus back to his father, carrying a truce offer and proposed settlement. Having through time-travel read Maurice's *Strategikon* (the explanation by this Basil Argyros about why the scribe was so precise

must have been interesting) Caesar knows that by dividing the enemy with clever offers one can triumph without fighting. Then he dispatches Marc Antony with orders to have Pullo take him to where the gold is buried.

Explaining this high strategy and intrigue to Octavius, who has gotten bored with the party (Atia definitely needed to have invited Gaby), Caesar strolls back in . . . until he has an epileptic fit. This is not only frightening but fraught with political stress.

Caesar recovers, but with Calpurnia not feeling well (to put it diplomatically) they have to leave for the night. But Caesar has some business to tend to before coming home. Sure enough, we see the business, or perhaps he gets the business; Servilia hadn't waited eight years for nothing.

Pullo comes back to Vorenus's insula and finds Evander trying to pick up where he had left off before. Vorenus won't interfere; he's off praying to Janus. Perhaps he has to become two-faced to deal with his current crisis.

In the morning, Pompey and his associates discuss Caesar's truce offer, cursing each other and their luck. Meanwhile, that HS 200,000 (yes, I know it ought to be "CC" with a bar over it) offer produces a good omen indeed . . .

(If they were going to say they were "Stealing from Saturn" they renounced a most interesting scene when Caesar demanded the money from the Sacred Treasury. The tribune Metellus refused him, saying that the money was only to be used to defend the City against the Gauls, in case they managed to repeat the Battle of the Allia and besiege Rome again. Caesar could, and did, say that he had eliminated that possibility. He also threatened to kill Metellus if he didn't get out of the way, saying "And this you know, young man, is more disagreeable for me to say than to do." [Plutarch, *Caesar*, Chapter 35])

Episode 5: "The Ram Has Touched the Wall"

a.d. VII Kalendas October
(September 25)

We are back the Pompeian camp, and while Pompey wanders back and forth along the beach, looking out over the Adriatic, his followers ponder the Caesarian peace offer. It becomes a picky choice of exact words.

There's dissent in Rome, too. Marc Antony wants to push on and finish the

Pompeians with one swift blow. As he puts it, "the ram has touched the wall," and the fighting has begun. Caesar is sitting back and trying to be conciliatory. When he's not seeing Servilia for a friendly night. This is called keeping in communication with the opposition. Well that's one thing you can call it.

On a lower level, Vorenus is in real trouble; his investment has up and died. (And you thought that pork bellies were a risky investment.) The Gallic slaves he brought back all got the black flux and croaked. Except for one boy, who he brings home, whereupon his daughters, over the objection of Pater, beg to keep him and give him a name. It's worse than stray dogs.

Speaking of stray dogs, Pullo is to be found sound asleep on the stairs to Vorenus's insula. When they wake him up he discovers much to his horror and chagrin that during last night's bar-hopping he had left Eirene somewhere. They have to go and find her. They're both going to have to go get real work.

Vorenus has a job offer as a bodyguard. However, he bristles at having to kill an easterner who won't pay up. This leaves him with only one choice.

Pullo lucks into his job. He has to teach a fatherless boy to be a man. The fatherless boy happens to be Octavius, and he turns out to be, if an indifferent legionary, a well of advice. Particularly for someone who's just seen his best friend's wife admit an affair with her brother-in-law, and wants to know what to do about it. (Atia had remarried, to Lucius Marcius Philippus, a not particularly distinguished man.)

Oh, and speaking of affairs, Atia complements Octavius on having seduced his great-uncle. You know, "every man's woman and each woman's man"? And so modest, he won't admit it, but Mater knows best. She has other seductions to take care of.

Caesar and Calpurnia are greeted in the morning with a broad variety of obscene graffiti (Did I mention the obscene graffiti?) all portraying the **Calidus Sexus™** of Caesar and Servilia. (No "CAESAR XENAM FUTUET?") Taggers have a long and disreputable history.

Accordingly, Caesar breaks off with Servilia, in fact he slaps her, since he can't even say "*Sexum cum illa muliro non habui.*" ["I did not have sex with that woman."] She gets back with her nails. After getting Mars's

blessing on the campaign, he sets off after the Pompeians, leaving Marc Antony in charge in Rome.

To whom Vorenius comes, cap in hand, asking if the offer is still good. Antony toys with his supplicant before making the same offer, except with a cash deduction for tardiness. Then he gives Vorenius a big friendly hug and kiss of welcome (“Eh, Vorenius, you a good kid. Go see my cousin Antonius Soprano from Sicilia, we going to go to the mattresses with the Corleonii . . .”).

Meanwhile, Pullo and Octavius (!) set out to take care of Evander. They drag him into the sewers and proceed to get him to confess to being the mother of Niobe’s son, after which they make the little boy a fatherless child in a sense.

There’s a lot of sneaking around in nighttime Rome. Servilia is not your average jilted lover. She spends some time writing out curse tablets, aimed at Caesar and at Atia, and then she goes out herself to plant them on the houses of the couple. It doesn’t work unless you put them there yourself, see. Also, they have to be lead, not PVC or never mind.

Pompey has been acting rather depressed lately. The Pompeians argued about accepting Caesar’s terms, but decided to. But Pompey wouldn’t meet with Caesar. That was enough. Cicero starts wondering if he oughtn’t to check out his farm nearby (surely it must be in the good hands of Gordianus the Finder), and would Brutus like to come along? No such luck.

Caesar finally arrives at the Pompeian camp. Which has been abandoned and is burning (see back at the end of Episode One). A tour of scenic Greece is on the agenda, looks like.

(Actually, Cicero didn’t leave just then.)

Episode 6: “Egeria”

a.d. VI Nonas October (October 2)
*E Cesare, per soggiogare Ilerda,
 punse Marsilia e poi corse in Ispagna.*
 [And Caesar, that he might subdue Ilerda,
 Thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain.]
 — *Purgatorio*. Dante Alighieri, Canto XVIII

This little excursion got cut out for reasons of brevity. Nevertheless, Caesar is feeling annoyed. He thought he was going to go to Greece, but he has ended up in Albania, where all the natives carry long curved swords, talk gibberish, and hack things a lot, announcing “Samuraii [whatever]!”. Also

Pompey is there with a bigger army. Does he know Ioannes Belushius? Caesar needs reinforcements. Marc Antony is in Rome with all the spare troops.

Antony is not minded to leave Rome, either. He’s too busy putting through the reform package. After politely persuading Senator Publius Servilus, the senior non-participant in the Pompeian bugout, that they would be honored if he were to be Caesar’s junior consul, he mentions that it would be ever so helpful if they reduced the proportion of slaves that could be employed on farms in Italy. They don’t have illegal immigrants from Mexico (think of ten thousand Aztecs working on Cato’s estates), so that’s the best they can do.

Then, a secret emissary from Pompey comes by. Antony can have his life and even a province, provided he sits on his hands and lets Caesar be conquered. Lucius Vorenius, the unwilling witness to this, is not happy.

Neither is his sister-in-law, who wants to know where Evander, her husband, is. Titus Pullo, who of course knows damn well where he is (see above) passes off a mildly convincing story.

Then Pullo goes off to his day job, which is that of teaching Octavius the manly arts of war. Atia, who is pleased with her son’s skills, informs them that as long as they’re thinking of manly arts, it’s time that Octavius have a woman for the first time, and does Pullo know a nice clean lupanar (not the sort where he goes)?

After Antony gets the employment laws through the Senate (or what’s left of it), it’s party time. He gets to watch two woman wearing helmets have a duel with swords. That’s all they’re wearing — helmets. Spoilsport Posca informs him that he has a dinner engagement with Atia.

Atia is seeing her boy off to become a man. She then sits and frets, waiting for Antony to come. Eventually he does, and we see her quickly changing into night clothes in order to tell him that she was about to go to bed, then change again into her dinner clothes.

Niobe has been counting the days (and you thought they didn’t have the rhythm method back then) and informs Vorenius that she’s willing if he is. He turns out to be.

Pullo and Octavian finally get to that good lupanar, and the Madame trots out the merchandise for his inspection. After some shy moments, he gets off by quizzing the poor

girl about her ancestry, which she professes to know nothing of. While Pullo tries in vain to score a free lay from an uncooperative Madame.

Atia is being more cooperative, and after some enthusiastic coupling with Marc Antony she proposes. After all, Uncle is doomed and with Atia at his side (and in his bed) he can do wonders. Somehow postcoital tristesse doesn’t quite work that way, and he breaks up quite violently with Atia. (There’s a lot of slapping here.)

Vorenius is about to go to it with Niobe again when the News comes, by way of Antony’s dwarf; the thirteenth legion is to mobilize on the field of Mars. Vorenius, who had been about to mobilize on the field of Venus, is not happy about this callup.

Neither is Atia, who is giving a make-up present to Servilia. If you ever wanted to know where the famed Argentus Capulus Longus, the star of those movies she saw and he didn’t, came from, here is one of his ancestors. Nice present.

Indeed, everyone is leaving the City. Octavius is going to Mediolanum with Timon, for example. As Antony hustles through his atrium, trailed by subordinates, he encounters the messenger from Pompey, who needs a reply to the proposal. He gets it, too, right in the chops, a very Buzz Aldrin kind of moment. Then we see Antony and Vorenius ride off to war, while Pullo marches behind.

In the final scene, we see Vorenius and Pullo below decks on storm-tossed ships on the stormy Aegean. Travelling during the off-season can often be uncomfortable.

Notes

The directors have built a very realistic Rome; it’s dirty, crowded, noisy — if we had smell-o-vision it’d be noisome, too. And did I mention the obscene graffiti? If you thought the frowsy little villages Xena and Gabrielle and Joxer prowled through were filthy and loud, this is them grown to adult size. This is not a Rome of clean pure white marble. The Rome set is five acres. The production budget is \$75 million. This explains a lot.

Incidentally, there will be a second set of episodes coming out in AUC MMDCCLX, or 2007. I’ve seen a DVD of Episode I at Best Buy, so presumably a set is on the way.

There is one minor but telling point in the performance. **The actors ride without stirrups.**

One of the creators of this is none other

than John Milius — you know, as in *Conan the Barbarian* and *The Wind and the Lion*. In other words, someone who gets armaments right. For example, the legionaries are wearing chain mail, not segmented-plate (*lorica segmentata*) as was adopted later, for example. Here’s a man who’s not afraid to show the violent side of the past.

You might recognize the Newsreader (Ian McNeice); he played Baron Harkonnen in the SciFi Channel’s versions of *Dune* and *Children of Dune*.

Lucius Vorenius and Titus Pullo come from history; *Bellum Gallicum* Liber V, xlv (*Galic Wars*, Book 5 Chapter 44).

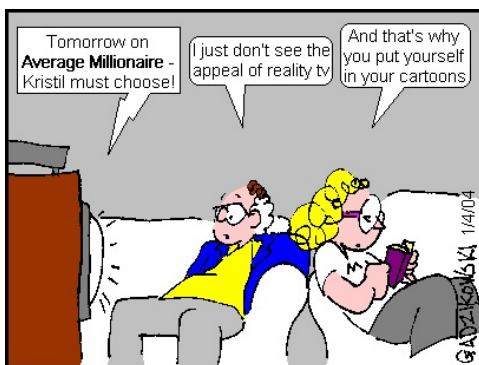
In the full name list: Atia is “Atia Balba Caesonia”; Octavius is now “Gaius Octavius Thurinius” [and will later on become first “Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus” and then “Imperator Caesar Augustus”]; Servilia is “Servilia Caepionis”

Other family ties: Servilia is Cato’s half-sister, and Cato’s dislike for Caesar stems from the incident in the Senate where Caesar got a note, Cato demanded that he read it out loud, and it wasn’t a subversive message from rebels but a love letter from Servilia. And then too Caesar had been the lover of Cato’s first wife, Atilia. Still can’t say “*Sexum cum illa muliro non habui.*”

Multiple dead bodies, seventeen breasts, two beasts, bull’s blood bath, the old head in a basket gag, a hot time in the old camp tonight, excruciating initiation ceremony, really wild bar fight, riot in the Senate, big ramming scene, cleaning out the Roman treasury, convenient omens, inconvenient pestilence, ocean views, sewer snuffing, the giant fat naked seeress, naked gladiatrices, the terror of travel by sea, multiple aardvarking, pilum fu, trephining fu, sword fu, suicide fu, refugee fu, prairie-oyster fu, bribery fu, curse fu, sewer fu, apology fu, brothel fu, defection fu.

Check it out.

Stay tuned for **Episode 7: “Pharsalus”**, where Caesar looks at Marc Antony and says, “*Ad signum mei, solve lora Infernis!*” [At my signal, unleash Hell!], when . . . [Narration Resumatur]



FOAH WANT OF A NAIL

Review by Joseph T Major of
**THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF
AMERICA:**

What Might Have Been

by Roger L. Random

(W. W. Norton; 2005;

ISBN 0-393-05967-7; \$25.95)

It isn't the most reassuring of circumstances when the author of this work gives the title of the book that inspired his creation as *Bring the Jubilee Again*. Ward Moore's seminal work of Civil War Alternate History is, of course, merely *Bring the Jubilee* (1953). It is even cited wrongly in the copious bibliography, which besides most of the usual suspects (Kantor's *If the South Had Won the Civil War* (1961), Turtledove's *The Guns of the South* (1992) and *How Few Remain* (1997) for example) cites Peter Tsouras's more academic *Gettysburg: An Alternate History* (1997) and his collection *Dixie Victorious: An Alternative History of the Civil War* (2004). Not to mention many real books on the economy, politics, and so on of the antebellum South. The closest comparison is with Robert Sobel's *For Want of a Nail: If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga* (1973, 1997), with its elaborate bibliography, tables of voting results, gross national product figures, etc.

Random begins with an analysis of the comparison of forces. It was a matter of soft factors (leadership) against hard ones (production); as said in the December 7, 2003 PartiallyClips cartoon: "This whole war could be the Almighty's little joke. He put all the factories and railroads on one side, and gave the other side all of the smart generals."

Having postulated that, he begins his analysis. Now David Downing's *The Moscow Option: An Alternate Second World War* (1979) has in effect the Axis getting all the right breaks. They still lose. Random has the Confederates getting a few good breaks, first as Shiloh, where there is some disruption in the reinforcement flow and General Grant loses. Then to Chancellorsville, where some keen-eyed North Carolinian marksman is a little less accurate. (Recall that Kantor had to have more than one point of departure for his scenario.)

This means a less advantageous battle of Gettysburg, at least from the Union point of view. If you have not actually seen Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg, the reality would surprise you. To take an example I'm personally familiar with, most farms around Hopkinsville have higher ridges. Now the Round Tops are a different matter, but . . . one of the arguments about Lee's command style there was that he treated Ewell as if he were Jackson, who had more initiative. Well, if Jackson were given that order, Random argues, he would have taken Culp's Hill and left Meade in a worse-off position. (Kantor had Lee realizing that Ewell was not Jackson and specifically ordering him to take the hill; in their *Gettysburg* (2003), Forstchen, Hanser, and Gingrich had that also, with no success but greater losses.)

An extended stalemate means a Union Party loss in the 1864 election, which in turn gets Lincoln to settle. Robert Skimin's *Gray Victory* (1988) has something of this, admittedly through Davis having had the patience to put up with Joe Johnston and having him delay Sherman enough to not provide an election-winning victory at Atlanta. Fiddle-dee-dee.

So now we have a nation. Now what?

Random begins by discussing the problems of bisecting a nation. He argues that the Confederates actually had the basis for a decent economy, as a raw materials provider. This prediction includes a chart showing a more reasonable rate of monetary growth, with a concurrent lack of inflation, though there would still be currency problems. (Consider the scene in *An End to Bugling* (1963) where General Stuart wants to buy 4¢ worth of lemonade, paying with two U.S. 2¢ pieces and a C.S. dollar bill, which seem to him to be about the same value.)

Unlike most writers, he imagines Lee declining the presidency on the grounds of

health, there being no Cape Dutchmen with nitrated glycerin on hand for treating his heart trouble. The first postwar president of the CSA, rather, would be likely be Kentucky's own John C. Breckinridge. Politically, he argues that while there would be political harmony at first the basic bugaboo of relations with the southern states in a united USA would become the basic problem of the separated CSA.

Any independent Confederacy always comes down to the question of the "S" word; slavery. The solution ranges from Jake Featherston's final solution to the colored folk problem in the *American Empire* and *Settling Accounts* series to the continued-to-the-present solution of David C. Poyer's *The Shiloh Project* (1981) to various optimistic scenarios. Random's choice is one of those on the optimistic side, seeing emancipation by 1880. It's a financial matter, basically, the existence of slavery being a brake on economic development. (Random does not go as far as the socialist Confederacy of Robert Stapps's *A More Perfect Union* (1971).)

North of the new border, he sees a more diverse political landscape, with the Populist Party becoming more viable, thus setting up a three-party system in the U.S. (Doesn't say if Lincoln goes over to the Populists, trying to set up a Marxist-Lincolnist America.) But a knock-on effect he describes would be a weakening of corporations, since the Fifteenth Amendment also protected corporations, and he does not see it being passed in this world, hence corporations would have to work through a maze of local incorporating laws. And in general this United States would be more plural (following Garry Will's argument about the War having made the country a unity instead of a grouping of states).

Abroad (a weakness of previous AH, which had either too much divergence, i.e. the weaker German Union in *Bring the Jubilee* or too little, i.e. the Soviet Alaska in *If the South Had Won the Civil War*) the new order in North America leads to a mutual weakening of the Monroe Doctrine, with European states seeking gains in the Americas, and in return the American states taking part in a partition of the residue of the Spanish Empire. (One error: Wilhelm II was the grandson of Wilhelm I, not the son (Page 237).) As in the *Great War* and *American Empire* series, Random has the U.S. forming an alliance with

Germany. Which leads to a scene very much out of the *Great War* series, except even more so.

