

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Pearl Harbor is one of the great myths of our age. I had not really thought much of what it would be like to have actually experienced it until I began researching *Utah's* story. The hardest part of it all was actually choosing what to include. Every time I cut a detail it felt somewhat like telling my father to shut up. However, we just didn't have the space for every detail. The biggest thing I learned was that Pearl Harbor happened to real people, not just figures out of legends. I hope the veterans would remember that this is the first time I have ever done a project like this. I hope to do a better job with the next one. I am not sorry for the impulse which led to this project. I do wish I had had the impulse much earlier.

— Lisa

Trinlay Khadro 2

Joe's Birthday is **December 24, 2007**
 Christmas is **December 25, 2007**

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WARNING!

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

Reviewer's Notes

It's customary for editors to do a solemn and thoughtful review of the year preceeding in their end-of-the-year editorials — something like the kid who, assigned to write an autobiography as the first assignment in his eighth-grade class, began, "For eight years I've been doing autobiographies." (Must have been the fad du jour in Education post-graduate seminars.)

One of the unsettling things is reading a report on San Diego ComicCon and noting that they were thinking of capping the membership at **120,000**. That's not a typo. And they evidently do have sf stuff — Greg Bear and Ray Bradbury were guests in the past two years. So one can't say that there's no interest. But a hundred and twenty thousand people? This begins to pass community and go into agglomeration.

The community we know is dying out. I gave copies of *Alexiad* to some people Chris Garcia recommended. No response. We are trying outreach to (for example) people who write to other zines. This might work a little, but at the same time we have to be careful. (And then too, there was the fellow who wrote in, misspelled some words, gave no indication of being interested in anything, and oh yes, he was located somewhere that made us suspicious.)

I spend far too much time reading the message board of the James Randi Educational Foundation (<http://forums.randi.org/>). As watching the arguments about the moon hoax (must have slipped over from Phil Plait's Bad Astronomy board (<http://www.bautforum.com/>)). The principal hoax supporter was very skilled at debate, which has increasingly drifted away from having anything to do with resolving an issue or finding a truth. For example, when one poster pointed out the large number of people involved in filming a scene, jokingly ending with "and the tea lady", he seized on that to avoid discussing the point.

However, there is light amid the dark. On the thread concerning the question, "**Korean War False Flag?**", asking for Korean War conspiracy theories, the poster calling himself "Redtail" said: "I have heard that Col. Potter's buddies in the NWO planted explosives on Col. Blake's plane."

Does this debunk the stories about Radar O'Reilly's sense of perception?

JTM

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



TRINLAY KHADRO

The case that “made” Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the premier forensic pathologist of the early twentieth century, was the trial of Dr. Harvey Hawley Crippen for the murder of his wife, Cora. With painstaking CSI work and compelling testimony, Spilsbury drew together the clues (or clews) — the chemical analysis of the dismembered body found in the cellar at the Crippen manse, showing the presence of hyoscine, the scar showing that the deceased had had a hysterectomy — to put the rope round Crippen’s neck.

But now, DNA analysis has indicated that the corpse *wasn’t* Cora’s. Eep. The problem is the same as in Mark Twain’s science-fiction story “From the ‘London Times’ of 1904” (1898) — there was a corpse in the cellar, even if it wasn’t who they thought it was. And that little bit with Ethel le Neve — he was up to something. (Which epic voyage, I think, contributed to Arthur Whitaker’s Sherlock Holmes pastiche “The Man Who Was Wanted” (1948).)

And now there is a new biography reevaluating Sir Bernard on a broader scale: *Lethal Witness: Sir Bernard Spilsbury, Honorary Pathologist* by Andrew Rose (Sutton; 2007; ISBN 9780750944229; £20).

An Appy Polly Logy: *Farthing* by Jo Walton (2005) does not have a successful Operation Sea Lion. It has H.M.G. having a mass attack of brains-eaten-out-by-Zanthean-Brain-Leeches and accepting the Hess demarche. (Thus qualifying as a sequel to Christopher Priest’s *The Separation* (2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #5).)

