

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΕΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

One of the big thrills of editing *Alexiad* has been getting to write about old and new favorite books. I absolutely love discovering new writers such as George Pendle and Michael Curtis Ford. I love sharing these new finds with our readers. There's nothing like the prickles at the back of my neck when I realize the book I bought on impulse is truly one worthy of sharing with our readers. I wish it happened more often. In more than thirty years of reading, though, only a little more than fifty books come to mind when I try to think of ones that stand out in my mind at short notice. That is not very many. It is entirely possible that I am far too picky a reader. I tend to buy the works of new writers on the cheap and send them back to the thrift store if they don't keep my interest all the way through, sometimes even if they do. We just don't have space to keep everything. I did acquire *The Ten Thousand* for fifty cents and have since acquired everything Michael Curtis Ford has in paperback. I haven't read them yet because they keep disappearing in the stacks. It would really help such matters if the library would declare a moratorium on their book sales until all the book addicts in Louisville had cleared out their collections. I don't see this happening, though. Oh well, I could have worse vices.

— Lisa

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The **World Party** is at 9:00 p.m. local time on **June 21, 2007**.

WonderFest 2007, the modeling convention, will be held **July 19-20, 2007** at the Executive West in Louisville.

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

However, that weekend will also have **BreyerFest**, the model horse convention, at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington.

<http://www.breyerhorses.com/breyer/breyerfest.asp>

TuckerCon, the 2007 NASFiC [North American Science Fiction Convention], will be **August 2-5, 2007** at the Collinsville, Illinois Gateway Center and Holiday Inn. Membership is \$120 for adults, \$75 for young adults (ages 11-16), and \$65 for children (6-10).

ConGlomeration 2007 will be **August 10-12, 2007** at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Louisville. The Guests of Honor are **Ben Bova**, **Allen Steele**, and **Daniel Dos Santos**. Membership is \$25 until July 25, 2007 and \$35 thereafter and at the door.

ConGlomeration/Attn: Registration

P.O. Box 32095

Louisville, KY 40232-2095

<http://www.conglomeration.org>

In other news, the Thunder Over Louisville fireworks display has been rescheduled to **April 12, 2008**. So there won't be any fireworks for next year's ConGlomeration.

The 82nd Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 4, 2007** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, NJ.

The 53rd Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 25, 2007** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, NY.

The 115th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 6, 2007** at the Red Mile in Lexington, KY.

Printed on March 23, 2009

Deadline is **August 1, 2007**

Reviewer's Notes

I have been finding a drought in new science fiction and even fantasy of late. If I wanted Sexy Vampire stories now, I could read all I wanted. Myself, I read Madeline L'Engle's *Penguins and Golden Calves* (1996), in which she expresses puzzlement at why young people longed to be vampires. It meant being dead, and existing by killing. She had the old view, they had the new one ("Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire," as the tagline from the movie *The Lost Boys* [1987; <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093437/>] goes). Like, d00dz, she's like stuck in a wrinkle in time, y'know?

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



they found that she had flooded through an open hatch. A crewman had attempted to close the hatch, and by the evidence had turned the locking wheel as hard as he could, trying to close the hatch. On his previous boat, that particular type of hatch locking wheel turned the other way [Pages 79-81].

With technical cockups like that, it might be presumed that one of the eleven men transferred to the *K-127* at the last minute might have made a similar blunder, which could explain how that sub suffered a not dissimilar problem. So much for *Red Star Rogue* by Sewell and Richmond (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #2).

For those whose horizons in cartoons are just a little beyond “ded zeeba”, GoComics now has something available:

<http://gocomics.com/pibgorn/>

Depressing is finding that the only stuff at the bookstore that isn't romance, animé, Sexy Vampire, or tie-in is old Baen books. Then reading them and finding that *Demon's Gate* (2004) by Steve White is yet another Belisarius story, while *Warp Speed* (2004) by Travis S. Taylor is *The Skylark of Space* without a DuQuesne. And they were at least readable and kept my reading interest.

I have been reading with some interest the alternatetheory.com message board. Their section on published fiction has been having a neat little piece of fan fiction by Mark Whittington, the author of *Children of Apollo* (2001), the alternate space race novel.

The fan fiction features Prime Minister Francis Urquhart, the antihero of the BBC miniseries *House of Cards* (1990, 1993, 1995). Whittington inserts F.U. into the very real life 9/11 and produces a more advantageous course of events. (His writing is flawed by, of all things, poor spelling.) On the higher level, Whittington pulls off brilliantly the difficult task of making an unlikable unpleasant character end up doing good almost in spite of himself — as he did with Nixon in *Children of Apollo*.

Reading this raises the troubling question: is the only way to defeat our enemy to be so ruthless?

MONARCHIST NEWS

Clarification. Lord Culloden appears to be really and truly named “Xan Windsor”. And you thought the names in your family were

odd.

Princess Ariane Wilhelmina Máxima Ines of the Netherlands was born **April 10, 2007** in Den Haag to **Princess Máxima** and **Prince Willem-Alexander of Orange**.

Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark have had a daughter, born **April 22, 2007** in Copenhagen. Her name will be announced at the christening.

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Review by Joseph T Major of
THE CHILDREN OF HURIN
by J. R. R. Tolkien,
edited by Christopher R. Tolkien
(Houghton Mifflin; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-618-89464-2; \$26.00)

“Yes, Professor, Amalgamated Consolidated Editorialhouse is proud to be the publisher of your books. The Tolkien Line is one of our biggest profit centers! However, we've got a little problem with this new book of yours.”

“I was not aware of any problem. Pray enlighten me.”

“It's not . . . not like *The Lord of the Rings*.”

“Certainly not. This is a part of the history of the Elder Days, long before the forging of the Rings.”

“That's a matter we've been meaning to talk to you about. We have our writers working on a couple of sequels . . . well, never mind that for now.”

“My point is, though, that ‘Tolkien’ is our Number One brand. Bring this out, and your sales will drop, the next title won't do nearly as well. Perhaps if you publish it under a pseudonym? Professor? Where are you going!?”

E. R. Eddison might have understood this. He had written that sort of thing, after all [*Styrbiorn the Strong* (1926)]. Robert E. Howard might have found it of all things too grim and negative, and this was the guy who thought “Crom grudgingly applauds those who help themselves” far too positive a portrayal of

the Cimmerian deity's divine benevolence. If Poul Anderson had read *Unfinished Tales* (which he may have but I don't know for sure) I venture to say he would have understood it. One thinks of others these days who might not be so comprehending. Piers Jacob? James Oliver Rigney? The egregious Nick Perumov?

A lot of people who had had their opinions set and fixed regarding Tolkien — “Boy's Own Paper”; “No women, no sex”; “No one gets hurt”; “Elfy-welfy”; “No villain” — aren't going to have them changed by any such trivial thing as counter-examples, either. One wonders what Peter Toynbee, who dismissed Tolkien so casually (even after having been punched out by a real-life Saruman), would have said of this. Probably nothing.

The basic plot is that of a Norse reiver, going from bad to worse to utter devastation in a grim and hostile world. It begins very much as a Norse epic might:

Hador Goldenhead was a lord of the Edain and well-beloved by the Eldar. He dwelt while his days lasted under the lordship of Fingolfin, who gave to him wide lands in that region of Hithlum which was called Dor-lómin. His daughter Glóredhel wedded Haldir son of Halmir, lord of the Men of Brethil; and at the same feast his son Galdor the Tall wedded Hareth, the daughter of Halmir.

Galdor and Hareth had two sons, Húrin and Huor . . .

— *The Children of Húrin*. Page 33

And for a time the House of Hador did well; Húrin the lord, his wife Morwen, and their children Túrin and Urwen. Who are literally black and white, since Túrin is already a moody and violent sort, while his sister is joyous and happy; indeed her nickname is Lalaith [“Laughter”]. Thus is it that when she dies young, laughter goes out of the family for good.

Then the scene expands beyond the household, to the world where Morgoth's sway is wider and wider yet. He's already used Weapons of Mass Destruction, in the Dagor Bragollach [“Battle of Sudden Flame”]; now he is mobilizing, and the Elves and Men are counter-mobilizing. Some idea of the result may be derived from the subsequent name of the battle, Nirnaeth Arnoediad [“Tears Unnumbered”]. The combined armies wage desperate battle (now here is where Aemilius Scaurus and his *Misplaced Legion* are needed,

or even Caesar and the entire army, Antonius, Caecilius Metellus, Vorenus, Pullo, and all; and maybe even Xena and Gabrielle) and Morgoth's armies win a decisive victory. (The "tears unnumbered" are shed by those who were left behind.)

Then Morgoth shows what a real Evil Overlord does. Húrin has been taken prisoner, and Morgoth has a little talk with him:

'You say it,' said Morgoth. 'I am the Elder King, Melkor, first and mightiest of all the Valar, who was before the world, and made it. The shadow of my purpose lies upon Arda, and all that it is bends slowly and surely to my will. But upon all whom you love my thought shall weigh as a cloud of Doom, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair. Wherever they go, evil shall arise. Whenever they speak, their words shall bring ill counsel. Whatsoever they do shall turn against them. They shall die without hope, cursing both life and death.'

But Húrin answered, 'Do you forget to whom you speak? Such things you spoke long ago to our fathers; but we escaped from your shadow. And now we have knowledge of you, for we have looked upon the faces that have seen the Light, and heard the voices that have spoken with Manwë. Before Arda you were, but others also, and you did not make it. Neither are you the most mighty; for you have spent your strength on yourself and wasted it in your own emptiness. No more are you now than an escaped thrall of the Valar, and their chain still awaits you.'

'You have learned the lessons of your masters by rote,' said Morgoth. 'But such childish lore will not help you, now that they are all fled away.'

'This last then I will say to you, thrall Morgoth,' said Húrin, 'and it comes not from the lore of the Eldar, but is put in to my heart in this hour. You are not the Lord of Men, and shall not be, though all Arda and Menel fall in your dominion. Beyond the Circles of the World you shall not pursue those who refuse you.'

'Beyond the Circles of the World I will not pursue them,' said Morgoth. 'For beyond the Circles of the World there is Nothing. But within them they shall not escape me, until they enter into Nothing.'

'You lie,' said Húrin.

— *The Children of Húrin*, Pages 64-65

In far too many works, the efforts of the antagonists — the Bad Guys — are motiveless. They do what they do because they're the Bad Guys. Their efforts have a disconnect between action and result; the Bad Guys triumph, no matter what their opponents do, until the last section of the work, when there is an equal and opposite reversal, and all the Evil Overlord's Legions of Doom and such are useless. Which is why such a course of events as is presented here is a change of pace. In this one conversation we see motivation, differing world-views, attitudes, actions having both causes and effects, and predictions.

The reader will also notice a singular lack of archaicism, real or affected. There's no, "'Thou sayest it,' spake Morgoth. 'The Elder King, Melkor, art I, of all the Valar First and Mightiest...'"

Then too, they both turned out to be right.

The curse that Morgoth lays is that Húrin is going to be long-lived and all-seeing. Some curse, or so some might think. Being imprisoned on the battlements of Thangorodrim, Morgoth's fortress, is one of the less unpleasant parts of the curse. It's having to see the curse work out that is the bad part. You did notice that he would see the world as Morgoth saw it.

The first thing he sees is his family getting plundered and dispersed. Morwen is expecting, and goes off one way; Túrin is desperate, and goes off another way. Which will in time lead to other problems.

For now, Túrin flees to Doriath, the hidden kingdom of the Elves, ruled by Thingol Greycloak, best known as the father of Luthien Tinuviel. Security in these troubled days is an unending task and Túrin makes both friends and enemies there. The friends include Beleg the Strongbow, the arch-archer of Doriath (was it simple appositeness, coincidence, the Akashic Records of universal knowledge "out there", or early adaptation when Wendy & Richard Pini gave *their* arch-archer elf the name of "Strongbow"?). Now as for the enemies . . .

Túrin demonstrates one of his character flaws when he gets into a fight over his lack of grooming in the field. His opponent seems to believe that he is in an animé where it is possible to jump considerable distances down a waterfall from one rock to another and so escape uninjured. This is one of those events where others learn by your example because you aren't around any longer.

With at the very least bad-blood accusations hanging over his head, Túrin flees and joins a band of outlaws, a very popular occupation in that day and time. Mysterious, laconic, efficiently violent, he becomes the leader of the band in a traditional fashion. ("Clint? Sergio. Have I got a script for you!")

Every outlaw needs a stronghold; it's basic guerilla doctrine. However, Túrin's curse gets it with a killing; the bandits attack some other wanderers, mortally wounding one, and their leader is cozened into letting the bandits into his hiding-place, which is secure. Security can be a trap too.

Those seeking a nice Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™ scenario will no doubt be pleased to note that the keepers of the covert are the Petty-Dwarves, Mîm and his surviving son (the other one was the casualty), and that presently Beleg comes out of Doriath to join his old comrade in arms. But it isn't a joyous community of goodly folk united against the Evil Overlord; Mîm has a grudge. Neither is it:

Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
Riding through the glen,
Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
With his Merry Men,
Robs from the rich,
Gives to the poor . . .

It's more like Hereward the Wake, fighting a bitter-end resistance against an inexorable invader.

Oh, and Morgoth is going to put down this uprising. Mîm has a grudge; Morgoth has troops. They can come together. And their hiding-place is invaded, with a massacre and Túrin being taken captive. By some good fortune, Beleg is spared, and he takes up the pursuit, finding along the way an escapee from Morgoth's mines to serve as a guide and partner. And you thought Kolyma was original.

Then the curse hits home again. Beleg and his zek companion Gwindor track the orcs all the way almost to Thandogorim, and in a desperate and bold strike get Túrin out from the middle of an overconfident band of Orcs and Warg trackers. Only, when trying to get Túrin's shackles off, Beleg nicks him with the sword blade he's using, and that rouses him. Túrin proceeds to kill his attacker, and only then finds out who and how.

Gwindor takes Túrin to his own home, the cavernous Elf-realm of Nargothrond. This may not have been the best idea around. While Túrin (taking a new pseudonym, Agarwen ["Bloodstained"]), grows into the best warrior

in the world, that just gets him overconfident. It also draws notice. Then there is his armentarium, which includes the above mentioned sword, now named Gurthang "Iron of Death", which has earned its wielder the nickname of Mormegil "the Black Sword". [They are fortunate the weapon in question isn't a bound demon which drinks souls.] And, oh yes, Gwindor's sometime girlfriend Finduilas is now attracted to the handsome (albeit mortal) War-Leader.

Again, this new aggressiveness draws on it a fierce retaliation. Along with a little bait-and-switch. While King Orodreth, Túrin, and most of the troops are ranging out afield, another force attacks the main caverns themselves, which are not only lightly defended, but easily accessible. It seems that for his convenience Túrin had a bridge built across the river Narog in front of the caves of Nargothrond. It would have been a little hard to make it one-way, and the result is that the dragon Glaurung can now get across the river without getting wet. Niieee.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Túrin returns from the battlefield in time to see Glaurung's orcs rounding up the surviving Elf-maidens for transport. The dragon catches his eye (making eye contact with him is charming) and reminds him that he's abandoned his mother and sister and he should go get them, never mind Finduilas over there crying for help. So he goes back home to rescue his family.

Home has not done well either. One of the Easterlings, a fellow named Brodda, has established himself in the district, if not in their hall, and Túrin has words with him. This being Túrin, the words turn to deeds. And this is not Sir Richard and the Lady Ælueva from *Puck of Pook's Hill* either (Tolkien his eye (making a mythology for the English, not the Britons, understand), so Túrin has good reason if bad fortune. Especially when it is pointed out that his mother and the sister who was born after he began his wanderings went off to Doriath some time ago.

If it weren't for their having decided to go to Nargothrond to look for Túrin. At least Morwen sets out with a party of Elves, and then her daughter Nienor tags along, which is not the most adult way to describe what she did, but she was full grown, old enough to know better.

If you'd thought that the late Brodda had not been very hospitable, the current tenant of Nargothrond is far more of a bad host. The Elves are scattered, Morwen vanishes, and Nienor runs mad. In the horror of having seen the dragon, and having him strip her of her

sanity, she outruns the surviving Elves, losing her clothes in the process. This is not good news at home.

Túrin wanders again, and finds himself in a valley where some Men have settled. With a horrific story, for they ambushed a group of Orcs and wiped them out — helped by the fact that the Orcs massacred their prisoners rather than let them be liberated, and one of them had managed to hold on to life long enough to beg them to tell the Black Sword that Finduilas is here. He grieves for her and settles down there, taking up yet another name, “Turambar” [“Master of Doom”].

Then they find a woman, who had come fleeing through the woods and collapsed on Finduilas’s grave mound. She has amnesia and indeed aphasia, having evidently and obviously outrun both her wits and her garments. She must have somewhere in her the concept of language, though, as she picks up words and ideas very enthusiastically. She had been crying when they first found her, so Turambar called her “Níniel” [“Maid of Tears”].

History repeats itself. In spite of the chief of the locals liking her, Níniel falls for Turambar, they get married, and she gets pregnant. Then, Glaurung the dragon goes after his next target.

In the ensuing conflict, Glaurung is mortally wounded and Turambar is badly injured. While he’s lying there unconscious, Níniel goes out to the scene of conflict, heart in her mouth, and finds her spouse gravely wounded. She binds up his burnt hand — and then the dying dragon reminds her of something. They have met before, when she called herself Nienor; the sister of the wounded man lying there.

In horror, Níniel Nienor realizes that she has unknowingly done an abominable wrong. Driven mad again, but a different sort of mad, she runs down to the river and throws herself in.

Turambar comes to, wondering what’s been going on. When the whole matter is explained to him, he declares it impossible — only to realize that Morgoth and his dragon did meddle with his memory, and make him forget what Nienor looked like, among other things. Nevertheless, he kills the messenger (not even quoting Lord Lessingham: “A lie! And here’s your death for it!”)

And then, having realized that some things can’t go on any longer, and that he’s forfeited any chance or even right to a life, he runs on his sword. Amid the ruins, the locals bury him and put up a memorial to Níniel. Which is where, after many long years of wanderings

and of ruination, their parents meet again, and Morwen finally passes away.

Túrin did not play well with others. This may be a childish way to render his flaw but it has the virtue of simplicity. He did not cooperate well, he did not subordinate himself well, and he lashed out too often and too violently. As a result, for all his determination, devotion, and might, his efforts turned out to be in vain, and he left a trail of death and devastation wherever he went, as if he had been in Morgoth’s secret service. He might as well have been demonstrating in action Robert Conquest’s saying about an organisation being secretly run by its worst enemies.

But to quote one other commentator [William George Ferguson, commenting on the book in the rec.arts.sf.written group on September 20, 2006], “The Narn is mostly the story of [Húrin’s] son Túrin, who makes folks like Othello and Hamlet and Oedipus look like lucky devils.” There’s a bit of the *Kalevala* in it too; the incest theme, primarily (as I said, it’s a firm belief, hardly to be gainsaid by anything like solid facts, that Tolkien didn’t have sexuality in his epos). In de Camp’s & Pratt’s *The Wall of Serpents* (1953, 1972) Harold Shea only found the comparatively nice stuff.

(Since there is some evidence that Lönnrot did some very substantial editing on the traditional poems that make up the *Kalevala*, he may have been a model to Tolkien in more ways than one.)

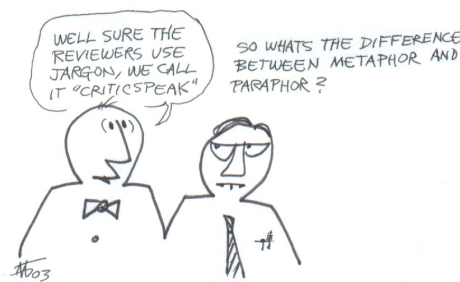
This text was assembled from various drafts of the story, some of which had been published earlier in *The Silmarillion* (1977) and *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* (1980). In other words, this is not a work on the level of the productions of Adrian Conan Doyle or Brian Herbert; it’s more like what would have come out if, say, L. Sprague de Camp had said during his meeting with the Professor, “I think this would sell, why not bring it out on its own?” and then sat on him until he did.

Those who should have been working together against a resolute and determined enemy permitted their petty grievances and differences of opinion to control their actions and divide them. Tolkien more than anyone disliked the thought of allegory. There are lessons to be learned from the ruin of Doriath.

Here ends the SILMARILLION. If it has passed from the high and the beautiful to darkness and ruin, that was

of old the fate of Arda Marred; and if any change shall come and the Marring be amended, Manwë and Varda may know; but they have not revealed it, and it is not declared in the dooms of Mandos.

— *Quenta Silmarillion* —



THE AMERICAN LIBERTY LEAGUE

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
THE DEVIL’S ADVOCATE
by Taylor Caldwell (1952)

It was a bright cold day in April and all the clocks were striking thirteen. Dagny Taggart looked out over the roofs of New York at the great calendar hanging in the air and listened to Eddie Williers reporting the latest shortages. She said, “Have the California District ship half its store of copper wire to Wisconsin. We must preserve the wheat crop.” The intercom buzzed.

“Miss Taggart, Mr. Smith from the Bureau of Economic Management is here to see you.”

“Very well, send him in,” she said, and then to the telephone, “Cuffy Meigs’s replacement is here. Goodbye.”

Smith was a weedy, ill-nourished man with bad teeth, in a scruffy coverall, as many of the newer bureaucrats had taken to wearing. He said, “Smith, Winston, from the BurEcMan of DepPlenty.”

“You’re English,” Dagny said.

“Yes, I came over last year . . .”

Alone in his New York flat, Winston Smith crept into his corner and opened his journal to write. “April 15. I still feel there is hope in the proles.

After speaking to the railway manager, I made an inspection of the line. One of the plateplayers, a strong looking chap by the name of Galt, was working on the fishplates (must learn all the local names for things) . . .”

Not by Alyssia Zinovievna Rosenbaum or Eric Arthur Blair

Janet Miriam Holland Taylor Caldwell (1900-1985) was once and not so long ago a very popular novelist, with over thirty million copies sold. Her first novel, *Dynasty of Death* (1938) was about a family of arms-makers; most of her work dealt with industrialism, but she also did classical historical novels (of which *Glory and the Lightning* (1974), about the Athenian hetaira Aspasia of Miletos, really jumps the shark; two words — “Syrian whiskey”).

She had a life, as well, having been in the Naval Reserve during the World War, then a court reporter. One of the biographies of her, *In Search of Taylor Caldwell* (1972), is by Jess Stearn, author of *Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping Prophet* (1967) [you knew there had to be a connection somewhere], who also collaborated with her on several of her later novels, including *Romance of Atlantis* (1975), a revised version of one of her juvenile works.

The Devil’s Advocate was the book which taught me that there is no requirement that every book have a unique title. And oddly enough, by then I had already read Robert Benchley’s 20,000 *Leagues Under the Sea*, or *David Copperfield* (1928) but that was clearly satirical. Tommy, my first oddball friend, had read “*The Devil’s Advocate*” and was heralding it as a predictor of the decline of American society. I wondered how a novel about a dying monsignor having and resolving a crisis of faith while investigating the case for sainthood of an Italian partisan executed by the Germans could have much to say about American society. I had read the book of the same title by Morris L. West (1959), and of course he had read this one.

This and a later work by her were vigorously eviscerated by Damon Knight; the review can be found on Pages 39-40 of *In Search of Wonder* between reviews of works by Stanley Mullen (one of the few SF writers Heinlein seemed to be able to get close to) and “Lee Correy” (rocketry expert G. Harry Stine), in a chapter titled “Chuckleheads”.

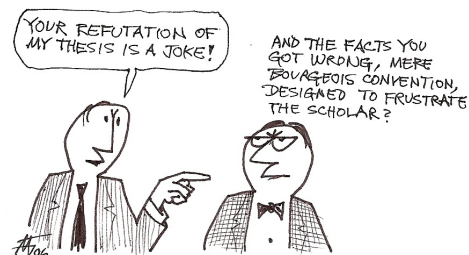
Knight did not think well of the book, either of style or of theme. He cites a number of infelicities of the former, and as for the latter, he has many examples. His summary is

that Caldwell “sees as in a Dewey button, darkly.”

This comes, of course, from the repeated comments by various of the characters that the country’s fall from its glory really began in 1933. Given the attitudes she cites, it is not really proper to cite Thomas E. Dewey in that connection. Dewey, after all, was in the progressive wing of the Republican Party, and the various gripes are more appropriate to the Hoover-Taft bloc; if not today’s Buchananites. (Strangely enough, Roosevelt is never mentioned by name.)

There is a saying attributed to Huey Long. Supposedly, he was asked if fascism would ever come to America. He said, “Sure, but we’ll call it *anti-fascism!*” The organization of American society under the Democracy, the Ingsoc-style renaming of the country, is one with strong parallels to Nazi society, from petty matters such as the replacement of the flag (the Democracy has a national flag that is red with one white star, the way that the Nazis replaced the Weimar black-red-gold flag with the swastika banner) all the way up to the omnipresent security service with its army, the Picked Guard. In that, Caldwell is more subtle than the clangorous writers from Sinclair Lewis (*It Can’t Happen Here* (1935)) to Philip Roth (*The Plot Against America* (2004)) who penned cautionary tales of an overt fascism taking over America.