ENEMY AT THE GATES

Review by Joseph T Major of

SETTLING ACCOUNTS:

DRIVE TO THE EAST

by Harry Turtledove

(Del Rey; 2005; ISBN 0-345-45724-2;

\$26.95)

Sequel to *How Few Remain*,
Great War Series,

American Empire Series,

and *Settling Accounts: Return Engagement*

FREEDOM!

Jake Featherston thought that with one kick, the rotten Yankee structure would crumble. He could lick 'em with cornstalks. How-evah, them damnyankee bastards wouldn't fite with cornstalks.

And that's the situation that our characters found themselves in at the end of *Settling Accounts: Return Engagement* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #4) — those as survived. Featherston has to do something about it.

The "drive to the east" is the attempt by the Confederate Army to conquer the rest of Ohio and then Pennsylvania, knocking the Yankees out of the war, after their stunning, but not devastating, drive to Lake Erie. But there are other theaters to consider, from the somolent troops around Clovis, New Mexico to the not quite so somolent troops engaged in suppressing the latest Mormon Rebellion, to the naval war.



Internal affairs also take their toll, from this curious matter of tube alloys being researched at Washington University all the

way to the, er, fumigating of the internment camps. Motor vehicles would no longer suffice. And did I mention this exciting new innovation of suicide bombers? (Could somebody be saying something about later events in other worlds?)

The campaign itself has settled down in and around Pittsburgh. Ah, if only there were a dam that could be breached to flood the city! As it goes, the American city of steel becomes a place of blood, with an enemy at the gates striving to conquer or die. All the fight here needed to be complete was a sniper duel.

But Jake may have overreached himself, and succession is such an issue. Look out, if the Reich sends General von Gersdorff and his aide Captain Freiherr von dem Bussche-Streithorst to the Confederacy they may give Jake's intelligence chief Clarence Potter some ideas. Perhaps he could even see what the Confederacy would be like without him . . .

It's hard to say this, because it's interesting watching the parallels work out. But first the *World at War* series and now this; that is a well that can be gone to overmuch.

A point that can be noted is Turtledove's version of why the poor whites were so in favor of segregation. It gave them someone to look down on. Now, with matters a lot worse than segregation going on, the other disfavored groups have someone to look down on. Or worse. Which was why Troop Leader Rodriguez liked the situation. (The author is being just a little too literal in his parallel, and besides that should be "Flock Leader".) There isn't any United Third-World Many-Headed Hydra of the Oppressed, guys, Featherston's Willing Executioners come in all shades.

Some people will be very glad that that big-toothed peanut-farming naval-academy jerk in Georgia bought it at the hands of the yankee partisans. It's almost like that unmitigated, treacherous, murderous, mendacious scoundrel in David Cornwell's Starbuck Chronicles, Billy Blythe, who did not have sex with that woman before he set the brothel afire.

Next year is *The Grapple*, and after that, *In at the Death*. As Anakin's son-in-law said, "I've got a bad feeling about this," when this history is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

LEST DARKNESS FALL

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE HIDDEN FAMILY

by Charles Stross

(Tor; 2005; ISBN 0-7653-1347-2; \$24.95)

"Book Two of *The Merchant Princes*"

When we left Miriam at the end of *The Family Trade*, she had survived having her entire life turned upside down and her entire world-view recast, several assassination attempts (some even by people who weren't members of her newly-discovered family), and some really blinding headaches. Now life will be getting really interesting.

This time, the someones trying to kill her are not from her newly discovered kin. Or are they?

In fact they are — but new to the rest of the Family as well. And indeed, this opens up a whole new field of endeavor, for it seems that there is a third alternate world that Miriam and her Family can travel to.

While the rest of her relatives were watching *Dallas*, evidently Miriam was reading *Lest Darkness Fall*, and so she resolves to introduce advanced (for the place) technologies into this Victorianesque world. That requires building a background, acquiring capital, and setting up an alibi when her more newly-discovered relatives decide there's something suspicious about this lady and attack.

Stross keeps his focus; the local repressive culture, while a significant factor, does not overwhelm the principal plot, the exploration of the now-wider ramifications of the Family. One of the founding sons disappeared on a mission, it seems, and now his descendants sort of heard the story their own way and are not very happy about the situation.

Add to that the other revelations to be found in this book, and some real surprises are in store. Miriam is facing grief and joy, gain and loss, and has a lot to look forward to when this story is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

ANIMAL PLANET

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE HALLOWED HUNT

by Lois McMaster Bujold

(EOS; 2005; ISBN 0-06-057462-3; \$24.95)

Sequel to *Paladin of Souls* (2001)

and *The Curse of Chalion* (2003)

Doing something different is always a

risk. No doubt editors and readers would have been glad to have an endless stream of twisty little stories, all of them alike, about the twisty little guy who in the current episode solved the problem for the incompetent superior who took all the credit, lather, rinse, repeat as needed. Which may have been why Lois McMaster Bujold did something different.

Even in this current scheme of things, there's always the temptation to do that. The Evil Overlord of the last book (trilogy, whatever) has been defeated, but behind him, it turns out, is an even Eviller Overlord who just hadn't been bothered to get involved before, so the diverse band of heroes who are the only ones who can defeat him have to turn to their task again, but this time it's personal. That well gets gone to a little too often. Which may have been why Lois McMaster Bujold did something different.

Which is to say, this is not a rerun of *The Curse of Chalion*, not even a variation of Miles Vorkosigan. It's about a different sort of person in a different place in the world facing a different sort of problem. Well not too different; Lord Ingrey has an identity crisis. It had to do with this wolf, see . . .

He can't let that distract him. There's been a killing, and since it happens to be a royal younger son, it's a matter of state. But since he was trying to do it a little too roughly to tonight's bedmate, there is a little more than that involved. And then there was the leopard . . .

You see, there is an ancient magic ritual for personal enhancement. The people who have undergone it have had an animal sacrificed, its spirit planted in theirs. This is, however, just a little bit illegal. Which gives Ingrey (wolf) and the would-be royal bedmate Lady Ijada (leopard) just a little something special in common.

The young folks, therefore, set off on a little excursion to the royal capital. That it may be for the purpose of Lady Ijada being either hanged for murder or burned alive for possession is merely a side comment, the main problem being the pressure on Ingrey to deal with his own wolf-spirit and the fact that the late prince was more than dubious himself.

When they do arrive, though, Ingrey finds himself in even more trouble, having to do with a most dubious legacy. It isn't just animal spirits that can be transferred, you see, and he seems to be next in line to receive a

really nasty one. Bringing this legacy of blood and terror to an end has been made easier by his efforts, but at the same time, it is far easier for it to be realized, and in a tense confrontation involving everyone Ingrey faces his choice for marriage, life, and whether he will be himself or not.

Bujold has been not unwilling, not unable to put in a quip or two. I'm minded of the climaxes of *A Civil Campaign* (2000) which flashes between Miles defending himself in a deadly serious judicial hearing in the Council of Counts, and his clone-twin Mark leading his researchers in a Three-Stoogesish butter-bug "butter" fight. But she can not write comedy, as well as write comedy.

COLD AS THE ICE QUEEN'S GRAVE

Review by Joseph T Major of

THRAXAS AND THE SORCERERS

by "Martin Scott" [Martin Millar]

(Baen; 2001, 2005; ISBN 0-7434-9908-5;

\$22.95)

Sequel to *Thraxas* and *Death and Thraxas*

<http://www.thraxas.com>

<http://www.martinmillar.com>

After carrying out a stakeout in the dead of winter (it's as cold as the ice queen's grave), in the middle of a blinding snowstorm, in a deserted warehouse, the hero finds the smuggler. Who, of course, offers him a grand bribe to forget about the whole thing. After all, he has friends in high places and will get off, and besides everyone else in the great wicked city is corrupt. What a shame he found the only man who wasn't, and the malefactor gets packed off to the pen.

And if Hawk and Fisher (from the Simon R. Green novels) saw this fat man getting himself outside of several pints of beer, toking up with a tharsis stick, and generally (and genially) debauching himself, they'd conclude that Thraxas was just another one of the lowlifes that throng this city of Turai, a place just like their own Haven. However, it's "Scott" writing this and not Green. Thraxas's tired cynical — indeed, nigh Flashmanesque — desire to work as little as possible, have nothing to do with politics, and generally stay out of trouble continues to be balked in this latest tale of the unwilling detective.

After being dragged unwillingly away from the Island of the Elves (they have had a

lot of practice at brewing beer, you know) Thraxas finds himself pitched into a bitter winter back home; it's as cold as the ice queen's grave. Then the trouble really begins, because the Assemblage of the Sorcerers Guild is about to begin, meeting in Turai to elect a new leader. A local, of course, if the incorruptible and implacable Deputy Consul Cicerius has anything to say about it. (Hey, Thraxas, would you like to meet this guy I know named Gordianus?)

And so, in a charivari of debauchery, drunkenness, drug use, sexual excess, and even a few magic spells here and there, the Assembly begins. As was said, Turai is grossly corrupt, and with them willing to spend whatever it takes to get Lisutaris, Mistress of the Sky, elected, you can imagine that the Assembly would be as lively as an American Legion convention.

Naturally there are one or two problems along the way! Makri, the half-human, quarter-Orc, quarter-Elf barmaid is having romantic problems on top of her usual anger. Far too many people are dying of overdoses of dwa. (This may be setting something up for down the line.) Someone has hired an assassin to get Lisutaris. It's as cold as the ice queen's grave. And Lisutaris can't be got away from her water pipe, except to have her hair done.



As Thraxas boozes himself through the details of the political maneuvering, more and more bodies begin to pile up. Particularly the one in his room. Fortunately, he had an alibi; unfortunately Lisutaris didn't, and it looks like she decided to cut down, or cut up, the competition. And then it gets down to the

final contest for the new leader . . .

However, it looks as if Thraxas will be again dragged out of his humble lodgings above the Avenging Axe, for there are still more episodes in his life to be revealed when this is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

Note that Baen has gone from paperbacks with two Thraxas adventures to hardbacks with one. I can understand, but it still deprives us of as big a Thraxas fix. Their hearts must be as cold as the ice queen's . . . all right, all right.

PROVIDENCE THEIR GUIDE

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE STONEHENGE GATE
by Jack Williamson

(Tor; 2005; ISBN 0-765-30897-5; \$24.95)

The thirty-third issue of *Amazing Stories* (Volume 3 Number 9) was cover-dated December 1928, and as usual was on the stands well before that month. Most of the readers wouldn't have cared that stocks were entering an era of perpetually increasing shareholder value (for values of "perpetual" of less than a year). Political reference works relegated the anti-Semitic party in the German Reichstag to a footnote. If you wanted to mail a letter it cost three cents, but long distance calls were rare and exorbitantly expensive. The twenties were roaring, even in the mundane world.

The reader of that ish would have many delights once the quarter (that's 25¢, \$0.25) payment was forked over, and the Frank R. Paul cover showing the man being drawn up into the strange alien vessel (they weren't quite yet up to anal probes, I guess) was opened. There was the final installment of Frank and George Wallis's serial *The World at Bay*.

Shorter works included "The Appendix and the Spectacles" by Miles J. Breuer, M.D. (Gernsback strove for credentials, which is why, though there were even then many such writing, Edward Elmer Smith is known as E. E. Smith, Ph.D. or just as "Doc" Smith), "Before the Ice Age" by Alfred Fritchey, "The Fifth Dimension" by Claire Winger Harris, "Flight to Venus" by Edwin K. Sloat, "Monorail" by George K. Locard, and "The Space Bender" by Edward L. Rementer. I know that among those who are reading these words are some who could have read those when they first appeared.

But these writers did little else, and are

mostly forgotten; I do not believe any of them are still alive.

There was, however, one other story in the magazine: "The Metal Man" by a new writer named Jack Williamson, a kid barely twenty years old. He didn't even get his name listed on the cover. His reception has improved some since then.

What exactly is the point of this historical digression? This novel has the kind of conceptual breadth and presentation that stems from that early era, that time when sciencefiction stories (that's what it says on the cover of that *Amazing*, "Scientifiction", in that insignia that is the insignia of First Fandom now) were arising from generalized adventure stories. And that was about the only place left where they could go. Oz had to shut itself off from aerial overview, the gate to the Moon Pool (at Nan Madol, Ponape) had to be destroyed in a catastrophe, and Shangri-La had to be hidden in the unreachable Tibetan Plateau. (Nowadays there is a Starbucks in the Emerald City, the batrachians of the Moon Pool make Nike shoes for pennies a day, and Shangri-La has a Maoist Self-Criticism and Self-Help Internet Service Provider.) Going to other planets to find that sense of adventure had become the last resort.

An attitude which our narrator, Will Stone (some commentators point out the resemblance of this name to "Will Stewart", the pseudonym under which Williamson published his "Seetee" stories) isn't quite looking forward to as our story begins. Rather, he and his three poker-playing buddies from the University of New Mexico, where Will teaches English (as you know, Jack Williamson was an English teacher at the U of NM; imagine, an English teacher who has actually written something in the real world!) are having a talk about something one of them found. Or may have found; ground-piercing radar indicates what appears to be a structure similar to Stonehenge under the Sahara Desert.

In an attitude straight out of the old adventure tales (or *Ghostbusters* for that matter) they decide to go and see. It would seem easy enough to get a research grant, or several in fact, to do this investigation, but apparently not. Similarly, for all that they complain about there not being any way to conveniently get there, in fact the problems of desert travel were thoroughly investigated during the nineteen-thirties by Bagnold,

Peniakoff, and others, including Almaszy. Hasn't Williamson seen *The English Patient*?

And so, Will Stone and his friends, Lupe, Derek, and Ram, set off to the Sahara. Ram, of course, is going back. It seems that, although he is Kikuyu (more or less), his great-grandmother was found wandering in the area. He also has a birthmark in the center of his forehead. Why am I reminded of Teal'c from *Stargate SG-1*?

Perhaps because the trilithons in the Sahara turn out to be a stargate. It doesn't help that they get split up, and have to go looking for each other.

The travels on other worlds are low-keyed; somolent, some might find them. Will and his friends find themselves on giant abandoned alien worlds (I'm reminded of the spaceports in André Norton's "Time Traders" series) and then in a world where there is just a little bit of a racial problem. Which, it turns out, Ram has a connection to . . .

The ending has a bitter realism about it. The Wonderful Outsiders Who Change the World gag just won't work any more, whether it's the other world or our own.

You could look it up for historical purposes, but more to the point, look it up for its own worth. They had to be readable back then, and that's one habit Williamson has kept.

MAUGHAM, OR: THE BRITISH AGENT

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE GREAT GAME:

The Myths and Reality of Espionage
by Frederick P. Hitz

(Vintage/Random House; 2004. 2005;
ISBN 0-375-72638-1; \$13.00)

W. Somerset Maugham had an interesting way to do research. (And other literary methods, such as being the first-person narrator of his novel *The Razor's Edge*, for example.) His famous novel *Of Human Bondage* is about the struggles of a medical student. Maugham was a medical student.

His fix-up novel, *Ashenden, or: The British Agent* (1928) is about a somewhat down-at-heels writer who accepts an assignment to run spies out of Switzerland, and all the grotesque, peculiar, and eccentric people he has to deal with. Now what did Maugham do during the Great War? Well, I'll give you a hint . . . he was in Switzerland!

The relationship between spy novelists and actual espionage agents is often very close. Chaps from Ian Fleming to “John LeCarré” [David Cornwell] got their start in Intelligence, though admittedly across the Big Pond there are people more like the late thriller writer “Philip Attlee”, also known as CIA official David Attlee Phillips.

Frederick P. Hitz had a long career in the spy business, ending with his being inspector general of the CIA under Bush and Clinton. In this work, he provides a brief explanation of what life in the espionage field is like, using illustrations from thrillers.

Hitz discusses all the things people expect as well as those they should expect. In the latter category, for example, you have “The Spy Bureaucracy”, and it’s a pity he didn’t have access to Charlie Stross’s *The Atrocity Archives* (2004) for examples of this.

In the expected category, he tells the tale of Obi-Wan’s attempt to recruit this Picard to work against Palpatine, er Smiley trying to recruit Karla, in a discussion of recruitment. Other examples of other topics are as far past as Kim in his eponymous novel (i.e., Kimball O’Hara, not Harold Adrian Russell Philby) and as now as 9/11. Which has some unusual ramifications:

... As one of my students demonstrated in a term paper two years ago, it would have been theoretically possible to put Osama bin Laden out of business by electronically diverting all the assets from his Swiss bank account rather than trying to find him in the desert with a cruise missile.

— *The Great Game*, Page 184

Richard Minter, call your hacker . . .

Other people discussed include a striking example of the personality of the defector, Oleg V. Penkovsky and the brilliant team who handled him. While you’ve never heard of Harold Shergold or George Kisevalter, those are names to conjure with in espionage history. Not to mention Greville Wynne, a man so diverse and prickly that “Nigel West” described him as such in *Seven Spies Who Changed the World* (1991). (For the life of Kisevalter, see *CIA Spymaster* by Clarence Ashley (2004); Shergold is covered in *The Spy Who Saved the World* by Jerrold L. Schecter and Peter S. Deriabin (1992).)

But as in the case of true crime as

contrasted with mystery stories, the real thing is far more diverse and insight-provoking:

. . . the protagonists in the spy fiction I am most familiar with pale in comparison to their real-life counterparts. They are not nearly as complex in character or bizarre in behavior as the real thing. . . the truth that makes you free in the real world of espionage is that no fictional account adequately captures the remarkable variety of twists and turns that a genuine human spy goes through in pursuit of his mission of treachery and betrayal.

— *The Great Game*, Page 189

OUT OF THE DUST SHALL ACHERON ARISE

Review by Joseph T Major of
EURABIA: The Euro-Arab Axis
by Bat Ye’or

(Farleigh Dickinson University Press; 2005;
ISBN 0-8386-4077-X; \$23.95)

“. . . I tell you he would restore Acheron by his magic, by the sorcery of a gigantic blood-sacrifice such as the world has never seen. He would enslave the world, and with a deluge of blood wash away the present and restore the past!”

— Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon* [*Conan the Conqueror*], Chapter 21, “Out of the Dust Shall Acheron Arise”

In a letter to Elron himself, John W. Campbell reserved “Arabian Nights” fantasies to the future discoverer of the science of modern mental health (January 23, 1939; *The John W. Campbell Letters Volume I*, Page 44). He was not able to enforce his writ, and as a result we find sprightly forward young women and caring concerned young men adventuring in a society completely without religion. If it had the religion it should have, the women would be house-bound and only permitted to wear black sacks, while the men would be studying religion and have a revulsion towards women. That wouldn’t be much of a story. It isn’t much of a reality.

Eugene Lyons observed the disconnect between what progressives believed and what they supported; pacifists praised the Red Army, feminists praised the female manual laborers in the streets of Moscow, free-speech

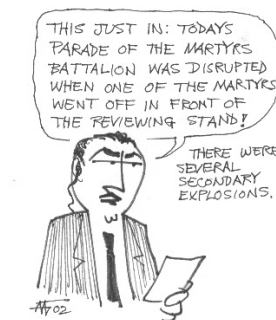
advocates praised Soviet censorship, eminent jurists of historic struggles for rights and freedom praised the purge trials (*The Red Decade* (1941)). Their descendants did so in lands from China to Nicaragua (Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims* (1981)). Communism is pretty much a dead issue now, but Islam seems to have taken its place in the hearts and minds of the world.

In this work, the author of *Islam and Dhimmitude* (2002) discusses the means and the consequences of the intellectual dhimmization of Europe; how the nations of Europe simply quit resisting the idea of Islam.

It began with the OPEC oil embargo. In its wake, the ministers of the European Community decided that they needed to understand Islam better. So they began the Euro-Arab Dialogue. A dialogue requires participation on both sides, and the Arabs demonstrated how compromising with someone who won’t compromise is a good way to lose.

Islam and Dhimmitude describes how the non-Islamic communities under the rule of Islam were deprived of their civil rights. As a result, their members adopted a servile mind-set; the equivalent of a battered woman coming to believe that she deserved it. This book describes how that mind-set is already becoming adopted in Europe.

Part of it is anti-Semitism. The propaganda about “neocon Zion Nazis” that is becoming more and more mainstream in the United States is already normalized in Europe.



thrilling sequel to *La Rabbia e l’Orgoglio* [*The Rage and The Pride* (2001, 2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. I #6)]. There’s another observer saying things that can’t be permitted to be said.

Europe has secularized itself, and far from having achieved a post-religious utopia, it has merely opened itself to another religion, and in an expression that denies the values that the secularizers value. “The words of this wizard stand on their heads,” Gimli said about Saruman, but now the old fellow seems to be an European Union spokesman.

There is a certain chicken-and-egg problem here; did the creeping dhimmization of Eurabia stem from the formation of the Euro-Arab Dialogue, or was the dialogue the result of that? Bat Ye’or here trends dangerously close to McCarthyite simplification by assuming that the idea was a result of the organization.

Multiculturalism has come a cropper here. It’s based on the “it’s a small world, after all” idea; that everyone, like the dolls in the Disney World diorama, is cast from the same mold even if dressed in different costumes and made from different-color plastics. So the Islamicists are Just Like Us down below, and if we just sit down with them over a cup of herbal tea all these little differences can be worked out.

It’s not very useful to approach in a spirit of compromise someone to whom the concept is alien; the compromiser ends up giving everything away. This is what is happening in Eurabia, as all the compromise is on the side of the non-Muslims.

There is part of a chapter here that deserves to be an entire book in itself. One of the tropes of popular history is the story of Islamic Granada, the paradise of tolerance and multiculturalism, where three religions worked together in harmony and created beauty. From the history of Islam in general, one would wonder what the special circumstances that created this lack of pressure. Bat Ye’or argues that far from being a tolerant place, Granada was just another land of dhimmitude.

Thomas Sowell discussed the denial and disconnect of public policy in *The Vision of the Anointed* (1995). Like Lyons, he pointed out this disconnect between policy and reality, this denial of results. This is a case where the difference is being written in blood, the blood that flies from the blown-apart targets of suicide bombers (defended by those who believe they will never have to deal with that personally). This is a deluge of blood meant to wash away the present and restore the past, the very un-ideal thirteenth-century Islam of dhimmitude and backwardness.

The reaction to this book has been interesting. Its opponents don't care to discuss the issues raised, merely using the magic word "racist" to end all discussion.

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

Review by Joseph T Major of
*EMPIRES OF THE WORD:
A Language History of the World*
by Nicholas Ostler
(HarperCollins; 2005;
ISBN 0-06-621086-0; \$29.95)

This power is wonderfully developed in all Martians, and accounts largely for the simplicity of their language and the relatively few spoken words exchanged even in long conversations. It is the universal language of Mars, through the medium of which the higher and lower animals of this world of paradoxes are able to communicate to a greater or less extent, depending upon the intellectual sphere of the species and the development of the individual.

— *A Princess of Mars*, Edgar Rice Burroughs

Jasoomians (or in their own terms, the people of Earth) lack this ability to communicate directly from mind to mind, and therefore must depend upon completely spoken languages. Which, as all such things do, change and shift, go out of use as the times change, are adopted, modified, or revised for various reasons, and in general put scholars to great effort to keep them straight.

Languages have been a part of the spread of humanity. This is a history of language as a part of civilization. The telling of this story is hampered by some outside problems; it cannot tell the history of those civilizations without writing. Not always, as Ostler does describe the linguistic spread of the Aztecs and Incas. (The Mayans had writing, but thanks to Fr. de Landa their records were reduced primarily to temple inscriptions; the language survived, and is still written in Roman letters . . .)

The history of writing he covers begins in the middle east. It was somewhat surprising to learn that, in a sense, the dominant language of the Persian Empire was not Persian, but Akkadian — not really a spoken language any longer, either. But an official or merchant needing to communicate with

someone who spoke a different language would use a scribe who, like all scribes, was bilingual in Akkadian and would write the message in that language. The recipient would find a local scribe who would translate the message into the local language — as long as you could trust the translation process, it worked.



Later eras saw the rise and fall of Greek, the rise and splintering of Latin, and now, the dominance of English. Whether this will continue is another matter; Ostler argues that what ensures the dominance of a language is a religious imperative. Strangely enough, he does not find Arabic all that dominant, arguing that it is too dialectal. (The way that in *Too Many Magicians* Lord Darcy could tell the casino operator that he himself had learned better Arabic than what the other guy spoke.)

Chinese of course also has a dialect-become-language problem. Ostler takes the trouble to point out that "Mandarin" is an outsider's word for what is becoming the official dominant dialect of the Chinese family of languages; the principal government of its speakers refer to it as *Putonghua* "national language", and *Putonghua* is replacing a variety of languages or dialects. Interestingly enough, for example, the Jurchens called Manchu took up *Putonghua* with such enthusiasms that their own language is extinct in Manchuria, and, as Xibo (Hsi-po) is only found among the descendants of a Manchu bannerman garrison in Sinkiang (Xinjiang) — which was why the Mandarin Chuan Ch'ing-fu (Zhuan Qingfu) was so identified with it. [He is better known, of course, by his byname of "Fu Manchu".]

In lesser chapters, Ostler touches on such spreads as the Portuguese maritime empire, which for all that it once dominated the

Indian Ocean, has as its biggest legacy Brazil. Or the rise of Russian and its spread eastward.

Empires of the Word examines history from a different angle, providing new perspective. Hm, how did dialects of Westron evolve from Numenorean . . .

AGES IN CHAOS

Review by Joseph T Major of
FINDING ATLANTIS:

*A True Story of Genius, Madness, and an
Extraordinary Quest for a Lost World*
by David King
(Harmony Books; 2005;
ISBN 1-4000-4752-8; \$23.00)

In James A. Michener's *Space*, the con man calling himself "Leopold Strabismus" decides, all the better to make his cock-eyed ideas sound plausible, to pretend to an advanced education. But an American school wouldn't do; he might be caught out. So he picked one with a nice euphonious name, Uppsala University in Sweden. Had Michener known about Uppsala's most unusual faculty member, he might have added yet another theme to Strabismus's flying saucer roguery.

Olaf Rudbeck of the University of Uppsala was an extraordinary person. Even more than Thomas Jefferson, he seemed to exemplify the polymath; though he was trained as a physician (and was one of the first to describe the lymphatic system), he was an architect and builder, and was the first to use stratigraphy, the laying down of layers of soil, in archaeology. He was famous in his time, the latter part of the seventeenth century, so much so that he could turn down an invitation to join the Royal Society of Britain.

If he isn't known as well nowadays, it may be because of the target of his vast resources of erudition and intellect. For the greater part of his active life, Olaf Rudbeck was utterly and totally devoted to his great idea: proving that Atlantis had been, not in the Atlantic, not in America, not in the Aegean, but in Sweden, indeed in Uppsala. This was his life's work, the focus of his intellect, the goal of his efforts.

Everywhere he looked he found proofs. The topography of Uppsala resembled Plato's description. The original Greek letters resembled Swedish runes. The names of the Gods had Swedish origins. Everything fit, and he wrote four fat volumes explaining it.

There would be some trouble on the way. His patron had problems with the court during reign changes. There were challenges to his own status; he suffered a very distracting and degrading set of hearings over corruption in his building projects. And finally a great fire burned down most of Uppsala, including his house with all his research notes.

What King attributes as the primary reason for Rudbeck having become ignored was not so much general skepticism as that Sweden became itself irrelevant; imperial overstretch snapped back with a vengeance. From being a great scholar of a world power, Rudbeck became a nobody from nowhere in particular.

The book could have used more analysis of why Rudbeck's "derivations" and discoveries were wrong. He looked for what he intended to find and unsurprisingly found it. But he defended his theories straightforwardly, and not by using the evasions that his inquisitors were ill, or that no matter what his failings were in one particular field, he was a generalist and therefore it didn't matter.

For a case of a powerful mind gone powerfully wrong, this is hard to beat. I doubt Heinlein had heard of this fellow when he named the family in *Citizen of the Galaxy* — Thorby is surely nothing like this — but one never knows. Everything is a source to the good writer, as Olof Rudbeck would have been first to acknowledge.

TENNESSEE WALKERS & KENTUCKY FUTURITY

by Lisa

This Saturday, October 1, was the Kentucky Futurity. There will not be a Triple Crown winner this year since two different horses won the two earlier events. However, it was still be a good show. Also that weekend the Horse Park, in addition to the usual champions, had Tennessee Walker champions, The Black Night Shade, Alabama Cash, Be Touched, and Mistress as guests. Tennessee Walkers are famed for their smooth, comfortable gaits. They were bred from the now extinct Narragansett Pacers, Canadian horses, Morgans, Standardbreds, Thoroughbreds and Saddlebreds.

Knowing this was informative but did not prepare for me for what I saw. I expected something like Saddlebreds. What I saw was closer to the Lipizzans. These horses danced

in a fiery walk. I have a model of a Tennessee Walker named Midnight Sun but I thought his gait was exaggerated until I saw a gray mare named Mistress dancing like gray fire. We didn't get to see the Black Night Shade but I doubt he was that much better than Mistress. Perhaps someday one of the Walker champions will return to the Horse Park as a permanent resident at the Hall of Champions.

The Kentucky Futurity went to Strong Yankee, who had won the Yonkers Trot. He won the first heat, which we arrived too late to see. Hambletonian winner Vivid Photo won the second heat so the two horses duelled it out in a third heat which Strong Yankee won despite a strong effort by Vivid Photo.

AN AWARD WELL DESERVED

by Steven H Silver
(Reprinted from *Argentus* #5)
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There are no lifetime achievement Hugos, which is a pity, because it means that often fans will vote for an inferior work to recognize an author's work over a period of years instead of a superior work by a newer author who shows signs of receiving future nominations. In one of the cases when the fans seem to have awarded a Hugo for lifetime achievement, it was given posthumously, and the recipient's husband declined the honor.

However, there is a means by which an award can be given by the fans to recognize the lifetime achievement of a person who has had an enormous influence on science fiction over the course of her lifetime. Each year, the committee responsible for hosting the World Science Fiction Convention may elect to present a special award to a deserving person.

In 2004, the committee responsible for Noreason IV elected to present an award to Erwin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss. Judging from the applause which exploded throughout the hall, nobody could find any reason to fault the committee for its decision, and Filthy Pierre has certainly done more than enough for fandom to merit the award he was honored with, and as much additional recognition as can be meted out to him.

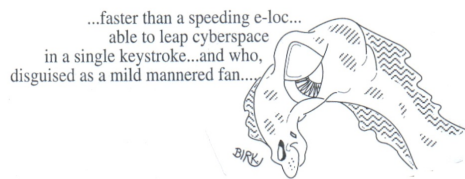
What other types of achievement are worthy of such recognition. One achievement which merits such recognition is introducing a new form of book to the masses. In the modern age, this would be various forms of e-

books, but two generations ago, in the aftermath of World War II, it meant introducing the mass market paperback to the United States at a time when paper was being rationed.

Another achievement might be the foundation of not one, but two major publishing houses that have been responsible for much of the science fiction published over the years. Moreso because in many ways those houses pioneered modern science fiction publishing.

Would publishing a blockbuster, genre bending novel merit such an award. A work so integral to the history of the field that it is inconceivable to imagine what fantasy would be like today without it, if fantasy even existed?

Betty Ballantine (b.1919) introduced paperbacks to the United States and founded, along with her husband, Bantam Books in 1945. Seven years later, they founded Ballantine Books which eventually launched the Ballantine Adult Fantasy line and later started Del Rey for science fiction and fantasy in 1977. In the 1960s, she bought the rights to publish an authorized edition of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* in the US, helping to introduce Tolkien's writings to the masses and pay Professor Tolkien for his work.



...faster than a speeding e-loc...
able to leap cyberspace
in a single keystroke...and who,
disguised as a mild mannered fan....

For all that she has done, Betty Ballantine's name does not necessarily come to mind when one thinks of the pioneers of science fiction. Nevertheless, she has done as much for the field as John W. Campbell, Jr., Hugo Gernsback, or Robert A. Heinlein. While Judith Merril's name comes to mind among pioneering women in science fiction, it was Betty Ballantine who published Merril's 1950 anthology *Shot in the Dark*.

No rocket ship or plaque could begin to pay Betty Ballantine back for everything she has done for science fiction, or publishing in general. However, we can show her some appreciation for the lifetime of work she has

put in to make science fiction what it is today.

Science fiction and fantasy fans, whether media fans, readers, or just convention fans, owe a tremendous debt to Betty Ballantine. This is a debt which can never be repaid, although, in the admonitions of Robert A. Heinlein, should be paid forward by each and every one of us. Nevertheless, while we may not be able to repay the debt, we can, we should, we must, insist that a Worldcon committee, perhaps LACon IV in 2006 or Nippon 2007, recognize Betty Ballantine on behalf of all of fandom and give her the award she has earned.

POE'S HEART AND THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER: Exploring The Effect of Anxiety on Our Brains and Our Culture

by Richard Restak, M.D.
(Harmony Books, 2004, 235 pages/indexed,
\$22.00, ISBN # 1400048508)
Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

The book's title refers to Edgar Allen Poe's protagonist in "The Tell-Tale Heart" short story. Having killed a man, the main character develops deep anxiety from guilt, leading him to imagine that he hears the heart beat of his deceased victim. Meaning: anxiety can be a strong, and negative, force in some humans. The mountain climber allusion relates to those who fearlessly, and apparently, with little anxiety, climb such peaks as Mount Everest. In brief: anxiety doesn't have to inhibit.

Anxiety is defined as "A state of uneasiness and distress about future uncertainties; apprehension; worry," according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

Today, more than ever before, many people are highly anxious. The book points out that, "...over 19 million Americans suffer from some form of anxiety dysfunction." Why? Well, thanks to modern technology, more is learned about what's going wrong in the world. And that information comes around the clock, seven days a week. Certainly, events like 9/11 in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania are a part of this heightened anxiety, too. With so much bad news, people are tenser. And it's making some of them anxious to the point of experiencing panic and anxiety attacks.

That's the bad news. The good news is,

according to Dr. Restak, the book's author, anxiety can benefit humans. This life saving/or enhancing trait lets people know of internal conflict, so something can be done to resolve or alleviate the problem. And for those who have an inordinate amount of anxiety, they can learn to cope with it and/or to medicate malady. And here he's not talking about old self-remedies for anxiety, such as consuming alcohol or becoming a workaholic. He's discussing effective, nonaddictive pharmacological drugs such as Prozac plus attitudinal changes

The author explains the difference between fear and anxiety. The former being a reaction to a specific external threat: a bear met face to face in the woods, for instance. Once that threat passes, so does the fear. Anxiety, on the other hand, is more of a general feeling of unease, an internal conflict. The anxious sufferer may not even know what's causing that feeling. But it effects his life negatively.

The amount of anxiety felt by individuals, of course, varies. Researchers suspect it depends upon the genes. No one, however, knows exactly which genes are responsible.

Restak writes, "[...]. My point here is that people differ in their susceptibility to developing anxiety not because of 'neurosis' or a 'weak will' but, we're learning, because of genetic susceptibility: Nature dealt them a 'bad hand.'"

In the epilogue, the author lays out ways to learn how to cope with your anxiety, like thinking specifically about what makes you anxious, recording these thoughts in a journal, learning how stop thinking that way, and more.

The idea isn't to rid yourself completely of anxiety, because it's a very necessary life force. But you shouldn't let it ruin your life, either. It's a survival mechanism. So it has to be kept in proper perspective.

Writer of over a dozen other books, Restak is a neurologist and a neuropsychiatrist. He also teaches neurology at a major university hospital.

Recommended.