We regret to report the death of **Alexander Feklisov** (Aleksandr Semyonovich Feklisov) on **October 26, 2007**. Born March 9, 1914, Aleksandr Semyonovich was an officer of Soviet State Security involved in two of the more significant relationships between the Socialist Motherland and the Main Adversary. During the period 1943-5, Feklisov was case officer for Agent LIBERAL and his spy ring, overseeing the transfer of atomic secrets. In 1962, under the cover name of “Alexander Fomin”, Feklisov was station chief in Washington, serving as a back channel for the Kennedy Administration in a successful attempt

to tone down the Cuban Missile Crisis. His encomium of the glorious socialist struggle performed by Agent LIBERAL (also known as Julius Rosenberg) in his memoirs *The Man Behind the Rosenbergs* (2001) infuriated many American progressives.

Having read a number of books by Joe McGinniss, or McGinnis [including *Never Enough*, reviewed in this], I do have a question, well two. Where did he get the work done to prolong his life and youth, and how much of the other Brinks Job guys’ money did it take?

I have splurged (thanks to Office Depot having a No Payments Until January 2009 sale) and bought a Toshiba Satellite P205 laptop with an Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor running at 1.67 & 1.66 Ghz. I suppose it was sometime in the early nineteen-fifties, maybe around my birth, that the world’s entire computing power exceeded this. The CD Drive also plays HD DVD, but then Toshiba developed that, as Sony has done Blu-Ray. Back an aeon of the world ago, Sony had developed Betamax, and you remember how well that turned out. Oh and the computer has Microsoft Windows Vista™ SM® © Bill Gates is GOD! Home Premium. The only problem I’ve had with it is remembering to create CD’s the right way.

The M/S *Explorer*, which sank on November 23 near the South Shetland Islands, north of the Antarctic Peninsula, after being holed by a small berg, had originally been the *Lindblad Explorer*, the ship the Heinleins took on their Antarctic cruise in 1983 (see *Grumbles from the Grave* (1989), Pages 198-205).

If you type “exapno mapcase” into the Wikipedia search engine, you find the entry on Harpo Marx. Why?

In 1934, Harpo performed in the Soviet Union. They advertised the performance of XAPIIO MAPKC — pronounced “kharpo marks” — which he read as “Exapno Mapcase”.

Randall Garrett’s Marx Brothers reference-riden story “The Foreign Hand-Tie” (*Analog*, December 1961) has an “Operation Mapcase” which involves an (overlycomplex) infiltration of the Soviet Union. And other interesting images; the scene where Leonard Poe goes to his brother’s dream, for example . . .

OBITS

We regret to report the death of Southern Fandom mainstay, arch-armoror, anthologist, and general good guy **Julius Henry “Hank” Reinhardt**, on **October 30, 2007**, from complications of heart surgery. Hank helped found the Atlanta Science Fiction Organization, a mainstay of early Southern Fandom, in 1950. He was one of the founders of Museum Replicas, LTD., the sword-making company. And putting them together, he helped establish many units of the Society for Creative Anachronism across the South.

He is survived by his second wife, Baen

editor **Toni Weisskopf**, two daughters, and two grandchildren.

We note the death of **Ira Levin** on **November 12, 2007**. Born **August 27, 1929**, Levin began his career as a playwright, of which the most notable such work of his is “Deathtrap”. His novels were in the field, including *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967) and its sequel *Son of Rosemary* (1997), *This Perfect Day* (1970), *The Stepford Wives* (1972), and *The Boys from Brazil* (1976) — yet, he was never “typed” as a “sci-fi writer”.

MONARCHIST NEWS

We regret to report the death of **Lady Katherine Brandram** on **October 2, 2007**. Born **May 4, 1913** in Athens to **Constantine I, King of the Hellenes** and the former **Princess Sophie of Prussia** as Princess Katherine of Greece and Denmark, she married Major Richard Brandram [1911-1994] on April 21, 1947, relinquishing her titles and becoming Lady Katherine Brandram. She is survived by their son Richard Brandram.

Her death leaves only one great-grandchild of Queen Victoria surviving, **Count Carl Johann Bernadotte af Wisborg**.

We are pleased to announce the birth of **Mr Albert Windsor** on **September 22, 2007** to **Paola** and **Lord Nicholas Windsor**. Mr Windsor has the distinction of being the first untitled member of the House of Windsor, due to the revision of dynastic law done under George V. (Of course, as Germans will argue, he is still a dynast of Saxe-Coburg and entitled to use the German titles, since Herzog Carl, that friend of Manfred von Richthofen, did not recognize Cousin George’s renunciation.)

The parliament of Sakartvelo [Georgia], by a vote of 104 to 6, agreed to consider the institution of a constitutional monarchy in the country. Georgia is the oldest Christian country, and its royal house, the Bagrationi family, can show descent from King Ashot I [r. bef800-830] with claims of descent going back to the fourth century AD/CE, and before that to King David. The current head of the house is **H.S.H. Prince Giorgi Bagrationi**.