Not that they would admit that many of these trends were indeed present in the New Deal. Imperialism and cartelization have been done under “progressive” justifications with as much energy and good intentions as they have been done with “traditionalist” intentions. Neither the New Deal nor the Old Right were particularly meaningful practitioners of their rhetorical images of liberty.



The novel is set in a nightmarish future world. America has become an authoritarian and hegemonic power, incorporating at least Canada. World War II was followed by World

War III, where America crushed the Soviet Union, and then by World War IV, where it crushed the communized European powers. And now it is gearing up for a war against the South American nations.

At home, the country has lost almost all its freedoms. The economy is mobilized for constant war; the Military are in control, with their principal supporters being big commercial farmers and big industrialists. However, many groups have taken up the support of the new order of things, or at least brought down the old order. There are pockets of wealth amid widespread poverty, crumbling infrastructure, and a general national malaise (as it’s put in *Ebert’s Bigger Little Movie Glossary* (1999), **Orwell that Ends Wells** (Page 146)).

The country is now referred to as “The Democracy”; any mention of the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence is banned. The former states have been reorganized out of existence; the Democracy is divided into Sections (as in *It Can’t Happen Here*) ruled by army officers.

There is a resistance, the brave but persecuted Minute Men. Wherein begins our story, in about the year 1970.

Andrew Durant, a lawyer in New York City, is a member of a cell of Minute Men, and as the story begins he has just been captured and tortured. He has refused to break, even when seeing eight of the other members of his cell executed. Then he is brought before the man he most hates and fears, the dreaded Arthur Carlson, Chief Magistrate.

Who, it turns out, is also a Minute Man; indeed, a principal leader and organizer of the revolutionary underground cabal. Carlson proceeds to explain his plan. The most trusted Minute Men, those who have proven their fidelity under pressure, will be tasked with provoking a revolution. Durant, and his friend the other survivor of their cell, will be given false identities and sent as moles to oppress the privileged classes of the Democracy, to provoke them into rebelling against it. They will likely be assassinated in the process, as despised hirelings of the government, but they will be secret martyrs for freedom.

Durant, or to use his nom de taupe, “Curtiss”, is assigned to be head of Section Seven, the district encompassing the former states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He is assigned a small staff and packed off to Philadelphia. But, he figures, he will settle in on a farm so he can see his work at first hand.

Over the next few chapters “Curtiss” discovers the dimensions of the Minute Men’s

infiltration of the Democracy’s government. From his junior officers all the way up to the directors of the national labor union and the bureau of security, members of the Minute Men are there. It’s a nation of moles, so to speak, a sixth column for the Lord of All.

However, not all is easy. To get the Minute Men’s man in place as chief of security requires a suicide car bombing of the former chief. Similarly, “Curtiss” himself facilitates the killing of one “loyal” official, and then frames another for the murder. Strangely enough, the framed man tells “Curtiss” that he’s figured out the scheme, but prefers to die instead of living in the future that “Curtiss” is working for.

“Curtiss” also has to deal with confusion amid his staff. One of the officers has a complex web of connections, to the Minute Men, one of the house staff, and their unwilling landlord’s daughter. Some of the others are “loyalists”. The climax where he learns who is betraying and who isn’t is somewhat nerve-racking, also possibly fatal if the bad guys are at all sensible, but then Carlson seems rather heedless of his subordinates’ lives.

Then, towards the end of the year, the final rebellion begins. Several of the leaders turn up at “Curtiss’s” headquarters and the troops they have brought raise the old flag. The subjugated nations split off, the old order collapses with even less resistance than the Soviet order would in our world, and all ends.

Or rather, it ends with Durant, having resumed his original identity, heading south to find his family. Along the way, he learns of Arthur Carlson’s assassination, by some fellow train riders who are pleased the old bastard got what he deserved. He sorrows secretly for the wise and brave leader, who had chosen a terrible martyrdom, that of being the Evil Example.

While Knight cites Caldwell’s “ability to choose the word which does not merely understate a dramatic point but mashes it completely flat”, there are some telling comprehensions of the plitudinousness of such a society. For example, the national anthem of the Democracy:

Raise your voices, men of labor,
Men who made the nation great!
Clasp the hand of fellow neighbor
‘Gainst the hordes of foreign hate!
Rejoice, rejoice in noble freedom!
Hold the sword at every door,
Guard with joy and hope each city,
Pledge your faith forevermore!

Democracy! Oh our Democracy!
Where no man dies for one man’s gain!
Democracy, our Democracy!
Evermore! Evermore!

And indeed one feature rendered in almost anti-exuberant exuberance is the washed-out grayness of the society. Conquest also cited a Soviet dissident who commended Orwell’s *1984* for its portrayal of the impoverishment and drabness of Soviet society, where as he put it, the elevators never worked and there were no razor blades in the shops. For all that Durant is among the privileged classes, both in his proper person and in his pose, the flashes of how the ordinary man lives are all too clearly of a drab and unpleasant life of unrewarded toil.

But the farther the plot progresses the less clear it is who is the enemy. Is it the multitude of groups “who had been among the very first to betray” America? One by one they turn out to be ineffectual, minor, or insignificant. Is it the President? The president, though in office for fifteen years, turns out to be a pathetic, passive weakling who collapses without even a struggle; nowhere near possessing the sinister folksiness of Sinclair Lewis’s Berzelius Windrip or the friendly authoritarianism of Charles Lindbergh as presented by Philip Roth, much less the vicious energy of Jake Featherston of Harry Turtledove’s *American Empire* and *Settling Accounts* series.

Finally, the onus for the tyranny and despotism is pinned on the Military; but even here, the Military is infested with Minute Men moles, and the never-seen top commanders are portrayed as corrupt bloated incompetent junta-figures.

(Interesting point: if President Slocum has been in power for fifteen years, he would have had to have succeeded Harry Truman, directly or almost so. And the Military would have, at least at first, been run by people like Arthur Radford, Maxwell Taylor, Arleigh Burke, and Nathan Twining; who were competent and not overbearing, not expansionist.)

The motivation of Arthur Carlson, the van Vogtesque figure who is simultaneously head of the secret police and of the underground, is one of the odder features of the book. A review of his actions — executing many of the revolutionaries and putting the survivors in positions where they are likely to be killed by other revolutionaries while carrying out his acts of repression — has them seem almost more the plans of an utterly cynical security man using the opposition to destroy itself. (Think of the security guy in Harry Harrison’s

Starworld (1981), who openly boasted that the rebels couldn't tell if he was a secret good guy or an utter opportunist.)



This joint venture does explain how the Minute Men can operate with such impunity. After Durant's capture he 1) meets with his former priest, one of several authority figures from his past who have been mobilized to oversee his initiation, 2) is informed that his wife and children have been transported to safety under new identities, 3) is himself given a new identity. And the Minute Men have secret codes that can be hidden in public speeches, secure communications, and other methods of conspiracy. This is indeed a "conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man". One might well imagine Carlson to be like Kier Gray of *Slan*, or to take a later and more maleficent figure, Palpatine of the *Star Wars* epics, the man who runs both sides of the game.

Now the idea of the Security Chief knowing that the game is up is hardly fiction. Even then, Heinrich Himmler had been "among the very first to betray" Hitler, wittingly offering his services to the British as an ally against Bolshevism both before and after his capture, unaware of the odium that his actions had earned him. And, the year after this book was published, Lavrenti Beria strove for an opening to the West, but found that his reputation (not just with teenage girls) made him unsuitable for authority in the post-Stalin Soviet Union.

Only . . . when among the conspirators, Carlson is more small-town patriotic American than the small-town patriotic Americans of the target audience, more religious than the religious. Which raises the question of how did a man of such beliefs get to where he was? He would have to be deceptive; and yet he seemingly has no qualms about being

deceptive. Carlson indeed is bent on martyrdom, as we see in one scene without Durant involved, one where he renounces a normal life to declare himself ready to die for his country.

Knight summarizes the plot in these terms:

The ingenuity exercised by the Minute Men in the 1970 revolution is of a class familiar to science fiction readers; they infiltrate the dictatorship until, in effect, they own it. Then, avoiding the prosaic coup d'état, which would not make much of a novel, they slyly intensify the government's oppression until the public, which has stood with its finger in its mouth for going on forty years, Rises in its Wrath.

— *In Search of Wonder*, Page 39

Now at that time, Robert Moss's *Moscow Rules* (1985), a novel about a coup d'état, hadn't been written.

There are some problems with the installation of Durant in authority. Would a major, a comparatively low-ranking officer, be made chief administrator of an entire district encompassing several pre-realignment states? The precedent would be Cromwell's military administration of the Protectorate — also known as the "Rule of the Major-Generals". Creating an heretofore unknown officer of some seniority would be just a little hard even for the all-pervasive Minute Men ("Major-General Curtiss? Where did you serve before?"); jumping up a junior officer would be only slightly less suspicious.

There are considerations for the aftermath. For one thing, the process of setting Minute Men against Minute Men is hardly likely to stop. Someone could hunt down that oppressive bastard "Curtiss" and kill him for what he did in the bad old days in Section 7.

And what happens when it comes out, as it will, that the ostensible liberators were also the most oppressive of oppressors? At the very least, their attitude will come across as condescending, at worst, the Minute Men could become the new Illuminati. Particularly as Carlson has intended that both the political parties that run candidates in the first election will be covertly controlled by the Minute Men, and has even picked the man who is to win. Cigarette Smoking Man indeed!

In our era of being prohibitionist about old pleasures and libertine about new ones, the abundant smoking of tobacco products and consumption of whiskey presented in this book would not accord with our mores. Not to

mention the current habit of recasting the past to contemporary standards.

Some of the proposals the revolutionaries put forward hardly seem intended to win friends and influence people. For example, in the course of a discussion on the bloodthirstiness of certain apparatchiks of the Democracy, Carlson wonders if in order to spare women from becoming brutal, it may be necessary to ban them from the military, or factory labor. Er, offend people with guns? Or welding torches?

The ambition of the revolutionaries is to restore the idealized "Constitutional American" government that supposedly existed before 1933, a Ray Bradbury tale writ nationwide. It seems dreadfully implausible that this is the only revolutionary group. There's no one who wants to install an authentic socialist government? Or, like in *It Can't Happen Here*, where the revolutionaries want to have Corpoism without the Corpos, the communitarian society supposedly installed by Berzelius Windrip's Minute Men (the irony of this coincidence of names is amusing for those who have also read Lewis's book) without the corrupt, ineffectual gang of leaders who actually did it? Admittedly, most such works have the same problem, of only one revolutionary group. Think of it as literary parsimony in action.

(One can fancy with some humor a post-revolutionary power struggle amid these Minute Men, the Cabal of "If This Goes On —", the Underground of *It Can't Happen Here*, a quasi-religious super-scientific group of researchers like in Heinlein's *The Day After Tomorrow* (1941, 1949; G.022) or its original, John W. Campbell's "All" (1976), and a group of pragmatic patriotic officers like in *Moscow Rules*, all taking credit for the collapse of the Democracy and all wanting to install their particular take on the new post-revolutionary government.)

One wonders how the conspirators could sustain their triumph even if there were no competing revolutionary groups. The many "betrayers" may be ineffectual and spineless, but they are still a significant proportion of society (Knight lists eighteen separate groups of people, many with considerable influence); they have a presence. To take the example of the "prosaic coup d'état", *Moscow Rules* ends very soon after the coup, with the leaders of the new government still concerned about being able to assert its authority. (There is another parallel; the coup leader painfully renounces his American girlfriend to devote his life to rebuilding the country, and unlike Carlson he

does have a bodyguard.) And so here, the supporters of the Democracy aren't just going to dry up and go away.

The book ends with a generalized "wave of good feeling" among Americans. In the example we see, Durant is in Georgia and talking to some white people, who proclaim themselves understanding of the long-term suffering of the, as they said then, Negroes. Given that a few days previously, the Southern Districts had proclaimed that they would secede under the name and symbolic appurtenances of the Confederate States of America, one nowadays may show some concern about their feelings.

It is fair to note that one particular scourge is put to rest. Carlson and his associates cite the Democracy for having encouraged outright massacres of Negroes and Jews. This represents a level of tolerance that might surprise anyone expecting the White Christian America that seems to follow from their idealized "Constitutional American" society.

What Caldwell seems to be imagining is a dedicated group of secret conspirators for good, an institutionalized narapaoia (see "Narapaoia" by Alan Nelson (*F&SF*, April 1951) for this opposite of paranoia) so to speak. Secret societies work better in fiction than in the real world, where they generate internal contradictions that tear them apart.

What follows from this is a very real problem; is it even possible to have a "constitutional republican" government in a society where no one accepts those values? And how to instill those values without destroying them? It's like the self-contradictory folly of flag-burning laws and amendments; we can always buy a new flag, but our freedoms are not available at the hardware store. Recall how Heinlein's attitude towards re-education changed from positive to negative between the serialization of "If This Goes On —" (*Astounding*, February-March 1940; NHOL G.011b) and its revised hardback publication (NHOL G.011c; 1953).

There is an ambiguous attitude towards the military; as pointed out, the high command is bloated politicized incompetent proto-caudillos, and so many of the lower ranks are presented as mindless automata. Yet like every other institution of the Democracy, its military is pervaded with Minute Men, secretly opposing the authoritarian regime. And indeed, the hand-picked candidate for the first post-Democracy presidential election is a retired army officer — a general who quit because he opposed the imperialistic expansionistic trends of the proto-Democracy.

In the fifties, other “constitutional republicans” looked to a retired general to take the lead of the country and save it from those trends, to implant a proper government that would not heed inane opinions like this:

“Democracy costs money and lives, and at time it does look inefficient, but it wins in the end. No matter how you look at it, in the final analysis, democracy as we have it in the United States is the best form of government that man has ever evolved.”

What commie pinko wimp uttered this paeon of praise for That Man In the White House’s system of constitutional-republic obliterating tyranny? Who used the D-word? Why, the hero of the Old Right himself, General **Douglas MacArthur** (quoted in *Old Soldiers Never Die* (1996), Pages 363-364, from George C. Kenney’s diary for November 25, 1942).



DOWNFALL OF THE BURNING MOUNTAIN THAT FAILED: A NOVEL OF THE RISING SUN

Review by Joseph T Major of
MACARTHUR'S WAR: A Novel of the Invasion of Japan

by Douglas Niles and Michael Dobson
(Forge Books; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-7653-1287-7; \$27.95)

PEARL HARBOR: A Novel of December 8th

“Book One of the Pacific War Series”
by William R. Forstchen, Albert S. Hanser,
and Newt Gingrich

(Thomas Dunne Books; 2007;
ISBN 978-0312363505; \$25.95) and
1945: A Novel

by Robert Conroy
(Ballantine Books; 2007;
ISBN 978-034594795; \$14.95)

And the seven angels which had the

seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;

And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

— Revelations 8:6-13

The first alternate history novel about an alternative Pacific Campaign was Ronald Clark’s *The Bomb that Failed* (1969); the Trinity test fizzles, the Allies get bogged down in Japan and then Stalin starts getting frisky, but fortunately there are tube alloys available . . . As you can see, it is not primarily about the invasion of Japan, but it’s also not a solely-American thing. (There had been an essay on the topic in *The Atlantic Monthly* as early as December of 1946, by physicist Arthur Conant; he made the same points for using the Bomb that have been made over and over again, to no avail in persuading the unpersuadable.) Of prewar works, Hector C. Bywater’s *The Great Pacific War* (1925) was a “future war”, while the book Bywater thought unrealistic, Homer

C. Lea’s *The Valour of Ignorance* (1909) also had a very authoritarian subtext.

Other works involved “secret histories”, such as Edwin Corley’s *The Jesus Factor* (1970), where it turns out that atom bombs don’t go off if in motion while being triggered; i.e., the Trinity test worked, but the first combat drop . . . the problem is that the “coverup” not only requires too many people to keep a secret, but a geological convenience on the far side of implausible. (The book is part of Corley’s future history that also includes *Siege* (1969), the more plausible version of Spider Robinson’s *Night of Power* (1985).)

Then, in 1971, the author of *Von Ryan’s Express* took a flier; Donald Westheimer wrote *Downfall*, a novel about Operation OLYMPIC, the planned invasion of Kyushu. His point of departure is that in the thunderstorm that hit Los Alamos on the night before the Trinity atom bomb test, a lightning stroke hit the test tower, aborting the test. This was in fact a valid concern. This is not a book to read if you care much about following along with characters; the death rates are high (*Song of Ice and Fire* fans, anyone?). To help confuse bibliographers, the book has been retitled *Death Is Lighter Than a Feather* and is available from the University of North Texas Press (ISBN 0-92939-890-4; \$23.95) with an introduction by the historian John Roy Skates, author of *The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb* (1994).

Space opera and thriller writer Alfred Coppel [Alfredo José de Arana-Marini Coppel] went to the next phase, so to speak, with *The Burning Mountain* (1984), about Operation CORONET, a novel of the invasion of Honshu, the next step in the plan to defeat Japan. Again, the same considerations apply; don’t get too attached to anyone. The highlight of the work is the equal and opposite stories of two acculturations. (It’s interesting that Coppel’s work could almost be considered a sequel to Westheimer’s.) The title, of course, is from Revelations Chapter 8 Verse 8. (If you look at the Greek original, you can see that the KJV should have had Verse 7 begin “And the first angel sounded . . .”, it’s “. . .” [“**Kai** ho protos esalpisen . . .”] like all the other verses.)

Since then, of course, the historians have had their way, with Peter Tsouras editing a collection of essays by historians on the topic of the *Rising Sun Victorious* (2001).

And now this peculiar coincidence, where three different publishers did three different novels on three different alternative Great Pacific Wars in the merry month of May 2007.

The authors of *Fox on the Rhine* (2000) and *Fox at the Front* (2003), the stories of Rommel’s war on the Nazis, turn to a different military hero in a different milieu with an analysis of *MacArthur’s War*. Who, it seems, has a terrible secret or two; he was bribed by Manuel Quezon, and had a nervous breakdown on the first day of the war. These incidents, and the managing thereof, turn out to be a festering problem that builds throughout the book, in a deadly subplot.

The change, however, begins when something slips up in the Battle of Midway, and the Japanese do better in the carrier exchange, losing one flattop to the Americans’ two (this is possible indeed). Mac seizes the day and gets named to high command, exercising control over the campaigns. Add to that a failure in nuclear testing at Los Alamos (again, perfectly plausible) and there is no alternative but to go in on the Japanese beaches. Where, it seems, at the last minute victory is snatched from the jaws of victory . . .

Niles and Dobson seem to forget the story of USS *Robin*. Samuel Elliot Morrison, author of the official history of the U.S. Navy in World War II, dealt with the problem of U.S. carrier operations in the last half of 1942, when *Enterprise* was in the dockyard and all the other usable carriers (*Ranger* wasn’t suited for Pacific ops) save *Saratoga* had been lost, by not mentioning any carriers by name at all. *Saratoga* was not alone; there was a ship referred to as “USS *Robin*”, but her real name was HMS *Victorious*. The Royal Navy lent a carrier, that is. And indeed, by April of 1945 there was a British task force operating in the Pacific, a fifth of the total carrier force, with more ships on the way. And similarly, there is the matter of the Soviet liberation of Manchuria. Neither comes in here.

One can appreciate the feelings of the minor characters, what with the bombers *Skylark of Space*, *Skylark II*, and *Skylark of Valeron*. (To be consistent they ought to refer to the amphibious command ship as *Directrix*.) Fortunately for the heretofore uninformed, the texts of the three *Skylark* books then existing are on the Gutenberg Project web site. QX!

While the events of MacArthur’s life cited are true, the authors’ portrayal of him is far more cartoonish than is credible. (The way that the Harry Truman story that Merle Miller put in *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (1973) just won’t die — a version of it even appears in *The Burning Mountain*.)

The authors (or some of them, anyway) of

the ill-fated *1945* (1995) and the somewhat better-received *Gettysburg* Trilogy (2003-2005) now turn to a later war, with the attack on *Pearl Harbor* being handled a little differently.

They begin with a long historical setup. The authors introduce our two principal narrators, a couple of officers from the U.S. and Royal Navies who meet in the thirties, sharing concerns about the rise of Japanese power. This alone is more than the other works, but then this is the first book of a series.

Then the point of departure. Nagumo Chiuchi was not the most air-minded of commanders, which made him an odd choice for commander of the First Carrier Striking Force of the *rengo kantai*. This gets pointed out to the fleet commander. Therefore, Yamamoto Isoroku himself goes on the Pearl Harbor mission. (Because of the stringent radio silence the striking force assumed, this would mean he would be out of touch at a critical moment in the offensive, which was Pacific-wide.)

After the reporting of the success of the first two waves of attack, the third wave strike goes in, bombing the headquarters, docks, and oil tanks, severely crippling the Pearl Harbor facilities. (The “third wave” controversy has been very popular in Pearl Harbor analysis. Their aviation fuel supplies were low, the strike would have to land after dark, the first two waves had been far more successful than they had imagined, and so to a large extent the third wave was Fuchida’s after the fact analysis.) Meanwhile, other forces make plans for their attacks which may not turn out as hoped when this is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

Robert Conroy likes numbers. *1901* (1995) was based on a German *Großergeneralstab* plan for the invasion of America which must have been drawn up on a boring hot Berlin afternoon. *1862* (2006), the Sidewise Award nominee, dealt with a somewhat different response to the Trent Incident. (It’s the *intelligent* version of Harry Harrison’s *Stars and Stripes* Trilogy, without steam tanks or zombie Wellingtons.)

As you know, in the real world hardliners attempted to prevented the surrender of Japan. Here they succeed, aborting the surrender broadcast and indeed taking the Tennō into . . . er, putting him in safety away from his misguided advisors. This means the grim plans of OLYMPIC grind on, and before long men are dying on the craggy hills of Kyushu. However, due to the collapse of order in the island, it’s possible for an infiltrator to get very close to the enemy. America is a country of

immigrants, some of whom still remember the old home . . . and have a lot of courage and cleverness.

I am somewhat pleased to note that Conroy does note the British Pacific Fleet/Force, though he underestimates it, and also notes the need to hold Hong Kong — which in turn deals with the interlocking of world events, something writers will forget. And as for what happens to MacArthur . . . ***shudder***

The ending seems perhaps a little fairy-tale. However, Truman is being harassed by the war-weary, and has found that there are objections to using nuclear weapons. (The women for peace march is, well, inconvenient for his walk.)

This seems an odd coincidence, but such things do happen. As for their plausibility . . . Niles & Dobson and Conroy take plausible points of departure, and up to a point follow them well, but veer into if not absurdity at least implausibility. Forstchen & Co., by way of contrast, are less plausible in their departure, but are more so in their development.

These were reminders of the cost of war in general and of this war in particular. Paul Fussell wrote an essay titled “Thank God for the Atom Bomb” [*The New Republic* August 1981 as “Hiroshima: A Soldier’s View”]. He observed that the dichotomy between support and opposition paralleled that between front-line and rear echelon. Something that George MacDonald Fraser said about himself and his squadmates of the Border Regiment, as he reported in *Quartered Safe Out Here* (1994). It could have been worse.

THE SENTINEL

Review by Joseph T Major of

EIFELHEIM

by Michael Flynn

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 987-0-765-30096-6;

\$25.95)

Hugo Nominee

(Originally reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #6)

First Contact may have problems. The basic example is the one of First Contact between comparative equals in technology, on “neutral territory”, where each has reasonable concerns about security: “First Contact” by “Murray Leinster” [William Fitzgerald Jenkins] (*Astounding*, May 1945; Retro-Hugo Winner). Leinster also postulated a common interest, so to speak, between the different species.

But the contact may not be between equals, it may not be on neutral ground, and it may not

be possible to resolve the differences by a swap. Sometimes it may be outright conquest, as in “Despoilers of the Golden Empire” by “Donald Gordon” [Randall Garrett] (*Astounding*, March 1959). The conquerors may take advantage of a factional dissent among the inhabitants, as in H. Beam Piper’s “When In the Course” (1981) or David Weber’s *Heirs of Empire* (1996). Or, they could be economically and technologically crushing, as in Greg Costikyan’s *First Contract* (2000).

But then, the all conquering technological superiority may not be all that all conquering; as Poul Anderson described in “The Man Who Came Early” (*F&SF*, June 1956). The title character found himself overwhelmed. Anderson would do a variance of that in “The Longest Voyage” (*Analog*, December 1960; Hugo Winner), wherein the natives made an explosive choice in the field of potential technological acceleration. (And then, just to show that he was on all sides of the question, Anderson also did *The High Crusade* (1960; *Astounding*, July-September 1960) which showed that technology is one thing but politics is quite another.) Not to mention the time-travellers in *Time Slave* (1975) by “John Norman” [John Frederick Lange], who not only couldn’t impress the people of 60,000 B.C.[E.] but lost a woman who was a Ph.D. in mathematics (for some reason Norman seemed to have it in for women who had a Ph.D. in mathematics) as a slave to the man who had torn her clothes off, tied her up, and then liberated her suppressed natural submissive nature.