THE CHERRYH ODYSSEY

edited by: Edward Carmien 2004
Borgo Press/an imprint of Wildside Press
\$19.95 trade paper
a book review by E.B. Frohvet

The distant origin of this semi-academic

book, according to the editor's Preface, dates to the winter of 1978 when he chanced across the DAW paperback of *Well of Shiuan*. ("A novel of science fiction and fantasy. . ." As the Gates, and Changeling the Gatesword, are made things, the product of technology, I'd have to say clearly SF, though the Morgaine Cycle books do read like fantasy.) Carmien argues that Cherryh is under-read and under-appreciated. "Cherryh is commonly knot.rn as a hard read."

James Gunn observes that, "SF operates by using one of two strategies: by estranging the familiar or by familiarizing the strange. Cherryh has specialized in the second. . ."

Jane Fancher, C. J. Cherryh's good friend and business partner, has written a backgrounder; a biographical sketch on the author's education and how it has affected her writing. Fancher makes the interesting point that an SF writer needs a "deliberately shallow sea of information", lest the story get buried in too much detail. (The besetting fault of the, admittedly early, *Hunter of Worlds*.)

Cherryh's academic background is in Latin, and classical history. When Morgaine says of the vicious *ghal*-lord Hetharu, "His people fear him, but they do not love him" (*Fires of Azeroth*, chapter 3) that's a paraphrase of Caligula's motto *Oderint dum metuant*: "Let them hate me so long as they fear me."

Literary critic Burton Raffel undertakes the thankless task of trying to defend Cherryh's work as literature. If, as Dr. Tom Shippey has pointed out, the literary establishment continues to reject and resent Tolkien, they're not going to accept Cherryh.

Possibly the most entertaining read in the book is noted SF historian John Clute's review of *Hammerfall*. Beneath Clute's acid, damning-with-faint-praise dismissal of a ponderous, clunky book, a sense of genuine puzzlement comes through: Why would Cherryh, a writer of proven quality, do such a thing? Amid the praise and personal appreciations from other contributors, this is a striking cautionary note., (In defense of Clute, who hardly needs my defense, I had a similar response to *Cyteen*, widely considered one of the author's major works. Just couldn't get into it at all.)

Heather Stark draws a sharp line between Cherryh's SF and her fantasy, accusing the latter of "endless mythic fog". I agree, though that's an occupational hazard of fantasy writers. Janice Bogstad takes the opposite side

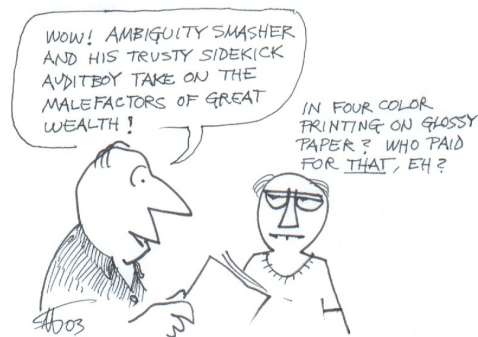
of the same argument in analyzing the author's "Slavic Fantasy" trilogy of 1989-1991.

The contributor to this book most recognizable to the fanzine community is Janine Stinson, who illustrates "The Human as Other" citing five examples from C.J. Cherryh books. (One could certainly trace an earlier lineage of "the human as other" in, e.g., Andre Norton -- an early influence on Cherryh — see for instance *Catseye*, *Storm Over Warlock*, *The X Factor*.)

Academic scholar and feminist Janice Crosby proposes Cherryh as a feminist writer, citing Morgaine as a "dominant" figure despite the fact that Nils Vanye is the viewpoint character. While Crosby makes some valid points, her narrow and didactic view grates. She openly says that women need escapist fantasy because good men like Vanye "are rare, the stuff of legends." That's unfair and prejudicial verging on sexist.

Susan Bernardo's scholarly paper on identity themes in *Cyteen* is so pompously dense as to be virtually unreadable, at least to one who is not a devoted admirer of that novel.

A "selective" bibliography assembled by Stan Szalewicz is a useful reference for further research; although, like most of this book, it is geared more to the academic reader. It barely acknowledges the existence of, and makes virtually no effort to dip into or understand, science fiction fandom.



One thing that struck me particularly is that a word which is central to reading Cherryh, never appears in this book. That word is "loyalty". Every C.J. Cherryh story that I've read has been a crisis-of-loyalty story. (Fancher uses "fealty", specifically to define the *ilin*-oath; but that's not the same

thing at all.) I also mentioned in one of my past articles that Cherryh has an underutilized knack for addressing faith issues: that's hardly mentioned here. This says to me that while the experts and scholars in this book are worth reading, we fans who read science fiction for love of the genre still have something to contribute to the discussion.

CANDY REVIEW

Reese's Chocolate Lovers Cup
Reese's Peanut Butter Lovers Cup
Review by Johnny Carruthers

The latest limited edition Reese's Cups are an attempt to resolve that one burning question for fans of the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. That question, of course, is "Which do you love more – the chocolate or the peanut butter?"

In an attempt to answer that question, Hershey has released the Chocolate Lovers Cup and the Peanut Butter Lovers Cup. This time, the limited editions are virtually the same as the original Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. It's just that in each case, one of the components is emphasized more than the other.

In fact, I can find no discernable difference between the Chocolate Lovers Cup and the original Reese's Cup. The Chocolate Lovers Cup might have slightly more chocolate than the original, but if it does, it's not something that can be readily detected by the naked eye.

On the other hand, with the Peanut Butter Lovers Cup, there is a noticeable difference. Where the original Reese's Cup has a shell of milk chocolate surrounding the peanut butter, only the sides and bottom of the shell are chocolate on the Peanut Butter Lovers Cup. The top of the shell is peanut butter, as if too much of the peanut butter filling had been placed into the milk chocolate cup. Which, I suppose, is precisely what happened.

Both of these limited editions taste exactly like the original Reese's Cup. The only difference is that, depending on whether you are eating a Chocolate Lovers Cup or a Peanut Butter Lovers Cup, the flavor of one or the other is dominant.

These limited editions were released in conjunction with a contest that Hershey is sponsoring. To enter, go to the Reese's website before September 30, 2005, and answer whether you are a chocolate lover or a peanut butter lover. Once you answer the

question, you are directed to fill out an entry form. The address for the Reese's website is:

<http://www.reeses.com>

The last time I checked, it looked like an overwhelming majority of us are chocolate lovers, because chocolate held a lead of 74% to 26% for peanut butter. Keep in mind that this is subject to change, please. There may be a number of determined peanut butter lovers who haven't voted yet. And you can vote/enter the contest more than once – you are limited to only one vote/entry per day.

I have no idea how long these limited editions will stay on the shelves. Given that the contest runs through September 30, I'm guessing that Hershey made enough of both so that the Chocolate Lovers Cup and the Peanut Butter Lovers Cup will probably stay around through most of the contest period.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Yorkie
Review by Johnny Carruthers

I found this candy bar in the international foods aisle at Meijer. It's a British import, made by Nestle. And while it's a wonderful candy bar, unfortunately it probably could never get wider distribution here in the US.

There is nothing in the Yorkie bar itself that would prevent wider distribution. It's pure milk chocolate. It's also three to four times thicker than the average chocolate bar, which is one reason I think it would be popular if it could get wider distribution. The label on the wrapper said "Original," so there may be other varieties of the Yorkie of which I am unaware. (The original was the only variety that Meijer had on its shelves.)

While the bar is, as I said, wonderful, it's the wrapper that would probably prevent the wider distribution it should get. The Yorkie's wrapper is one of the most delightful pieces of politically incorrect packaging that I have had a pleasure to see. The wrapper proudly states that "It's not for girls!" and cautiously advises the buyer, "Do not feed the birds!" The O in the "Yorkie" logo shows a stylized drawing of a female, similar to what you see on the door of the women's restroom, in the red circle-and-slash meaning "NO."

The feminists would pitch a fit if the Yorkie bar gained wider distribution. And I'm talking about the ones that Rush Limbaugh usually refers to as "feminazis."

I'm talking about the feminists who, long ago, apparently had anything resembling a sense of humor surgically removed. Too bad, because I can just imagine the perfect commercial campaign for the Yorkie bar. Just picture the honorable governor of the state of California declaring that "This is not a candy bar for girly men!"

Since this is an import, it will probably be difficult to find. As I said, I picked it up in the international foods aisle at Meijer, so if that chain is in your area, you should be able to find it. I've also seen it in the specialty foods section at Liquor Barn, a Louisville-area chain of liquor/party stores. Barring a trip to England, the best advice I have would be to check any stores that specialize in imported foods, and see if they carry Yorkie bars in stock.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

SMARTIES

Review by Rodney Leighton

Are SMARTIES kin to M&Ms?

Prompted by Sheryl's query in the last issue, I purchased a few samples and scanned some shelves in a store. I confess to missing part of an opportunity. I spent some time in Sobeys; a large grocery store, spending money I didn't have. In spite of having found some larger bags of SMARTIES there one time, I neglected to look too closely at these things while in that store. On the way home, I remembered the idea I had had of picking up some of these things and typing what will very likely be my final small press contribution of 2005 and possibly ever. So I stopped at NEEDS; which is a subsidiary of Sobeys. They had a small selection of these candies. But, after all, it is only a fairly small convenience store out in the boon docks.

They had about 4 packages of M&Ms. I bought a 48 gram package which has a bunch of STAR WARS PHRASES AND IMAGES ON IT. I might have known the contents would not be much good. This one is dark chocolate; I think there were 2 or 3 other types on the shelf. These are bitty candies with a solid shell which come in different colours; 7 in this package; with an M on each one. Don't know what the shell is. Inside is solid cocoa from the taste. Not to my taste at all.

The other package is 150 grams. This one is peanut; they also had chocolate of this size. The candies have that shell but are larger;

about the size and shape of a swallow's egg, if that description is of any value to you city folks. These are really good. This package at least comes in red and blue; green and yellow and brown and orange. I am sitting here eating them, drinking chocolate milk and trying to think up a way of describing these things.

Alas, my reviewing abilities died with my mother, for some reason.

Remember that larger bag of SMARTIES I mentioned? Other than the M embossed on most of the candies in this bag, there ain't, if my 3 month old memory is any good, a damned bit of difference in what is in this bag and what was in that SMARTIES bag.

SMARTIES, as a rule, come in small boxes and are flat, more or less. I bought a normal sized box; 56 g. Same texture; same colours except there are a few pink SMARTIES. No noticeable difference in taste.

As mentioned I have seen, and eaten, SMARTIES of a larger size and shape which come in bags. Also chocolate bars in various sizes. The one I bought yesterday is 45 g which is the smallest they have; I have seen them twice as large and 3 times as large. Opening it up, I can tell you that the bar is divided into small squares which form a continuous bar. SMARTIES is emblazoned on each section. Bar is your basic milk chocolate bar. Each one has numerous bitty SMARTIES embedded in the bar. Based mostly on experiences of driving down the road while eating these things and finding SMARTIES falling here and there, I can tell you they are about one third the size of regular SMARTIES but are similar in all other aspects.

I had thought of comparing the nutrition facts printed on the packages. However, I am not sure if they are comparable; there is no such info on the SMARTIES box. Comparing the larger bag of M&Ms and the SMARTIES bar, I note that the bar has 19% Fat compared to 16% in the M&Ms; it has 37% Trans Fat compared to 21%. No wonder they taste so good. But the bar lists no Fiber, or Fibre, to be accurate in reporting, compared to 5% for the M&Ms, which lists no Vitamin A whereas the bar lists 6%.

Probably the bar accounts for this and the coating on the M&Ms accounts for the fiber.

Both of these products emanate from Ontario. Apparently Lloyd Penney hasn't done any proof reading for them. North York,

the listed home of SMARTIES and Nestle, is, I think, a Toronto suburb. The home of EEFEM Inc., makers of M&Ms, is listed as Bolton, Ont. I have no idea where it is but it wouldn't surprise me a bit if it is next door to North York and that EFFEM is a NESTLE subsidiary.

Based on this very unscientific survey, I see very little difference in these two products. No M&M bars that I have ever seen. I don't know if there are regular size M&Ms comparable to regular size SMARTIES. But the larger, not quite large enough to be Robin's egg size, are indistinguishable. Except for the M.

Makes for a tasty breakfast. Although, I suppose, some nutrition minded person will castigate me for making a breakfast of M&Ms and SMARTIES and chocolate milk.

E-DAY: THE OCTOBER 3 ECLIPSE

by Sue Burke

<http://patchword.com/sueburke/eng/index.asp>

The morning was cool and cloudless. My husband and I sat on the grass next to some rose bushes at the esplanade of Madrid's Planetarium. More than 2,000 people had come to witness the first annular eclipse of the Sun visible in Spain since April 1, 1764. It was about 10:30 a.m., still 25 minutes away from the big moment, but the Sun already had become a remarkable crescent.

One of the young women sitting behind us looked up. "¡Ay! ¡Qué chulo!" she said to her friend: *Wow! It's so neat!*

An LED screen in front of the Planetarium offered a live view of the Sun, or from time to time, explanatory videos. The orbit of the Moon placed it farther away from the Earth at that moment, so it would not cover all of the Sun as in a total eclipse. People on the ground in a narrow band from Spain to Somalia would see it cover 90% the Sun and create a ring of light in the sky.

Of course, no one should look at the Sun directly, so the Planetarium gave away 1,600 Eclipse Shades™, cardboard glasses with plastic lenses so dark nothing dimmer than the Sun could be seen through them. Someone had put a pair on the statue of former Madrid Mayor Enrique Tierno Galván that presides over the esplanade, and groups of friends photographed each other standing beside it, everyone in their Shades.

Other people held the glasses as an

improvised filter over the camera lens of their mobile telephones. More professionally minded photographers, there in abundance, used real filters. School groups, retirees, but most of all young people had come out: unemployment is high among young adults in Spain, so they had the time and proper finances to appreciate a free show.

Refreshments, so to speak, were provided by Wrigley's, which introduced a new brand of chewing gum that day to Spain: Trex Eclipse. Representatives handed out free packs. The advertising campaign called the gum "intensely refreshing." It tasted very minty.

Over loudspeakers, an astronomer described other eclipses. By 10:45 the light was noticeably dimmer, like a cloudy day, and, next to us, the light diffracting through the tiny spaces between the leaves of the rose bushes dappled tiny crescent shapes on the ground.

A Telemadrid TV station helicopter began to circle the Planetarium, photographing a sea of people staring through cardboard glasses at the sky. Some people waved.

The moment approached. The crescent shrank into a tiny sliver.

The Planetarium had arranged for a violinist, Ara Malikian, to play his composition, *Moon Shadow*, during the peak minutes of the eclipse. He was introduced to applause. The work made use of the ability of a violinist to play two strings at once, the two notes representing the two heavenly bodies as they reached harmony — though he was hard to hear over the TV helicopter.

The Moon kept moving, and, finally, to more applause and shouts of "¡Vamos!" *All right!*, it made a ring out of the Sun.

For 4 minutes and 11 seconds, a beautiful halo of light floated overhead, too brilliant to see without shades, wonderful but weird. The shadows under the rose bushes became rings. The light was dimmer, but shadows sparkled with a new geometry. People looked up and around with delight.

Then, the ring thinned at the bottom, and there was a flash of a Baily's bead, a pearl of light that marked the last rays of the Sun passing through a valley on the edge of the surface of the Moon. The Sun became a crescent again, to more applause.

The violinist explored the slow separation of the two spheres, ending with two sustained, simultaneous notes, to yet more applause. The crescent gradually grew, and eventually

people began to drift off to the street, pausing for one last observation of the Sun through their souvenir glasses before they entered the subway and returned to their normal Monday routine.

This eclipse was part of Saros 134, which began on June 22, 1248 and will end on August 6, 2510. The next eclipse in that saros will be on October 14, 2023 and will also be an annular eclipse. The path will run from Oregon southwest through Texas, then across the Gulf of Mexico to Yucatan and down Central America, then through Columbia and Brazil.

— JTM

FANZINES

Argentus Special Edition, #5
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Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA
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<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>
<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Special Edition is a gameshow edition, recounting appearances

ranging from Steve's turn on *Jeopardy!* down to Guy Lillian's on *The Who What or Where Game*.

Banana Wings #23

Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES, UK
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The Best of MOZ Issues One to Six

Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road, Mississauga, ON L4Y 1C8 CANADA
mmoore@pathcon.com

Beyond Bree August 2005, September 2005

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Catchpenny Gazette #10 Autumn 2005

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Jomp, Jr. #24 July 2005

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MT Void V. 24 #6 August 5, 2005 — V. 24 #14 September 30, 2005

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Opuntia #58.1 August 2005 #58.3 September 2005

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Steam Engine Time #4 January 2005

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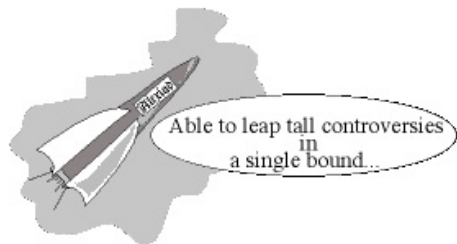
The Zine Dump #9

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



Hope everyone has fun at Ditto!

Letters, we get letters



From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** August 15, 2005
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA
22204-1552 USA

Thank you for *Alexiad* #4.4, which arrived on August 10th, my 74th birthday. Also on that day, James C. McBride, an acquaintance, died at age 25. He had worked with Homeland Security before joining the DC Police where he was Rookie of the Year in 2004 for the 1st Precinct. Also, he was going to law school, and was engaged to be married. Lee liked him a lot, so we went to the funeral Saturday. (He died in the line of duty, riding his mountain bike for bike patrol practice in serious heat and humidity, and the cause of death was listed as hyponatremia, the result of drinking too much water.) They gave him a fine funeral, with the deputy mayor, the chief of police, and others speaking, and hundreds of off-duty police in attendance, blocking off 16th Street NW with two fire trucks suspending a garrison flag from touching ladders. Also a bagpiper, the full police honors, including the family following the hearse in police cars. Impressive and moving — I wish I'd known him better.