CITY OF DREAMING BOOKS

by Walter Moers

This is a wild literary romp. Moers has set this fantasy in a city devoted exclusively to books. (No, I’m not kidding.) All residents of the city are either book sellers or book buyers, often both. The sheer bookish hilarity alone is worth the price of the book. Every time I thought Moers could not possibly top it he upped the bookish hilarity until I drove Joe crazy giggling as I sped through the book. I thought the Remarkable Millard Fillmore was it for truly weirdly, insanely funny material but the Moers book thoroughly outdoes the Fillmore book. Every book lover should read this one.

AND THEY WERE THERE: USS *UTAH* (AG-16)

by Lisa Major

I had the idea of doing a piece on Pearl Harbor for the December issue. I felt that with the anniversary coming up it would be a good time to honor those veterans. What would it have belike in those moments when the "rockets' red glare" stopped being words in a song and became the brutally savage reality of torpedoes tearing into ship hulls? I can't really understand what it was like. The only people who really do know are those who were there that December day sixty-six years ago. Their numbers are sadly diminishing in ever-increasing numbers. The youngest Pearl veterans are now 84 years old. Their last reunion ever was held last year. If I am to do proper honor to them I have to do it now. I knew I did not have the ability to do justice to a wide-scale piece on the whole event so I decided to limit myself to one ship. But which one? The *Arizona* was the first ship that sprang to mind and almost as quickly I rejected that idea. *Arizona's* story has been told enough by better writers than me. I wanted a lesser-known ship, one whose story is not nearly as well known but which, like all ships there, deserved to be known. There was some tantalizing mention of her in a History Channel documentary that made me want to know more and so I chose *Utah*. Her survivors have a website, <http://www.ussutah.org>.

She began on March 9, 1909, when construction began on her. She was finished by late December of that year and sponsored by Mary Spry, daughter of Governor William Spry of Utah. The *Utah* was officially commissioned on August 31, 1911 under the command of Captain William Benson. She was more than 521 feet long and a little less than ninety feet wide. She could float in less than thirty feet of water. She could transport her crew of over a thousand at a speed of some twenty knots, roughly twenty miles an hour. *Utah* was armed with ten 12" guns, sixteen 5" guns, and two 21" torpedo tubes. Her first real assignment was with the Atlantic Fleet. Before our entry into World War I she saw action preventing the *Ypiranga*, a German steamship, from delivering arms to Mexico. Seven of her crew earned Medals of Honor at this time.

During the first part of our involvement with WW1 the *Utah* served as a training ship in Chesapeake Bay. In late August 1918 she was assigned to convoy escort duty for convoys going to Britain. After the end of WWI she was part of the escort for the *George Washington*, the ship carrying President Woodrow Wilson to France. In 1921 *Utah* served as flagship in Europe until she was relieved in 1922. She spent the next three and a half years as "the flagship of Battleship Division, United States Scouting Fleet." In 1925 and 1926 she trained midshipmen. In July 1931 she was converted from a battleship to an auxiliary ship. From then on she served as a target training ship. She went to Hawaii in September 1941. On December 6,

1941 her captain and executive officer both took leave, so that Engineering Officer Isquith was in charge at 0800 the next morning when planes sporting the rising sun roared over Pearl Harbor. Genda and Fuchida had instructed their pilots to avoid *Utah* but adrenaline and youthful inexperience sent two torpedoes into *Utah*.

As the USS *Utah* site says: "The attack on the fleet at Pearl Harbor lasted a little under two hours, but for *Utah*, it was over in a few minutes. At 0801, soon after sailors had begun raising the colors at the ship's fantail, the erstwhile battleship took a torpedo hit forward, and immediately started to list to port.

"As the ship began to roll ponderously over on her beam ends, 6- by-12-inch timbers, placed on the decks to cushion them against the impact of the bombs used during the ship's latest stint as a mobile target, began to shift, hampering the efforts of the crew to abandon ship. Below, men headed topside while they could. One, however, Chief Watertender Peter Tomich, remained below, making sure that the boilers were secured and that all men had gotten out of the engineering spaces. Another man, Fireman John B. Vaessen, USNR, remained at his post in the dynamo room, making sure that the ship had enough power to keep her lights going as long as possible.