Piper and Weber set their heroes in conflict with the local religious authorities, who were portrayed as wanting to control if not outright suppress technology, as they did dissent. (As opposed to, for example, Garrett, whose Commander Frank ever gave heed to the precepts of the Universal Assembly as he sought the power metal so needful in the Second Empire.) This is the image of religion that is the norm in SF.

As Anderson did in *The High Crusade*, and Harry Turtledove does again and again, most notably in *Noninterference* (1987; *Analog* July 1985, July 1986, May-July 1987), just because their technology isn’t up to the level of yours doesn’t mean they’re stupid. As people — intelligent beings — found out in both cases, assuming that low tech means dumb can be a fatal assumption.

Michael Flynn (who sometimes uses the middle initial “F.”, some would think just to annoy bibliographers) had a story in the November 1986 issue of *Analog*. He would

become better known, however, for his story of a secret conspiracy intending to do humanity good, *In the Country of the Blind* (1990, *Analog* October-November 1987), which I once mockingly called “None Dare Call It Foundation”, after Gary Allen’s conspiracy opus *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (1971) which as the witty line in *National Review* ran, linked the Council on Foreign Relations to everything except the men’s room in Grand Central Station. Given that Flynn has written an essay titled “The State of Psychohistory” (*Analog*, April-May 1988) and a story titled “Pson of Psychohistory” (*Analog*, June 1994), he may see that point.

The issue of *Analog* for November 1986 (are you beginning to wonder by now if there isn’t a certain *bias* towards that one publication?) had a science-fictional historical detective story, and try saying that three times fast. The detection, while it did involve sudden death, had more to do with a sociological problem. In keeping with the author’s attention to the structural links of society, the story told of how the dynamics of commerce and control led to a certain pattern in how cities were built — except, in this one place, there was a gap in the network.

Investigating the gap turned up legends, stories of strange travelers from far-off. As the pieces came together, it became clear that the people who came to Oberhochwald in Germany were from very far off — and they weren’t human. Except, in a sense, within, they were.

What was noteworthy about the story was how it drew together those soft sciences — sociology, economics, psychology — with the hard science of physics, tying speculation in that science into the structure of its story. The story, “Eifelheim”, was nominated for the Hugo Award and for the Locus Award; it won that year’s (1987) *Analog* Award for Best Novella/Novellette.

Twenty years later, Flynn has returned to that story. Now, what he has done is to write at greater length about how the people of Oberhochwald reacted to these beings from another world, and how they discovered that these aliens were not altogether alien.

Those expecting the aliens to use their technological and moral superiority to show the poor benighted humans how oppressive the Church is, and destroy it, as for example Crown Prince Sean MacIntyre [son & heir of Galactic Emperor Colin MacIntyre — talk about John W. Campbell’s belief about the innate superiority of Scotsmen!] did in *Heirs of Empire*, will be out of luck here. Flynn

realizes that, it seems, there will always be the question of why people are born, why do they die, and why do they spend so much of the time in between wearing digital watches . . . trying to understand and control the world around them. (Think of what a watch does. Many a true word hath been spoken in jest.) Father Dietrich of Oberhochwald, the pastor who is the protagonist of the fourteenth-century story is portrayed as a humane, learned man trying to understand the world God made. If he is tolerant of Jews, he can certainly be tolerant of creatures from a world completely outside his knowledge.

That's another point; Father Dietrich doesn't understand, he has to be taught, and he sees things in the terminology of the world he knows. He tries to understand the aliens' interstellar culture in terms of the empyrean, for example. It took a lot of work to render this, and a difficult decision to render it as it was.

There are other factors working on the characters. The aliens aren't going to show Father Dietrich and his overlord Manfred von Hochwald how to make gunpowder and thereby set up a new empire. For one thing, the locals already know how to make gunpowder. (It should be noted at this point that Piper's "When In the Course" was revised to become "Gunpowder God" (*Analog*, November 1964, the issue on sale when Piper killed himself), the first part of *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (1965).) For another, while some of their enemies can indeed be overcome by higher technology, the technology is not available to overcome all of them. The robber baron Philipp von Falkenstein can be blown away with the aid of personal contragravity lifters; but overcoming *Yersinia pestis* is not so easy.

This is the grim underlying theme of the story. The aliens have not brought a deadly plague with them; plagues we have enough on our own. When the Black Death comes to Oberhochwald, we have a painful presentation of suffering and loss laid out for the reader.

Which also explains why, as those who were free of the plague left the town, they said it was no longer Oberhochwald, but "Devil-Home" — *Teufelheim*. Which got elided to "Eifelheim".

That is where the modern story, the bulk of the original novella, came in. Tom is a cliologist, a mathematical historian, a profession almost out of *In the Country of the Blind* — and in his study of how humans organize their communities, he find a hole in the German matrix of commerce and communication, a hole labeled "Eifelheim".

Part of the charm of the original story was the gradual emergence of the event, as it were; the happenings in Oberhochwald in the fourteenth century were obscure, had to be pieced together from a snippet here and a reference there, a commentary in one place and an allusion in another. In a way, it was reminiscent of how the nature of Boskonian, of the Eddorians, gradually emerged as the story of Kimball Kinnison and the Patrol progressed, in the original serializations (*Galactic Patrol: Astounding* September 1937 — February 1938; *Gray Lensman: Astounding* October 1939 — January 1940; *Second Stage Lensman: Astounding* November 1941 — February 1942; and *Children of the Lens: Astounding* November 1947 — February 1948). In the updating, the technology has been refitted, as it were, to the contemporary reality of the internet. Of course, in the original Flynn was following in the tracks of Jenkins's "A Logic Named Joe" (*Astounding*, March 1946 — you were expecting maybe *Planet Stories?*), the story that anticipated the Internet.

Paralleling Tom's historical detection is the detection in physics done by his domestic partner Sharon. She is looking into the extremely arcane theories of dimension, and investigating why red shifts are so quantized. There is a brilliant scene near the end of the book where it all comes together . . .

The aliens, it seems, did not bring death with them, but death came anyhow. Not disease; far from being struck down by "by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth" [*The War of the Worlds*, H. G. Wells (1898; before there was an *Astounding*)], their fate is more subtle. A nutritional deficiency; not something that is on Earth, but something that **isn't**. The temporary solution could be rendered as something horrific, but because the characters are speaking in the language of Catholicism, it becomes moving. If one dies, the nutrients in his or her body can sustain the others. Thus the "alchemist" — biochemist? — that the Earthlings call "Arnold" goes out into the snow to die, carrying a note that says, "This is my body. Whoever eats it shall live." [Page 154] He might well have said, "I am just going outside and may be some time." (Without even the hope imparted to the original in Brenda W. Clough's Hugo and Nebula nominated "May Be Some Time" [*Analog*, April 2001].)

The proof is out there. In the final chapter, Tom and some of the other modern characters go out to Eifelheim to find the physical proof of this First Contact. In a way, this moving chapter is an anti-climax, for the real climax

comes when Sharon sees that it all came together; the aliens traveled between the stars using the science she herself was investigating:

"This may sound weird," Tom announced, "but I feel oddly disappointed."

She opened her eyes and looked at him. He was studying the medieval circuit diagram. "Disappointed?" She couldn't believe he had said that. Disappointed? When they had just been given the stars?

"I mean, that they didn't have a complete set of plans. Then you'd know what to do."

She stared back at him where he stood framed in the kitchen doorway. "But I already know the only thing that matters."

"What's that?"

"I know it can be done."

— *Eifelheim*, Page 305

That is science fiction as it should be.

There is one other reference that comes from my association; one would think Flynn would have made it if he could have, but one never knows. The alien the excavators exhume had been baptized as "Johannes Sterne" and they translate the name as "John of the Stars". How about "John Star"? You know, as from *The Legion of Space* (1934; *Astounding*, April-August 1934), *The Cometeers* (1936; *Astounding*, May-August 1936), *One Against the Legion* (1939; *Astounding* April-June 1939), and *The Queen of the Legion* (1983). And think of what will happen when John Star comes back to his people . . .

The original story "Eifelheim" was nominated for the Best Novella Hugo, recall. It came in dead last in the voting. Looking at the competition, I still don't understand why; I found the loss to be quite astounding.

In Roger Macbride Allen's *Orphan of Creation* (1988 [what, no *Analog* serialization? *Astounding*]), we have the downside of the Wonderful Discovery. Allen's investigators find the skeletons of Australopithecines — in Mississippi, unfossilized, of nineteenth-century date. What Allen shows, as a cautionary reminder, is that not everyone will believe such a discovery, and indeed, the discovery is very quickly demonstrated to be a hoax. Until, that is, when the discoverers come out of the Gabon with somewhat more recent specimens, at which time the discourse takes a whole new turn. In his final chapter, Flynn hints at a

similar controversy to come: "And don't forget the cries of fraud or hoax that will be raised." [Page 312]. There's a story in that.

There's another story to be found in the development of the drive; this isn't the era of John W. Campbell's Arcot, Wade, and Morey ("Piracy Preferred" (*Amazing Stories*, June 1930), *The Black Star Passes* (*Amazing Stories Quarterly*, Fall 1930), "Solarite" (*Amazing Stories*, November 1930), and *Islands of Space* (*Amazing Stories Quarterly*, Spring 1931)), who could capture an alien technology Monday morning, have it in production by Tuesday noon, and roll out the upgrade late Thursday. A more realistic story would show the pains of progression. Then too, given the risk-averse society of today, there might well be legal obstacles. Think "Trends" (by Isaac Asimov, *Astounding*, July 1939) in result if not in precise method.

One wonders what will be out there; a collapsing irresolute empire as in *The High Crusade*? Or something else, perhaps? Harry Turtledove's "The Road Not Taken" (*Analog*, November 1985) hints at a universe of expansion that sounds almost like the heady days of the thirties in SF. I wish he'd write more novels set in that milieu, instead of the Civil War stood on its head or WWII turned backwards. But whatever sells. Or a universe out there like in the story by "Christopher Anvil" [Harry C. Crosby] of a conquered Earth overwhelmed by more numerous, but less inventive aliens, and how it got back at them, so to speak, *Pandora's Planet* (1972; *Astounding* September 1956, *Analog* April 1961, August 1962; expanded version *Pandora's Legions* (2002)).

Contrawise, we could have something like "A World By the Tale" by "Seaton McKettrig" [Randall Garrett, again] (*Analog*, October 1963), where Earth is a backwater with absolutely nothing to offer to anyone in the galactic civilization. They're out there, we just can't get the wherewithal to go. Imagine finding a galaxy like that.

Or . . .

Once we had passed that crisis, it was only a matter of time before we found the pyramid and forced it open. Now its signals have ceased, and those whose duty it is will be turning their minds upon Earth. Perhaps they wish to help our infant civilization. But they must be very, very old, and the old are often insanely jealous of the young.

I can never look now at the Milky Way without wondering from which of

those banked clouds of stars the emissaries are coming. If you will pardon so commonplace a simile, we have set off the fire alarm and have nothing to do but to wait.

I do not think we will have to wait for long.

— “The Sentinel”, Sir Arthur C. Clarke

DRAGON WITH ONE “O”

Review by Joseph T Major of
HIS MAJESTY’S DRAGON

(Del Rey; 2006; ISBN 0-345-48128-3; \$7.50)

[Originally published in Britain as

TEMERAIRE]

by Naomi Novik

Hugo Nominee

(Originally reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #3)

Prince Yung-Hsing did not rise to greet the man in the yellow robe with the hat of a First Rank Mandarin on his great hairless head; but he spoke politely. “Elder Brother, what are we to do about the barbarian Laurence?”

When the Marquis Chuan opened his long magnetic barbarian eyes he spoke in his insidious tone, alternately guttural and sibilant, “I have developed a preparation of the *Amanita* which will cause rapid unconsciousness . . .”

— Not by Naomi Novik or Arthur Sarsfeld
“Sax Rohmer” Ward

I suppose it’s just as well that this book was written neither to the currently popular naval paradigm nor to the currently popular dragon paradigm. Had it been the former, Captain Will Laurence of the frigate H.M.S. *Reliant* would have spent a hundred pages discoursing with the ship’s doctor Mr. Pollitt on the tactical use of dragons, while the doctor would have reciprocated at like length about their physiology. Then the egg would have begun to crack (one hopes the dragon would not have died of boredom). Had it been the latter, once the egg broke, the captain might have *utterly disgraced* himself by squealing in a *most undignified* fashion, “His name is Temeraire!” (And what of the male dragon pilots flying female dragons; well, old boy, it’s all very much in the tradition, along with rum and the lash.)

But when His Majesty’s Ship *Reliant* took a French prize, it turned out to have a dragon’s egg on board, a present from the Jiaqing [Chia-ch’ing] Emperor to this barbarian prince Napoleon, who has sent messengers bearing tribute and offering to tame the Russian

barbarians. However, someone mistimed the incubation period, and the egg hatched, its chick becoming *His Majesty’s Dragon* known as *Temeraire*. Captain Laurence saw that the egg was cracking and mustered the midshipmen to bond with the dragon, but the dragon picked the Captain instead.

There is no spirit of The Few in this Britain, but they try. Laurence now finds himself in the Air Corps, learning how to control an intelligent, inquisitive creature. Oh yes, as established above, his name is Temeraire. Temeraire is childishly entrancing, as entrancing as any big scaly thing with not only wings but claws can be, and he becomes friends with his rider.

And that bit earlier about the traditions of the Royal Navy? Well, in a tradition-shattering precedent, it seems that there are some dragons that are ridden by — women. Keep it on the quietus, or next thing you know they’ll want to vote! By Gad, sir, what is this country coming to?

The reason the Frogs were getting a lizard was that they already had some; indeed, Novik has worked out a complex structure of dragon breeds, differentiated by nation. And going back all the way to the Romans, too. (Insert image of Titus Pullo desperately clinging to the back of a dragon during the search for Xena. . .) And then Boney attempts his Operation *Lion-de-Mer* and it’s up to Captain Laurence, Temeraire, and their fellow riders and dragons to defeat the Empire . . .

There is the *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* problem here; if this world has had dragons for hundreds of years, how come everything else is so much like ours? Novik seems to want to ignore it to tell her story, a story lacking the excesses of the stories it is compared to; no infodumps, no sappy sentimentality, just a honest story about intelligent beings trying to understand each other and make better the world they live in.

LITTLE ANTIHEROES

Review by Joseph T Major of

RAINBOWS END

by Vernor Vinge

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 0-312-85684-9; \$25.95)

Hugo Nominee

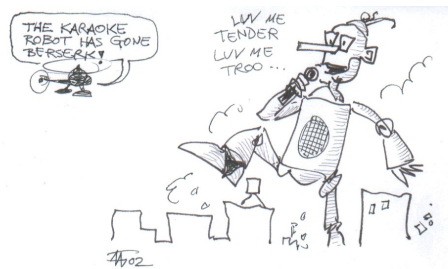
SF has often fallen down on the human factors. While SF writers predicted the Internet as far back as the forties (“A Logic Named Joe” by “Murray Leinster” (*Astounding*, March 1946)) they imagined it would be used for the dissemination of information. No one foresaw

the barrage of advertising for triple-ecks barely legal hot chicks, genuine counterfeit Rolexes, wild wet fundamental follies, refinancing now while rates are low, clean-shaven boytoys, free excursions to Cancun, and little blue pills that make you throb. Not to mention the earnest and eager solicitations from the widows of Nigerian bank clerks needing a foreign bank account to deposit the estate of a man with your surname who died intestate, for the purpose of charities, since all the others just stole the money . . .

Robert Ku, er Gu was old enough to remember before pinyin, so when Alzheimer’s took him, that was sad. Except when he became a test case for a new cure. But, the world has changed more than he likes, and he stumbles through a place that has no place for him. A typical cyberpunk world, with virtual realities, oddly retarded/advanced technology, and people who take bowling alone to new heights.

Not to mention the shredding of books; never mind how practicable it is (we can assume, since this is a cyberpunk novel, that cameras can catch microscopic shreds of paper and assemble entire books therefrom), it turns out to be the plot of the sinister secret company.

And at that point I ran out of interest. I didn’t care what happened to these people.



Ann Maxwell’s *Fire Dancer* series ran out at three books (*Fire Dancer* (1982), *Dancer’s Luck* (1983), and *Dancer’s Illusion* (1983)) because, I think, she put in too much imagination; there were so many wonders, so many augmentations to her heroine & hero, that the reader got overwhelmed and the chance of conflict declined. So she had to get even more exotic, and *Dancer’s Illusion* is set on a planet where the inhabitants have the power to create illusions; they live in a place where nothing is necessarily real. This was a fascinating idea, but she didn’t do that much with it.

Similarly, Robert often wanders through

virtual reality places, the other characters even more so, but nothing much seems to come of it. (Albeit, given what happens in such places as *Second Life*, this may not be a bad thing.)

So, with not so many cosmic ideas and a lot more interesting characters, this might have been a good book. Norman Spinrad did something with the idea of assuming virtual personae in *Little Heroes* (1987), for example.

SPACE FAMILY STONE

Review by Joseph T Major of

GLASSHOUSE

by Charles Stross

(Ace; 2006; ISBN 0-441-01403-8; \$24.95)

Hugo Nominee

Stross’s worlds are marked by a torrent of wonders, extrapolation piled on extrapolation. Robin, except when she’s Reeve, changes sex in the John Varley style, for example. Why is it credible when Herb’s casual gender-shifters aren’t? Because Stross’s protagonist has qualms.

Then Reeve is hurled into a historical-recreationist setup, enduring a life of horrid drudgery and toil. Yet this comes across as a far more detailed extrapolation of the throw-away passage in *The Rolling Stones* (1952; NHOL G.099) about the horrors of primitive transport, not the lame *Galaxy/ST:TNG* ghastrly “late twentieth-century technology” gig. Why is this credible? Because it’s to build a world, not to make a point. (And naming a character “Alice Sheldon”! [Page 88] Really, now!)

Oh, somebody is trying to kill Robin, you see, which was why he fled into the experiment. Reeve thinks; you see, part of the process included a memory lapse. That’s life in the world, you can get killed, but if you’ve been prudent you can have a backup out there to pick up where you left off. Not to mention body mods, like Kay, the really fanatic Hindu emulator (she has four arms and seems to have assimilated the *Kama Sutra*) that Robin falls for.

There’s a reason for someone trying to kill Robin/Reeve, and it has to do with being in a glasshouse. How this Britishism survived the blue pencils of sorcerer’s-stone hyped Yank editors I have no idea, for one would think they would have changed the title to *Stockade* without a qualm. But here it is. Whether “glasshouse” or “stockade”, it seems our narrator is, or should be, in one.

Robin had been a soldier in a terrifying war, one made more sinister and more protracted by the lights of science. And Reeve, as she adjusts to the horrors and failings of late

twentieth century technology, explores the depths and dark undercurrents of her confinement.

Then, finally, they all strike back . . .

Stross tells a story where the technology makes it possible, where the science is part of the life. It's a fascinating world, and I think that Robin (as the character is at the end) does well. At least he has a very happy personal ending.

I do have a qualm but it's about the author, so perhaps isn't wholly relevant. Stross is one of the Scottish Socialist writers, the sort of people who extol the Promise of Prosperity & Freedom under the New Way. In practice, it will only happen after a long stretch when they alone hold supreme power, in order to purify the polity. The way their ancestors did in the seventeenth century, executing those who had failed to live up to their exalted and harsh moral standards in quantities that would have appalled a similar reformer, Maximilien Robespierre (he guillotined for incivism, they burned for witchcraft, same difference).

Come to think of it, in the glasshouse, Reeve (her name at that point) does get harassed by people with that sort of mentality, so either Stross doesn't quite go with the flow, or he can do characters different from himself.

AFTER THE NINTH DEATH THERE IS NO OTHER

Review by Joseph T Major of
STRAY

by Rachel Vincent
(Mira Books; 2007;

ISBN 987-0-7783-2421-8; \$6.99)

I should someday write down a list of the Writers Syndromes I've noticed. One, for example, is the *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norell* Syndrome, where there is some huge change in the world, and yet everything else is the same; i.e., Regency Britain being just the same in spite of a Magic Kingdom having ruled the North Country for the twelfth through fourteenth centuries. Another is *Long Way Back* Syndrome, first described by Damon Knight, where a writer contrives a fascinating world, only to send the characters away from it on a trite story.

Here, we have a case of *Laciel and Her Friends* Syndrome (named after a work by Sharon Green), also known as Spoiled Princess Syndrome. The narrator, almost always a woman, has appallingly poor judgment, as shown by her constant insistence on getting away from the protection of her associates into

a world where she will be killed. She runs away several times, only to be saved repeatedly, and to resent her rescuers. (If she weren't adult, I'd take this as an example of **Devolution In Action** (*Ebert's Bigger Little Movie Glossary* (1999), Page 49).)

Faythe is a werecat. For some reason, women usually don't become werecats when attacked by a werecat, as men will (sometimes), and female werekittens usually don't seem to come to term. Therefore, werequeens (called "tabbies" in the book, though unlike calicos, tabby cats can be of either sex) are valuable.

Faythe, therefore, hates her family and friends and spends all her time trying to run away. Somehow they forgot to teach her while raising her.

Add, that like Laciel and most other Spoiled Princesses, while Faythe has a valuable ability, as said she has appallingly poor judgment, and is self-centered; the result is a book that is in some ways an unpleasant read.

One of the particular reasons she should have some kind of protection just now, see, is that someone is kidnapping and killing female werecats. For some reason the authorities don't get involved (I find it hard to believe that the spectacular murder described would go totally unnoticed) so it's up to the werecats to find out, and meanwhile protect their females. Naturally, Faythe hates this surveillance and oppression and wants to get away from it.

So she does . . . and gets kidnapped.

At this point, caged and threatened with rape, she finally manages to get her act in gear. She manages to escape, gets back in touch with her family, sets up a trap for the bad guy, and puts her own neck on the line, with salutary though troublesome results.

The ending sort of saves it, even though the bad guy has the all too common power of being invincible until the ending. However, I wouldn't have got as far as I did if I hadn't been curious.

The concepts of this secret history are not without interest. It's a change from werewolves, not to mention Sexy Vampires . . .

LAW AND ORDER: TASMANIA

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
LES FRÈRES KIP

[*The Kip Brothers*]

by Jules Verne

Translated by Stanford L. Luce

Edited by Arthur B. Evans

Introduction & Notes by Jean-Michel Margot

(Wesleyan University Press; 1902, 2005;
ISBN 978-0-8195-6704-8; \$29.95)

"*Un Voyage Extraordinaire*"

M. Verne is the ancestor indeed of M. Clancy. The detail here is anthropological, much information about the aborigines of the islands of the South Pacific. Not all that relevant, and indeed on top of the characters giving each other information at a rate worthy of Aubrey and Maturin, likely to make the reader give up.

Les Frères Kip [*The Kip Brothers*] is one of the last novels by Jules Verne that was published before his death in 1905. This is its first translation into English, and therefore the anglophone reader can assume that the text is close enough to the original.

This is not a work of engineering extrapolation, in the mode of works ranging from *De la terre à la lune* [*From the Earth to the Moon*] (1865) to *Maitre du monde* [*The Master of the World*] (1905), much less *L'Invasion de la Mer* [*The Invasion of the Sea*] (1904; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 1 #4). It is more an ordinary adventure, albeit one laden with anthropological information about the South Pacific, seen from the surface (previously, Verne's readers had seen it from below, described by Captain Nemo in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* [*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*] (1870)).

Indeed, the title characters don't even appear until well into the book. We begin with the villains instead, two sailors with the improbable names of Flig Balt and Vin Mod. Balt is the boatswain of the brig *James Cook*; he is imbued with a desire to be captain and owner aboard without any trifling legal methods, while Mod is his lackey. They are planning to mutiny, they just need enough men on their side.

They go north on the *James Cook*, her captain and her owner unwitting, and in the process rescue the brothers Karl and Pieter Kip, two Netherlanders headed home to ensure that an inheritance is still there by the time they do. However, their ship encountered a storm and they are apparently the only survivors. But, by a coincidence worthy of M. Burroughs, the *James Cook* encountered the sinking hulk of their ship, from which the Kips can recover some of their personal goods, and so can Vin Mod.

At the ship's next stop, in Port Praslin on New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago, the captain is robbed and murdered. The owner has Karl Kip take the ship down to Tasmania. On the way, Flig Balt attempts a mutiny. On

trial in Hobart, Balt accuses the Kips of the murder; helped by his accomplice having conveniently planted the murder weapon and some of the money in Karl's baggage.

The brothers are tried for the murder without respect for the jurisdiction of the German colonial courts, convicted, and sentenced to death, which gets commuted to life at hard labor. In prison, their demeanor and attitude go far to persuade everyone of their innocence.

Three other prisoners, Fenians, are staging their own escape. The Kips learn of this, but say nothing to the warders, not being after wantin' a shiv between the ribs on some dark night. The Fenians escape, and just before being recaptured, are snatched by their own lads from America . . . along with the Kip brothers.

They turn themselves in once they reach the States, and are shipped back to Australia. This has spurred interest, and fortunately the *Kaiserlicheatortuntersuchungsburo* (Imperial Crime Scene Investigation Bureau) had taken a picture of the victim. Enlarging it, the Australian police see that the captain's eyes have preserved the images of his murderers. The Kip brothers are freed, Flig Balt and Vin Mod are put on the Most Wanted list, and all is well.