Nigerian emails: I recently got a letter addressed to "Alexis A(rnaldus) Gilliland", from South Africa, offering me 20 percent of six million dollars for the use of my bank account. The middle name makes me think they got it from a reference work of some sort. I turned it over to the post office, but a stamped letter has to be a bigger investment than an email.

The standard of spelling and of plausibility has been declining. Nowadays I get emails saying "I want to buy something from your

store." (Using a stolen credit card number and asking for a big cash rebate, I understand.) Buy what?

Cats or books, maybe.

— LTM

Lisa considers replacing her car, and says that proper American driveways have proper American cars parked in them. Well, not exactly, it depends on how you define proper. The rising price of gas has resulted in fewer sales of highly profitable SUVs, with the result that GM and Ford have had their bonds downgraded to junk. Their problem is of long standing, rooted in settling with the unions by accepting long term costs (retirement and health benefits) to avoid short term costs (wages.) And now the long term costs are killing them in the face of nonunion competition from the Japanese. Who built newer plants in the American South specifically to avoid unions. My next car is probably going to be a hybrid, for what it's worth.

Lisa found a case of a guy who drove 30 hours on one tank of gas in a Prius, during the evacuation of coastal Texas. Don't know how much wear there was on the batteries and electric motor, but . . .

— JTM

Marty Helgesen considers my letter at some length, even to the point of Googling "Josephus Jesus" to come up essentially blank. Perhaps he should try "Josephus Pontius Pilate," since looking through Google is like panning for gold in that most of what you find is always useless, even as proving a negative is always hard (and if you don't want to find something, it can be real easy to miss.)

I was indeed mistaken about the specifics of the Holy Inquisition, wrongly using it as a generic, and he could have properly said "admit" instead of striking it out. However, I notice that he doesn't deny my assertion that the Church has always had other means of enforcement, saying only: "What a marvelous statement, meaninglessly vague, but ominous in what it hints at." by way of blowing a little smoke at the issue. Any comprehensive listing of Church inspired violence would be

tedious, but here is one specific example for his consideration: In 415 AD the Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria ordered the murder of the philosopher and mathematician Hypatia, which was carried out by paramilitary monks. Previously monks had nearly killed the Prefect Orestes, with whom Cyril was in conflict, and Hypatia was marked for death because she was a strong supporter of Orestes. After Hypatia's murder, Orestes himself was murdered, and Patriarch, later Saint, Cyril had control of the city.

On the question of a life of Christ that is secular, as opposed to the life of Christ provided by the Gospels, imagine the Gospel version as the movie, with the secular version assembled from the bits and pieces left on the cutting room floor. The Church edited those secular bits out for good theological reasons. And yet, it doesn't mean that the Divine Christ was not also human, even if his humanity was subordinated to his Divinity in the making of an Icon. For example, given that Christ was a charismatic and itinerant preacher, was he also perfectly chaste? That question is necessarily unanswerable. The Gospels are silent on the issue, and no blooper reel is available. However, what we know about contemporary religious charismatics is that they have a high sex drive, which often got them in trouble, but if God sent his only begotten son into this world to experience being human, what sort of human experience would it be to die in agony having never made love to a woman? I expect the Church thought it better to leave that one as a bone for theologians to mumble, rather than to provide fornicators with an excuse for their misconduct, for which one can hardly blame them.

From: **Trinlay Khadro** August 18, 2005
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triab3@dias.net

Thanks for the latest ish.

This LOC is going to take me a while as my notes on the 'zine have been taking a while to take shape.

Megumi-hime & Sir Elric are doing fine. She's usually sleeping smack in the middle of my bed at night while I'm pressed up against the wall. I guess I know who's the pet! (It's obviously **me**.)

Sulla used to do that, too. I'd wake up lying on my side on the edge of the bed and there would be this large warm furry spot in the small of my back, keeping me out of most of the bed.

Today we took a friend and went to the Milwaukee Public Museum, we have a membership so it's a cheap activity for us. I took a bunch of photos but because I've turned off the flash and many of the display areas are only dimly lit so I don't know how well anything's turned out yet.

KT and I also recently saw *March of the Penguins*. Those birds are tough! Nesting in Antarctica in the coldest windiest time of the year. We were much impressed with what great daddies penguins are. The babies are just **adorable**. It was a bit intense in parts, as there are so many ways a penguin might find its demise.

I recently bought a bag of "strawberry creme" Hershey kisses. They're only OK: the strawberry flavor seems a bit too liquor like and artificial and I often find "white chocolate" to be waxy. Combined with dark chocolate kisses they're tasty.

I wonder if the filling of "violet crumble" might be violet flavored: locally we occasionally come across violet flavor lozenges which I really like. If Johnny would like a pack of them I might be able to round some up to mail to him, Eventually I may get to one of our local International Markets and try the crumble myself.

KT is getting ready to get her learner's permit. We'd have probably got it this week but for the life of me, I can't find her Social Security card . . . I know where I put it . . . but apparently I put it somewhere "safe" (read "lost forever").

I'D LIKE TO THANK THE
INVENTOR OF THE LOTUS
DRIVE, THE ACADEMY....

Tomorrow it's a trip to the SSA with a handful of her ID material (school ID . . . birth certificate) to get a new card sent out. Maybe in a couple of



weeks we can try the DMV again.

I'm also getting my courage up for putting my work on eBay. I'm worried about details so I really just need to go to eBay and read the FAQ and if that's not enough ask more questions. I presume they'll process credit cards for me (I'm such a chicken . . .).

I'm also pondering doing small pieces for the Art o'Matic people. They've got refurbished cigarette machines placed usually in galleries. The gallery owner sells the \$5 tokens for the machine and there are bits of art in cigarette box sized packages. (Artist gets \$2.50/item and the gallery owner gets a cut and the machine owners get a cut . . .) It's not going to really make money for me but it seems like a fun way to get tiny-art out to people.

Lisa: as a university student I did lots of reading, studying, and sketching on the bus. I also found that in several places I've lived, the bus system was a good way to learn my way around town. The Milwaukee Bus System has the highest fare and the least logical routes of any city that I have lived in. It doesn't even come within walking distance of me, but I can drive to a strip mall and catch a flyer to downtown Milwaukee or go to a nearby burb' and catch a few routes into and around town.

Re: Ephemeral communication — I get email about once a week from my parents, usually a forwarded joke or cartoon. I'd **never** hear from my sister if not for email.

Thanks for the call about Jan, I sent her a get well note the next day.

One ponders the naval "reenactment" with Red vs Blue and imagines a send up of "Red vs Blue" mechanama (movies using videogame driver . . .) <KT's friend Kevin is a big fan of it.>

Lady With an Alien: Elric says "Whoop Hoo!" Though we all think immediately of Leonard of Quimm.

Somewhere, I have *Vampire Hunter D* on video. KT bought it at a con — I don't think I've watched it yet. Local Animé fan group just finished watching *Cerulean Sand* (which credits Jules Verne as the source of the story). Next it's *Planetes* (basically the team of heroes cleaning up space junk from Earth's orbit) and then back to *Naruto* (teen ninja).

Would they ever do Vermilion Sands, or is J. G. Ballard persona non grata for having done Empire of the Sun?

Well, you do realize that Nazis are neither objective observers nor objective reporters. The truth is somewhere between Orientalism and the worst accounts. The idea of measuring skulls and "race science" unfortunately wasn't limited to the Nazis. Somewhere around uncle's house is an American textbook from the 1930's categorizing nationalities and ethnic groups by what now seems like silly stereotypes. I've always had the idea that "race" was a pointless way of categorizing people . . . and too often an excuse to put a person into a caste or ranking by traits that are essentially meaningless. A categorization by "culture" might be more useful: adapting one's behavior so as not to offend the other. An African-American, born in Sudan, who is a doctor (and relative's neighbor) has more in common with his suburban neighbors (Jewish teacher, Asian doctors . . . dentist, retired shopkeeper, etc.) than he does with people in the inner city who may have a stronger physical resemblance.

Most people I meet these days soon learn that I belong to the local Greek church and ignore my Northern European face.

— LTM

Accounts from the Tibetan side of the encounters are divided between puzzled, suspicious, and "well they say our big space-hungry neighbor to the north should stay on their side of the border: so how bad can these guys be?"

Oddly enough, until recently, the Tibetan language did not have a way to describe "prostitute". Though there **also** seems to have been a rather looser idea of marriage than, say, Europe. Polyandry tends to happen in very remote locations — with few people or resources; if a group of brothers looks around and sees only sisters, half-sisters, and first cousins in the local women, they'll pool their resources and share a wife — who often seems to be head of household. (Gee, anyone wonder how that happens?) So there really aren't "excess" women. (And it also isn't like abbeys weren't common.)

What comparison, if any, has Hale made of the accounts of the region and culture from the same and from earlier periods; Davise-Neel, Harrer, the expedition from the Field Museum in the early 1900's?

Only slight mentions of Harrer. He also mentions Sir Francis Younghusband, whose expedition was organized a little differently.

Re: *Flyboys*: One notices a very different response to prisoners and the resolution in the Russo-Japanese war and WWII. So what inspires such a huge difference in behavior between that war and WWII?

It does seem, in retrospect, that globally, nationalism and racism were high in the thirties — early postwar era. It reminds me a bit of the trends towards religious fanaticism currently and almost globally. Are these trends in Humanity just one-of-those-things?

Rather than "fondness" for liver, perhaps it's more "metaphorical magic". As in English, Japanese idioms link the liver with courage. (We say "lily-livered" and mean "wimp".)

As for Chambara and Animé, perhaps it's fair to make a similar comparison between Westerns and the real west. Actually, it doesn't take much effort to compare Chambara and westerns; my Dad and I do that all the time.

Yojimbo — could just as easily be the plot for a gunfighter movie: Mysterious stranger comes into town and throws the local power struggle into high gear . . .

Uh, you did know about:
Per un pugno di dollari (1964)
[A Fistful of Dollars]

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0058461/>

"Crazy bellringer was right, there's money to be made in a place like this."

My Big Fat Greek Wedding: My parents loved that movie. In Milwaukee there's the major event of a [fill in random ethnic group] wedding . . . it crosses all ethnic lines.

My parents in the late fifties planned "something small and sweet with their closest friends and family" but the mothers got involved and it turned into something just shy of a Royal wedding. "If you invite so&so you have to invite 'cousin' . . ." Before they knew it they had nearly 30 attendants and a couple hundred guests (at least that's how Mom tells it), some of whom they didn't even know.

I started getting serious with photography

as a high school student, Uncle gave me a 35mm Olympus in the early eighties. With one of my cousins, the "professional photographer" was a drunken ass and the only decent photos she had of her wedding were the ones that I took. For another cousin I used a borrowed camera, don't know why, and the photos I took didn't turn out at all.

My brother sent me some of the professional photographer's photos. Looking closely, I think mine are in higher resolution, and his were as dark. (I tweaked the picture of the bride that smiles out from my computer screen to lighten her up.)

I'm quite fond of my digital camera; I like being able to see things right away and to be able to tweak things once I get them on the computer.

Car talk: In my limited experience, repair shops often overcharge for repairs on foreign cars — but with these gas prices I sure like the idea of the hybrids.

Witchcraft: I don't think 1940 predates Wicca, but it certainly predates organized Wicca or people talking openly about still using folkways. "Russian countess who loved being possessed by a wolf." Gee, some folks are just **kinky**. :-)

Joy Smith: With the letters I saw, it seemed like Great Uncle was pointedly **not** talking about what he'd seen and what he was hearing from survivors. As much as a bravo as he was he found it too disturbing to talk about. Even in his old age, he'd see places in Europe on t.v. and he'd talk about places he saw and things he did while on leave. What he did on duty got mentioned and then glossed over.

I remember him as a sort of wild character, even when he was an old man he had several girlfriends, so noticing that sensitivity was a bit of a surprise.

It's also possible that his folks destroyed any letters they found too intense.

Rod Smith: I wonder if the garage was shifting to part of it being "reserved" parking and some "pay as you go" parking with only the non-reserved section being covered by the "full" sign. The federal building in Milwaukee has a parking structure; it takes a government issued key card to use the upper "employee only" levels and the lower levels being for the clients.

Re: comment on Kennewick Man: I think so much of “race” is dependent on arbitrary judgments — somehow at some point the Ainu of Northern Japan got classified as “Caucasian” but if we’d see one in say Chicago or downtown Milwaukee almost all of us would describe that person as “Asian”. In the case of a skeleton perhaps, for the most part, the idea of “race” may be useless. The politics of the whole thing went to Silly very quickly . . . Politics and science aren’t often a good mix.

Quite so, but for the local tribes it was all a matter of maintaining their identity. The forensic reconstruction looked like Patrick Stewart. (“Make it so, Crazy Horse”.)

— JTM

Sheryl Birkhead: Just this year, a girl in Milwaukee was bitten by a sick bat that she found in her church. They didn’t diagnose her (she hadn’t mentioned the bite to anyone) until symptoms appeared. She survived and there are semi-regular updates on her in the *Milwaukee News*. She’s back in school but isn’t “normal” yet.

Further comment on my loc —

Re: *Samurai William*: I think I need to clarify that I don’t know if I’d get along with either Ieyasu or William, or them me, but I’m really tickled when I get to see a historical person or period through the eyes of someone there so it’s more than a cardboard cutout or stage set.

A view of a historical person as a human being in a first-hand account it just one of those things that tickle me.

At Convergence six out of seven dragons were all bought by one person. Today in email R. B. Cleary sent me an invitation to put work in the art show, at a con he’s working on.

Keep an eye out to see me on eBay soon.

..
Rodney L.: Is it possible you’ve gotten on a “chicks in fandom/chicks in zines” mailing list because of your mourning a lack of females in fandom?

Taras: I’ve never with hearing loss it’s the female and children’s voices range that seems to go first. I often have gaps in hearing everything my daughter says . . . it’s worse when there is background noise or if she’s stressed.

As usual, the tale on the last page kills me — as they say on line ROTFLET (Rolling On The Floor Laughing, Eyes Tearing.)

I’m still waiting for my disability hearing with the Social Security Administration — anyone know how to encourage the system? It’s just been incredible how difficult and prolonged the process has been.

My savings are draining faster than I would have expected. Hopefully, my crafts will sell pretty well, and things will work out all right.

Now I need a book idea I can work out in 2"x3" . . . well, that’ll be my project for the next few weeks. That and getting work up on eBay.

From: **E. B. Frohvet** August 21, 2005
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City MD 21042-5988 USA

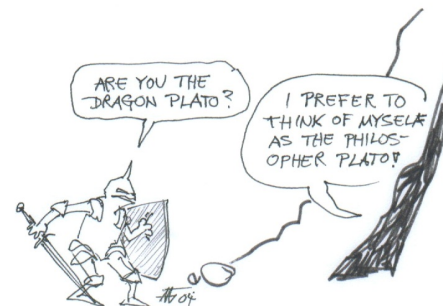
With regard to the Martian rovers, “It is reported that somehow the solar cell arrays are getting cleared off, i.e., of accumulated dust. Wind seems a more likely explanation than a fairy godspirit with a feather duster.

You can explain to Tan Hadron about calling his wife a fairy. Remember, he’s a good shot and can throw knives, too. (And she’s no slouch in the swordfighting department herself.)

“Sections of bamboo explode in a hot fire. . .” (I’m tempted to ask for your explanation of a cold fire, but moving on. . .) Any kind of firewood displays a similar phenomenon to a lesser degree, the more so if it’s damp — which is why you want firewood at least a year old. It was a well known technique, to put small amounts of bamboo in a regular fire; the noise of the exploding pieces would drive away wild animals or evil spirits. Verne cites the technique in *The Mysterious Island*.

Genealogy (which has apparently cost fandom Tom Sadler): Lately I’ve been reading *The Colonel*, a biography of “Colonel Tom Parker” — the title was honorary and the name invented — the notorious manager of Elvis Presley. When Parker first got into country music, several of the performers with whom he interacted thought him strange because he would never talk about his family background, which Southerners were prone to do. It had a lot to do with the fact that he was an illegal alien; he forfeited his Dutch

citizenship on entering the U.S. Army (in which he never rose above Private First Class) and never regularized his position in the United States.



By the way, there was a sitcom episode where the priest recited the ritual part of the ceremony inviting anyone to object — and the groom’s mother spoke up. The best man asked the priest, “What do we do now?” and the Father replied, “I don’t know, this has never happened before!” (There is, or was, a similar custom in which anyone who objected to the ordination of a candidate for the ministry could speak up. Called a *si quis*, from the opening words in Latin: “If anyone. . .”)

Local Mystery: Interesting that it took seventeen years to dispose of a wrecked boat, when you can have your spouse declared dead after seven years’ unexplained absence (five in Florida).

Part of the problem was the legal tangle. I think the city was afraid of having the boat’s owner turn up after she was thoroughly scrapped and suing them for the full value of an operating tugboat.

— LTM

Trinlay’s Wisconsin report: Is “Mary Prince-of-the-North” a family name? Or should it be “Princess”? I’ve never eaten elk but venison is regularly available at a local restaurant. It would have been interesting to see “Meet the Weapons” though I imagine that meant swords and such.

Should I ask why, in four different places in my book review, words that actually end in “om” manage to end with “in”? Private joke? Spellchecker glitch? Merely curious.

I wonder about things. Like, is the expression “Prix Aurora Award” not redundant?

No, it’s Canadian: like “Douane Canada Customs”.

As for the Lost Causes (the two Fan Hugos and the Langford Award): least said, soonest mended. Though I have no grievance with Sue Mason.

Alexis Gilliland: The Bible offers at least a precedent on those who contravert the teachings of their faith for immediate advantage; see 2 Kings 5:18.

In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

The notion of any American becoming Pope is indeed fiction.