"Cmdr. Isquith made an inspection to make sure men were out and nearly became trapped himself. As the ship began to turn over, he found an escape hatch blocked. While he was attempting to escape through a porthole, a table upon which he was standing, impelled by the ever-increasing list of the ship, slipped out from beneath him. Fortunately, a man outside grabbed Isquith's arm and pulled him through at the last instant.

"At 0812, the mooring lines snapped, and *Utah* rolled over on her beam ends; her survivors struck out for shore, some taking shelter on the mooring quays since Japanese strafers were active."

(Isquith would very shortly pay his rescue forward by helping save Vaessen despite the strafing from Japanese planes. Many survivors swam for their lives in water mixed with oil from damaged ships. Many had to slide along sharp barnacles to reach this water. Even away from the sinking ship they had to face strafing by Japanese machine guns. LTM)

And now I think the survivors should be allowed to speak for themselves, as who could tell their story better than they? I regret there wasn't room to quote all stories in their entirety but we just don't have space. It has proved to be a very difficult task to pick and choose what to use. The more I have struggled with this task, the more I have become aware that every detail I leave out is a story ignored. Unfortunately we only have so much space. The complete story can be found on the *Utah* survivors' website, <http://www.ussutah.org>. I would like to thank the survivors for very generously giving me permission to quote from their website.

While the men were cutting [through the ship's hull to rescue trapped personnel] it was then that it seemed to me that all

H_____ cut loose, shrapnel and bullets were falling so thick it looked as if all of us would be hit, but the men that were cutting did not stop working to take cover. The man in charge kept saying, "Keep those torches burning."

WILLIAM GLENN BARTLEY
Coxswain, USN

Eyewitness Report of James W. Clark, Gm2/c

Looking in the direction of Ford Island I noticed smoke rising into the air and heard the sound of explosions. Looking up, I saw Jap planes bombing Ford Island. Almost simultaneously a torpedo hit the ship on the port side.

A Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant Hauck, came by and said "lets go down below and check water tight doors." We went and saw that everything was secure. We also saw water coming down the passageway and decided we should get out of there.

We went up two flights of stairs. At the next flight of stairs guys were congregating on the stairway. We needed to get out of there because the ship was listing 35 degrees by then . . . [The reason the men were crowding the stairway was because had they left the ladder, they would have become exposed to machine gun fire . . .]

(James Clark was promoted for his conduct during the attack. LTM)

"CLARK, James W. GM2c., USN remained with Lieutenant P. H. Hauck, USN, closing water-tight doors and hatches in forward lower compartments, at great risk, until driven out by inflow of water and ordered out by Lieutenant Hauck, CLARK being among the last to leave the ship."

TRUETT DAVIS, Sea2c USN

From our "ringside seat" in the ditch we could hear the bomb explosions from Battleship Row and see the black smoke and fires over there . . . It was determined much later that hundreds of survivors swam from their ships and were picked up by other ships trying to get out of Pearl Harbor. This, plus the ones still entombed in their ships, blown to pieces or burned beyond recognition made it extremely difficult to come up with an accurate survival list. . . . I believe it was the morning of December 9th that my name was called to join about 25 other sailors on a burial detail.

This would be the most memorable and horrible experience of my life. For three days we unloaded trucks bringing in pine boxes containing bodies and parts of bodies. The bodies of course, had not been prepared for burial and as we carried them, the leakage coming out

of them would get all over us. The stench was unbearable and it took months before I really thought I was rid of the smell. . . . Bodies were moved at later dates and most were reburied in the Punch Bowl Cemetery on Oahu. . .

EYEWITNESS REPORT OF
CLARENCE W. DURHAM
Radioman 3/c

I will always be haunted by the events of the morning when the USS *Utah* was torpedo bombed and rolled over 180 degrees . . . From that instant on it was a frantic struggle for survival for the whole crew . . . The ship had already listed so far that a "Battle Bar" [a heavy iron grate], had broken loose from an unsecured lock and completely blocked the airshaft above me, and the one at the level of the radio room had also fallen trapping members of the "black gang" below it.

I will never forget the faces of those men trapped in the Engine Room. I knew there was no way I could lift those steel grates and I also knew at that point that my chances were very slim of getting out of there myself . . . I could see the pilots clearly as they made low sweeps across the area. I discovered that throwing rocks at the planes didn't help at all.

(It might not have helped at this time but his action was emblematic of the fighting spirit we would need to win World War II. LTM)

Witness report of Robert Graves as provided in an interview with the Web Master of Battleship Row Web Site.