One can say that Verne is not the most hard-science of SF writers. He is writing here a morality play; the Kip brothers were unjustly convicted, but thanks to their good character and the advances of technology, truth and justice were served in the end.

This is hardly a crucial work in the Verne oeuvre, but it is a new one. The Wesleyan University Press's efforts to make available all Verne's works in good translations is commendable and will help the general reader in establishing his place in the history of fiction in general and SF in particular.

ADVENTURES IN CALEB CATLUM'S AMERICA

Review by Joseph T Major of
LAND OF LINCOLN:

Adventures in Abe's America

by Andrew Ferguson

(Atlantic Monthly Press; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-87113-867-2; \$24.00)

Vincent McHugh's *Caleb Catlum's America* (1936) is based on the same principle that animates actions ranging from bad encounters at parties all the way up to so much fan fiction — "those I admire [love], admire [love] each other". In his novel, McHugh created a Catlum family which included the

great figures of American legend and history, all of whom were related, and all of whom shared the same values and practices.

Later on, we had Philip José Farmer's "Wold Newton" and Robert A. Heinlein's "World As Myth" bodies of work. It didn't always work; for example, after Farmer said something in *Tarzan Alive* (1972) about Harry Flashman and a relative of Tarzan in the Crimea, and Fraser didn't mention it or find anything of the sort in *Flashman and the Charge* (1973), Farmer evidently decided to play it safe from then on.

Anyhow, McHugh's work can be read as an attempt to create a unified body of legend about this country, a "Matter of America" to go with the "Matter of Britain" (Arthur), the "Matter of France" (Charlemagne), the "Matter of Germany" (the Ring of the Nibelungs), and so on. Among his members of the Catlum family, he included Abraham Lincoln. But then, Lincoln was already getting mythic.

Ferguson, a writer for *The New Republic*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Weekly Standard*, has dipped into this existing body of myth and the reality behind it. In what at first seems odd, he begins with a meeting of a group of Lincoln-haters. I admit I was looking to see L. Neil Smith appear, or even be mentioned, but evidently there are some things even they won't do. The critiques presented, however, are familiar and powerful, if not necessarily complete or correct.

From there, Ferguson dips into the mythologizing of Lincoln, or how those stories they told you about Abe weeping over the slaves were somewhat revised after the fact. One case he gives is of Lincoln seeing a group of about a dozen chained-up slaves being shipped on a riverboat; later on, it was said that this had provoked a severe revulsion in him at the Peculiar Institution, but evidently, at the time, he hadn't said anything of the sort. (People do look back at events of their early days with new perspectives based on later-gained experience.)

The mythologizers have their part, and Ferguson talks with Lincoln collectors, Lincolniana collectors, and so on. That is, from people who buy things once owned or touched by Lincoln down to people who buy kitschy Lincoln memorabilia for high prices.

From relics to sites, and so Ferguson tours the Lincoln Heritage Trail, which even then was based on propaganda, myth, and commercial needs. It began as an encouragement for people to go out driving and buy gas, back when it was cheap. Ferguson had been taken on it as a child; he took his

children on it, backwards in effect, going from Lincoln's Tomb in Springfield to the Lincoln Birthplace in Hodgenville. Along the way he notes the parkification, or how the Lincoln Home in Springfield had once been a part of a living neighborhood, and now had been made into a shrine in a park, for example. Or, at the other end, how the "Lincoln Birthplace Log Cabin" in Hodgenville was discovered to have been made of trees from the 1850s. Oops.

One of the more amusing incidents is where Ferguson goes to a convention of Lincoln Impersonators. The Ninth Annual Convention of Lincoln Impersonators, at Santa Claus, Indiana. (Which he fails to mention for some reason is not far from the Lincoln Boyhood Park, which he also visited. [My nephew and niece had their graduation ceremonies there.]

One point encountered amid all this is the modernization of history. Ferguson recalls how the museum exhibits he had been familiar with had tried to display Lincoln's life as something to be admired and seen. Now curators, following the precepts of writers of school history texts (see Diane Ravitch's *The Language Police* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #3) have removed even that.

I doubt they could deal with the incident described in the final chapter. It had to do with a man from Prague who had to come to Springfield. It was pretty obviously the last trip he would ever make. Over sixty years ago he had been in a concentration camp, and when all seemed at an end, he had a vision of Lincoln, there in his cell, telling him to remember that all men are created equal. And now, he had to go there before he died, to leave thanks.

SIGH

Review by Joseph T Major of
**RECLAIMING HISTORY:
The Assassination of President John F.
Kennedy**

by Vincent Bugliosi
(W. W. Norton; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-393-04525-3; \$49.95)
<http://www.reclaiminghistory.com/>

It is a tragedy that this 1612+xlvi page book (it isn't without end notes or source notes, they are in the CD) is in a sense ultimately pointless. Bugliosi has produced an exhaustive discussion of the Kennedy assassination, tracking down conspiracist assertions, analyzing them, and showing their errors.

But conspiracism doesn't work that way. What one does is to take a particular item, create a context for it, and exalt that to supreme

proof. Such theories are compleat; evidence to the contrary is created by The Conspiracy, arguing to the contrary is done by The Conspirators or their henchmen. So refutation is not worth discussing, it can be ignored. Daniel Pipes's *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From* (1997) is a far too brief overview of this mindset.

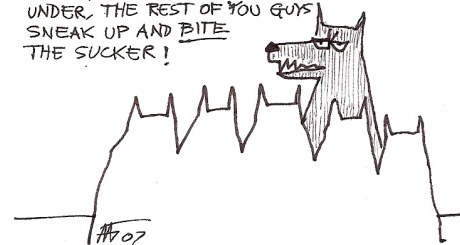
Bugliosi shows a certain lack of understanding almost right away, when he discusses how it was that the commissioners of the Warren Commission and their staffers wouldn't lie. Conspiracists *know* that all such statements are merely fodder for the sheeple, that They Were All In On It, that the Conspirators wouldn't permit them to say otherwise. Any attempt at refutation has to be a refutation of means, not just of facts; the irrationality of the conspiracists's reasoning has to be discussed as well.

The evidence contradicting and refuting conspiracy theories can be found here. All conspiracy theories existing at the time of the final editing of the manuscript, that is. However, the conspiratoralists are not constrained by ordinary laws of reality, and new conspiracies and new evidence appear regularly. (Two new sets of charges appeared in May before the publication of the book, for example.) Thus any such book is seen merely as a source of ideas for new avenues of "investigation".

If it were just the necessary overkill of conspiracists, this book would be interesting. Bugliosi pounds them the way he pounds defendants. But wait, there's more! He provides a thorough, grueling biography of Lee Harvey Oswald, besides which the previous overkill is you haven't seen from overkill. This is more biography than most biographers give.

And his purview grows wider and wider yet. If anyone wants to know what actually happened on those days in November 1963, this will tell you in more detail than anyone would ever want to know. The prosecutor acts prosecutorial; as in *Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O. J. Simpson Got Away With Murder* (1996), where he composed the closing statement he would have made in *People vs. Simpson*, here Bugliosi lists no fewer than **fifty-three** indications of Lee Harvey Oswald's guilt (Pages 959-966). And Oswald was a man who didn't play well with others; so as a member of a conspiracy, he was a non-starter.

OKAY, NOW WHILE MAURICE HAS THE MOOSE TRYING TO GUESS WHICH SHELL THE PEA IS UNDER, THE REST OF YOU GUYS SNEAK UP AND BITE THE SUCKER!



Anyone wishing to approach those events without preconception and find out what happened will find this book useful. But there are so few people like that any more.

(Meanwhile, Harry Turtledove has joined with screenwriter Bryce Zabel to ask about the alternative, making JFK himself very much in need of Bugliosi, in *Winter of Our Discontent: The Impeachment and Trial of John F. Kennedy* [<http://www.brycezabel.com/altjfk/>].)

AT RISK

by Kit Ehrman
(I Books; 2003; ISBN 0-7434-7506-2; \$6.99)
Review by Lisa Major

Recently I attended a book signing at Crescent Hill Library featuring a new mystery writer named Kit Ehrman. I didn't have enough money to buy one then but did find a copy of her first book, *At Risk*, at Half Price. I'll let the book's first sentence speak for itself.

Some mornings, before darkness gives way to light and a cold wind howls across the pasture and presses against the barn like a giant hand, I wonder what in the hell I'm doing working on a horse farm.

Ehrman's main character, Steve Cline, is the young manager of a horse farm. Ehrman's writing is strongly reminiscent of Dick Francis. She's not his equal yet, in *At Risk*, at least but I think she has real potential.

GHOSTWALK

by Rebecca Stott
Spiegel and Grau
scheduled release May 8, 2007
Review by Lisa Major

This is written along similar lines to the *Da Vinci Code* but done much better. The

historical scientist Stott chose was Isaac Newton. She has skillfully mingled modern suspense with historical mystery. I'm not an expert on Isaac Newton, so I can't speak as to how accurate Stott is about Newton, nor am I usually much interested in books that deal much with the occult. I don't want to deal much with the plot because this particular plot is very delicately balanced. I think the author does an excellent job of balancing a complicated plot and I don't want to risk spoiling its ending. I wouldn't pay hardcover price unless I was one of the people who absolutely had to have the *Da Vinci Code* or collect everything to do with Isaac Newton but you could do considerably worse than have your library order this one or buy the paperback copy when it comes out. (Hardbacks are decidedly beyond my budget and it's not my practice to recommend others spend more money than I can.) It's much more well written than most conspiracy/mystery books. I'd very much like to see some of the attention the *Da Vinci Code* got go to a book where I had to know how it turned out.

Ghostwalk is Stott's first novel and impressive for a first novel. I look forward to seeing her second one.

STYMIE

by Lisa

This issue's horse is Stymie, who was foaled in 1941 and died the year I was born. His was a true rags to riches story. He raced as a cheap claimer and lost in those races before noted trainer Hirsch Jacobs saw something in the high-headed chestnut horse (like many of Man o'War's descendants Stymie ran with his head held high). He claimed Stymie for only \$1500. In his care Stymie went on to become a Thoroughbred legend, becoming no. 41 on the Blood Horse magazine's Top 100 list for the last century. He ended his racing career with earnings over \$918,000.

CHILUKKI

by Lisa

Champion mare Chilukki and her foal by Horse of the Year Ghostzapper died of pregnancy complications. It was a small story in the Courier Journal, not so small to her owners, who must have hoped great things for this foal and for the other foals Chilukki would have given them.

MARWARI

by Lisa

I had planned to do a piece on the Morgan breed but then encountered a breed called Marwari at the Horse Park. The Marwari breed is native to India and was the royal horse of the Rajahs. The one at the Horse Park was a beautifully marked black and white. Their ears are set in an elfin curl, not the straight points of other breeds.



During the British Raj the Marwari fell on hard times and was kept alive by "the surviving Rajput families and horse lovers from all communities." The Marwari's height ranges between 14 and 17 hands. They excel at dressage and have a very comfortable gait called the revaal, which made them highly useful in the desert. There are some Marwaris here in the United States, specifically Chappaquiddick, Massachusetts. Perhaps if I am ever close again they would not mind a visit.

Source <http://www.horsemarwari.com>

TRIPLE CROWN NEWS

by Lisa

Kentucky Derby

Street Sense has become the first colt to win both Breeder's Cup Juvenile and the Kentucky Derby. He turned in an amazing performance at Churchill Downs. When I heard he was in nineteenth place I said "So much for him." I thought at that point he was just

another colt who had failed to live up to his early promise. And then he got moving and swept by the eighteen horses ahead of him. Now all he has to do is repeat the performance twice. The Preakness will probably be the hardest. He'll have to be closer to the pace. The Belmont is more suited to come from behind horses than the Preakness, the shortest of the three races.

Preakness

I was right about the Preakness being hard for Street Sense, even if I had the wrong reason. Still, it was a magnificent race between two champion colts even if we're not going to get a Triple Crown winner this year. Best of all, both colts pulled up sound and safe. Much as I would love to see a Triple Crown winner, every time I see horses and their riders get hurt I care less about that than I do about seeing all horses and jockeys come out of the race unharmed.

Belmont

The Belmont was everything I hoped to see, even if Street Sense didn't bother showing up. Fans still got to see a tremendous race between two top horses, Curlin and Rags to Riches. She held him off but he made her work hard for her victory. Rags to Riches therefore became the first filly to win the Belmont since 1905. Like both Genuine Risk and Winning Colors, she's big and blocky. Yesterday at least, she had the same fire-eating look Winning Colors had the day she nearly beat superhorse Personal Ensign. She and Bernardini are by the same sire, A.P. Indy, which makes them both grandchildren of Seattle Slew. The only thing I hated about the race was that the commentators were ready to crown Curlin as a superhorse before the Belmont and then totally dismissed him afterwards. Never mind that he ran a tremendous race and battled hard all the way down the stretch. It was utterly sickening.

PURSEWEB SPIDERS

by Lisa

Today while straightening up our entryway I chanced to see an indistinct black shape crawling in the big box I keep to put cull books in. It disappeared under a flap. Cautiously I tilted the box back and what emerged was unmistakably a black spider with white markings. My first thought was that it was a dangerous black widow and then I realized the body shape was all wrong for a black widow. Black widows have little glistening ball-like bodies. This spider was built more like a lobster and its body didn't glisten.

That realization stopped me from smashing it with the nearest solid object. It crawled out

of the box and disappeared under a bag of kitty litter. Troubled I went upstairs and googled for Kentucky spiders. I discovered that our mysterious visitor was probably a purseweb spider, quite harmless to humans despite their threatening color. It looked very like the photograph of an *Atypus* male, most commonly seen in the Daniel Boone Forest not too far from Louisville. I suspect this one hitched a ride during Joe's and Grant's recent expedition to southern Indiana.

According to the University of Kentucky entomology department they are fascinating creatures. Here is some of what I found on their site.

PURSEWEB SPIDER FACTS

Although purseweb spiders resemble wolf spiders, they are not closely related. In fact, purseweb spiders, along with trap-door spiders, are very primitive spiders, and they are the closest relatives to tarantulas that live in Kentucky. Wolf spiders are not related to tarantulas.

Some species of pursewebs are endangered. I have marked its appearance down so that if I see it again I will not worry about its being a black widow. Sightings of pursewebs are rare. I am very glad now I didn't kill it since these particular spiders seem to be living fossils. It is strange to think that relatives of the exotic tarantula live so close. I wonder how many of them get smashed for being the same color as black widows?

On the Divinity of Julius Caesar

It was no surprise when the Senate of Rome declared Gaius Julius Caesar, Dictator (deceased), a god.

These things happen.

Men turn into gods sometimes.

Alexander, when he assumed

the horns of Amon, was devoured by divinity.

It drove him mad. He ran an old friend through with a spear, then perpetrated outrageous massacres in his grief, as arbitrary and terrible as any thunderbolts hurled by Jove.

The only thing left for him to do was die, at the height of his glory, so that the failures of what he had wrought could be blamed on his successors.

He could not go back

to being just a man.

By contrast, our Caesar maintained his poise, his elegance, and his charm, even as he confounded his enemies, as he shaped an imperial future no one else could see. His own death was necessary to set into final motion those forces which would end the ambitions of the dynasts forever and transform his unlikely heir, the sickly boy Octavian, into the sublime Augustus, and bring the world a Golden Age. He had to have foreseen everything, and walked into that Senate meeting on the Ides of March with perfect deliberation. How absurd to imagine the master strategist caught off-guard by a bunch of boobies with daggers.

The truth is clear now: that Gaius Julius Caesar sacrificed himself for his country, so that Rome might live; and then, like the risen Osiris, conquered death as he had once conquered Gaul, and metamorphosized into the heavens as a star, which we now worship.

— Darrell Schweitzer

100 GRAND WITH COCONUT

Candy Bar Review by Johnny Carruthers

Steve Almond is probably going to avoid this limited edition, for at least two reasons. First, it's a 100 Grand bar (or at least a variation thereof), and as I've mentioned previously, he loathes that particular bar. (Of course, "loathe" is probably much too mild a word to describe his feelings toward the 100 Grand, but it will have to suffice.) Second, it contains coconut, which, as I have also mentioned, is far from one of his favorite candy ingredients. (Quite the opposite, in fact.)

That's all right. I hope he does avoid this bar. It means that I will be able to get more for myself.

As the name implies, this bar takes the basic structure of the 100 Grand bar, and adds coconut to it. Toasted coconut, to be precise. The coconut is added to the caramel core of the bar, while the outer covering of milk chocolate imbedded with crisped rice stays the same.

The addition of the coconut to the caramel changes the structural integrity of the bar

somewhat. The caramel doesn't have the rubbery quality that Almond so eloquently described (and with which I happen to agree.) The caramel/coconut core still has a chewy texture to it, but it comes from both the caramel and the coconut, with possibly the coconut texture being the slightly dominant one of the two.

The flavor of the coconut is certainly the dominant one in this candy bar. It comes close to overpowering the flavor of the chocolate, and does overpower the flavors of everything else in the bar. It's definitely the last flavor that remains on your tastebuds after taking a bite.

The toasted coconut is also the texture that dominates this bar. As I said a couple of paragraphs ago, it is slightly chewy, but with a slight crunch to it. While it negates the rubberiness of the caramel, it also overwhelms the crisped rice, almost to the point where it isn't noticed as you bite into a bar. And it's the coconut that is the last thing to leave your mouth, both physically and in terms of flavor.

Adding coconut to the 100 Grand bar is a definite improvement over the original. Not perfect, but it is an interesting improvement. Too bad it's a limited edition. It would be nice to see this one stick around for more than a few brief months.

NESTLE CRUNCH WITH COCONUT

Candy Bar Review by Johnny Carruthers

This variation on the Nestle Crunch bar surprised me at first. Instead of the flat molds of the original Crunch bar, this limited edition was made with the thicker molds used to make the Crunch With Caramel bar. Based on that initial observation, my first assumption was that the Coconut Crunch bar would be similar to the Caramel bar, but with a coconut creme filling instead of the caramel.

Well, that initial assumption was wrong. This is a bar of solid Nestle milk chocolate, with both crisped rice and toasted coconut added to the chocolate. (And if I were to hazard a guess, it would be that someone at Nestle reached the conclusion that the thicker bar was more suitable to hold both the rice and coconut.)

As is the case with other Nestle Crunch bars, the crisped rice is visible when you look at the bottom of the bar. A closer look reveals the coconut flakes as well, and when you bite into the bar, the cross-section shows that the coconut and rice are well-distributed throughout the bar.

In the Coconut Crunch bar, both the coconut and the rice provide the crunch. The textures of the two are slightly different, providing an interesting contrast. The toasted coconut has a slightly more delicate crunch than the bold crunch of the crisped rice. The crunch of the rice is slightly more noticeable, with the coconut providing more of a background crunch.

When it comes to flavor, the roles are reversed. The sweet flavor of the coconut is the stronger flavor in this bar. It isn't enough to completely overpower the malty flavor of the crisped rice, though; the rice provides more subtle undertones of flavor. And in the background is the milk chocolate, bringing all of the flavors together in harmony.

As is the case with all limited editions, I have no idea how long this one will stay on the shelves. I can think of one way I would like to see its return. If not as a full-size candy bar, I would love to see the Coconut Crunch on the shelves as a bag of miniatures.

And now that I'm thinking about it, I would also be interested in tasting how the combination of crisped rice and toasted coconut would go with dark chocolate . . .

The Foundation Trilogy, A Gnostic Allegory

Notes by Taral Wayne

Compiled circa 1980's perhaps, summarized April 2007

Second Foundation = secret Church of St. John.

Hari Seldon = Christ

Mule = Arthur? (Both were at some odds with the Church/2nd Foundation in their attempt to create a secular state.) Also possibly the Roman emperor. But the Mule is also titled First Citizen, an allusion to Augustus Caesar.

Prime Radiant = The Holy Grail, that both Arthur, the Mule & Ebling Mis seek.

Like Arthur, the Mule sends his servants (knights) to find the Grail. Instead of a vision of God, the Prime Radiant shows the future (as Seldon's Plan).

The First Foundation stands in relation to the 2nd Foundation, the way the Roman Church (the common face of Christianity) stands in relation to the hidden Church of St. John. Both the 2nd Foundation and the Church of St. John teach a higher truth. (The seat of the 2nd Foundation is Trantor, which could equate with Rome rather than Britain, which doesn't fit the analogy well. On the other hand, if Trantor is Avalon, and Terminus is

Rome, the analogy holds up.)

Gaal Dornick = St. Peter. Dornick founded Terminus, ie: Rome and by extension the Church of Rome.

Previous Galactic Empire = Possibly the Hellenistic world.

50 Psychohistorians (who founded the First Foundation with Seldon) = the disciples of Christ.

50 2nd Foundationers (sacrificed to the Mule) = Christian martyrs.

Capt. Han Pritcher = Sir Lancelot, Arthur's most trusted knight, formerly his enemy. Han Pritcher was formerly the Mule's enemy, but was "converted" by the Mule's power.

Ebling Mis = Sir Galahad, who is the only knight pure enough to actually find the Grail. Like Galahad, Mis is a pure scholar, not motivated by political power, and is the only one to discover where the 2nd Foundation actually is. (Though he dies "voluntarily" before he can reveal it.)

Salvor Hardin = St. Peter, (Hardin was the first of the Foundation's Mayors, ie: first Pope. Think about it. "Salvor"—Saint. Peter (the rock) — Hardin.)

Anselm Haut Rodric = Robert Anson Heinlein, a private joke.

1. The Celtic church had associations with the legendary Church of St. John. Its monks and clergy wore a unique tonsure that was said to have been required by St. John himself. Unlike the Roman church, the Celtic stuck by the Julian calendar for calculating Easter. There were many other differences between the two churches that were the basis of friction between them until the Roman church finally imposed its sole order.
2. Curiously, the "magician" and Gnostic heretic Simon Magnus also wore the Celtic tonsure, associating the Celtic church with Gnosticism.
3. The Gnostics believed in an inner knowledge, a secret higher truth that behind orthodox Christianity taught to the masses. Those who mastered the Gnostic truth gained powers over their own spirit and in the world. Given Gnosticism's nature, it strayed easily into magical tradition.
4. The Celtic church was heavily influence by ancient Celtic thought, including Druidism. It's characteristic "Otherworldliness" readily absorbed Gnostic ideas as well. At the time of Augustine's mission to Britain, the two churches were out of sympathy with one another. Inasmuch as the Roman

church disapproved of Gnostic though, the Celtic church was all the more receptive.

5. The idea of the Church of St. John go back to the Bible, in which Christ gives St. Peter authority over his "flock". But John for some reason is exempted from Peter's authority, and cryptically told of an important role in Jesus' later plans. It was widely believed in the Dark Ages that St. John would figure as the spiritual head of a non-militant and unworldly church when mankind was ready for further revelation. Until then, the church of St. John would remain an underground church within orthodox Christianity. The Celtic church was believed by some to have secret ties with the underground church. They were not, of course, expected to admit to this.
6. The Holy Grail represented a higher sacrament than the mass in the Church of St. John. Of course, its exact nature was hidden from the uninitiated. No one in the Arthurian cycle had ever actually seen it, (except Galahad, after his quest, and even then the vision was whisked from his sight afterward.) The Grail legend seems to be associated strongly with Britain, through the Arthurian cycle, and therefore with the Celtic church.

The real question in all this speculation, though, is just how much a bookish, Jewish lad in his early 20's knew about mystic alternate Christianity and the Arthurian cycle. That the young Asimov would be familiar with Gibbon and Roman imperial history is a given. King Arthur is very plausible. Even some smattering of Gnosticism. But Celtic Christianity and the Church of St. John? Perhaps we should regard that idea as an "emergent property" of all the rest...

For the next insightful part of my analysis of the *Foundation Trilogy*, I intend to demonstrate how it is also a cryptic rebuttal of Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*.

THE MAKING OF THE FITTEST: DNA And The Ultimate Forensic Record of Evolution

by Sean B. Carroll

(W.W. Norton & Company, 2006,
301 pages/indexed, \$25.95,
ISBN-13: 9780393061635 and
ISBN-10: 0393061639)
Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

Here's the strongest proof yet for Darwin's Theory of Evolution. The DNA of any

particular species contains a record of all its genes. That includes those no longer in use, fossilized so to speak. And this DNA can be traced directly back to evolved-from species.

Mutation and natural selection becomes clear in Carroll's volume. He uses some unique examples: bloodless fish, Rock pocket mice, pigeons, colobus monkeys, rough-skinned newts, fruit flies, and, of course, homo sapiens.

"With DNA science penetrating so many facets of everyday life, it is again time," writes the author in his Preface, "for a new departure and to seek facts about evolution gathered from DNA evidence. Over the past few years, biology has gained unprecedented access to a vast amount of DNA evidence from all kinds of organisms, including humans and our closest relatives. In just twenty years, the amount of DNA sequences in our databases has grown 40,000-fold, with the vast majority of that coming in this new century. [....]"

The writer makes several convincing cases for readers (including creationists and supporters of 'intelligent design') to believe in the evolutionary process. He delves deeply into how traits (such as mole's eyes), unused because of not being chosen for in natural selection, were lost over time. The eyes and vision, in color and otherwise, of different species comes in for a thorough examination, too. And the use of specific genes to develop functions other than what they were originally used for is another subject looked into.