Sheryl Birkhead: I brought up the notion of reviewing one’s driver’s license by mail as a curiosity — I didn’t think anyone would actually do it! For me, it would have been more trouble to find an ophthalmologist, than just to go to the DMV office. Far be it from me to point out that Sue Mason got exposure to American fans in my late fanzine *Twink*, as early as 1998.

Jason Burnett: Why, Minneapolis? I guess you could cite Hal Clement as a precursor of Mundane SF, as I understand the term. He said often that FTL travel was the only plot device he used that could not be justified under the state of science at the time he wrote. One can think of lots of SF that would be classed as “mundane” by this standard: most of alternate history, most of “after the nuclear war”, oddities such as Schenck’s *Steam Bird*.

Trinlay Khadro: Back in the Stone Age when I was a Red Cross blood donor, they took a sample from one’s earlobe to test for, as I recall, iron content. Someone with anemia is obviously not a good candidate for donating blood. Except in unusual cases, however, iron deficiency anemia is easily treated with oral supplements. I don’t know what “CQ10+” might be. I still have my origami dragon.

Lloyd Penney: The last time I was in

Canada (before 9/11), it took about ten seconds to get through Canadian customs going in — they asked my nationality and purpose (“Tourist”, I said) and waved me along. It took rather longer to get back into the U.S.; American customs required me to get out of the car, open the trunk, etc.

Robert Kennedy, Richard Dengrove: It was cited somewhere that roughly 35% of Internet content is porn, and roughly another 25% is commercial advertising. When you add in all the incoherent mumble, finding anything worthwhile becomes a signal-to-noise-ratio problem.

Martin Helgesen: I don’t agree with you that the sex abuse scandal is irrelevant to McGrath’s premise. He is saying, in essence, that religion is a good thing. The sexual abuse of children by priests contradicts his basic premise, and is thus relevant. (The same is true of blowing up airplanes and trains in praise of Allah.)

The International Astronomical Union will decide whether the Kuiper Belt object 2003UB313, a/k/a “Xena”, will be classified as a planet. The smart money is on probably not. (If it is later found to have a satellite, that will be “Gabrielle”. Astronomy students 100 years from now will not get the joke.)

There’s a big to-do about Pluto; it’s been classified as a planet for seventy-five years, but some astronomers want to reclassify it, on the grounds that it is too small, apparently smaller than Xena. Then what will we do about “Mother Very Thoughtfully Made A Jelly Sandwich Under No Protest; ‘Xcellent.’”? (See Have Space Suit — Will Travel [plus my gloss].)

Good prediction about the satellite.

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 25, 2005
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL
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<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

I enjoyed your book reviews, and I appreciated that quote from *Lady with an Alien* — “Leonardo looked genuinely amused. . . .” “When do you think I’d have as much as a spare minute for a secret society?”

I also like what he said about the Grail, “I wouldn’t leave codes for others, . . . I’d . . . find it . . . myself.”

Field Guide to the Apocalypse: Movie Survival Skills for the End of the World sounds like fun. *Big Dead Place: Inside the Strange & Menacing World of Antarctica* sounds scary. Did the skydivers whose parachutes didn’t open die? (I’m assuming they did, but I always like to know for sure.) Thanks for all the glimpses of history from the books you read and review.

They died, Joy. Paid \$22,000 each to punch holes in the Polar Plateau, and the Polies had to bag and ship out the bodies. Which is why the Antarctic workers have so little love for tourists.

— JTM

Lisa, that’s a great incentive for bus riding — free rides for city employees. There’s an idea that needs to be publicized.

I certainly like it. It means a tank of gas can last three weeks. It’s not feasible for everything because I don’t feel safe standing at bus stops after dark.

— LTM



Thanks to Johnny Carruthers for his Hershey’s Nut Lovers bar review. I wasn’t aware of that one and would like to try it. (Any excuse . . .) I tried the Reese’s peanut butter cups limited editions recently; and I don’t care for the white chocolate ones much because I’ve always thought that white chocolate has no flavor; the chocolate lovers one is good; but the peanut butter lovers one

(with the chocolate lightly coating the bottom) is too salty because there’s too much peanut butter.

And thanks to Trinlay Khadro for her Wiscon report. I’d like to go to there some day.

I’m glad you included the Museum Replicas catalog in the Fanzines listing. It’s also fun to look at. Did Hank Reinhardt make some of the items? Thanks, Joe, for the Awards listings. I’m glad that N3F has its own awards now. (There can never be too many awards, E.B.)

Re: LOCs: I enjoyed the discussion of *The Prisoner* and, as always, the books and history you learn about in the LOCs too. Dainis Bisenieks’ mentions of mistakes in books he works with and reads was interesting. He’s an editor? (Sorry, this was probably mentioned in an earlier LOC(s).)

Rodney mentioned the *Memphen* special artist issue; I was fortunate enough to get that issue too. A lot of fan artists and fanzines do need more exposure. Lloyd, thanks for the Travis Tea explanation.

I loved “And now you know . . .” about the various heroes and their involvement in the Lord of the Rings saga.

From: **Lloyd Penney** August 28, 2005
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penneys@allstream.net

This is the first part of the weekend I’ve felt good enough to actually get my head off the pillow. I was running a temperature of 101.7°F. Yvonne thought I might have had a touch of the flu, and I thought it was just the galloping crud. However, most of it has faded, so here’s a letter on *Alexiad* 22.

Text-messaging is the new thing, and actually quite good when you are traveling the subway, as I often am. Yvonne might send me a text message, just a few words, and even if I am in the subway, the cellphone network will keep trying to reach me with the message until I emerge from underground. I can only imagine that kids think that paperzines of any kind are produced by utter dinosaurs.

One of the people from ConGlomeration looked at an issue of Alexiad I had on hand, asked if it were on line, and upon finding out otherwise, wasn’t

interested. And others are even more so.

I have some of the programme books and progress reports from Worldcons of the past . . . Pittcon (1960 – 18th Worldcon) in Pittsburgh, Detention (1959 – 17th Worldcon) in Detroit, Chicon III (1962 – 20th Worldcon), and even the 11th Worldcon (1953) in Philadelphia. Perhaps a single track of programming wouldn’t satisfy our own complex tastes today, but then, the interest was literary SF only, and only good folks like Bjo Trimble and Forry Ackerman would bring about the art show and costuming at Worldcons. A single track of programming brought everyone together in one room, and made for close friendships (or enmities), and a tight community, something I wish we had today.

I’m sure I heard something about astrologers planning a lawsuit against the astronomers who discovered the tenth planet, Xena, or maybe Goofy, seeing how much further out it is than Pluto. The evidence of a tenth planet is really fouling up their astrological reports. Other astrologers are happy about this discovery, saying that not knowing about the tenth planet is what made some of their predictions a little off. I wonder what they’d say if sometime during the next 20 years or so, an eleventh planet was discovered . . .

How come the astrologers didn’t predict the new planets? Galileo saw Neptune (and there is an Elvish name for it in Tolkien’s notes for *The Silmarillion*; Luinil [Lúimil]) but no astrologer ever noted the differences for it or for Pluto or Xena before they were discovered by astronomers. Oh all right, here’s “Xena”:

ꞤꞤꞤꞤ

In the first year of the Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid, John Millard, the chairman of Torcon 2, was our honorary chairman. When John died, it was revealed that the contents of his home revealed a large collection of books on Antarctica, and outside of his own fannish achievements, he was known as a world-wide expert on Antarctica. I think he’d been there a couple of times as well.

I should get that book on Spirit and

Opportunity for Yvonne. She's become quite active in space advocacy in the Toronto area. She also has the mission patches for the two rovers, with Marvin the Martian and Duck Dodgers, on a denim jacket, along with many other mission patches.

The kind of candy that Johnny Carruthers speaks of reminds me of something I enjoyed as a kid, large squares of sponge toffee. It was like a crunch, sweet sponge, and I remember having a heckuva time getting out of my teeth. There's also a bar available here called a Crunchie, which is a chocolate-covered stick of sponge toffee. One thing I've noticed over the last couple of years . . . many popular chocolate bars are not changing their names, but changing their manufacturers. One year, it might be Rowntree, the next Cadbury, the next Nestlé. It also depends on country . . . Kit Kat bars are made by Hershey in the US, but by Nestlé in Canada. They used to be made by Rowntree here.

E. B. Frohvet refers to Taral's previous remarks about the ability to appoint anyone to any job regardless of competence. I'd heard that the head of programming, Terry Fong, only volunteered to help with programming, and that he wound up in charge. He was humbled by the appointment, and tried his best, but he experience wasn't up to the job.

I imagine that Jason Burnett is quite happy in Minneapolis right now, seeing that Hurricane Katrina is bearing down on New Orleans as I write . . . I'm hoping that Louisiana fandom is on higher and safer ground at this time.

The FAAn Awards are supposed to be available to all of fanzine fandom. However, there isn't the best distribution, and there is the expectation that everyone will obtain a ballot from the Corflu.org website. Seeing that the next Corflu will be in the spring, keep checking the Corflu.org website, and there will be ways, either mail or e-mail, for all to vote, including you, Joe and Lisa, E. B., and Rodney, and everyone who participates in this and all fanzines. I am not on any FAAn list, but I vote anyway, and I encourage all fanzine fans to vote.

We've been trying to get information about Hurricane Katrina, but the CBC is on strike, and CNN is showing too many commercials on either side of Larry King's craggy face. So, all we can do from up here is hope that Katrina shows some mercy, or that New Orleans is built a little stronger than we think. Take care, and let's all hope for the

best.

Lisa and I have been watching the Weather Channel with great despair.

— JTM

From: **John Hertz** August 27, 2005
236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Why are the drawings in *Alexiad* 4/4 so gray?

Why is Rule 4 "It does not have to be good" a thing of joy?

Teresa Nielsen Hayden has been saying history is the trade secret of sf. *Fighting Sail* should be a biography of Fulton.

Then I seem to be ahead on the secrets.

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Sept. 1, 2005
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8093
mmwooster@yahoo.com

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 22.

I agree with **Lisa** that Canadian customs authorities for some reason are, in my experience, far more obnoxious than American ones. For example, in 2004, on a train to Montreal, the customs officer stood in direct sunlight and when I had a hard time seeing him (because I had to look at the sun to see him), asked if I was blind. In 2005 I flew Air Canada to Glasgow and had a five-hour layover in Toronto. The customs guy asked, "Do you have any friends in Canada?" "No," I said. He was convinced I would use the five hours to do who knows what sort of nefarious activity. I had to convince him that I was not going to leave the airport before he would let me in. By contrast, American customs officers I dealt with were efficient, courteous, and professional, in part because I declare absolutely everything. One of them noticed I was bringing back Scottish oatcakes and asked what an oatcake was.

I can't tell **Taras Wolansky** very much about my father's investigation of the Dean Drive, because it was done when I was a kid. I do know that the investigator was Joseph Martino, who wrote some *Analog* stories and then taught at the University of Dayton. My father was also involved in some way with

Project Blue Book, although I don't think he was the principal investigator. My dad, who was an sf reader but not a fan, was very proud of the results of research he funded. But I think his most important legacy was his grants about how people search for information; anytime you do a Boolean search on Google, you're using the results of research my dad funded.

I did read the Walter Jon Williams novel I mentioned in my last letter. It is *Days of Atonement* (Tor; 1991) which is a near-future police procedural with some time travel paradoxes grafted on to it. It's also interesting how Williams's future differs from ours; there are no cell phones in his world, and when cops plug in to what would now be an internal police intranet, they put little satellite dishes on their cars and receive broadcasts from Washington. (But then, as *Wired* reminds us, most futurologists in 1990 thought that the Net would evolve into something like 500-channel television, not the text-driven World Wide Web.)

You mean they hadn't read "A Logic Named Joe" (Astounding, March 1946)?

— JTM

As for **Joe's** comments about the huge array of items available at Worldcons; I like the choice and variety Worldcons have. There's something for everyone — and that's what makes Worldcons fun.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 12, 2005
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010-2451 USA
robertk@cipcug.org

Thank you for Vol. 4, No. 4. It arrived on August 19, having taken just three days.

The *HUGO* voting went even worse for me than usual this time. I'm not sure why I bother. Maybe I'll quit after next year. The only one that I voted for in first place and that actually won was *The Incredibles* for Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form. In the nominations, if *Farscape: The Peacekeeper Wars* had received three more votes it would have knocked *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* out and been included in the final ballot. As Joe indicated, both he and *Alexiad* needed a lot more nominations to have made the final ballot for Best Fan Writer and Best Fanzine (21 for Writer and 15 for Fanzine). If everyone who receives *Alexiad* would sign

up for the next Worldcon (even if just Supporting) and nominate Joe and *Alexiad*, they would make it easily. Just a thought.

Just as long as you don't pay for your memberships with consecutively-numbered postal money orders. If people decide that certain repeat winners of the awards will win anyhow, that will ensure that they do.

I've seen a few movies lately and I rate them on a scale of 1-5. *War of the Worlds*, I down graded to a 2.5 (from a 3.0 that I indicated in my last loc.) *Fantastic 4* I gave a 4.0. *The Island* I gave a 4.0 (I was being nice) because I enjoyed it even if it did remind me of *Logan's Run*, did not receive all that great reviews, and apparently bombed at the box office. Then, the non-SF movie *March of the Penguins* I gave a 5.0+. If you haven't seen the last one, rent it when it is available.

Bob, you need to talk to Taras.

— JTM

We Few by David Weber and John Ringo was finally obtained on Interlibrary Loan, it being the fourth book in the Prince Roger saga. Not being a speed reader like Joe, I read it for one evening until I just had to go to bed. Then, finished it the next evening. I am truly enthralled by the series. This could be the last book. However, there is an opening for additional books, so who knows?

I lost my head and purchased the two DVD set of Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*. It appears that an excellent job was done for the English language version. However, I watched it in Japanese with English subtitles. One really has to pay attention when using subtitles. Maybe I'll watch the English language version next time.

Wanting some light, quick reading I obtained *The Johnny Maxwell Trilogy* by Terry Pratchett on Interlibrary Loan. Yes, I know it's a juvenile. But, it was a fun read.

On August 25 I had my last wisdom tooth pulled. Does this mean that what little wisdom I had is now gone?

Be grateful you had them as long as you did. Mine all got pulled to make room for braces.

--- LTM is where I lived for the last couple of decades before leaving Los Angeles altogether), legend had it that buses ran every two hours in the wrong direction. Others said that the legends were overly optimistic.

On August 30 it was a colonoscopy. Then on September 4 it was Traffic School. Yes, I was a bad boy and received a speeding ticket. So, it was spend all day on a Sunday in Traffic School because I had to get it done quickly. It's possible to get a VHS or DVD from Blockbuster and do it at home for eight hours. But, it costs more than a class with people and the interaction with other offenders (scofflaws?) is much more interesting. My knowing that should tell you that it was not my first Traffic School.

On September 2 starting at 8:00 p.m., the Sci-Fi Channel presented six hours of viewers favorite episodes of *Stargate SG-1*. I taped and watched them at my convenience. Since I am a recent convert to *Stargate SG-1*, none of the episodes had been seen previously and were greatly enjoyed.

I too enjoy *Stargate* but haven't watched much this summer. It's been really too hot to have the TV on.

— LTM

Dainis Bisenieks: I have all 6 of the *Tros of Samothrace* novels by Talbot Mundy. Also, I believe *Jimgrim* and perhaps *Om*, maybe others. But the later are all packed away in boxes.

Lloyd Penney: I am descended from Richard H. Penny who immigrated from England. My Great-Grandmother (his daughter) was Susan Penny Bonham. Is there any connection between Penney and Penny?

Martin Helgesen: This Is True is a great site and I too recommend it.

In two days I'm off to Niagara Falls for my Navy ship reunion.

From: **Milt Stevens** September 14, 2005
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley,
CA 93063-3834 USA
miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Alexiad* V4#4, Lisa talks about the City of Louisville offering free bus service to city employees. The City of Los Angeles made similar offers during a couple of two week periods during the thirty-four years I worked for them. I never took advantage of the offer either time. There are a couple of areas in Los Angeles where bus service is said to be tolerable. In the San Fernando Valley (which

has been officially accepted as a planet as yet. I seem to recall there was a similar object discovered six months ago or so, and I don't know what happened to that one either. At the time, I suggested it was probably the mother ship for all the UFOs. Like this previous object, the current planet thingie is pretty far out in the local suburbs. If you were going to name it after a woman, it probably should be a very cold woman. I would suggest Medea.

There were other factors that made riding the bus in Los Angeles a not very good idea. Much of the time I worked irregular hours in not so swell areas. If you remember Octavia Butler's Hugo winning story, "Speech Sounds," it was based on her experiences riding the buses in South-Central Los Angeles while she was growing up. It obviously wasn't a great experience if you were Black, and it would be considerably worse if you weren't.

Joseph notes that the 1953 worldcon, Philcon II, had only one track of programming. True, and worldcons would continue to have only one track of programming for almost twenty years after that. If you happen to come across a copy of the Proceedings of Chicon III (1962), you will find that it contains a transcript of the entire program. Doing a similar worldcon proceedings today might not be entirely impossible, but it would be damned unlikely.

MidAmeriCon, my first worldcon (1976), had one and a half program tracks. The big thing, besides Heinlein's GoH speech, was their play, which was based on Cordwainer Smith's works with a lot of others mixed in. There was also an exhibition room that everyone ignored for some movie that was coming out **RealSoonNow** called "The Star Wars".

It was Andy Porter who pointed out to me (with an accusing finger) that it had been L.A.Con I (1972, I was hotel relations) that had been the first worldcon to go beyond single track programming. I checked back in my files and verified that we did indeed have one and a half tracks of programming for a 2000 person convention. It seems to have been all down hill from there. At the recent NASFiC, I did notice they had program items on quilting and flint knapping. Gee, I remember when people used to ask what belly dancing had to do with science fiction.