Toddy Bugarin and I were just visiting when he observed some planes coming in and he stated "You would think we could at least have Sunday off". Suddenly we noticed the planes had the blood spot of the rising sun on the wings and they dropped a torpedo that struck our ship . . . our guns were covered with a "dog house" of steel and we could not fire if we chose to do so . . .

I finally made it topside, never seeing Toddy again; he is still in the ship. . .

BATTLESHIP ROW: Do you remember the torpedo explosions? If so, how loud were they? Did they rock the ship violently, or just a little?

BOB GRAVES: Yes, I did see and feel the first torpedo. The water "spout" was not very visible as it was forward of the air castle. The ship really shuddered and started to list, the timbers started to move a bit and we repaired below decks. We also felt and heard the second one and again the ship shivered very strongly.

BBROW: Did you see the planes coming in that were strafing, or just hear the bullets hitting around you? Do bullets

hitting nearby make that "beyowww" sound you hear in the movies?

BG: Saw the planes strafing as they came in after the torpedo drop, also heard the strike of the bullets on the metal around us. . . The sound to me was more a clipping than the "beoinging".

BBROW: Do you remember how loud it was during the attack?

BG: The noise was so very great that it was unbelievable. That night we slept in a shed with a metal roof and the sounds of shell fragments hitting the roof were also very frightening. It was our own anti-aircraft being fired "at any sign or sound".

BBROW: Describe Burial Detail.

BG: We were directed to attach lines to the bodies and tow them to a retrievable area. We bagged them accordingly. There were a number of containers that held only minimal parts of the cadavers. It was not an easy job. I never knew what stress was then, but guess I had it. The memories are tough and caused many nightmares LONG AGO, Thank God. Mass graves sites were prepared by bull dozers. I understand that all were extracted later on and proper burial took place. I know of 3 unknown graves of shipmates off Utah. They are in Punchbowl with remains of more than one man. I did burial detail for 10 days,

Eyewitness Report of George Hettinger
Electricians Mate Second Class

I heard some kind of explosion. I did not know what was going on. I thought maybe some ammunition had exploded or somebody dropped one of the armor hatches.

There was another guy from our division, struggling in the water below me, hollering that he couldn't swim. I went back to help this guy out.

As we watched and saw Jap planes get hit, boy, we would all yell!

When we could no longer see any planes coming over, we started walking around out past the seaplane hanger and that's when I first realized all the devastation. Everything was burnt and black.

The night of December 7th some of our planes came in and somebody opened fire. The next thing you know everything in the harbor opened fire. The tracers from the shooting was a sight to see. You never saw a 4th of July like that! . . .

(Hettinger was commended for his conduct on *Utah* and for assistance given to another after abandoning ship. The planes he mentions were coming from *Enterprise*. Word was given they were friendly but not everyone got the word. And for some reason survivors were nervous about planes overhead. Several planes were shot down and a stray bullet killed Seaman Pallas

Brown of the *Utah*, who thus has the unfortunate distinction of being the first sailor killed by friendly fire in World War II and the *Enterprise* pilots the same unfortunate distinction of being the first pilots to be killed by friendly fire. LTM)

William (Bill) Hughes, Rm3/c USN

But at 07:55 AM, Sunday Morning, December 7th 1941, our lives would be changed forever. We had not been trained to anticipate a major, all out sneak attack by a large force of foreign military aircraft from a country with whom we were not at war. . . . On that lazy Sunday morning, most off-duty radiomen were asleep on our dry comfortable cots in the bunk room.

By this time, Jap aircraft were making strafing runs on the hapless sailors who were exposed to their fire. . . . It became a matter of every man for himself. Personally, I felt an urgent need to distance myself from the ship . . .

While hunkered down in the ditch, watching terror reign from the skies, these thoughts: (1) Where in the h— are all these planes coming from and how long will they keep coming . . .

Other personnel exemplified unusual valor in disregarding their safety and operating small boats to ferry personnel from the doomed ship to shore. Others lent a hand to wounded shipmates in distress. It was our worst hour and yet our finest hour.

. . . we observed the terrible site of the mangled superstructure of USS *Arizona*, the capsized *Oklahoma*, the sunken and burning *California*, *Nevada*, *Maryland* and other ships, such as the destroyers, *Downs* and *Cassin*, and *Shaw*, the latter three being almost obliterated in Dry-dock. These sights gave us a knot in the pit of our stomachs and very heavy hearts.