The chapter on the USSR's head scientist, in actuality an ideologue, T.D. Lysenko, is an interesting case study in why tested scientific proof is the only reliable tool for gaining new knowledge. He, no doubt, contributed to the downfall of the Soviet Union.

Carroll concludes this book with a troubling discussion on today's near extinction of numerous species, such as the cod fish, most varieties of whales, and big horn sheep. This is quite disturbing reading.

With the exception of brief portions of early chapters being a tad challenging for the mathematically impaired, like this reviewer, the book is an easy, fast, and, even, exciting read. It's highly recommended.

Sean B. Carroll is a University of Wisconsin-Madison genetics professor. He also works for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. His previous book was *Endless Forms Most Beautiful: The New Science of Evo Devo* [evolution of development].

FANZINES

Askance # 2 May 2007

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Banana Wings #30

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Beyond Bree May 2007

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

Bits of My Boring Life #1

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Incidentally, Lauraine and Mike
stopped off in Louisville on the way to
Dayton, and we all enjoyed lunch
together at Lynn's Paradise Café.

The Knarley Knews # 123 April 2007

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MT Void V. 25 #41 April 13, 2007 — V. 25

#47 May 25, 2007

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Pablo Lennis #234, May 2007

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Pixel # 13 May 2007, #14 June 2007

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Plokta V. -23 #1 April 1972 "Plokta on Mars", V. 12 #1 13 Collette Court, Eleanor Close, London, SE16 6PW UK

With mimeo and everything. Gosh-
wow-oh-boy-oh-boy! And the 1973
TAFF ballot, too!
locs@plokta.com
<http://www.plokta.com>

Science Fiction/San Francisco #43 April 18, 2007, #44 May 9, 2007, #45 May 23, 2007 Christopher J. Garcia and Jean Martin SFinSF@gmail.com <http://www.efanzines.com> **Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee**

Vanamonde # 673-687

John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.
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Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee

Visions of Paradise #115

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The Zine Dump #15

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HANDICAPPING THE HUGOS



Ah . . .
It's Hugo
voting time
in Fandom!

Best Fanzine

- 5) *Plokta*
- 4) *The Drink Tank*
- 3) *Banana Wings*
- 2) *Science Fiction Five-Yearly*
- 1) *Challenger*

Best Fan Writer

- 5) No Award
- 4) John Scalzi
- 3) Chris Garcia
- 2) Steven H Silver
- 1) John Hertz

Other recommendations: Best Fan Artist,
Brad W. Foster

AWARDS

At the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America's 2007 Nebula Awards ceremony in New York City on May 12, 2007 the following works received the Nebula Award:

- Best Novel:** *Seeker* by Jack McDevitt
Best Novella: "Burn" by James Patrick Kelly
Best Novelette: "Two Hearts" by Peter S. Beagle
Best Short Story: "Echo" by Elizabeth Hand
Best Script: "Howl's Moving Castle"

The André Norton Award for YA SF&F went to *Magic or Madness* by Justine Larbalestier. The Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master was **James Gunn**. The Author Emeritus was **D. G. Compton**.

As has become usual, the correlations between the Hugo and Nebula awards are low. "Two Hearts" was the only winner of both, and *Seeker* was not even on the Hugo ballot.

The Sidewise Award nominations are out:

Long Form

- Robert Conroy, *1862* (Presidio Press, 2006)
 Paul Park, *The Tourmaline* (Tor, 2006)
 Charles Stross, **The Family Trade: The Hidden Family**, and *The Clan Corporate* (Tor, 2004-2006)
 Harry Turtledove, *The Disunited States of America* (Tor, 2006)
 Jo Walton, *Farthing* (Tor, 2006)

Short Form

- Stephen Baxter. "The Pacific Mystery" (*The Mammoth Book of Extreme Science Fiction: New Generation Far-Future SF* (ed. Mike Ashley) Constable & Robinson 2006 and Carroll & Graf 2006)
 Maya Kaathryn Bohnhoff, "O, Pioneer" (*Paradox* #8 (Winter 2005-06))
 Gardner Dozois, "Counterfactual" (*The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, June 2006)
 Chris Floyd, "History Lesson" (*The Moscow Times*, February 22, 2006)
 Martin Gidron, "Palestina" (*Interzone* #204 (June 2006))
 Brian Stableford, "The Plurality of Worlds" (*Asimov's* August 2006)
 Andrew Tisbert, "The Meteor of the War" (*Paradox* #9 (Summer 2006))

2nd May

To Captain Nick Lambert R.N.
HMS Cornwall

Sir,

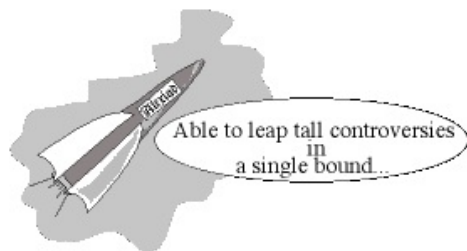
I have been acquainted of the events of the 23rd March, during which a boarding party of some fifteen sailors and Marines under your command suffered themselves to be captured by the Persian natives, without offering resistance of any kind.

I may say, sir, that had I been the officer commanding on that station, your relief would have been precipitate and your disgrace certain.

I remain, sir,

Nelson Drake

Letters, we get letters



From: **Steven H Silver** April 13, 2007
707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA
s.hsilver@comcast.net

The February *Alexiad* has been sitting next to my computer since arrival and I am finally getting around to LOCing, days after the deadline for the next issue, for which I intend to send you a couple of candy bar reviews. I'd also like to congratulate you on your Hugo nomination. I have to note, however, that I'm the publisher of one of your co-nominees (Worldcon Guest of Honor Speeches). Chris Garcia, in his handicapping the Hugos edition of the *Drink Tank* figures your odds for winning at 4-1, edging our odds at 5-1, but both dwarfed by the even money on Julie's book.

I've read Menzies's book, although I was mostly interested in the section on the discovery of Australia, since I was doing some preliminary research for a potential AH based on a Chinese settlement of Australia prior to its European discovery.

Impressive prediction of the Sidewise Award winners even before the announcement of the nominees (which will take place between my writing this letter and the publication of said letter). At this point all save two of the nominees have been notified and of the notified ones, all save two have accepted their nominations. The awards will most likely be presented at NASFiC in St. Louis.

Conroy needs to come up with better titles. *1901, 1862, 1945*.

Re YCT E.B.Frohvet's LoC: I had already sent him a copy of *Argentus* and received a LoC from him in the same mail delivery as the ish of *Alexiad*. Also, nitpick: Steven, not Steve.

Re: George W. Price: Just to toot his horn, but George is going to be the Fan Guest of Honor at this year's Windycon in Chicago

(Nov 9-11, www.windycon.org).

From: **Christopher J. Garcia** April 19, 2007
1401 N. Shoreline Boulevard, Mountain View, CA 94043-1311
chris@computerhistory.org
Best Fanzine Hugo Nominee
Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee

I can see it now. There's a room in a Community Centre and a circle of grown people sitting in plastic chairs that are too small for them. There's a table off to the side with punch and cookies. You and I are there, and when your turn comes, you stand up and say "My name is Joseph T. Major, and I'm a Thrift Store and Used Bookstore Junky." I will then follow suit by confession my not-so-secret shame. I've been going to used bookstores recently to complete my Vonnegut collection (I used to own all of them in the 1970s editions from Dell, but they were lost in many of my long-ago moves). I spend a lot of time looking for old books . . . and so seldom do I read new ones . . . save for *Heinlein's Children*, which I completely devoured! MY greatest triumph was not a book, but a bookend. It was a late 1950s Peanuts bookend of Charlie Brown. It turns out that not very many were made because few were made. I bought it for a buck. I sold it for three hundred.

You know, I've never read "The Marching Morons", but *Idiocracy* was a great little movie. I like Mike Judge and his amp vision of the world. *King of the Hill* is a near-masterpiece, sadly overshadowed by *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*.

I've always thought that it was smart that one could not copyright basic concepts. I also think that it's wonderful that film and book reviewers are finally understanding that new ideas, things that aren't just rehashes, are actually more important than rewarmed concepts. Roger Ebert used to get dinged a lot for giving praise to things that were new even if they weren't as technically sound as other films, but then others caught on. I think that's why we're seeing films with more to them now.

I did not know that Julia Louis-Dreyfus came from such notable stock. I'd have thought French actress Julia Dreyfus would have been the one with the strong lineage, but I would be wrong.

I'd heard about Prince Alexander's desire to move the remains of his father and the flat-out pissed-off people who took it as a serious blow to their community identity. It's a shame that Prince Alexander wishes to act against his

father's wishes. On one hand, I can kind of see that the desire to have all of the monarchs of the line in one place, especially for an aging prince, but it seems to be devastating the Serbian community of Chicago.

I went through a phase where I was obsessed with mountaineering. I've never climbed with ropes myself, but I read everything I could on the subject. Then they found Mallory and I researched everything I could on him. I even went so far as to write up a notebook filled with notes and points and finally came to the conclusion that he probably did make it and that Irvine, that poor sap who went down with the big guy, had the camera and is still waiting on the mountain to be discovered. Of course, making it back down is another part of the equation and it won't change Hillary's conquest, but knowing that it could have been done in the 1920s is so impressive. On that note, I must buy *The Boys of Everest*. Every year I get more and more non-fiction to read and less fiction. There are at least five good books on the losses on Everest over the last decade, but only one good fiction book on the same subject. Go figure.

I've still never watched *Rome*. I feel like I should start renting the DVDs, but then again, a lot of Cable series on DVD have let me down.

You know, one of the articles I've written for *The Drink Tank* but never used is called The Protocols of the Elders of SMoF. It's a comedic take on the *PEoZ* and a piece of FAAn fiction. I was obsessed with conspiracy theory and hoaxing and the Protocols are both and neither . . . depending on who you talk to and at what point in history. Henry Ford was a firm believer, in fact. I'm a big comic book nut (the FanboyPlanet.com Podcast that I'm on once in a while is held in a comic shoppe) and I've got to buy it.

I've started in on *At Her Majesty's Secret Service* and I'm a fair bit impressed. As a guy who likes Spy novels and Non-Fiction, it really comes together. I'm hoping, and praying, that I'll make it to the Spy Museum at some point in my life. It's a strong book, partly because the personalities are so strong.

Allason has written a lot of interesting stuff. His Counterfeit Spies (1998) was a good brief exposé of hoaxing — rather like "Jug" Burkett's exposé of Vietnam vet fakers, Stolen Valor (1998). So I told each of them about the other, and Allason liked Stolen Valor.

I want to read that Fillmore book. He's a president who just doesn't get the respect he deserves. Garfield's another one like that. These are the guys you can hook fun fiction onto. Recently, at the Sonoma Valley Film Festival, I saw a film called *Netherbeast Incorporated* which had Garfield as a major part of the plot. In fact, they celebrated his birthday as a holiday at the company. Think of that!

I'm not actually that much into Fillmore but I may start. My review copy has Fillmore sitting on a unicorn and reading, truly a man to be appreciated. The Louisville library has a copy. Yours might too and if they don't you might be able to talk them into getting one.

— LTM

You know, I love Sherlock Holmes movies, probably an outgrowth of my love for *Young Sherlock Holmes* when I was a kid, but I've never much cared for the books. Again, go figure.

The movies have been discussed from time to time at various SH/ACD Symposia. There was a good presentation a few years ago on the topic of the Best Holmeses You've Never Seen.

They were doing a special promotion at the 7-11 by my work and they had the Inside Out Jr. Mints. I'm not fan of Jr. Mints, but it was ½ great, ½ awful. I'm still not fully aware of how I felt about them. The Triple Chocolate Twix is a grand invention. I must find more of those. I had it at the promotion day (they gave them away) and was just in Heaven. I traded my Cokeane Energy Drink (which was also free) to one of the girls so I could have their Twix.

I'm not much of a currency collector, but I am soon to be the proud owner of a Norton Dollar, the money issued by Emperor Norton of SF. I'm so excited, as he's one of those characters who so completely changed my view of life once I discovered him.

Oh no. That's not good. Earl's report of the state of Forry and Bradbury is just so sad. I knew about Forry's fall, but I hadn't heard that Ray was in such a shape. I might have to go and eat some donuts.

Good ish. I love the Gilliland art too. The Rotsler was well-deserved. I should really ask for some stuff for *The Drink Tank*. It really does add a lot to the layout.

From: **Patrick McCray** April 20, 2007
Patrick.McCray@webbschool.org

Am I really in the
Alexiad lettercol...?



Much enjoyed and appreciated!
 Again, if anything from doctorlao catches your eye, feel free to use it.

Why don't Tim or Grant review, anymore?
 And is *Rome* worth the purchase? I am considering getting both seasons when #2 comes out. I'm a big *I, Claudius* and *Sopranos* fan, and it looks like a cross between the two.

Grant has been unwell. Also, you seem to have answered your own question (having made a few references to "Mark Antony's cousin Antonius Soprano from Sicilia" in earlier reviews, I can see your point).

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** April 24, 2007
 8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com
<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

Thanks for the background on early and current SF. I'll keep an eye out for *Sherlock Holmes' War of the Worlds*. Btw, I've always liked *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches*, an anthology which was edited by Kevin J. Anderson.

Thanks also for the background on mountain climbing and the mountains in Tibet, including Everest. I enjoyed your reviews and background on *The Plot* by Will Eisner and the others — and your pointing out the anachronisms in various books. And I remember reading at least one of the Oy Oy Seven books a long time ago.

Sounds like you had a good time at the Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle symposium and on the rest of your trip; you certainly visited a lot of places and people along the way! (I'm about to cull my old annotated Sherlock Holmes, btw. We plan to move one of these days — when the house sells — and I'm culling a lot of things,

including books.)

I enjoyed Darrell Schweitzer's story about the Byzantine empress confronting her old enemy. I loved her succinctness and swiftness.

Good background on battleships and battlecruisers, though I got swamped in the discussion . . . Thanks to Taral Wayne for his look at denarii; that went well with your Rome review. Speaking of ets and *The Last Frontier: Imagining Other Worlds* . . ., there's at least one more article on alien life upcoming in the e-zine, *Darker Matter*.

The books on plagiarism and *Glacial Lake Missoula* . . . sound interesting too. And thanks for the Hugo nomination list and notes. Lots more info in the LOCs; and I enjoyed the Roman character's visit to Narnia on the last page.

Whereupon Aslan said, LET HIM BE RETURNED FORTHWITH TO THE SPACE-TIME WHENCE HE CAME. And Pullo said, "Don't go throwin' them big words around like that, you talkin' kitty-cat."

— JTM

P.S. Note to Lisa: In the latest Sneaky Pie Brown mystery, *Puss 'n Cahoots*, Rita Mae Brown addresses the need for a horse (Standardbreds and jumpers anyway. . .) to have a heavy cannon bone (p25). She also mentions German Shepherds and what's been done to the breed, among other things. Lots of meat in this book.

You think German Shepherds have it bad, you should see what they've done to Dalmatians. And Jack Russells.

— LTM

From: **Guy H. Lillian III** April 30, 2007
 8700 Millicent Way #1501, Shreveport LA 71115-2264 USA
GHLIII@yahoo.com
<http://www.challzine.net>
Best Fanzine Hugo Nominee

Scanning the superb letters with which the *Alexiad* lettercol is graced, I've decided to do something I've never done before — and respond directly to this one of my favorite fanzines. As you say someplace in this issue, zines are an all-but-obsolete medium, and those of us who fight back against the electronic future that threatens to completely obliterate

them deserve all the support we can get. So here goes.

There's a lot of emphasis on dates in this lettercol — for instance, July 20, 1919, Sir Edmund Hillary's birthday, fifty years to the day from the Apollo 11 landing. An appropriate birthday gift for such a man. July 20th isn't just Sir Edmund's birthday, of course; Diana Rigg was also born on that day and, ahem, so was I. At the last Los Angeles worldcon but one I was pleased to thank Buzz Aldrin for giving me one helluva 20th birthday. July 20th is a good birthday to have for other reasons, too — in 1944, von Stauffenberg and other sane Germans tried to blow up Hitler at the Wolf's Lair, and some centuries before that, according to Thornton Wilder, the Bridge at San Luis Rey collapsed. I believe the first "soft landing" on Mars occurred on July 20th, 1975, as well. What the hey, beats Halloween.

(In case anyone is keeping track of where one was for the first moon landing, I'll state for the record that I was home with my family in Kenner, Louisiana, having turned down an invitation to the actual launch. I regret this now. Had I accompanied my friends John Guidry, Rick Norwood, Don Walsh and Justin Winston on their drive to Cape Canaveral, I could have attended Joe Green's epic night-before party, met Heinlein and Clarke . . . and Rose-Marie Green, the 14-year-old princess of the residence. Cute girl, to judge by the photos; I wonder whatever became of her . . .)

Another date touched on is a terrible one, November 22, 1963, the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I was 14, in Sacramento, and like everyone conscious on that nightmare of a day, I remember the moment. I'd bought a sectioned tomato topped with tuna salad for lunch. Kurt Bischoff, a fellow freshman at Sacramento's Mira Loma High School, approached . . . and the day became an end to childhood, just as December 8, 1980 was, for us boomers, an end to youth.

(Speaking of the Kennedy assassination, though I look forward to Vincent Bugliosi's book on the subject, I question the need for it; Gerald Posner's *Case Closed* [Random House, 1993] already pretty thoroughly debunked all of the conspiracy theories in the case.)

The ingenuity of conspiracy theorists is without bounds. Just too late for Bugliosi, for example, they have discovered E. Howard Hunt's deathbed confession listing the people involved. They don't have to adhere to the limitations

of reality, understand.

We remember May 5, 1970, the date of Kent State, and January 28, 1986, the last launch of the Challenger., and April 20, 1999 — Hitlermas, the day of Columbine. And, of course, September 11th. Why, why are the dates we remember — the moon landing is the only exception I can think of — be days of such overwhelming horror? Could it be — and I hope this is true — that on such days we see past the monstrosities of fate and crime to the values they assault — the values we put forward to face them? Is it hope that such days of infamy may be overcome that makes such public dates resonate throughout society?

Maybe it's the personal part of the days that matter. Maybe by remembering the intimate, human details of a day we can find that hope I mentioned before. September 11th, after all, was my parents' anniversary long before it became the day of shock and horror 54 years later. I find it a hopeful note of personal resilience and strength that, whatever Mohammed Atta and his thugs may have done to the world body politic, in my mind, anyway, they couldn't overcome that.

Lisa's father was married for the second time on December 7. It was the only day the church was available.

— JTM

Anyway, grand issue in a grand series of issues; your Hugo nomination for *Heinlein's Children* will not be the last you see. Just don't crowd *Challenger* off the ballot just yet, 'kay? Sooner or later . . . some day . . .

From: **E. B. Frohvet** April 29, 2007
 4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City MD 21042-5988 USA

The Decline of Littrussy Department reports: A clothing store at Columbia Mall offers a certain item in a wide range of colors; the list begins: "Coral, Scarlet, Burgandy . . ." Shoot me now.

I just don't get people. It can be 41°F with a howling wind, and people are like, It's officially "spring", so it must be suitable weather for walking about in shorts and a T-shirt.

The concept of "daylight savings time" evades me too — and the ludicrously early application of it this year has messed up my sleeping habits. On the plus side, the time function on my VCR/DVD player, off an hour

all winter, is now correct. Could not figure out how to adjust it.

In a review of *Ghost Whisperer*, I alluded to actress Jennifer Love Hewitt's low-cut wardrobe. The same young lady now appears even more scantily clad, in TV commercials for a line of women's underwear. Coincidence?

I recall Lisa's find, the James Stoddard *High House*; I thought it interesting once but it did not hold my interest on re-reading. It suffered (my opinion) one of the most damning adjectives in Frohvet'speak: clever.

The Earl of Ulster, if memory serves, the elder son of the Duke of Kent; a first cousin once removed of the Queen, which would make the baby Lord a first cousin twice removed.

Gloucester. Appropriately, he is the patron of the Richard III Society; who better than "Richard, Duke of Gloucester" his own self?

Ah, the Lost Causes again. For the nth year in a row I reiterate my offer to stop calling them Lost Causes if Guy Lillian, Steve Stiles, or Claire Brialey wins one. (This is kind of like H. & R. Block's offer to go with you if your tax returns are audited: it's a sincere offer, one just doesn't expect to have to make good on it.) Being actually nicer of a person than I am given credit for, I'll stick with it despite the fact that Guy Lillian has dropped me from the *Challenger* mailing list. AGAIN. Nice to see that John Hertz got a well-deserved nomination even if there's next to zero chance of his receiving the thing.

Al du Pisani says he and his siblings "actually like each other". That must be nice. . . My understanding of the 1938 (1939?) coelacanth was like Joseph's, it was supposed to be an escape from the Comoros colony. I assume someone has researched the typical currents in that area.

Richard Dengrove, re: *Trap Door* — two years. And twentythree days, if you wish to be particular. Indulge me if I quote myself: "If you don't want to do a fanzine, say so and go do something else."

Recently dug out for a re-read Donn Kushner's *A Book Dragon* and for some reason was struck by the description of Brother Theophilus drawing Jesus walking on the waters "with a bemused seagull perched on his shoulder".

Joy Smith: If you liked Lyn McConchie's *Key of the Keplian*, you might also enjoy her *Silver May Tarnish*; now in paperback.

Evelyn Leeper: I was ranting on non-publishing fanzines. However, some years back I told the then-American agent for *Ansible* to save the postage, as it really didn't interest me. No, I am not familiar with *MT Void*. Considering the way you responded when I once spoke to you at a Worldcon, I would not especially have sought it out. Also, what Joseph said.

Dainis Bisenieks, & Lisa: The film about the American who fails to change planes and winds up in Israel was *Goodbye New York*, 1985, PG-13; written and directed by Amos Kollek; the American tourist was played by Julie Hagerty. My notes from the time summed it up as "nice scenery, not much plot".

John Purcell: The best way to get your students interested in Shakespeare is to take them to an actual play! They were meant to be performed, not read.

Robert Kennedy: Well, I didn't say *Ghost Whisperer* was great television. The next best alternative that night is WWF "wrestling", Ghod help us all. (As a child I liked "pro wrestling", because in those days there were good guys and bad guys. Now they all seem to be bad guys.)

Oh, good grief! Sir, I do most humbly apologize. My first impulse looking at Hugo Nominations is to glance at the three fan categories (or the two fan categories and the King of Shameless Award) and ignore the rest. Thus at first look I overlooked the nomination for *Heinlein's Children* in "Best Related Book". Congratulations, well deserved.

Thank you.

— JTM

P.S. As part of Preakness Week celebrations, the chief veterinarian from the Barbaro case will be honored with a special award from the Maryland Jockey Club.

From: **Taral Wayne** May 3, 2007
254 Dunn Avenue Apt. 2111, Toronto,
ON M6K 1S6 CANADA
taralwayne@3web.net

I liked the article on battlecruisers. Of course the battlecruiser is one of Science Fiction's favourite class of combat starship, though the whole concept of "ships of the line" makes little sense in the environment of space, where there are no "courses" to "shape", and orbital manoeuvres are four dimensional. The nautical analogy seems a powerful one though. Who can resist the appeal of pips on the collar,

a snappy salute, and a captain who's reassuring presence in the command chair is reinforced with every "Engage the sail drive Mr. Info!" Then a vessel half the size of Cleveland lumbers around to port, and with a lusty lurch into the stellar swell makes weigh at a majestic warp three . . . classic stuff!

The Air Force offers nothing like it.

But back to battlecruisers. I waited half through Rodford Edmiston's article to see if he was aware of the breach of handling protocols for the ammunition in the Battle of Jutland, and — by George — he was. I can add a little irrelevant detail. Specifically, the powder monkeys of the day were under enormous pressure to sustain a very high rate of fire, and it was only possible if flash doors were left open, and caches of powder-bags were left at various stages along the pathway from magazine to gun breach.

Flash doors are exactly what they sound like — doors. Shut, they prevent the heat flash from an explosion from travelling down the handling pathway, and igniting powder charges on their way forward to the gun. One bag at a time, charges that go off may in seconds set off the entire magazine; immediate death to the ship. Even small amounts of loose powder leaked from the bags along the way can spread the explosion.

The explosive charge wasn't encased in brass, as with field artillery or small calibre guns. The overall weight would be far too high, and a dead loss to the ship's tonnage. The difficulty of handling would multiply geometrically. Instead, the charges used for high calibre guns aboard a capital ship are stored in canvas bags. They are standard weight, and depending on how many bags are loaded behind the shell before the breach is closed, they give the gunnery officer an additional control over range. (The other is elevation of the gun, of course.)

Caching charges along the way has obvious dangers. It is like mining the ship from one end to the other, and waiting for someone to light the fuse. What is the advantage? Think of each cache as a sort of bank. The handler has spent his cash and is waiting for a loan from further up the line. But some hold up is delaying the flow. Instead of wait a few more seconds for the delay to clear up, the handler grabs a bag from the handy cache at his feet. When the next charge comes down the line, all the better — its early now!

But of course the discrete practice of caching destroys whatever value safety protocols have completely.