I'd seen something or other on naming the new planetary thingie Xena, but I sort of thought it was a gag. I don't know whether it

has been officially accepted as a planet as yet. I seem to recall there was a similar object discovered six months ago or so, and I don't know what happened to that one either. At the time, I suggested it was probably the mother ship for all the UFOs. Like this previous object, the current planet thingie is pretty far out in the local suburbs. If you were going to name it after a woman, it probably should be a very cold woman. I would suggest Medea.

Since scam spam is a subject that comes up in *Alexiad*, I'm attaching an example I received recently. Marty Cantor and I received the same one on the same day. It's a variation of the Drake Inheritance Scam Dale Speirs described in *Opuntia* awhile back. I'm pretty sure it comes from somewhere in fandom.

Subject: Bequest of Sir Dennis Thatcher - From Rev. Fr. Luke Allan
From: "Rev. Fr. Luke Allan"
Date: 26 Aug 2005 04:07:11 -0000

SS Peter & Paul Catholic Parish
7 Tetlow Lane,
Wimbome DORSET BH21 1LF
London, UK.

Dearest In The Lord,

On behalf of the trustees and executor of the estate of Late Sir. Dennis Thatcher, I wish to notify you that late Sir. Dennis Thatcher, made you a beneficiary to his WILL. He left the sum of Nine Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds Sterling (£950,000.00) to you in the codicil and last testament to his WILL. This may sound strange and unbelievable to you, but it is real and true. Being a widely travelled man, he must have been in contact with you in the past or simply you were nominated to him by one of his numerous friends abroad that wished you good. Sir. Dennis Thatcher passed away peacefully in the Lister Hospital London, after a short illness at the age of 88 years. He was businessman and husband to Margaret Thatcher, the former British Prime Minister. He was Born May 10th 1915; died June 26th 2003, and his WILL is now ready for execution.

Sir. Dennis Thatcher, until his death

was a very dedicated Christian who loved to give out. His great philanthropy earned him numerous awards during his lifetime. In a tribute to him at a News Conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin, British Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair said:

... "Sir Dennis was a kind and generous-hearted man, a real gentleman who had many friends here and abroad".

According to him, this money is to support your activities and to help the poor and the needy in your country. Please If I reach you as I am hopeful, endeavor to get back to me as soon as possible.

Yours In His Service,
Rev. Fr. Luke Allan

And of course it was Sir Denis Thatcher, Bt.

See *Drake's Fortune: The Fabulous True Story of The World's Greatest Confidence Man* by Richard Rayner (2002) for more on the Drake Inheritance.

— JTM

From: **Rodney Leighton** Sept. 7, 2005
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

Thanks for *Alexiad* which arrived yesterday.

I never did believe that old saw about all knowledge being found in fanzines. But this one did provide answers to some of the things I had been thinking about. I had wondered if you had taken my combo letter as a suggestion to do likewise or perhaps thought that I was suggesting that we discontinue personal correspondence. I wondered if there would be a letter with *Alexiad*. Most of that was answered. I had not been thinking too much on why I had not heard from Jan Stinson; gaps of 3 or 4 months are not unusual. I see there is a serious reason; I should have been worried. And I had some time ago decided that Trinlay had decided that she no longer wished to correspond with me and had stopped writing; here she sends

me a message via your fanzine.

Well, things have flipped over completely here. I had lots of work and neither the time nor the energy to do anything with this machine. I have spent portions of the past few days pondering a form letter announcing that I was suspending all small press stuff and correspondence. Due to financial troubles.

I had understood that there was lots of work. I had to buy new tires for the truck and went ahead and bought a good set; close to \$800. Three days later I learned that there was no silviculture work; the rich people who control that had pulled all the funding. Okay, I have a small harvest job to clean up. Informed the landowner that I hoped to do it in the next 2 or 3 weeks. 2 days later he informed me that he did not want me to cut anymore. Okay. There's no market for pulpwood. Fortunately I have some poge, which will keep me afloat, barely, for awhile. But doing so means cutting expenditures to the bone.

So, here I am. Lots of time on my hands. Well, I am getting a little of the long neglected housework done. And lots of reading. But; not knowing when work will resume, if ever, and also, gas prices have now risen to the point that I am not sure if I can make any money doing silviculture unless they raise the rates substantially. I spent the summer doing work for rates which were slightly lower than they were 20 years ago while gas prices were about 600% higher and all other prices 400-500% higher. Now that gas is about 1000% higher than it was 20 years ago, and, naturally, all other prices will follow. The last time that they suspended silviculture funding mid season . . . the last 2 times . . . they started wanting work done in October. But they also wanted it done at even lower rates.

This may well be the time when it becomes necessary for me to change careers. Or something. Apparently Tim had a lot of money when he lost his job. All I have is debts.

From my house I can walk half a mile down one road, passing one house and seeing little if any traffic and then hook onto a road with no houses and less traffic. Back there are some woods roads. Wanting a place to take fairly long walks with no one bothering me, I have been walking down there. One day recently, having spent much of the walk contemplating putting together a form letter announcing the end of small press activity for

some time and correspondence until things straighten out, I was walking along, headed home, and suddenly realized that I was as much at peace as I have been in a number of years. This is fairly weird. I mean, I have spent major portions of the last number of years in deep depression or on the verge of a nervous breakdown. And here I was looking at serious financial trouble; bankruptcy is not at all impossible. Yet, I seem to be at peace.

Well, I guess everyone knows I am strange.

I think that is the first loc from Tim I have ever seen, anywhere. What can this mean?

I have to get new glasses. Actually, I've been putting that off for a year. Got to the point that I had to do it. Tomorrow is eye test day. The guy who has looked after my eyes for almost 50 years is semi-retired. Decided to go to his daughter. His father was the first, when I was nine years old, about 3 centuries ago.

Last time I got new glasses, three years ago (it had to do with dropping the old ones, breaking the frame, and then getting glue on one lens while trying to repair them), the ophthalmologist told me I should have my eyes dilated annually. I ought to, but I've been too busy/lazy to have it done. They also want me to wear bifocals.

I had arranged to visit my sisters, and aunt, this month, prior to work disappearing. I'm going to go ahead and do it. Might be the last time they see me for some time. If nothing happens, by the end of the month, the credit card will be maxed. I will get out and do something. Not sure what.

A guy is supposed to buy one of my saws. If he does so, I plan to stop off at Staples on my way from one of those visits and buy a couple of ribbons for this thing. I am restricting myself somewhat. See what happens.

I can't resist Sheryl. I can't recall when, if ever, I have had any M&Ms in my hands. Based on the tv ads, SMARTIES are, indeed, fairly similar. Some sort of solid cover in various colours with a tasty inside which I am not sure what it is. The SMARTIES packages provide good eating candies. The bars are basically milk chocolate bars with mini versions of regular SMARTIES embedded

throughout. If I thought there was any possibility of it reaching you intact I would send you one. However . . .

I'm toying with the idea of buying a SMARTIES bar or 2 tomorrow and trying to write a review of them. Don't know if I will any more than I know anything else.

Hey, if it's not raining too hard I am shortly going out and walk for 3 miles or so.

Sept. 9. New glasses; coming soon. \$60 for the 15 minute exam. \$109 for new lenses. \$20 for gas. I hope to pick up the new glasses on the way home from one of my family visits.

Sept.10. Got a catalogue yesterday from some outfit called ACORN. Lots of SF fan type stuff none of which I could afford. Not much I would want although if I were rich I would likely buy the 8 DVD set of the Nero Wolfe shows even though they cost \$160 plus taxes and etc. Lots of British stuff including tons of Agatha Christie on DVD; and CD. And the perfect gift for Lisa . . . a bright red sweatshirt which proclaims . . . She . . . who must be . . . OBEYED. Only costs 29 bucks plus.

This is possibly the last time you hear from me for some time.

Nero Wolfe: This is the excellent A&E production with Timothy Hutton and Maury Chaykin, available here from A&E for \$149.95. A&E is also offering a free Nero Wolfe t-shirt with each purchase; this should be available only in size XXXXL, but some people have no sense of tradition.

— JTM

From: **Richard Dengrove** Sept. 21, 2005
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,
Alexandria, VA 22306- USA
RichD22426@aol.com

I enjoyed *Alexiad*, August 2005 immensely. Here are some comments.

The past is not what it seems. for instance, I'm not certain Pierce's *Will of the Empress* is as farfetched as it seems to us. I thought old English law, or at least Medieval English tradition, allowed noblemen to kidnap noblewomen, and gain their estates that way.

Also, when the Nazis were measuring the skulls of Tibetan natives in *Himmler's Crusade*, that was not what it seemed either.

The Nazis weren't the only ones who were measuring skulls or heads. It used to be considered solid anthropology to measure the skulls, and brains of Polynesians, Blacks and even Whites.

It was thought generally the average reflected their race's intelligence, and it would show which races were superior and inferior. In short, the political correctness of that time was the diametrical opposite of the political correctness of today.

I remember Stephan Jay Gould discussing this in the *Mismeasure of Man* (1981). Also, I remember reading about a well-known Greenwich Village bohemian who raved in the 1920s about having measured Amerindian heads on a reservation. He was another Gould, a Joe Gould.

Did Joe Gould do like Bruno Beger did, which was to pick out candidates, have them executed, then prepare and mount the skulls?

Of course, even the present is not what it seems. There must be many dogs out there like Lisa's Doberman, Digger. Dogs with a vicious reputation but a sweet disposition. I know of another, a police dog, Ché. Yes, named after Ché.Guevara. It was that era and I can understand why a friend of mine named him that.

On the other hand, a less revolutionary dog you would never meet. You let him out of the house. He did not need a leash or even a human walker. He did what he needed to do, knocked on the door a few a minutes later, and you let him in.

I realize someone should have been there with a pooper scooper but that is another issue.

Also, I am not certain things are what they seem when Lloyd Penney reports how a group of writers tried to expose PublishAmerica by getting them to publish trash. The problem is I am hearing the norm for a lot of the publishing industry is not to read what is published. If the authors want their book edited, they have to pay for it.

I do not think my comments on the internet were what they seem to you, Joe. You are very right that teens fog it with bizarre argot, like "Wut R U doing 2nite?" And I'm sure they regard that as really "kewl." They are beyond help. I was referring to mature adults who write well on paper and are

unreadable in their blogs. Unfortunately, I believe this is a time when we need communication the most.

Having seen a Livejournal report of a con that consisted of a listing of screen names, I was left with the impression that this was a party where I didn't know anyone there and wasn't really invited. Admittedly some fanzines are that way, too.

Also, I do not know think my comments about rebels are what they seem to Taras Wolansky. I thought I said that the North Vietnamese were considered rebels. The New Left crowd at Columbia would still be full-fledged rebels if they booed conservatives burning the North Vietnamese Flag. According to my thesis, such as it is, they would have really been supporting the enemies of our country if they had booed conservatives burning the Russian Flag.

Furthermore, I think Evolution is not what it seems for Tim Lane. Probably not for a lot of supporters of Evolution as well. I doubt the gaps and flaws in Evolution should determine whether we should accept or reject it as science. I think the criteria is whether it is the strongest theory. If Intelligent Design is not a scientific theory at all, as he admits, there's no competition there.

On the other hand, I doubt that whether we accept Evolution should have anything to do with whether we believe in God. That's a matter for our hearts not observation by our senses.

Some things, of course, are as they seem; the Nigerian Prisoner Scam, for instance. Joe, you gave John Thiel one website about the scam. There may be a second I can give you both, <http://www.scamorama.com/>. It is pretty good, although I miss the emails they had in the past, sorted by alias (Robert Mugabe's Mother-in-Law?)

Of all people, the Nizkor site for Holocaust Remembrance has a collection of spam emails. "I am Cyla, widow of the late Nazi hunter SIMON WIESENTHAL, and I need help in getting \$127 MILLION DOLLARS out of Austria..."

— JTM

One last thing: I would like to thank Lloyd Penney for his compliment and Robert Kennedy for thanking me.

From: **Brad W. Foster** September 26, 2005
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA
bwfoster@juno.com

Even though the hurricane-twins of the past month haven't hit us directly, they sure have managed to affect our life a lot! Getting ready to head into Louisiana for a festival this next week, and hotels still can't guarantee there will be any room. woo!

One of the best stories about the Dallas bus system happened a couple of years back, when a guy who had applied for a job as a driver was turned down. Seems one big thing with the job was you had to make sure you arrived for work on time. Very important for the bus company. But when he said he takes the bus himself to get to work, they figured that wasn't a good enough guarantee, since they obviously knew the unreliability of their own system. Gives you faith.

Book reviews that have now gone onto my "look for" list from this issue: *Field Guide to the Apocalypse* and *Big Dead Place*. They not only sound like interesting reads, but great titles to have on the shelf! We had another of those great combo weekends a ways back. I set up my art at the "Jazz by the Boulevard" festival in Ft. Worth. So, had an art show, great music, and there was even a tent set up with cheap books. Several of the ones I picked up still had the blurb-sheet from the publisher tucked inside, looks like many of the boxes were stuffed with review copies being cleared out by the local paper. They get storage space back, we get some cheap good reading. A win/win situation to be sure.

I emailed Nick Johnson, the guy who wrote *Big Dead Place*, and told him he was seriously deranged and badly disturbed. He thanked me for the compliment.

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** September 27, 2005
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL 60690-3228 USA
grgpric@aol.com

August 2005 *Alexiad*:

The review of Grinspoon's *Lonely Planets* has a batch of really weird misspellings: "sitcin" for (I think) "sitcom"; "sanething" for "something"; "sane" for "some"; and "fran" for "from". That is, mostly "an" substituted for "om". And then the next review (of Seabrook's *Witchcraft*) has "ââÇ1" substituted for I can't guess what. These are not mistakes that even the most hamfisted typist would make, so I presume they are computer errors, perhaps introduced when you converted from the author's file to your system. Brad Foster's letter has "our know" in place of "are now" (p. 20, column 1, line 3), which also seems more than a little odd.

Scanning glitches and file conversions — I got the ones in your loc.

AND OUT OF THE MIST, THE DREADED PUNCTUATION PIRATES APPEARED!

SHIP AHoy!

#04

Sheryl Birkhead asks if Joe will get anything from publishing his forthcoming book *Heinlein's Children: The Juveniles*. Let me explain Advent's peculiar payment policy. We give a small advance — usually about \$100 — as a binder to make it legal, and then nothing more until the sales of the book have paid off all the expenses, principally the printer's bill. (This does not include anything for my time and labor — Advent is a hobby, and if I depended on it for my living, I would have starved many years ago.) After these expenses are paid off, which takes the sale of about half the edition, all further income is split with the author, usually 50/50. If sales are poor, the author never gets anything beyond that first small advance. But if sales are good, then he gets a much bigger royalty — 50% of sales income rather than the usual 5%-10% that pro publishers pay. The idea is that since Advent handles books that are not expected to be commercial successes (otherwise the pro publishers would have

taken them), the author takes a larger share of the risk if the book sells poorly, but also gets a larger share of the reward if it sells well.

Here's a story about that. Many years ago the late Lurton Blassingame, who was then Robert Heinlein's agent, asked for an accounting of the royalties due to Heinlein for his essay in Advent's *The Science Fiction Novel*. In particular he wanted to know how many copies had been sold. I replied that we didn't keep strict count of copies sold, since the royalty arrangement was based on the total money received from sales, not the price per copy. He sent back a very frosty letter saying that our arrangement — which he called "unheard of" — violated the contract and I had better produce those sales figures and cough up whatever money was due.

Advent's peculiar royalty system had been devised by Earl Kemp, the founder of the company, before I took it over in 1965 (when Earl and the other founders moved away from Chicago and no longer had time for it). So I hunted through the records and found the original contract with Heinlein. And I was startled to discover that by golly Blassingame was right: it called for a flat payment based on number of copies sold, in line with standard publishing practice. It seems that Kemp had privately agreed with Heinlein to use our peculiar system instead, and they had never run it past Blassingame.

I recalculated what Heinlein would have gotten under the original contract, estimating the number of copies sold by taking the number printed and subtracting those that had been distributed free for reviews, etc. And lo!, it turned out that under Advent's peculiar system, Heinlein had gotten a lot more — like two or three times more — than he would have received under the original contract. (Which was why Kemp had made the arrangement: to reward RAH and our other authors for taking the chance that they wouldn't get paid at all if sales were poor.)

So I wrote back to Blassingame, told him what I had found, and said that I preferred to keep the peculiar system in place, but if he really wanted me to adhere to the original contract I would withhold future royalty payments until the extra amount that Heinlein had gotten over the years had all been recouped. I heard nothing more from Blassingame — and I don't know if he ever checked with Heinlein. Anyway, we are still using our peculiar system with Eleanor Wood, who succeeded Blassingame as

Heinlein's agent.

You could have told him that it was the same deal George Allen & Unwin gave J. R. R. Tolkien.

Dainis Bisenieks mentions reading a slushpile story for George Scithers in which "there were gems being smuggled inside a 'pig' (if that's the word for it) passing through an oil pipeline." Yes, that's the word for it. Pigs are devices which are pushed through pipelines by the fluid pressure. They fit tightly enough that not much of the fluid gets by them, but not so tightly that they get stuck. Some pigs are for cleaning the pipeline — debris and unwanted condensates get shoved out ahead of the pigs and removed at "traps" which function something like airlocks. Others carry a variety of instruments for detecting leaks and other faults in the pipeline. I think there was a James Bond movie in which Bond escapes from the Soviet Union by riding in a pig (though I doubt if any pig ever made has had enough extra space inside to carry any people).

As I recall, in the movie *Diamonds Are Forever* he was transported in a "pig", but it was within the U.S.

Dainis also wonders "who wrote 'Black Friar of the Flame'?" Ah, that was the early Isaac Asimov, in *Planet Stories*, Spring 1942. It is laid more or less in the "Foundation" universe before the founding of the Galactic Empire, and climaxes in a retelling of the Battle of Salamis. It wasn't a bad story, despite the typically purple and inappropriate title that *Planet* hung on it; I still wonder what Asimov's original title was.