The long trek from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay lasted 3 years, 8 months and 25 days . . . That long trip was paid for by many American lives as well as lives of our Allies and the Japanese. It is said that the military is only needed when the diplomats fail. Let's hope we keep America militarily strong, the diplomats do not fail, and this terrible history will never be repeated.

Paul Joyce report

My ship the USS *Utah*, was one of the first to be hit; hit by two torpedoes. The ship rolled over and sank in about 18 minutes. . .

I was in the liberty section when the first torpedo hit. I had gone to the Tailor Shop to get my neckerchief. I was also picking up a neckerchief for Reed SF3/C; we were going ashore together. Reed SF3, was later found on board, a

casualty.

George Jurkovich, Rm3/c USN

While waiting in the sheltered area, we saw a destroyer drop an "ash-can" on a Japanese mini-sub. I remember this vividly, because I had never seen a ship moving that fast before in the channel.

I remember my last evening watch on the bridge of the *Argonne*. It was the night of December 8, 1941. The Admiral of the Base Force was still there and he looked very sad as he gazed across the channel at the still burning *Arizona*, and made some comment about the fact that it was still burning.

EYEWITNESS REPORT OF
CARL E. LEE, SEA2/c USN

On the ladder to topside the man in front of me just started to step out on the timbers on deck when before my eyes the machine bullets started chewing up the timbers and the man ducked back and missed being killed by that one more step . . .

Then a call for volunteers to fight the fire on the *Arizona* and *West Virginia*.

I went with this group. Arriving at the sight, it didn't take much to determine that nothing could be done about the fire and all we could do was to do what we could to help those coming off the burning ships. And come they did in every condition imaginable, oily, wounded, sick and some already dead being towed ashore by shipmates, some on fire. It was one hell of a job. For an eighteen year old boy, lucky enough to live through such a holocaust, I grew up that day. Yet not knowing then that the worst was yet to come.

On Monday I was sent to some barracks to join other survivors. There we were assigned to burial parties and went by trucks to the cemetery in Honolulu. Pine coffins were brought in everything that could carry one. As we started handling the boxes we couldn't overlook the stench and blood still running from the boxes. We placed 49 of these boxes to a trench (dug by bulldozers) and covered them with the American flag, then a chaplain would say a prayer. Then in the quiet and peaceful calm of the day came the most mournful and never to be forgotten sound I have ever heard before or since — TAPS. I don't remember how many trenches we filled that day. The next 2 days we went to a place called Red Hill where we were confronted with piles of bodies. There we placed the bodies and pieces of bodies in sheets of burlap and then into pine boxes and sent off for burial. The first lunch break we had the first day of this, we were taken to a school where food had been prepared

and was in plates on the tables. We marched in, sat down, looked at the food and to a man, got up and marched out without touching the food.

After that, Pearl Harbor was finally over for me, except for the ever lasting memory that haunts me to this day. As you can see I was no hero. There is nothing heroic about surviving such a catastrophe. Call it Luck, the Grace of God, or what you will, I was there and I survived.

[I beg leave to differ. I think serving on such a burial detail qualifies as heroic. LTM]

I was then assigned to the U.S.S. *Detroit* and arriving in 'Frisco, I sent a telegram to my mother wishing her a merry Christmas. I learned later, that was the first she knew I was still alive.

Signed
Carl E. Lee

Eyewitness Report of
Aubrey Mahaney, SM1/c USN

I saw the planes flying in low, drop their torpedoes, and lurch upward, barely clearing the ship. You could see the underside of the wings with a great big red ball on them. We could hardly believe what was happening. I counted two torpedo strikes; the entire ship just shuddered when they hit. With each torpedo, the ship would roll over a little more.

A load of heavy planking stacked on deck tore loose, crushing men as they tried to abandon ship. . .

From there it was a swim to shore through a thick oil slick under fire from the attacking planes. They strafed us in the water. I saw men throw up their arms and go under. Reaching Ford Island, I ducked into a trench to hide. Some of our men began to go into shock. They were covered with oil. You could see only the whites of their eyes.

A Navy lieutenant, clad only in his pajamas, had a .45-caliber pistol strapped to his side. He ordered us to set up machine gun nests. Instead of lying there in the ditch, we got busy. The sights and sounds of defeat were all around. The devastation on Ford Island was awful. There was smoke and fire, everywhere. When we got to see all that had happened, we were just sick. The confusion was hard to describe. You would see shipmates being killed . . . It was horrifying!