This is likely what happened to several

British battlecruisers during the Battle of Jutland — leading the imaginative C-in-C of the Grand Fleet, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe to mutter at the scene, "something is the matter with our ships." Not so. The fault lay with Royal Naval pride and compromised handling protocols.

The Germans didn't have all that good anti-flash arrangements until after the Battle of Dogger Bank, when SMS Seydlitz survived a turret and magazine explosion. Then they installed better handling arrangements.

There is a very interesting book that I found in a Seattle bookstore on my last visit. A British book by Chrysalis Press, Antony Preston's *The World's Worst Warship* is a technical, yet readable, critique of some 30 types and specific vessels, detailing their history and fatal flaws. The author has some surprising remarks about ships commonly thought invincible. Would you have expected the German battleship *Bismarck* or the Japanese superbattleship *Yamato* to be flawed designs? According to Preston, the *Bismarck* was antiquated technology, the result of a 20 year hiatus in German design experience, whose armour was poorly distributed, and steering gear unnecessarily vulnerable. Given the precise details of the *Bismarck's* sinking, perhaps this shouldn't come as much of a surprise. The failure of other war vessels such as the Russian *Novgorod* (which was perfectly round!) should come as less surprising.

Incidentally, the term "sucks" as in "that sucks" is apparently a nautical observation. Ships that sailed with poor trim would suffer from drag, and appear to "suck" to the water. That detail thanks to Neal Stephenson's *Quicksilver*.

Now for something completely different.

The story of the "hidden Arrow" is an old one and well beloved by Canadians. About ten years ago Dan Aykroyd starred in a Canadian made docu-drama called "The Arrow". It is mostly fact, mixed in with the usual degree of hyperbole and ellipsis bordering on fiction. Naturally, in this account, when White House pressure and Prime Minister Deifenbaker's pusillanimity have let to the cancellation of the Arrow project, the test pilot and chief designers connive to fly the most advanced prototype to a secret location somewhere in rural Ontario. It's a wonderful bit of wish fulfillment. But think about it.

Canadians realized what they lost early.

After one or two changes of government, all would have been forgiven had the plotters suddenly revealed the hidden Arrow. They would have been hailed as heroes and the plane triumphantly paraded through the streets of Toronto on its way to a permanent place of honour in the nation's capital. It would have happened by no later than 1967, the year of the World's Fair in Montreal. Instead, the hidden Arrow remains hidden . . . It can only mean that the hidden Arrow is only a Canadian myth, lamentably without foundation.

Stationed at CFB Avalon,
where King Arthur will fly it back
to save Canada in its hour of need,
eh?

— JTM

Or is it? I have a theory that there is a basis to the myth. Years after the Vandal-like destruction of all prototypes, it is a little known fact that at a certain CAF air base barracks there survives a part of the fuselage of an Avro Arrow. It is complete forward of the massive airducts, and was hung on a wall like the mother of all bucket over the door jokes. It was no secret — I've seen the photo — but it didn't seem to be common knowledge either. My suspicion is that it's this lone remnant, seen and the report of it passed one from person to the next, that is the actual "hidden" Arrow.

One last digression. Narnia (or Narni) was indeed a small Italian town 30 miles north of Rome in imperial times, and may still be on the map for all I know. So far as I've read, the town has no distinction other than being the place where the emperor Vitellius abandoned his army to flee to Rome and plead to the new emperor Vespasian's brother, Sabinus, for his life. (Unsuccessfully.)

I guess it just sounded good to C.S. Lewis.

From: **Lloyd Penney** May 5, 2007
Derby Day
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON
M9C 2B2 CANADA
penneys@allstream.net

Many thanks for the newest *Alexiad*, whole number 32. And now, I don't have to rush to get caught up. Some intelligent comments follow, although I wouldn't bet the farm...

I am sure you're enjoying the Derby, and I hope you've gotten at least a glimpse of the Queen.

Yvonne and I love used book stores and thrift shops. Today was radically changed for both of us . . . I was supposed to be doing some

voice taping in Scarborough, and Yvonne was supposed to go what we call "thrifting" with friends . . . sometimes, our plans gang aft agley. I have a number of British books, mostly because many bookstores here will stock both American and British editions, not to mention Canadian editions, of certain books, but I also have some Australian and New Zealand editions of some books. I even have some Cyrillic SF from Russian or Ukrainian publishers, and of course, French-language from a spectrum of Québec-based publishers, or direct imports from France. Used book stores are an adventure that is quickly going away, but our favorite is not far away, and you'll never know what you might find, with that musty bookstore smell that allows me to enjoy some childhood memories.

One of the nearby used
bookstores has closed, but early
Derby Day we went to the other
and I got a Dover Press edition of
Hadrian the Seventh that had
Rolfe's original draft for the
cover; a scratchboard drawing of
Hadrian in tiara and regalia, and in
the background the eyes and ears
of his cat.

I've been enjoying some free e-text books lately, especially *Accelerando* by Charlie Stross, and I am looking for more free SF e-books. Piper's works seem to be everywhere, as well as Lensman books here and there.

The Restaurant 'tude should go to chefs like Gordon Ramsey who can light a bad temper quicker than they can light a gas stove. There is a group in Toronto called The Serial Diners, and they dine their way through the Toronto phone book, and go to restaurants alphabetically. I think they're up to J or K now. Some restaurants are a true risk, and I know that some of them felt that by going to certain restaurants, they were risking their lives, or at least their stomachs.

I've just sent off a letter to Dale Speirs' *Opuntia*, two issues which talk about Sherlockiana. We're about to dispose of a box of Holmes books, and we're going to see if we can find them a good home. Some of those books we will be keeping; I think there's some bits of treasure there among the reprints.

May 23 to 27, Yvonne and I will be Dallas, Texas, if the weather will stay sane for a week or so, and we will be attending the 2007 International Space Development Conference. Should be fun, and we may have the opportunity to meet luminaries like Buzz

Aldrin, Sir Richard Branson and Burt Rutan. Japan is out of the question for this year's Worldcon, and I don't think we'll be going to more of them, and Yvonne's been to a couple of ISDCs before, so this will be my first one.

Some of those people will be at
the space conference being held
at the Heinlein Centennial. They
are making their numbers by
inviting in those who hold a
common interest, so the Heinlein
content should be diluted. Sounds
like Worldcon.

Greetings to Al du Pisani. Yvonne would definitely agree with you about Sarbanes-Oxley, with her extensive experience in accounts payable, but business is better off with those rules in place.

To the best of knowledge, Rod Smith, the Avro Arrow was killed by the Diefenbaker government after being pressured by the Roosevelt government to go with missiles are part of our national defence. There is also the feeling that the US government did not want an ally to have a superior fighter jet, and put enormous pressure on John Diefenbaker to kill the Arrow. Many of the Canadian scientists who worked for A.V. Roe & Co., once the Arrow project was killed, were snapped up by various American aerospace companies, and many of them were the minds and hands who put man on the moon. The Arrow has become a fabled part of Canadian heritage and mythology, and there very well may be various Arrow parts here and there, and even a full Arrow, out there . . . somewhere . . .

Wow, there all my recent locs, one after the other. Let's see if I can offer any updates. Right now, I have a lot less hair than I used to, but instead of the usual male pattern baldness setting in even more, this hair loss comes from a hairstylist who was easily distracted, and who started shaving my head. At least I'm ready for a hot summer. I expect Yvonne will be the vice-chair of a Toronto ISDC, but no guarantees. The chairman might wind up going to the International Space University of Strasbourg, France, and she might wind up chairing the event by default. A recent ophthalmologist's exam reveals continued good health in my eyes.

We almost brought Momcat home to stay with us, her owners wanting her to find a home where she isn't at the bottom of the pecking order, but Yvonne recently had a wide-spectrum allergy test . . . she's allergic to corn, oats, barley, tomatoes, hundred of other

foods, and . . . cats. Yvonne's sister Denise recently lost her beloved black Lab Max to assorted diseases related to being about fifteen years old, and Max and Yvonne were buddies. Ad Astra 2007 was a lot of fun, but we found ourselves with more time on our hands than we really liked. As a result, Yvonne will be returning to the convention to run their space and science programming track.

E.B. Frohvet details one of my personal frustrations . . . often, people will tell me they don't need a proofreader for their manuscript because they have a spellchecker as part of the WP programme. Yes, word and other programmes have a spelling and grammar checker aboard, but if Word ever gets a sense checker, I'll be in trouble. Until then, a proofreader provides that final polish of the finished product to make sure that reading the document is mistake-free. I can't even read for pleasure any more without spotting the mistakes in newspapers, books, magazines and even e-texts.

Rick Sneary must have been
glad you came after his time.

Trinlay Khadro, we love Get Fuzzy as well. Based on some of his strips, we thought he might have been Canadian, but he's a former elementary school teacher in Massachusetts.

Hello, Jeff Boman! You're 40? (I wouldn't feel so old, if it wasn't for you meddling kids!) And, I finally found Paul Gadzikowski's webcomic. Fun stuff!

<http://www.arthurkingoftimeandspace.com/1080.htm>

— JTM

And, all done. Many thanks, you two, and see you next issue.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** May 6, 2007
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA
22204-1552 USA

Many thanks for the April *Alexiad*, which arrived about the time we went up to New York for David Honigsberg's funeral. Shortly thereafter we left for Ravencon, down in Richmond, where Lee ran the con suite. With my help, he said modestly, although that help was also modest. Except when doing panels (they gave me four) I kept her company and went for ice or refilled a bowl now and then, but there was no shortage of volunteers to help out so there was no problem with dinner or an occasional break. In addition to what the con

provided (they way overbought on 2-liter sodas) we also got a certain amount of volunteer goodies, including a Ravencon cake and a hot pot with frozen packages of "Beef Lit'l Smokies" and bottles of barbeque sauce, which were duly served up and consumed. The secret technique, discovered after the first package (which was devoured cool if not cold) was to preheat the smokies in the microwave before putting them in the hot pot. Con and con suite were both critical successes according to the Ravencon website, and the con overflowed the overflow hotel down the road, so next year a bigger hotel has been lined up. Also, one of the volunteers showed herself willing and able, so next year she will get to run the con suite with Lee helping her, as the torch is passed to the younger generation.

The following weekend — or more properly week — we drove to Branson, Missouri, a couple of two-day trips of about 1100 miles bracketing a long weekend for Lee's reunion with USAF types who had served in Iceland. We get old and tired, alas, and call ourselves wise; The weekend *before* Ravencon there was a *Titanic* convention up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which Lee had been planning to attend, until she reviewed her schedule and saw she was committed to Ravencon and Branson, and figuring three conventions on three consecutive weekends might be a little much (but if I was 30 again . . .) she passed on the *Titanic* con. The year before, at Nashville, Lee had been the first WAF to show up at one of these reunions, while at Branson there were three of the first six who had served in Iceland, and we spent some time with Nancy, her best friend in Reykjavik. There is some agitation to go visit Nancy out in Temple, Arizona, so maybe after my radiation treatments in June and July we'll fly out.

Joe's review of *Heydrich: The Face of Evil* provides a comment hook by not mentioning that Heydrich had a Jewish grandmother, which made him Jewish according to the Nazis. He went into the Gestapo as Himmler's assistant for the express purpose of expunging the fact of his tainted blood from the record, and went on from there. At the time of his assassination he was first in line to succeed Hitler, and if he hadn't been killed, one may wonder whether he might not eventually have moved against Hitler himself. More grist for the mills of alternative historians.

Actually, one Jewish grandparent would get you classified as a "Mischling of the

Second Class". Dederichs doesn't think so, though. Heydrich might not have rebelled, or betrayed Hitler, but he might have flown to Spain at the end of the Reich, had he lived.

— JTM

From: **Rod E. Smith** May 11, 2007
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Speaking of finding unexpected treasures, for the LexFA meeting at my place in June we're planning an economic suicide mission to downtown Frankfort. We'll hit Poor Richard's Bookstore, the Completely Kentucky craft store, and so forth. Those who don't want to spend a couple of hours doing this can stay at my place and watch DVDs on my plasma TV. :-)

I don't think Tom Sadler will have moved down by then, but you might want to keep a lookout for him.

— JTM

In the letters section, AL du Pisani mentions Kentucky style corruption.

It's embarrassing. Not only is it blatant and childish, it's petty. Wasn't it a Louisville politician who got caught a few years ago taking a bribe of less than \$100? It would be different if more of the politicians here were at least competent. I could stand someone with his hand in the till if he at least did a good job. But we rarely seem to get even that.

What exactly did you expect for less than a hundred dollars?

— LTM

Hmmm, a lot of compliments on my weapon column. Plus some flattering comments about my climate change article. Nice bit of egoboo.

Another good issue. Thank you.

From: **Jim Stumm** May 5, 2007
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223-0029 USA

Alexis Gilliland: I live in Buffalo and I can't believe your figures for snow depth in North Tonawanda. You seem to be confusing it with the place that got a 10 foot snowfall which was at the eastern end of Lake Ontario,

some 300 miles east of here. In Buffalo, we had less snow this year than usual. I've lived in Buffalo over 50 years and we've never had 10 feet of snow at one time. That's more than we usually get all winter. As for 26 feet on the ground, that's totally absurd! Nothing like that anywhere in western NY. In the part of my backyard that I didn't shovel, there was never more than two feet of snow any time this winter.

I suspect that the phrase "upstate NY" is causing the misunderstanding. That can mean any place north of NYC, including such places as Albany, Watertown, and Syracuse, that are 100s of miles east of Buffalo in entirely different weather zones. Even if you hear of a big snowfall in "western NY," that may not mean the city of Buffalo. Most of our snow falls in the snowbelt south of the city (ski country), which averages 200 inches of snow a year, compared to half that for Buffalo. Often in winter, when I'm driving in Buffalo, on clear streets with the sun shining, as I head south I see ahead of me a bank of clouds, like a mountain range in the distance, blowing in off Lake Erie, and I think: they're getting belted in the snowbelt again.

But we do find it amusing to hear about places that are shut down by 2 or 3 inches of snow, that we would hardly notice. If there's ice, I'll throw some rocksalt on it and go on about my business. But to be fair, Buffalo does have a world-class fleet of snow removal equipment that other cities understandably lack.

I found actual numbers on the internet. Googling: "snow total buffalo ny 2006-2007" I clicked on the Golden Snowball Award website (a joke award for the NY city that has the highest amount of snow for an entire winter). It says Buffalo's total this season was 89 inches, less than the normal average of 97 inches. The winner two years running was Syracuse, 140 inches this year, 125 inches last year.

Lloyd Penney: Actually, one way to counteract global warming is to **increase** certain kinds of air pollution. In his 1999 book *Deep Time*, Gregory Benford devotes a chapter to various ways of offsetting the warming without reducing CO2 emissions. One way is to emulate volcanic eruptions that have cooled the planet in the past by putting massive amounts of particulates high in the stratosphere. For example, 1816 was called the year without a summer because there were killing frosts in summer months in North America and Europe. The cause was the eruption of Tambora Volcano in Indonesia the year before which

had injected a large amount of sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere.

Benford suggests we can do something similar as deliberate "geoengineering" if we want to take action to reduce planetary temperatures by a few degrees. He describes four ways sulfur compounds could be put into the atmosphere to reduce the heating effect of the sun.

Some of Benford's other ideas: take steps to increase reflectivity of roads and roofs to reflect more sunlight back into space, plant trees to soak up CO2, and fertilize oceans to increase plankton growth for the same purpose. He says the limiting nutrient is iron, and a small amount of iron compounds dissolved in polar oceans would massively increase plankton growth.

Robert Kennedy: I believe a space shuttle COULD fly to the Moon. Here's how: It would go into Earth orbit with the external tank still attached. Then an Atlas or Delta rocket with a payload of fuel (LOX and LH) would be launched to rendezvous with, and refuel the space shuttle, which could then fly to the Moon and return to Earth orbit. The space shuttle would then detach the external tank which it would leave in orbit to use as part of a space station. The shuttle could then return to Earth as usual. Variation: Or possibly it could land the external tank on the Moon so it could be used as the beginning of a Moon base.

But there's not the slightest chance that NASA will do anything like this.

Homer H. Hickam, Jr., the Rocket Boy himself, wrote a novel with this idea (but a different means), *Back to the Moon* (1999).
<http://www.homerhickam.com>

— JTM

From: **John Purcell** May 14, 2007
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Near as I can figure, that's the current issue number, if my math skills are still up to snuff. In any event, here's some chatter on your latest offering.

You two must have been in hog heaven — or horse heaven, as the case may be — with the Queen of England in attendance at the Kentucky Derby. That was, I thought, a nice touch by her. All I could think of, though, was if she had any money on a horse, and stood there cheering the steed on with a fervent plea of, "Come on, Curlin! Move yer bloomin'

arse!” At least, that horse came in show, so Her Majesty would have gone with some bucks made on the trip.

Pussycat, pussycat, where have you been? I’ve been to the Derby to see the Queen. Sorry, couldn’t resist. I will say this, the Queen’s presence was at least a distraction from Paris Hilton.

— LTM

Lots of mountain climbing stuff in this issue. I guess you have lofty aspirations for the zine, eh?

Nope, we’re just social climbers.

—LTM

I have yet to see *Rome*, mainly because we don’t subscribe to HBO or buy/rent DVD’s very often. This series, however, sounds so well-produced that I’d really like to see it. Thank you for the encapsulations; now I feel like I actually will know what’s going on once I start watching.

Taral Wayne’s little article about the Roman coins was really interesting. I have a bit of a coin collection, too, mainly concentrating on completing my run of State Quarters, and occasionally acquiring proof sets and silver dollars. I even have a 20,000 Mark note (dated 1922) that isn’t worth the paper its printed on, but it’s still fun to look at. But nothing older than an 1869 Flying Eagle cent is in my collection. Some year when I get some real disposable income I would like to acquire some American half-cents and oddball things like that. Coin collecting teaches history, and it is a fascinating hobby.

Richard Dengrove’s review of *The Last Frontier* was likewise interesting, but I am surprised that the author’s didn’t mention Lucian’s “A Trip to the Moon” as the earliest piece of science fiction. Some SF historians cite that one as the first, or Plato’s accounts of Atlantis as early science fiction. Of course, this all depends on how one defines “science fiction” in an historical sense; if you went by explaining the unexplainable to deal with the unknown, then early sagas like *Gilgamesh*, *The Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and so on, would qualify despite their obvious fantastic subject matters. Still, it sounds like Guthke’s book dealt primarily with life elsewhere in the solar system/universe (life on the sun, eh? must have found a spot in the shade to cultivate civilization there), which is an interesting subject matter on its own. Sounds like a very

interesting book.

Or the counterfactual in Livy’s History of Rome, Book IX, xvi-xix.

In the loccol, Jason Burnett made the comment that he thinks “we’ve totally missed the boast — focusing on the packaging rather than the contents” of modern-day fanzines. It is true that the technology available right now makes any fanzine look really good. I agree with both Jason and you that the content is what makes the zine, not the appearance. *SF5Y* #12 is indeed a shining example of the variety and quality of writing that can go into a zine. It definitely is one of the best additions to my fanzine collection, as small as that is right now.

All in all, a fine zine again, Joseph & Lisa. I thank you for sending it my way, and in return, an issue of *Askance* #2 will be winging your way by the end of this week. However, if you don’t want to wait, go to efanzines.com and enjoy.

And in return, I have sent you a LoC.

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** May 14, 2007
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* 32. That’s a fascinating bit of genealogy about Julia Louis-Dreyfus. OK: If her father was a French billionaire, how does she end up sounding so American? Is she a dual citizen? (If she is, the tiebreaker in deciding which country dual citizens “really” belong to is that Louis-Dreyfus certainly *sounds* American.)

Her father is a dual citizen and in fact, has a different first name in les États-Unis.

Taras Wolansky: I don’t think Camryn Manheim replaced Aisha Tyler on the mediocre “Ghost Whisperer” solely to make star Jennifer Love Hewitt look thinner. Indeed, it is a leitmotif of Ms. Hewitt’s career that a) she’s pretty stacked and b) delights in hiding it except for one or two scenes where she teases the few male viewers of this show with more than a little cleavage. Indeed, one of the few delights of *Garfield: The Movie* was watching Ms. Hewitt inflate a little bit with every scene until the end, where she revealed her curves for all to see. No, my guess is that Tyler found

better work and the show was the best that Manheim could get. But I read that it’s a 50-50 chance that “Ghost Whisperer” will be renewed, and I won’t miss it if it goes.

Joe: What was the Louisville convention where basketball fans crowded out the convention? Capclave last year had a similar problem, in that the University of Maryland used half the hotel to keep the football team in one place prior to a home game. As a result, Capclave didn’t get good function rooms and a couple of events were held in out of the way locations. WSFA’s response was to move Capclave from a hotel one mile away from my apartment to one ten miles away. This means I won’t be able to leave the con at 11 and get home in time for “Saturday Night Live.” **Sigh**

The con was DraConIs in 1988, and it wasn’t crowded out, the fans had problems with basketball fans.

As for Joe’s comment about faanish fans becoming bloggers: isn’t this one reason why fanzines are becoming more and more marginalized? Bloggers tend to talk to other bloggers, and there are so many blogs that one has to severely ration reading them or else you can’t read anything else. The blogosphere just seems to me to be more and more inbred, and the more that fanzines are superseded by Live Journal postings and blogs the less they have to say to the ordinary fan. As I understand it, genzines were meant to be of general interest for *all* fans. That’s no longer true.

Like the LiveJournal post about a con that was incomprehensible to me because the poster referred to everyone by his or her screen name, so I had the feeling I was at a party where I didn’t know anyone.

— JTM

About **Joe and Lisa’s** visit to the Cincinnati Art Museum: I recently went to the restored National Portrait Gallery and American Art Museum. I saw everything-and it took me eight hours (in two visits). But those were very good hours. There’s a lot of great art there (including the Rubens that’s in the museum’s “attic.”)

From: **Milt Stevens** May 19, 2007
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Lisa’s editorial in *Alexiad* V6#2 reminded me of the old days when I used to find all sorts of strange publications in thrift shops. In some cases, I would wonder how they got there. Just the other day, I was looking at a 1927 edition of *Jurgen* by James Branch Cabell which happened to be in my livingroom. I remember where I bought it. It was in a thrift shop in Los Angeles on the west side of Western Avenue about six blocks north of Beverly Boulevard. That particular shop existed for only a brief period in the early seventies. The title page of this copy is stamped Louis Ozersky Library, Jewish Community Center, Youngstown, Ohio. So how did it get to Los Angeles. I have a clue in a penciled notation on the title page which reads “C dup 2.” I presume it was a duplicate from that particular library. There is also a name in ink in the inside cover “Pete Kaufman.” Was he a previous owner? Maybe. Thrift shop hunting was fun. Unfortunately, most of the thrift shops have disappeared by now. It’s a good thing I got my active collecting in back in those days. These days, my house is too full of STUFF to allow that sort of collecting anyway.

Book & Music Exchange, and its upscale competitor Half-Price Books, do not accept books over a certain age. As a result, we have been giving away books instead of selling them, because Goodwill will put all donated books up for sale instead of throwing away those that don’t fit certain standards.

In “Reviewer’s Notes,” Joseph mentions the dumbing down of things in general. I wonder if it all started with the idea “It’s sci fi, so it doesn’t have to make sense.” Books and movies always fudged a little on history, but they tried to be more-or-less accurate. Then came Xena. History is just old stuff, and nobody really cares about old stuff, so who cares if it’s accurate or not? Who the heck will know that the Crusaders weren’t really fighting the Turks for Jerusalem. And we have to give them gunpowder, or we can’t have any neat explosions. That’s entertainment.

Think of what might happen if we took all the elements from just one issue of *Alexiad* and made a movie. Can Millard Fillmore get to the top of Mount Everest in time to stop Reinhard Heydrich from finding the plans for a new and improved battlecruiser? Of course, when they arrive at the top of Mount Everest they will discover the plans have really been hidden at the south pole by Count Von Zeppelin. You

know, maybe I should try writing for movies.

I think your ideas are too original for Hollywood.

— LTM

Speaking of battlecruisers, I found Rodford Edmiston's article quite informative. However, I think he missed one important thing about battlecruisers. The name sounds warlike. Back in the days when countries wanted to sound warlike, they build lots of battlecruisers. I'm sure that's why Klingons build so many of them.

In the letter column, Joseph mentions that the desire to reduce the number of awards in the SF field might lead to the abolition of the fan Hugos. That sounds like a perfectly reasonable idea to me.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** May 20, 2007
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Thank you for Vol. 6, No. 2.

I taped and watched the *Planet Earth* series on the Discovery Channel. The photography is magnificent. The narration is terrible.

The Third Level by Jack Finney was obtained on Interlibrary Loan. It contains 12 short stories from the 1950's and is only 188 pages. I enjoyed every one of the stories.

It appears that my comments last issue concerning *Special Unit 2* and *Eureka* (Sci-Fi Channel) were off. A little research on my part revealed that *Special Unit 2* was a series back in 2001/2002. So, the current broadcasting of the show was a rebroadcast and explains why they presented three episodes at a time. Obviously, I missed the original. Apparently, there were 19 episodes. It now appears that *Eureka* will have a Season 2 starting in July 2007. Hooray!