Here's the cover of that issue:
http://www.noosphere.com/showcase/IMA_GES/planet_spring42.jpg

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** Sept. 29, 2005
 100 Montgomery Street., #24-H,
 Jersey City, NJ 07302-3787 USA
twolansky@yahoo.com

Alexiad 4.4: In my last LoC, I wrote, "I

always have a good time at all the notoriously 'troubled' worldcons." Perhaps I spoke too soon. At any rate, the next time Glasgow bids for a Worldcon, I plan to actively campaign against them.

About your cousins, Madison Major and Madison Major, marrying each other: it reminds me of the scene in the movie, *The Wrong Box*, about a feud between two branches of the Finsbury family. Michael Caine introduces his bride to be: "And this is Julia Finsbury. Soon to become — Julia Finsbury!" **E.B. Frohvet: "Nearly all of organized religion would reject the idea [of contacting extraterrestrial intelligence] outright regardless of the evidence. The Vatican will declare the subject need twenty years of study . . ."** When I was a kid in parochial school, several decades ago, I had to study something called the Baltimore Catechism. Of all the Q&A's in it, the one I remember (for obvious reasons) was about whether there might be intelligent life on other planets. The official Catholic answer was: Why not; if they got their own Messiah sent to them, or it's our job to tell them about it, we'll find out. Recently an old catechism came my way, and I found my memory was accurate.



The beginning of *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* is indeed slow, because Mr. Norrell is a dry stick. But when Mr. Strange comes on the scene, things pick up considerably, if you like the Jane Austen kind of thing. (Perhaps Thomas Love Peacock might be a better comparison.) The history of magic in Clarke's world doesn't make sense, though: if magic is so powerful, why was it given up? Maybe it will be explained in the probable sequels.

Richard Dengrove: The reason

parapsychologists are not "reveling in the streets" over the sensory deprivation or "Ganzfeld" experiments is that, like cold fusion enthusiasts, they're still producing results that can't be replicated, except by true-believing experimenters. The history of parapsychology is that as controls are improved, the results disappear: the opposite of real science.

Rod E. Smith: One might add, during World War II, the Italian Fascists put Jews from southern France into hotels on the Riviera. This I learned from a documentary made by a fellow who was investigating how his parents, Italian Jews, had survived the war. The Italian Fascists simply wouldn't cooperate with the Holocaust, though Mussolini, terrified of Hitler, was pushing them to. Eventually, of course, the Fascists tried to make a separate peace with the Allies, and Hitler took over Italy. But by that time most Italian Jews were out of his reach, and 80% survived.

Alexis Gilliland: Atheism is on the march, but it is marching up a demographic landslide. Believers simply have more children. If belief has a genetic basis, which is likely, we're breeding for it. Thus, the only plausible futures are those like Donald Moffitt's "The Mechanical Sky" (Islam) or William Rotzler's *To the Land of the Electric Angel* (Christianity) or David Feintuch's "Seafort Saga" (syncretism).

Then they should know a bit more about religion. In "The Mechanical Sky", if the protagonist (a Muslim) let his wife (a Christian) raise their children as Christians, they would be executed for apostasy, it being Islamic doctrine that everyone is born Muslim but some are steered wrong by their parents, and the child of a Muslim is a Muslim. (As for "Whiny Nick" Seafort, he should be executed on general principles.)

Brad W. Foster: Good news about Teddy Harvia giving it a rest. He is a much better writer than cartoonist.

Dainis Bisenieks: "Your typical god-in-a-dirty-bathrobe was prone to anachronism. What would Caribbean pirates in 1640 know of carronades?" This

sounds like a reference to *Typewriter in the Sky*, in which L. Ron Hubbard has fun exactly with that sort of thing.

"Do we ever wonder . . . why fantasy worlds should have, though with additions, perfectly normal fauna and flora . . ." I've wondered why feminist writers don't simply make the women bigger and stronger than the men!

Lloyd Penney: I'll be seeing "Travis Tea", author of the new Publish America selection, *Atlanta Nights*, at Albacon in about a week. In an age when modern art critics will unknowingly lavish praise on a picture painted by an orangutan, or a couple of four-year-old girls, I'm curious to know by what standards the book was "as bad a book as could be written".

Why not look for yourself?
 It's on the Web.

John Thiel: The spam emails I find sinister are the ones that threaten you'll be billed hundreds of dollars for pornography, unless you send them your credit card number. It's aimed especially at older people, I think.

Robert S. Kennedy: I plan to take earplugs on my next trip to Las Vegas, where even tender Irish ballads are miked up to deafening levels.

I most recently walked out on *March of the Penguins*, an all-too-familiar nature documentary.

See Bob's letter above.

— JTM

P.S.: Joe, the book is called *The Bladerunner*; the movie that borrowed the title but not the story is called *Blade Runner*.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** Sept. 24, 2005
 921 S. St. Bernard Street,
 Philadelphia, PA 19143-3310 USA

After a hiatus of six months, the position of House Cat has been filled. A young female (neutered), gray with white beneath the eyes (but up the nose) and so on down to bib and underbelly, also the paws. Playful, noisy, and companionable. The expression "run of the house" has taken on new meaning. Very quiet; I only hear, now and then, faint mewls of hunger or annoyance. Though she might show up in the bedroom at dawn (if not

already there). She will settle down, not trample on me or generally act impatient until I am ready to get up. Does have a kittenish way of treating one's feet as a prey species, but without heavy use of claws and teeth. Does not claw anything except some basic rugs (firm weave, no pile) that I readily surrender to this use. I think we will get along very well. One cat, as I like to say, is both necessary and sufficient. A friend (not local) has taken on three and seems to have something of a wolf-goat-cabbage problem.

Recent proofreading work included a whole bunch of Talbot Mundy novels, of which only *King — of the Khyber Rifles* was familiar. In fact I had a copy, which was extremely useful in supplying a whole bunch of italicized words (most of them being *she* in lieu of the name), a missing paragraph, and a fix for some transposed lines . . . which I might have puzzled out.

The reason why Mundy is a very, very good writer is neatly shown by the one that I considered bad: *Caesar Dies*, in which most of the characters talk and talk on the matter of whether the precipitate death of Commodus would be a good thing or a bad thing. It is made plain that there are no longer any worthy Romans; the rot in the commonwealth is all-pervading.

The one novel I read with Commodus and the rot in the res publica was Edward Lucas White's *The Unwilling Vestal*, which featured a girl who was made a vestal and resolved to wait out her term to marry her love — who in response tried every legal way of getting killed short of getting sold into the lead mines, the climax being when he became King of Nemi, and the Unwilling Vestal had to get Commodus to set up a scheme to let him be replaced and survive. Commodus is a good guy in this one; it's available on Gutenberg.

Even Mundy's powers of description, which can appeal so intensely to the mind's eye, ear, nose, and throat, seem to falter: most likely because the scenes are static. In the good books, focus is mostly on the main character, who is typically on the move, or the narrator is one whom the real mover and

shaker — James Schuyler Grim a.k.a. Jimgrim in a whole passel of stories — has placed his trust.

I had not begun to read Mundy when a book about his life and work passed through my hands, but I have the general impression that Mundy had been there and done that, though not everything he told about his life was true. The comments made about the peoples of the Near and Middle East, about their lack of political maturity (permitting them to be coem tools) and about their future strike me as shrewd and prescient. How fascinating to read several tales set in Palestine around 1920, in which Jimgrim's task is to defuse the work of troublemakers who would unleash mob fury against the Jews, alleging offenses against Islam, as indeed happened from time to time. The dedication of one book is to the unnamed original of Jimgrim . . . whom I have thought of characterizing as a Lawrence who completely effaced himself, who never let his hand in events be seen.

As fictional tales of success, these are of course hokum (though it is implicit that vigilant efforts must not cease). Indeed, to the narrators their experiences are Adventure, in the very home of adventure; they revel in all that their senses take in, though they might at any time lose their lives. Subterfuge! Disguise! Everything that is said about the body language of disguise is remarkably convincing — unlike for example, the tricks with makeup and clothing of the Phantom Detective.

It's hokum because the potential for tragedy is played down; indeed, we are not made aware of it. The sheer magnitude of fanatical blindness that has been revealed, that was there all along but lacked resources . . .

Still, it is good hokum. These books are studies in command of self. One who would command, we are told, must first learn to obey (Miles Vorkoskan had some trouble with this), and several of Mundy's heroes are, in fact, officers; King is explicitly Secret Service, as Jimgrim seems also to be. Explicit assaults are made against King's command of himself, which he recognizes and struggles to fend off. The whole story is a contest of wills. There is also this large element of another kind of hokum in the middle of it, the preternatural element which places the book in the realm of fantasy. Enough said that I have characterized Hilton's

Lost Horizon as Mundy and water.

I close the subject of Mundy with a marginal note. If he has been there and done that, why is there a geographical goof which simple map knowledge could have corrected? In my case, I have been there and done that! I have traveled by train between Jerusalem and Haifa, and it goes nowhere near the Sea of Galilee!

Command of self is a Terry Pratchett theme, too; one things especially of Samuel Vimes. He has a major role in the latest book, *Thud!*, which both of us here promptly read. The troubles between Trolls and Dwarfs threaten to become Really Serious as the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, I mean Koom Valley rolls around again. We get some fascinating ethnographic details. We get one or two characters who are not played for laughs at all. Thought is required, just as it is in science fiction. Indeed, Terry is guilty of literature.

Tolkien and the English language: in Bujold's latest novel, *The Hallowed Hunt*, I find the term "bride-piece". It was, alas, a typo for "bride-price". And I just read in the *Times Literary Supplement* a review of a biography of Subrahmayan Chandrasekhar, in which a stellar species (and not any bearded bipeds) is named as "white dwarves". Can this be the usage of the *book*? I hope it dies not have any future and remains optional for the bipeds only. What was the first use of it, of general application outside of Tolkien's world, in public print? Byfield in 1967 is the earliest that I know of: "Dwarves alone can afford to wear cabochon diamonds."

Titus Groan looking for other weird people among whom he can feel normal is, of course, no joke. Don't we all feel most normal among fans? Merely as a book lover, never mind SF, I felt cut off from the majority. To almost all the women with whom Betsy kept company and who came to our house, my books might as well have been wallpaper. ("Books do furnish a room.") My kind of people incline their heads to scan the titles. Through them they gain some knowledge of me . . . though I always offer the disclaimer, "Lots of this was going cheap and looked interesting at the time."

That sounds like our place.

— JTM

The spelling of desiccated should be better known.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** September 3, 2005
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg,
MD 20882-3422 USA
catsmeouch@yahoo.com

Hi — playing with my new old typer — going to take a while to get used to the touch and stickiness of the keys, but you can't have everything!

I am sorry this is so late, well it feels as if it is late, and with all the problems in New Orleans (etc.) I'm feeling quite lucky.

My best wishes to Janine. If only a hospital stay would feel like a vacation, then one might be able to enjoy the process. Definitely does not sound like a fun stay.

Lisa — now that gas prices have climbed even higher, the hybrids should be looking better. I know two who have the Prius and love the car. I have a Matrix, and while I do like the vehicle, it does not get the mileage that the Prius does (mine gets 30-37 mpg), so I am starting to re-evaluate the need to drive anywhere.

I have seen a "new" (?) candybar at Walmart — but no place else — it appears to be a Nestlé Crunch, but in a red and white wrapper (which I thought might indicate white chocolate) and a notation that it was higher quality chocolate — at least I think that was what it said. I did not buy one (oh yeah — only saw it as the BIG bar) and when I went back to look again, it was gone. I thought I saw it (also) at a local grocery store, but same problem — but I may go take a look tomorrow. Ever seen one?

Trinlay — I got a mailing from some mail-order place (Stardust or something along that line) and they sell a fibromyalgia cookbook. Never seen one before. I intend (ha) to check on the Internet now that I, somewhere, have the author's name and see if I can find more about it.

Sounds as if Wiscon was enjoyable for you and KT.

The Dale Speirs story of his Aurora is a classic.

I didn't know that the N3F had its own awards. I am inferring from the bit that this is the first year?

Yes it is. There was no Fan Artist category; they should do something about that.

At any rate congrats to all the award winners!

I don't pay that much attention (usually) to the news — didn't know Pimlico was in danger of shutting down — would be a shame.

Yes, I meant Sue Grafton. I wish the library system would get all the alphabet books (as least as many as there are so far) as books on tape. They are not stellar reading but they are enjoyable.

Sigh. Time is doing its thing . . . Sept. 18!

Life has gotten in the way — cold from the flight to Utah in July, before it cleared up (and Dr. said I had the remnant of a sinus infection — never had one before) got a second cold . . . decided to buy a Select Comfort sofa bed for the basement so I can sleep down there in the summer and not worry about the A/C — it is always so nice and cool down there. Paid to have trees put into the holes created when the trees came out after the mild storms after hurricane Cindy, and THEN I had the chimney cleaned and found it is considered unsafe and a fire hazard (yeah with \$400 of wood sitting in the driveway). Just got the estimate to reline the flue and replace the woodstove insert — \$3200. The existing insert still works fine — and they wanted to be sure I knew it is so old (25 years) that it does not meet any current day codes and when they reline the chimney, it will be set up to go with "the" insert, if I choose not to get a new one, then when it finally dies, there is no guarantee it will fit with the new system. Sigh. But that is the current excuse and I am sticking to it.

Unusual names: one of my female classmates in vet school's first name was Douglas — I presume it was a family name — but it lead to endless confusion when she answered to her name in class.

I've mentioned my great-aunt Jimmie often enough, so I'll tell you about the woman who married my cousin David Parker in Frankfort. Her name is George. (George Ella, but still . . .)

— JTM

It is looking fairly "promising" (or at least unavoidable) that e-zines are the wave of the future. Well, there goes the fanartist niche! We'll see.

WAHF:
Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.
Murray Moore, who included with the copy of *Best of MOZ* a note of hope that we could come to Ditto. Gas prices.
AL du Pisani, who regretted he couldn't write.

A few years ago, when I wanted to play *Great Naval Battles North Atlantic* I had to upgrade the computer I had (from 4k to 8k memory). Now, I wanted to play *Rome: Total War* and I had to upgrade the video card.

Once I did . . . well, it's impressive. Cuts into my spare time considerably. At least I can stop at a reasonable time and go to bed.

The world-building takes, like most of those games do these days, off of Sid Meier's *Civilization*, with having to build one improvement before you can get another, and that influencing the kinds of troops you can raise. I keep on running out of family members, and losing battles has nothing to do with it. It's a very long-range game, understand.

The battles are spectacular. In fact, this is what they use on the History Channel to recreate ancient battles. Now if I can only find on the net someone's pre-set Pharsalus scenario so I too can say, "*Ad signum mei, solve lora Infernis!*"

PHILOSOPHY NOTES

by Paul Gadzikowski.

"This semester when I first turned up for philisophy class I discovered I hadn't brought a notebook — only a sketchbook."



Los Angeles is still too far away, what with paying for the new car, and even some of the local cons seem a bit off. Maybe things will have settled down by 2007. And who knows . . . there are some things developing.

YEAR OF THE RAT: The Fiendish Plot of Fu Manchu

[It is little known that in 1948, in a weak and impoverished moment, the author of *Homage to Catalonia* took on a sharecropping assignment. He was sick and needed money. The deal fell through, and little of the manuscript has survived . . .]

It was a bright cold day in April and all the clocks were striking thirteen when Sir Denis Nayland Smith came into my life again.

I had taken rooms at the University in Milan, the better to complete my studies in the etymology of the oriental languages. Winter had lingered in northern Italy that year, but all around there were the signs of rebuilding from the devastation of the war.

It had been a long day and I was exhausted. The lift in my block of flats was broken again, and I had had to do some work on the plumbing for my neighbours the Parsonses, like myself refugees from battered Britain. I was washing off, listening to the wireless set that was built into the wall, when I heard the door to my flat open.

The figure that confronted me was familiar, yet wearied. His hair was silver with age, but his bearing as lean and alert as ever. "Great Heavens, Winston!" he cried. "Have you heard!? *He* is at it again!"

Would the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu bring more devastation into this divided world, one where the Orient was set against the Soviet empire and the frightened, ocean-rimming powers of the west? . . .

When I came to I beheld his great hairless head in my field of vision. For a moment that was all I could see, but then the darkness of the chamber lightened a little, and I could behold the mandarin's cap, the yellow robe, and the marmoset that sat upon his shoulder.

Then came his voice, guttural and then siblant. "How many fingers am I holding up?" he said.

I strove to focus my vision, which had slid away after its recovery, and peer at the fuzzy images before me. After a moment — I was thinking so slowly, it seemed — after a moment I made out two fingers. "Two."

The Doctor made a pleased sound. "Very well. Two. And if I hold up two more, like this —" and he suited his actions to his words, "— how many does this make? Two and two is five, is it not?"

Four fingers or five? The images swam before my eyes . . .

"Companion Winston, your assignment will be difficult," Dr. Fu Manchu said, one long-nailed hand on the desk. "You understand, the perception of history in the West is very deficient. It must be corrected — and your task will be to see to that correction.

"Soon, we shall be in complete control of the history of the world. Who controls the present, controls the past, as a wise man once said. Once the unfortunate history of the world is revised, to make the paramountcy of China obvious, then we shall be in complete control of the world. As the wise one also said, who controls the past controls the future . . ."

I did not know which had been worse, Fu Manchu's modern electric brain torture, or the ancient Oriental torment of the rats. My rescue had been at the ultimate moment, and as I lay in the hospital bed, recovering, all seemed at peace; it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was over, I thought. Julia was beside me and all was right with the world..

"You are a most fortunate woman," I heard Nayland Smith say. "Your husband to be is heir to a title, by special remainder you understand, and though I should say it more often, I am proud to be his older brother."

She took my uninjured hand and I felt her hair brush my chest. Two tears trickled down the sides of my nose. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! I could do as I wished. I had won the victory over myself. I loved my big brother.

— Not by Eric Arthur Blair ("George Orwell")

or Arthur Sarsfield Ward ("Sax Rohmer")

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

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