Aubrey E. Mahaney

EYEWITNESS REPORT OF
James OBERTO, Sea2/c

Shipmate Lester Hutnick sat down on the edge of the bunk and said, "man oh man,

Jimmie, this is gonna be some day, some show". We were going to the fleet dance band contest.

At precisely 0755 the bugler sounded the call to colors. Both of us heard him start the call, no one on board ship, to my knowledge, ever heard him finish. Suddenly the ship rose a bit out of the water and slammed back onto the surface with a gut-wrenching shudder . . . In one corner of the compartment was a poker table with about seven sailors sitting around it playing cards.

One of the guys, upset over the money, chips, and cards having been knocked off the table angrily retorted, "Jesus Christ, what now! Don't tell me the Air Force is practicing torpedo and dive bombing attacks on Sunday morning, for Christ' sake!" Another card player said "Probably the (bleep) Japs are bombing us!" Seconds later, a postal clerk came stumbling down the compartment ladder, disheveled, bloody, wild eyed and shouting "Believe it or not, the (bleep) Japs are bombing us!".

[Bleep mine. The words cut out pertained to divine condemnation of the Japanese. LTM.]

When we came out on the main deck bullets hitting the timbers were sending splinters of wood flying in all directions. The sight of those timbers beginning to shift and move struck terror in me. The more the deck tilted, the more dangerous these huge pieces of wood became . . .

I could see the immense dull red hull of the *Utah* close behind me, and the seemingly perpetual bubbles rising all around. . . I barely sat down when all hell broke loose. Splinters of wood began flying in all directions. A Japanese Zero was diving on our boat. I dived overboard once more and started underwater toward shore . . .

Before heading for the safety of the ditch, however, I turned to look out over the water to see how "the old girl was doing". She was, now, almost completely upside down. It was distressing to see her with only her propellers, rudder and keel sticking out of the water. It was all over for her. The end of the *Utah* had come. What I didn't know was that nearly 60 sailors were still inside.

EYEWITNESS REPORT OF
HAROLD SCOTT RICHARDS, SK3/C USN

I heard the noise of airplanes and went to the porthole. There were many planes headed in our direction. I saw a torpedo bomber coming straight for the ship and it dropped a torpedo. Before I had the chance to run, it hit the ship with a tremendous explosion. The blast blew me out into a passageway.

My next recollection, I was outside the office and was going to my battle station. The ship was sinking so fast we

were ordered to abandon ship. Within a couple of minutes the ship was listing so much I could hardly stand. It was about 8 minutes from the time we caught our first shell until we started to go down.

... We had to run down the side of the rolling ship or run to jump overboard because the Japanese were machine-gunning all of the men. . . . Before I could get away from the ship, someone jumped on my left shoulder tearing the ligaments loose in my back and breaking my collarbone. Due to all the excitement I did not know at the time that my collarbone was broken.

The fuel oil from the ship was very thick, like molasses, and it had come to the surface. It was rather messy trying to swim through. I am very thankful it had not caught fire yet . . . My own injuries were not serious, so I did not go to a doctor until the 4th day after.

Henry Alfred Sarwine, CFC USN

December 7, 1941 dawned rather cool for Hawaii, but, I thought, after breakfast I may as well clean up and go ashore to wander around. But, shortly before 8 o'clock, the volume of noise of aircraft in the area enticed me to look out the porthole to see what it was all about. There, to my surprise was a plane pulling up from a torpedo run, and the wings had red balls painted on the underside! "It's Japanese," I shouted, "We're being attacked!" My companion chiefs crowded around to see through that same porthole, jamming me tighter into the bulkhead. "That plane dropped something," I said. But it was too late. That torpedo hit and my face was thoroughly splashed with fuel oil. Turning around I found I had been deserted. All the curious viewers were long gone, heading for higher ground.

I rushed to topside and from the Air-Castle I saw the flag being raised. "Good," I said. "We're showing our colors." Then a plane passed over spraying the deck with machine-gun bullets. It looked just like scenes in the movies, as wooden splinters splashed from the teakwood deck.

By then the ship had a very bad list to port. "Abandon Ship!" was the word announced.

... Someone had gained access into a magazine on Ford Island, and I was supplied with a 45 automatic and two boxes of ammunition. "Let the Japs come, I'll get a few at least!"

But everything was calm, where'd they all go?

The world was trigger-happy that night, bullets flying all over for no reason. I didn't get to fire a single shot.