Well, *Stargate SG-1* and *Stargate Atlantis* are thankfully back with *SG-1* being in its last season. I watched the pilot of *Painkiller Jane* and will not bother watching any further shows.

I watched the first hour of the two hour opening of the new series *Drive* on FOX, and then fell asleep. Further episodes will not be watched.

Michael Crichton's *NEXT* (2006) was a good read. Like *State of Fear* (2004), his comments at the end are as good as or better than the novel.

I watched the four hour presentation of *The Mormons* on PBS. To the best of my

knowledge it was quite accurate. I did, however, have a couple of problems. First was with Sarah Barringer Gordon who appeared and commented several times. She was indicated to be an Historian. So, I looked her up on Google and she is the Arlin M. Adams Professor of Constitutional Law and Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. She has a way of speaking that is incredibly irritating to me and she just about drove me nuts. Second was the claim late in the production that all religions have to move beyond their founding. That Christianity, Judaism, and Islam did it. It is most certainly not true of Islam for Islam is still mired in the 7th Century. Barringer is the author of *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002). I have ordered the book from Interlibrary Loan. It will be interesting to read what she has to say. That's because I have long felt that the LDS practice of polygamy was protected under the First Amendment. It's not that I favor polygamy; one wife was more than enough. It's just that I believe that the First Amendment means what it says. (Well now, that may be good for some comments.)

During the summer here we have Concerts in the Park. It has a band stand. These "concerts" sometime include a movie. On August 25 the movie will be *Galaxy Quest* which is somewhat of a surprise. I have the DVD, but may go to the movie as it will be on a large screen.

Interesting Trip Report regarding the 2007 USS *Bush* (DD-529) Reunion. I am not aware of any other ship reunion that continues its existence with not only the shipmates (in this case survivors) who served on a ship, but also their descendants. My brother served on the USS *Ammen* (DD-527), which was also a Fletcher Class destroyer, in approximately the years 1956-1958. He was a member of the Tin Can Sailors Association. The first reunion I attended for my ship, the USS *Worcester* (CL-144), was in Pensacola Beach in 1996. Pensacola Beach is an island in the Gulf off from Pensacola and is reached by going over two bridges. There were several hotels and a number of stores and restaurants on the island. (Including a *Hooters* where I had a very pleasant lunch.) It has been hit by a couple of hurricanes since I was there, so have no idea what it looks like now. My ship association banquet was held in the National Museum of Naval Aviation. They had a mock-up of a carrier flight deck. (Is it still there?) Tables were set up and that is where we ate. The location and the food were excellent.

The mock-up is still there. That was where the F4U Corsair was.

Darrell Schweitzer's "The Byzantine Empress Confronts Her Enemy, The Grand Logothete" was much enjoyed. Especially the final paragraph which caused me to laugh.

"The Joy of High Tech" by Rodford Edmiston, "BattleShip vs. Battlecruiser" followed by your "Historical Note" were of great interest to me.

I've ordered *The Little Book of Plagiarism* by Richard A. Posner that was reviewed by Jim Sullivan as I have Posner's book *BREAKING THE DEADLOCK: The 2000 Election, The Constitution, and The Courts* (2001). That book resulted in two letters from me to Posner containing some disagreements and commentary. He responded by e-mail. But, the response appears to have been lost when I obtained a new computer.

Interesting review of David Alt's *Glacial Lake Missoula and its Humongous Floods* by Alexis A. Gilliland. There was a TV presentation on the subject several weeks ago. I don't remember what channel, but it was probably PBS, Discovery, or History.

Dr. Bill Breuer has a very short review of the movie *The Astronaut Farmer* and recommends *Salvage One* as "far better conceived". I saw *The Astronaut Farmer* and enjoyed it greatly. I checked "imdb" and there is no listing for *Salvage One*. Then I tried Google and the name is actually *Salvage 1*. That I did find on "imdb". It was a short lived TV Series (1979) of which I was never aware. It is indicated that there may be a VHS somewhere and the complete series on DVD (but only available on eBay). I tried Amazon, nothing.

I am sorry that *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* was listed on the HUGO ballot for Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form in error. It and *The Prestige* are the only movies actually nominated that I've seen in a movie theater. So, I rented and watched the other four movies (*V for Vendetta*, *A Scanner Darkly*, *Children of Men*, and *Pan's Labyrinth*). I'm considering voting #1 *The Prestige*, #2 *Pan's Labyrinth*, and #3 No Award. Or, maybe I'll vote #1 No Award. I'll have to think about it. It does not appear to have been a good year for Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form. The only Short Form that I've seen is *Stargate SG-1*. I still think that the categories should be changed to Full Length Features and TV series (not just an episode).

Taras Wolansky: In you listing of wealthy politicians you should have included Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (both multimillionaires).

George W. Price: Good short analysis of what prolonged the Depression. Over the years I have tried explaining to some people that nothing FDR did helped shorten the Depression until he had our country start gearing up for our entry into WW II. Lots of what he did, at least at the start, was taken from the man he defeated for his first term, Herbert Hoover.

Joseph T Major: Yes, the new postal rates are 41¢ for the first ounce and 17¢ for each additional ounce. But, that is only for regular size envelopes. (And it changes for weights over 3.5 ounces.) The rates for large envelopes are 80¢ for the first ounce and 17¢ for each additional ounce. Also, for regular envelopes over 3.5 ounces rates move to the large envelope rates. The USPS has become very tricky. Your cost for mailing *Alexiad* is going to increase.

Timothy Lane: Yes, it is The Holy Church of the Global Warming. But, how do they explain what's happening on other planets like Venus, Mars, Neptune, and Pluto? It must be all those SUV's on the other planets.

That darn Tara of Helium, out driving with her friends. And texting to Duare on Amtor at the same time; some day while doing that she'll hit somebody's thooat!

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** May 20, 2007
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April *Alexiad*:

One agreement and one disagreement with Christopher J. Garcia:

He says he is "1/8 Ohlone Indian (and my Grandmother would slap me if I said Native American)." Applause. One of my grandmothers was a Mexican Indian, and while she died long before "Native American" came into use, I suspect she would have agreed. Like most of us, I am quite literally a native American, because I was born here — just as Tony Blair is a native Englishman and Angela Merkel is a native German — and I would like to see "native" restricted to that traditional meaning.

When I was a youngster absorbing English, "Indian" usually meant only one thing, because people from India were very scarce in this

country. There was no ambiguity, because nobody would have imagined that “cowboys and Indians” might have anything to do with Asians. On the rare occasions that an American would speak of an Indian from Asia, he would say “East Indian,” or even “Hindu” (never mind that the person might really be Muslim).

To be sure, “Indian” has always been a howling misnomer, but one so thoroughly accepted in American English that correcting it now, after five centuries, is an uphill job. On the other hand, a correction really is appropriate, since we now have large numbers of Asian Indians among us, to say nothing of extensive business dealings with India. The most sensible proposal I’ve seen is to say “Amerind,” which has the virtue of reflecting the traditional “American Indian” while being impossible to mistake for a reference to Asian Indians.

By the way, it seems to me that “Native American” is a product of political correctness rather than any interest in linguistic or geographic accuracy. The use of “Native American” seems to be pushed largely by those who are deeply ashamed of American history and wish that Europeans had not conquered this continent. Referring to the original inhabitants as “Native Americans” implies that the rest of us are not “natives,” but interlopers who have no real right to be here. However, I have never heard of any of those who think this way giving their own real estate back to the tribes it was stolen from.

Now to the disagreement:

Mr. Garcia also says that “I hate it when folks say that anyone discovered America unless they happened to wander over a land bridge. There were people here.” This displays, I think, a mistaken idea of what “discovered” implies. The usage takes for granted that we are speaking from the European viewpoint of our ancestors. They did indeed discover America. They didn’t know it existed, and then they discovered it. It’s an entirely appropriate short way of saying “The European forebears of our society sailed west and became aware of the existence of America.”

I suspect this controversy also goes back to that politically correct idea of being ashamed of our history. I don’t buy it. It is appropriate for us to speak from the European viewpoint, rather than striving to speak from some hypothetical universal viewpoint. The Europeans prevailed and our culture has been shaped almost entirely by European history and ideas. (That’s why this discussion is being conducted in English rather than Ohlone or Cherokee.) Regardless of where our ancestors

came from physically, we are a Western European society, and I see no reason to pretend otherwise.

* * * * *

Richard Dengrove is dubious about the belief that “Reagan was responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union. . . . (A)ll the explanations of it I have seen have been vague generalities. Something about toughness, or the Russians bankrupting themselves on the weapons race.”

I think most conservatives — and Reaganites in particular — can be much more specific. First, Reagan was very plain about his intentions: “We win, they lose.” So there is a presumption that what happened was not a wild historical accident. He intended it, though what he intended was not quite what actually happened.

The specific trigger was Reagan’s proposal for the Strategic Defense Initiative. The Soviets — notably Gorbachev — knew that they could not match “Star Wars” except by a huge technological modernization. And when they tried, the system collapsed. I do not believe that Reagan expected the collapse to happen so soon; his intention was to actually build the SDI and use it to defuse the threat of Soviet ICBMs. Then our economic and military superiority would be able to push the Communist system over the edge without triggering a nuclear war. Ironically, the Soviets could probably have held out a number of years longer if they had realized that Reagan’s opponents in America would in fact never let the SDI be built, and therefore their modernization was not really so urgent.

Have you read Mark Whittington’s Children of Apollo (2001; reviewed in Alexiad V. 3 #1)? He has Nixon heating up the space race to produce the same end ten years earlier.

— JTM

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** May 20, 2007
29217 Stonecrest Road, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90275-4936 USA
laurraine@mac.com
<http://www.weasner.com/>

It’s too bad the series *Rome* came to an end. I was hoping it would parallel *I, Claudius*. Well, it was interesting and entertaining while it lasted.

From the number of book reviews you run, I guess you must be one of those lucky people

who can read really fast. I envy and hate you (HHOK).

Although I enjoy the Sherlock Holmes stories, I guess I’m not really a fan. I don’t feel tempted to attend a convention about it.

There was a documentary about the glacial Lake Missoula and the flood on, I believe, the Discovery Channel a few years ago. If it’s rerun, I would recommend it to anyone who missed it the first time.

I don’t believe *Salvage One* has been released on DVD yet. Someone in FAPA was complaining about that.

I find it interesting to read the LoC from AL du Pisani, as he reports from a country I’ve never been to. I have met people from there but not recently.

I enjoyed very much “Leo Venefica Vestiariumque”.

The second season was too compressed; it should have ended with Philippi (what was in Episodes 1-6), and then the third season could have dealt with the disintegration of the Triumvirate (what was in Episodes 7-10).

Nice meeting you and Mike at Lynn’s Paradise Café.

— JTM

From: **Evelyn C. Leeper** May 26, 2007
80 Lakeridge Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA
eleeper@optonline.net
<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

You mention in V6#2 that it will be cheaper to send the *Alexiad* because the second ounce is only 17 cents. I think that you didn’t notice that the first ounce for 8.5x11 envelopes is *80* cents, not 41.

Which is why this is coming in a 6"x9" envelope, which is mailable at standard letter rate.

— JTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** May 16, 2007
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143-3310 USA

Avram Davidson gave Scythia-Pannonia-Transbalkania borders with both Graustark and Ruritania. That the former lies east of Vienna and west of Constantinople, I knew from actual reading of the books. I knew that doubts had been cast on the latter, but never bothered to check for myself. Quite by chance I have

learned that Ruritania is a kingdom on the Baltic, a stand-in for Mecklenburg. Balkan, Baltic — a distinction I’ve had to explain once or twice. (“The Balkans are mountains; the Baltic is a sea.”)

In Royal Flash “Strackenz” stands in for Mecklenburg and for Ruritania. And in one of the last of the Graustark books it’s explained that Graustark is near the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

I don’t need to read Anthony Hope; I get my fill of retro stuff, proofreading reprints from the pulps for Wildside Press. In recent weeks I’ve had one novel each by Ray Cummings and Otis Adelbert Kline. In the Kline I found that old standby — not the exact words, but — “With a strength he had not known he possessed, he burst his bonds.” Didn’t Howard’s Conan pull that stunt once or twice?

Perhaps you could remind Wildside of an author named John Taine?

— LTM

A bargain price book sale by the Friends of the Free Library yielded up a bunch of bargain paperbacks, just in time to be shipped off to the Eastern Hemisphere. We ordinary postal customers will no longer be able to send stuff overseas by slow (and relatively cheap) boat. The M-bag rate for most countries had risen over the years to \$1.05/lb., and to send reading matter, skiffy in this case, of mostly average quality, was a tolerable way of extending tentacles across the sea. Considering that all this was got dirt cheap and in some cases for nothing: averaged out, postage came to more than the purchase price. But at any kind of air mail rates, it would no longer be money well spent. I can in good conscience relax.

One expense, trifling as it might have been, was avoided. With University students packing up and leaving at regular intervals, lost or forgotten rolls of tape would turn up in sufficient numbers. Of the last find there is a tiny remnant.

I myself have a hankering for reading matter in some other language that would meet an actual interest. In German, this proved to be a history of Bohemia, a remarkably recent work in not-bad academic prose. Germans are famous for waiting for the verb. At times they have to wait for a noun, too. What in English would be a relative clause following a noun is,

in German, a participial phrase preceding. So you get all these modifiers marching by, and only at the tail of the parade do you see in whose honor it was.

In French, I got a paperback selection of the proclamations, bulletins, etc. of Napoleon. I especially wanted to know what he had to say about Waterloo. Which was, we had this battle *won* when a local reverse set off a general panic. But then, even Wellington considered it a close-run thing.

And wasn't Boney angry when Brother Joseph back home issued a bulletin about how those amazing battles in 1814 had been won against superior numbers, and he had wanted to tell about how his big battalions had utterly squashed the invaders.

Why Wildside resurrects any particular work of retro SF is of no concern of mine; but *First on the Moon* by Jeff Sutton (1958) has interest as a document of its time, when only the first small American satellites were up. The Other Side plays *very* dirty, sending hit men and saboteurs to our space program and not only rifles but heavy weaponry in their neck-and-neck (like the Preakness) race to the Moon. Our guys salvage some rifles from their crashed first ship, to even the odds, and in the end make a sovereign claim to the Moon. No coming in peace for all Mankind, here!

Who was Jeff Sutton? I had never heard of him in 1958, nor since. Just another hack writer, Not One of Us. He had boned up on some things but didn't really understand the laws of Newton; for one, he subscribed to the Jules Verne fallacy, y'know the one about the Moon's gravity making itself felt. Neither could you approach the designated landing place, central on the near side, and *then* swing around the far side on a course more polar than equatorial, before finally landing. (Oh, and nothing about half the Moon being in darkness.) We need not refer to later history; Newton suffices, along with Tsiolkovsky and Oberth and all those guys. Neither would you get clouds of backwash when the rockets are in braking mode.

The captured rifles are used against the second set of Bad Guys, who had begun hostilities, and I am nowise convinced by remarks about the target being at various times out of range. Without mustering actual figures, I am convinced that if you can see it, you can hit it; the only problem is accuracy of aim at a distance, for which volume of fire will

compensate. One hole is all it takes; some kind of assault rifle . . . If it's a question of trying to take precise aim at a distance, the angle subtended by a six-foot target defines your range, and a thingie on the front sight to take that measure could be contrived to correct your aim for elevation. Simple; and how long did it take me to think of this? Not long at all; but the author did not even think of having the bad guys modify their trigger guards. Nor did he reflect that the tanks of algae need sunlight. Not One of Us. I omit my other quibbles.

Jefferson Howard "Jeff" Sutton (1913-1979) wrote about twenty SF novels, of which First on the Moon was the first, and also edited an anthology with Clifford Simak.

Either a compositor or a spell check did not know the word coaming, changed to "combing" each time. This was an eye-and-hand job, not OCR; so I emended, querying only a few times, the original book, as usual, was not provided.

Which reminds me that geas, which I trace back past "The Green Magician" to its use by Cabell, is still not in dictionaries; I just peeked at a Scrabble dictionary.

The other recent proofing job, *Encounter* by J. Hunter Holly, needs no comment; a routine exercise in the body snatchers/puppet masters genre. "It wants to suck the knowledge from our brains." — from "The Alien" part of "SF Cliches; A Sonnet Cycle" by John M. Ford, in his new collection *Heat of Fusion*.

Joan Carol Holly (1932-1982) wrote as "J. Hunter Holly" and then "Joan Hunter Holly"; Encounter (1959) was her first book also.

— JTM

On work to be newly published, I sometimes offer helpful comments. Postulants are approaching the council chamber of the local gods; a portal creaks open ahead of them. You'd think that *gods* could keep the hinges oiled! This must be for effect, then; but wouldn't the effect be more unearthly if the portal opened on perfectly soundless hinges?

From: **Rodney Leighton** May 6, 2007
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

Thanks for *Alexiad*, which arrived on May 2.

I think the date on my letter in that issue should read Feb. 27. Don't know why it says December. Actually, I know it should be Feb., since that was when I did that copying thing.

That appears to have been the death knell for me getting interesting mail. Or maybe it was agreeing to let Steve put the damned thing on the Internet. Of course, he deemed it a zine. I was amazed that that Burns guy put it on there; isn't that site for sf fanzines? In the 10 weeks since I did that, I have received, um, about 4 fanzines. Normal, I guess.

If I had gotten the latest *FOSFAX* I might have written to tell Tim about the idiot politicians we have up here, who have nothing better to do with their time and the tax payer's money than to band together, all 3 opposition parties, to condemn the government for allowing a hockey team to elect a certain guy captain. Guy allegedly made a racial slur against some incompetent French Canadian official; he was cleared and politicians have no business being involved in such matters as who is captain and yet 3 of them dug up this matter from 2005 and made it a matter to be dealt with in the House of Commons. Lead by the guy who was elected on a platform of gaining independence for Quebec from Canada, all the while taking lots of Canadian dollars and screaming like hell if Quebec does not get the lion's share of federal money distributed to the provinces.

Ah, what children they are.

Well, I guess I will go cut some trees. Got a section of this current job still to do; 3 or 5 more days. Got some other work lined up. Gas is now \$1.19/liter or thereabouts and will go up weekly until it hits the expected \$1.50. Everything keeps rising except wages. When my parents were still alive we used to buy a barbecued chicken from a store; used to get a good sized chicken plus a bunch of taters and salad for about \$10. Local store flier is advertising barbecue chicken, on sale, for \$8. And they are smaller than they used to be. A can of sardines used to cost, not long ago, 59¢; 79¢. Last I bought, last week; \$1.09.

And a 10-ounce Coke used to be 10¢; now a 12-ounce can is 75¢ to \$1. Paperbacks used to be 75¢ and now they're \$7.99.

— JTM

Ah, hell, I have to go spend \$1400 or so on a new saw, next week. Will likely get some sort of thing copied. Don't really like that title

any longer, given that 90 something percent of the contents have nothing to do with mail.

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** May 27, 2007
6900 Cote St-Luc Rd. #708, Montreal,
QC H4V 2Y9 CANADA
croft@bigfoot.com
<http://fanselfpub.wetpaint.com>

This is Jeff from Jeromeville . . .
(I really have to read up on city names, to make sure I come up with new ones!)

40 came and went. I survived (no shock there.) My biggest gift will actually come on ironically my mom's birthday, August 4: there's a high school reunion at my old stomping grounds. It's a 25 year anniversary for 1982 grads, but it will also include friends from other years. Mine was 1984, but I knew many of the grads for years.

If there was a 20 year celebration for my year I never heard of it. This will more than make up for that fact.

As far as I know my high school class has had no reunions after the tenth (which I didn't go to). Read Jack Vance's The Book of Dreams (1981) for a story about a really fun twenty-fifth reunion, for certain values of fun.

— JTM

Issue 100 of *Comicopia* came and went, and it was my last issue. I'll be starting my own separate zine called *The Original Universe* in July. With all of my years of APAzines and my experiences here and in *The Knarley Knews* I have some good ideas on what to do for it. I believe in both we have other comicbook fans, and I hope those of you will try it out. E-mail me to get started if you are interested.

Why I plan to begin in July is because of the Script Frenzy competition I mentioned last issue. I'm a little over 3 days away from it as I write this, so I'll get to LOC replies next time around.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** May 18, 2007
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
20882-3422 USA
catsmeouch@yahoo.com

Greetings on the eve before the Preakness. We'll see . . .

I taped the hour special on Barbaro — just haven't had a chance to watch it. But, I am told the news in an epilogue is that Barbaro's full brother hit the ground in early May.

There was a movie about Ruffian yesterday but I tuned out halfway through her last race. I feel a bit sorry for the new foal. He's got a lot of expectations to live up to.

—LTM

Ghood luck to AL (du Pisani), both on the job scene and WorldCon finances.

Congrats to all the Hugo nominees — bask in the glow!

The postal rates **and regulations** have really changed — Agh!!! \$\$ for the “simple” manila envelope, but you know that better than I. Yeah, “Large Envelope”.

FYI — just pulled an informercial insert out for a new vet product, **DASUQUIN®**, now available for cats, supposedly even more effective (made by the same manufacturer) than Cosequin, but I didn't see the cost for cats although it says this new product is more economical than Cosequin — I need to see if the orthopedists are using yet.

Got the Apple store to burn the OS update for me (\$10) but the, supposedly identical, one I bought on eBay *never* did load, even after they sent three different CD's (first one, from the local place, loaded just fine). Now I'm trying to buy some version of Photoshop (Mac) — so far no luck since my idea of my price range doesn't match the selling prices, and I have to go *way* back to even think of it, but I'll keep trying. I hear so much about the software and I **really** want to try it out. Eventually . . .

For a while it appeared we had a shot at a Triple Crown winner — so close. The story behind the winning jockey earlier that day is eerie, having another horse go down might impact on him and coming off your own mount — then the doomed horse being euthanized on the track . . . and riding the Preakness winner.

I enjoy teaching, but prefer those who want to learn. It is always a plus when one of the SPCA volunteers is there because of veterinary school requirements for application. Right now no one who helps is veterinary school bound. Ghood luck to John — I was taking or re-taking courses so I could apply to vet school while I taught (7-8th graders, math and science) — at least it keeps you busy!

Apparently (John Purcell will be interviewing the purchaser) Harry's fanzine collection was bought by an individual, not a university. I await news of what will, eventually, be its fate.

E.B. — as fake as it sounds, I **was** honored to be nominated for the (fan artist) Hugo — but you are correct, I honestly was relieved not to have won and really *was* pleased for the winner

(not fake sentiment, honest).

I would be pleased if I won the Hugo I'm nominated for. Having heretofore been up against David Langford, I haven't had to worry about that.

— JTM

Observation on John Purcell's *Askance* — must be tough to start with covers by the best: **Foster** now **White**. With a few stellar exceptions, gotta be downhill from there! My Mac won't open the files on those in eZines — I really tried — just as well. Now I'm honestly saying I can't.

Want to get this mailed — thanks as always.

From: **Sue Burke** May 30, 2007
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sue@burke.name
www.sue.burke.name
mount-oregano.livejournal.com

Princess Letizia gave birth on April 29, depriving the gossip press photographers of a long weekend (May Day and Madrid Day) and a major soccer game. When little Princess Leonor, 18 months old and second in the line to the throne, came to see her new baby sister, she waved at the photographers as they called out her name before she entered the clinic, just as she had been taught to do by her family. Then she tried to run over, eager to meet these 400 friendly people crammed onto bleachers and hanging from scaffolding at the far side of the clinic parking lot. Her father, Prince Felipe, gently stopped her. Later, as they left, he let her use a microphone set up for a brief press conference, and she babbled, “Look, Papa . . . photo . . . people,” pointing at her distant would-be friends, and finally waved and wished them a hearty “adios.” They were smitten.

The new baby, third in line to the Spanish throne, is named Sofia after her grandmother, and entered this world at 4:50 p.m., weighing 3.31 kilos and measuring 50 centimeters long. They say she looks a lot like her sister.

Speaking of the Royals, a television network commissioned a poll on who Spaniards think is the most important historical figure, and current King Juan Carlos came in first, possibly because he brought lasting democracy to Spain, followed by Miguel de Cervantes and Christopher Columbus (an honorable Spaniard, if not one by birth). Fourth

was current Queen Sofía, then Adolfo Suárez (the prime minister who guided Spain through the transition to democracy), Santiago Ramón y Cajal (Nobel Prize for Medicine, 1906), Prince Felipe, Pablo Picasso, Saint Teresa of Jesus, and Felipe González (the prime minister who modernized Spain after the transition to democracy). You will notice that dictator Francisco Franco did not make the list. Having tried other systems, Spaniards prefer democracy.

Y Francisco Franco todavía está muerto.

— José Mayor

If you're still looking for singular real estate, the fortified mansion that King Richard the Lionhearted ordered built in 1180 in Périgord, France, is for sale. It served as a Knights Templar fort to protect pilgrims on the St. James Road, and has housed various historic figures. Rehabilitated, with a woods and gardens, US\$2.9 million, call (33) 05-53-30-4404.

As for myself, I survived a visit of my mother-in-law, and, after she left, some flash floods. It's been an unusually wet spring. The rain in Spain usually doesn't fall on the plains, at least not so much of it. But that's cleared up, and now the Madrid Book Fair is underway: 344 booksellers eager to add to my backlog of things to read. The worst part about being bilingual is that the backlog grows twice as fast.

I was asked about the reconquista of Spain — the Muslim reconquista, I presume. Spain is experiencing enormous immigration. The most recent census statistics (2003) show that there are 1,295,300 immigrants in Spain. Of those, 162,600 are Moroccan and another 55,400 come from the rest of Africa, and most of them are Muslim. (A few are Spanish Jews returning from a centuries-long exile.) However, 518,000 immigrants have come from Latin America, and most of them are Catholics. There's a reconquista, but it has more to do with Pizarro than Pelayo.

(By the way, 8,300 immigrants are from the U.S. and Canada.)

From: **Trinlay Khadro** May 30, 2007
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<http://stores.ebay.com/Silly-Kitty>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/trinlayk/>

Sorry this LOC is so delayed, this has been

a rough spring for me. I've had a couple of flare ups that sent me to bed for several days, but I've ALSO over done it and triggered these flares. :)

For example, Memorial Day weekend: Saturday I met my sister and brother-in-law at the Milwaukee County Zoo (photos on <http://www.flickr.com/photos/trinlayk/>) where we spent the whole day with them photographing the animals. I think my sister is becoming nearly the photo-geek I am, as she has a relatively new digicam with OPTICAL zoom. (An option I didn't swing for, since I really use the zoom so rarely and wanted to keep the weight down.) I'm particularly happy with my photos of a tiger (right up by the glass!) and a gorilla being grouchy and a young gorilla and a young human being curious . . .



TRINLAY KHADRO

Memorial Weekend Sunday, we drove down to Franklin, in order to carpool with my Auntie and Uncle to the Chicago Burbs (Deerfield? Skokie?) for a birthday party for one of my cousins. My Great-aunt's daughter turned 69, and had a big gathering at their home. I was able to visit with cousins I haven't seen in decades, and their kids. One cousin, about my age, surprised me by being so balding, and I still remember him with a Beatles haircut, when I took photos at his Bar Mitzvah, a kajillion years ago. One of the very young cousins, 7 years old, reminded me soooooo very much of myself at that same age, thick glasses, orthotics sticking out of his sneakers (I had those terrible orthopedic shoes in the 60s) difficulty keeping track of conversation and keeping appropriate eye contact . . . (also me at 7. . . I had a great teacher when I was about 10 who took some time to tutor me on “eye contact”). His mom was explaining to some older relatives that he has autism, but is also described as “High functioning”. Despite some of his communication difficulties he is a very polite, kind and sweet young man . . . I'm kind of inspired.

I spend Memorial Day and the next couple days recovering from the weekend.

Tomorrow, a cousin from California will be at my Auntie & Uncle's house when my parents arrive for a quick visit with them, so we'll be trekking to Franklin again to visit. (This time I can pretty much sit around, so that won't be so hard on me.)

Memorial Weekend Sunday, Lisa and I went to Hopkinsville, picking up Sarah & Jeff [my niece and her husband] along the way. We made sure my parents' graves were all right, then went to see some relatives.

Memorial Day we went to the Henderson Memorial Day service, where General John Campbell spoke. Really.

If you, or other readers, are ever in Milwaukee Wisconsin, you'll have to make a stop at Renaissance books in down town Milwaukee. 3 floors of an old office building STUFFED with books on every imaginable topic and genre. All second hand, some vintage. The place is both heaven and a bit aggravating, since it's not well organized. KT's inner librarian has an attack every time we go there, particularly the periodicals area in the basement. (If one has a dust allergy, one should take their allergy meds before going to that book store.)

Joe: You realize that there is NOTHING new under the sun . . . and only so many plot lines and motifs available to humanity. Sooner or later, they all come around again.

I know that. But the Hollywood flacks who go on about how these dumb sci-fi geeks could never think of such stuff don't.

Random Jottings: Y'know, I should make a stuffy of that alien mascot of the column.

(I've already done slugs, and chibi cthulus, so what's more eyes, and more tentacles?)

I've mailed you some art copied via KT's new printer/copier, I wonder what I had been thinking when I put these in a bound sketchbook. It must have seemed like an excellent idea at the time, but it makes copying the ones near the binding rather difficult. Hope you can use them.

Thanks for the reviews, plot tracker for *Rome*, eventually we'll rent or buy, or borrow the DVDs.

I'm up to DVD #11 of 12 on *Shinsengumi* . . . not quite the # of plot twists as *Rome* but several real surprises, some heartbreaking.

(Things on a level with "Luke, I am your father . . . Join with me, and together we can rule the galaxy!" "NNNNNOOOOOOooooooooo!!")

"Octavia throws her wedding ring into the ocean." Wow, that's dramatic! Are wedding rings something the Romans did? I always thought it was more of a Middle Eastern - North African (Egyptian/Semetic) tradition.

Nope, Romanum est.

I think KT has read *Blood Bound*, borrowed from a friend. I haven't gotten to it yet, I recently finished *The Amber Spyglass* and I'm partway through *Kavalier & Clay*.

Will Eisner is also a huge local celebrity, having his name plastered on the Eisner Museum at the Milwaukee School of Art and Design.

One of the Big Stories on "Space Week" on one of the Educational Channels, was about a plan for a Mission to Mars taking months to get there, and sending supplies ahead, and using some materials that are native to the Red Planet to avoid "postage". It had several scientific, engineering types all excitable on the screen, but also much despair and confusion that even though this plan was presented to NASA, it isn't happening. I don't know enough to know if NASA was rejecting it because "Really, that's not feasible", or if it really was "They rejected it because this plan came from outside the agency."

Is this Robert Zubrin's Mars Direct? NASA doesn't seem to be rejecting it, but they are saying that prior robotic reconnaissance is desirable. They don't want to have an unfortunate incident with the Warhoons . . . er, an accident.

— JTM

"The Bixogots compare the two lobes of the glacier to a woman's legs..." well gee, those were the males weren't they? :) How human of them!

KT had recently come across a N.Zealand news report that Sir Edmund Hillary had fallen at home and was in hospital. He's since been released but we're reminded that he's 80 something.

I think I've seen a "Dancing Man" font available (free?) on the Internet. I don't remember what it was actually called though.

http://www.1001fonts.com/fonts_overview.html?preview_text=&view=full&filter=All&category_id=21&sort=font_date

Richard Dengrove: Mom can always find your buttons to push: she was there for the installation . . .

Dark chocolate, in moderation is supposed to be GOOD for us. We want a higher HDL and a lower LDL, I think. It's not just Cholesterol, it's the TYPE of cholesterol.

Rod Smith: Not only "Did ya' have a nice trip?" (asked of the aliens) but also "Can I see your drive system?"

Lloyd Penny: Sounds like your co worker with the detached retina had complications. Yeowch.

Joy V. Smith: Seimei responds to your sent skritches with a big loud "Puuuurrrrrrrr"

EB: Also "Dr. Phil's" guests often have problems not only due to "stupidity" but "jackassery", I wonder at times whether these are actors in carefully crafted roles, as I can't even imagine what rock some of these people must come from under to get in these messes.

I find that when I call a government office or a help line, the problem I need help with is almost NEVER one on the computer/voice bot, menu . . . Is it just that I never have "normal" difficulties?

Sometimes though, the bot is just there to route the call to the right department.

My last Loc: I think his parents had arrived in the late 40's from Europe, their prior kids apparently didn't survive the Nazis . . . (People just didn't talk about the people they lost around the kids . . .) and he had been a premie . . . so might not have had a prior name.

Megumi and Seimei are getting along better all the time, I sometimes wake during the night and find them curled up TOGETHER beside me, sometimes mutually grooming each other. (AWWWWW!) Our vet was somewhat surprised that Megumi was tolerating Seimei so well after only a couple months, I wonder if maybe they could be siblings or half sibs? (Megumi was given to us so I have NO idea where she came from . . .) She still scolds him regularly, but we have more of "Hey, idiot don't make a mess" hissing, rather than "YOU ARE STEALING MY SPOT! My Home! My food!" hissing . . .

Martin Moore Wooster: I don't recall when Kennedy was shot, I was about 7 months old at the time. But I do have a vague, early childhood memory of being out at a bank or some such with my mom, and her bursting into tears . . . but that probably is a completely different event at a much later age. I do remember Literature class being put on "hold" while the tv was turned on for news about President Reagan's shooting.

Rodney: The last time I heard from Dick

Geis, he was reporting his sight was failing, and that while he used to enjoy reading and responding to zines, it was now too difficult for him to read them.

Jeffrey Allan Bowman: I think the Wikipedia scandal that I recall was somewhat more politically loaded than the "Pod Father" instance. It was basically a situation where political group A and political group B were battling for control of the entry on a particular stack of historical events . . . and it was getting . . . well Byzantine.

Kletch and Sherman Perks are rather safe, they are in non-trendy neighborhoods, that are of little interest to Starbucks. Also these little local coffee houses, are quite happy to carry snacks and goodies that are tailored to their neighborhood. Sherman Perk, has a separate case of Kosher baked goods, and Kletch has a similar set up with some vegetarian items . . . ALL specially made for them by local bakeries specializing in such items. Starbucks wouldn't bother. My crafters' circle that was meeting at Sherman Perk, picked it so that all the members could safely eat their baked goods. :) I should send out an email, and see when and if those crafty fans want to meet sometime this summer, I haven't seen some of them for months and months.

Seimei says: lkutrfeew (he walked across the laptop . . . :) isn't that the cutest.

Looks like after a long hot day, we'll be having a rainy evening, so I'll send this out and catch up on more later if I find I have any more news. I'll be posting some amigurumi stuffy faeries on Etsy over the next week or so, they're really cute.

From: **Richard Dengrove** May 30, 2007
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You find Kevin Anderson's *The Martian War* really bad. It could not be any worse than Garrett P. Serviss' *Edison's Conquest of Mars* (1893). Edison organizes an invasion of Mars and kills off all the Martians with electric guns. Although this was a sequel to the *War of the Worlds*, Garrett could not get himself to write about octopus-like creatures who wear machines. At least that's what I hear. I am sure he was distressed, as others, that such un-human beings might be superior to us. Serviss' Martians are human-like except they are fifteen feet tall.

Speaking of superiority and inferiority, there is your review of Will Eisner's *The Secret History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

I didn't see any mention Goedsche, a German anti-Semite, who wrote a novel entitled *Biarritz* (1868). You may have mentioned him; I just didn't see it.

In *Biarritz*, he has Jewish leaders meet in a Prague cemetery and plot to overthrow Christian society. There is a representative for each tribe of Israel.

While it was a plagiarism of Maurice Joly, Joly's novel was set in Hell and concerned a dialogue between Machiavelli and Montesquieu there. From Goedsche, I gather the Protocols borrowed the cemetery, Jewish conspirators, and the council of twelve.

No, I didn't mention Goedsche, neither did Eisner, and apparently neither did Philip Graves.

From stereotypes, we go to real people and real achievements. Your talk of people who achieved some sort of record on rafts reminded me hearty adventurers have crossed the Atlantic Ocean in rowboats.

Wikipedia gives Frank Samuelson and George Harbo, Norwegian immigrants, as the first. They left the Battery in New York on June 6, 1896 and made it 55 days later to the Scilly Islands, off the southwest of the British Isles. In addition, the article says their record has not been beaten.

Some achievements could have been avoided. As you comment to me, Joe, the Arabs could have prevented the Sephardim who were exiled from Arab lands from becoming the backbone of the Likud. Also, the Israelis could have prevented the Palestinians who were exiled from Israel from becoming fodder for Hamas and Hezbollah.

With foresight, the most rational move each side could have made was allow the two peoples to stay in their homeland, and leave them unmolested.

Of course, while you can hope that the Arabs and Israelis might act rationally, you don't expect any rationality in Charles Fourier's utopian books. Lisa Major commented to me that you couldn't ride a lion. No, it wasn't a lion you would ride in Charles Fourier's world; it was an anti-lion. His social system would change the orbit of the Earth and the animals on it. The lion would become an anti-lion, and you could ride him.

You wouldn't expect Holocaust deniers to be rational either. Are they a clear and present danger. Joe, you and Joy V. Smith see them as a clear and present danger, as I am sure most of my relatives do. But how does one measure clear and present danger? It seems to depend

on gut feelings rather than rational criteria.

You have named one young terrorist and a singing group with teenage twins, who may or may not be under their parents' thumb. For you and Joy Smith, that suffices for a clear and present danger. In those singing twins, you see Hitler coming.

While figuring there must be thousands more, I don't know whether I would consider them a clear and present danger. My gut feeling is, for now, the terrorist, those singing twins and the thousands are a lunatic fringe far from the mainstream.

Of course, all this talk about the irrational brings on the question: what is rational? Do I disagree with Timothy Lane that absence of proof is not proof of absence? I know Carl Sagan said that it wasn't proof of absence, but it seems to me it is.

The problem is the word "proof." Despite the rhetoric over Intelligent Design, all the proofs of science must be tentative. For now, absence of proof is a proof of absence. However, because proofs should be based on the presence or absence of observable facts, Tim is right that new observations should be able to overthrow them.

For now, the absence of rigorous proof for the Sasquatch and the Loch Ness monster: e.g., no living or dead body: means proof of absence as far as science is concerned. However, I agree the existence of the Loch Ness monster and the Sasquatch may yet be proven scientifically.

Now let us get to the big topic of Global Warming. Is Timothy Lane's comment right that the Global Warming skeptics have the true scientific attitude? The problem is I have heard a lot of nonsense from both sides. The spiel I have heard most often is an appeal to authority. With the Global Warming skeptics, it is an appeal to unseen authority.

Also, both sides have tried to prove or disprove Global Warming by proving or disproving a part. Of course, a part may be true while the whole is not. I am willing to grant Trinlay Khadro that carbon dioxide and, to a lesser extent, other greenhouse gases are warming up the Earth (e.g., water vapor, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone). In turn, I am willing to grant that these greenhouse gases are, to a great extent, man's doing.

However, while I agree with Trinlay about warming part of the Global Warming, I may disagree about its consequences and its cure. I don't know what Trinlay's precise stand on either is, but my problem is that believers in Global Warming are often fuzzy about both.

I read two articles in the *Skeptical Inquirer*,

May-June 2007. One article was "Global Climate Change Triggered by Global Warming, Part 1" by a Stuart D. Jordan, a NASA scientist. I grant that the sea levels will rise with Global Warming. It makes sense that Global Warming would melt arctic ice. Of course, changes in sea level is what man has had to deal throughout his history.

Then the article goes on to talk about other dangers. If they were 'likely,' they would be good reasons to fight Global Warming. But Dr. Jordan writes about them as if they are 'for all we know's.

For all we know, Global Warming could cause large portions of the Earth to turn to desert; for all we know, it could cause northern Europe to cool; for all we know, it could stir up tsunamis; for all we know, it could be a harbinger of plague and pest. Earth.

This all sounds horrible but once again we are getting close to our normal state of affairs: with or without Global Warming, any unknown, unforeseen thing can happen anywhere at any time – for all we know.

Then the article decided to dispose of a claimed advantage of Global Warming, that a hotter climate will increase the growing season and there will be more food for everyone. This, it says, is on soft ground. Instead, for all we know, Global Warming can cause the Earth to dry up and vast portions of it to become desert. The problem with this is that the *Skeptical Inquirer* also published another article, an editorial "IPCC Climate Report shows 'Unequivocal' Warming, Reduces Uncertainties," which quotes from a report of the Intergovernment Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations body. According to one quote from the U.N. report, it is proof conclusive for Global Warming that the planet is becoming wetter. In short, who's kidding whom?

Let's get to the cures for Global Warming. Taras Wolansky, Joe Major and George Price are right that there is harm if the only cure is that of the radical environmentalists; namely, that we give up industrial civilization and the internet, and live in thatched huts. While the radical environmentalists would regard it as a great boon, most of us would regard such a solution as harm.

However, there are other cures beside going back to the stone age. Lloyd Penney may yet be right; the cure may be like that for any other pollution. Maybe less. World leaders' cures for Global Warming, like the Kyoto Accords, may not do too much harm; they may not do too much good either.

As inexpensive as these cures are, however, the cure I have heard most often is even less

expensive. We are supposed to believe in the threat of Global Warming as a credo, and congratulate ourselves on our enlightenment.

Read about the history of the Greenland Colony.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** May 31, 2007
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"The Nepalese government has officially labeled Mount Everest 'Sagarmatha'". This is a made-up name, it turns out: there was no Nepalese name for the mountain, but the government did not want to use the Sherpa/Tibetan name, Chomolungma. Anyway, we're lucky that the distinguished former Royal Surveyor was named George Everest and not George Murgatroyd.

"Real Regency bucks would have dumped the forward and sprightly (dare I say anachronistic?) young women of Regency Romances in the alleys behind depraved London stews, having left them poxed, fuddled with laudanum, and pregnant". Where on Earth did you get such a strange idea? Indeed, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* criticizes the Gothic romances of her time precisely for that kind of sensationalism. Also, "an armed society is a polite society": if religious, social, and legal institutions failed, one might have an encounter at dawn.

From reading modern Regency Romances.

Johnny Carruthers: You **"can't recall if [you] had ever had Junior Mints before"**? All right, what did you do with the *real* Johnny Carruthers, you damned dirty alien!

Taral Wayne: **"The U.S. is in debt as it's never been before"**. Actually the national debt, relative to GDP, was higher in the Forties and Fifties. Also, those U.S. dollars held in other countries have no value except their ability to buy U.S. goods. If the dollars did "drop to vanishingly little worth", we as the "debtors" would be the beneficiaries; the "creditors" would be left holding the bag. In effect, we would have obtained goods from other countries for free.

Richard Dengrove: I have no views I can't defend, though I don't necessarily present the evidence for every view on every occasion, due to time and space considerations. Sometimes,

I'll make an assertion and wait for someone to challenge it. (For example, I've made disparaging comments about JFK and waited for somebody to defend him. But nobody ever does!)

Popularly, the fall of Rome is often attributed to decadence (i.e., naughty behavior as in DeMille epics), not lack of patriotism. Obviously, the less patriotic people are, the less likely they are to volunteer to defend their country. This is why the American military has grown more and more conservative and Republican in recent years.

The Empire was expanding during its era of decadence; it didn't "fall" (if only the West counts) until the good pious Christians like Honorius came in.

Recall the columnist for *The Nation* who, right after 9/11, would not permit her teenage daughter to fly an American flag from the window of their apartment, not far from where the World Trade Center used to be. Because, she explained in her column, the American flag is a symbol of "racism and genocide". That's what the schools teach today, to a considerable extent.

"Fundamentalist" is a pejorative term referring to a wide variety of conservative Christian denominations. Who don't all believe the same things, especially about the "inerrancy" of Scripture. There's even a few who believe the King James Version was divinely inspired; I might smile a little at that, but I would never use such abusive language as "low grade morons".

A little more detail about Ronald Reagan and the Cold War. He pushed it into high tech areas where the Soviets knew they couldn't compete. And he wouldn't let them buy the technology, either (in great contrast to Bill "it's the economy stupid" Clinton and China). The Soviets also took the Strategic Defense Initiative very seriously; indeed, Gorbachev wrecked a major treaty over that one issue. While the Soviets weren't sure a perfect, "astrodome" defense was possible, they realized technology that can shoot down a missile even part of the time can shoot down an airplane or take out a tank every time.

Reagan limited Soviet access to hard currency by interfering with their gas pipeline to Europe, and persuading the Saudis to overproduce oil, driving down the price the Soviets could get. (When people attack the Saudis today, I always remember their service in helping win the Cold War.) Also, at very

little cost to us, Reagan forced the Soviets to waste billions they didn't have on pro-Communist governments in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and other places.

Lloyd Penney: Whether or not carbon dioxide-related global warming is a threat, ". . . we fight it, we will benefit our air and water and environment, and our planet." Well, no. Forcing people to do things in a more expensive way means economic growth is damaged: and the rule, everywhere in the world, is that the poorer a country is, the more it damages the environment. Protecting the environment is something only rich countries can afford to do. (Note that the Kyoto Protocol would tend to shift manufacturing from advanced countries that regulate pollution, to places like China and Malaysia!)

Also, we're talking about trading one kind of "pollution" (carbon dioxide is actually what plants use to grow) for another: nuclear power plants. Not that I'm particularly paranoid about radioactive waste, either.

Alexis Gilliland: It's nothing more than the Law of Supply and Demand. Wage rates were kept artificially high during the Depression, causing oversupply of (and underdemand for) labor. During the war, wage rates were kept from rising even as the money supply was inflated, allowing the market to clear once again.

Trinlay Khadro: "**Between the 1970s and 2007, the total global population of polar bears increased from 5,000 to 25,000**", according to Wikipedia, though there is some evidence of a decline in some locations in recent years.

Japan was not the Philippines. Had it not climbed into its own navel (to preserve the social hierarchy and the status of the samurai), it would shortly have had its own empire in Asia. Even with a 250-year handicap, it almost pulled it off. Also, the radically egalitarian notions implicit in Christianity would probably have had a liberating effect, which was why the shoguns stamped it out.

Martin Morse Wooster: I also saw the Lux Radio Theatre "Star Wars" at ConJose. I will confess, I recognized only a couple of the impersonations; e.g., Jimmy Stewart.

When JFK was shot, I was in a parochial grade school; generally speaking, we nasty boys approved of anything that would make the nuns cry.

The first 80 pages of Spider Robinson's *Variable Star* have a Heinleinesque feeling, and then occasionally thereafter. (I'm half-way through.) I think Heinlein would have disliked the book, and would at the least have

demanded his name be removed.

Let's see . . . the "hero" is a skinny Canadian who plays the saxophone, the reaction to the Earth being destroyed is a bland lecture about non-violence . . . I think Heinlein might have demanded that the **author** be removed, from the real world if necessary.

— JTM

From: **John Hertz** May 29, 2007
236 S. Coronado Street No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA
Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee

The adventure of *Glory Road* is fine. The social commentary is feeble. As you say, "we all read it a long time ago" — in, say, *Bleak House*, a great novel, a weak satire.

Likewise, Will Eisner will probably live in history for his art, not his commentary. But the enmity of the world is like a golden cloak, heavy and hard to put off.

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Nancy Martsch, with congratulations.

SUPER ADVICE

by Paul Gadzikowski

**THE WIND AND FLAVIO**

The puddle of yellow fur lay in the Roman sunlight, oblivious to all around it. Then a little pink mouth gaped, a tongue protruded, and began to wash the fur.

“Yes, Flavio, this is one of the many funny ways in which we love each other,” said the man in white sitting on the balcony, looking out over the City. He directed His attention to the newspaper which lay over His lap, and declared unto the cat, “Such is the recondite triviality of newspapermen, that they direct attention to the scandalous doings of superficial heireses and ephemeral actors, while the real events of the world pass unregarded.” The cat yawned.

There was a knock on the door behind Him. “Your Holiness? Your Holiness?”

“Enter,” He said. Hadrian the Seventh, Servant of the Servants of God, Bishop and Patriarch of Rome, Successor of Saint Peter — in short, Pope — gathered His wits to deal with this interruption of His transitory morning leisure.

Sir John, his Gentleman-at-arms, entered, and knelt to kiss the Fisherman’s Ring. “The Ambassadors of America and of the Ninefold King are here to see You,” he said.

The Pope tossed the yellow journal aside and got to His feet. “We will receive them precipitiously. Does the Cardinal-Secretary-of-State attend?”

“Yes, sir.”

The three men were waiting in the antechamber of His private apartments. The Pope said, “Your excellencies honour Us with your presence. Be seated, and We shall heed your words.”

His writing-room was clear for the nonce, and He directed His steps thither. Sir John brought sufficient chairs for the cardinal and the ambassadors, and when they had declined refreshment, He graciously enquired regarding the purpose of their visit.

“It has to do with the recent events in Morocco,” the Ambassador of America said. “The President has dispatched the Atlantic Squadron there to deal with the matter.”

“Which was a grossly unilateral action on his part,” the Ambassador of the Ninefold King said. “Morocco is a constituent territory of the Kingdom of Africa, and British troops will in due course be dispatched to bring the miscreant to justice. Indeed, as a British subject was killed by this bandit in the course of these lamentable events, it is His Majesty’s Governments’ position that they have priority.”

“Wherefore you have already prepared the forces of reprisal,” Hadrian said. “You have, have you not?”

An embarrassed silence filled the room.

“We note with interest the marked energy of President Roosevelt. We believe the phraseology he employed was ‘Why spoil the beauty of the thing with legality?’ Nevertheless, it is Our opinion that while his action was justified, it was infringing on the bounds of the relevant clauses of the Treaty of Rome. As you have submitted this matter to Us, it is Our judgment that the said expedition must be under the command of a British commander. That would be Rear-Admiral Doveton Sturdee of the Mediterranean Squadron would it not? The American squadron commander will report to him upon arrival, and consult with him before taking action.

“We have taken notice of the American President’s description of his actions. It was a most telling phrase that he used: ‘The American people want Pedicaris alive or Raisuli dead!’ . . .”

— Not by “Fr. Rolfe” [Frederick Rolfe “Baron Corvo”] or John Milius

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Lisa

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

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

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