As I remember the USS *Utah*
By David P. (D.P.) Smith Em3c

... I heard aircraft noise and went to a near-by open porthole. I saw an aircraft flying just off the water coming toward where I was standing. My thoughts, at that moment, were what are they doing on Sunday morning and in port. I thought it must be just another exercise. Then I saw a torpedo drop and a quick pull up of the aircraft. I saw a large red circle painted on the bottom of each wing as the plane climbed to miss our mast. I saw the wake of the torpedo as it came toward me and I felt the shake of my ship as it struck and exploded. . . . I could see the Battle Ships on the other side of Ford Island taking hits, blowing up, and burning. . . . I looked over the side and decided that it would be better to swim under water to Ford Island due to strafing and oil that was spilling from our rupture fuel tanks. At this time I saw the mooring lines part due to the weight of the seawater that was entering the hull. I noticed a shipmate that was using the lines to cross over to the mooring pilings. He was flung into the air as the lines broke. . . .

I remember many of the things that my shipmate Red Upton has expressed in his writings. I was in the same group that he was. We were trying to stay alive and help those that needed help. Most of us feared that ground forces would start coming ashore during the night. There was a lot of random shooting going until daylight on 8 December 1941.

David P. Smith

Eyewitness Account
Leonide B. (Lee) Soucy, PhM2/c

I happened to be looking out of a porthole in Sick Bay when I saw a large number of airplanes approaching a mile or two south of us. As I focused on a forward group of 5 to 6 planes, at least three of them started diving and dropped bombs. . . .

I watched large balls of flame and a black cloud of smoke rising, my first thought was: "Somebody goofed big this time. They loaded live bombs on those planes by mistake."

... everyone was wondering aloud "What kind of a drill is this?" . . . I took a few strokes toward the launch and saw the water a few feet ahead of me and toward the launch being peppered with machine gun bullets. As the strafers banked I saw the big red Japanese insignia on the wings. Until then I had not known who was attacking us. Almost 60 years after the fact I still find it difficult to believe that they could sneak up on us from so far away. . . . Before we could discuss what to do two young officers in a jeep hailed us. "Corpsmen come with us on the double!" Sumner and I were both wearing our Red Cross

brassards . . .

Upon arrival we saw oil covered men with a variety of bullet wounds, shrapnel injuries and severe burns — many of who were vomiting oil-streaked mucus and dirty seawater.

The next day all pharmacist's mates from the *Utah* were transferred to the Pearl Harbor Naval Hospital. Doctors, nurses and corpsmen did a magnificent job, under very trying conditions.

And would you believe "girls of the night" from River Street and Hotel Street showed up at the Naval Hospital to help tend the wounded. I know of at least one who donated blood for transfusion. Today prostitutes would not be acceptable as blood donors, but after the attack they were anxious to help men they had served in other ways.

Lee Soucy, USS *Utah* survivor

Charles Louis Thys 356 45 42 S2/c USN

... When in situations such as this, humorous events often occur. After more than fifty years, I no longer recall who the duty compartment cleaner was that fateful Sunday morning. He stood there with his wet swab and bucket of water shouting, "Get off my wet deck." The thought of clearing the compartment appealed to us. He jumped up in the air and fell back into the water. At this time, he observed the inrush of water. He tossed his swab and bucket into the air as he headed for the ladder.

... Nearby, a winded and tired sailor dropped into the water. I went to his aid and held him up. He was wearing those old high-topped shoes issued in boot camps. As fast as they could be removed, into the water they went. After a brief rest, the trip to the beach started again. . . .

Just the thought of the Japanese strafers seemed to provide renewed energy and the shoreline was reached in record time . . .

Peter Tomich, Chief Watertender, USN

This is not an eyewitness report. However, no report of the day's events would be complete without paying tribute to the one individual who exhibited outstanding valor and courage, and whose actions saved the lives of his Shipmates.

For this action Peter Tomich, Chief Watertender, US Navy, would posthumously receive the Medal of Honor. (Tomich earned the Medal of Honor by sacrificing his own life to keep the boilers from exploding and dooming the hundreds of men trying to escape from the *Utah*. "Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life." "This is how a man lives. This is how a man dies." Robert Heinlein. It gives me great pleasure to be able to say that the Navy named a destroyer escort after him, DE-242. The *Tomich* served proudly until 1946 and sadly was scrapped in 1974. Unfortunately Tomich's next of kin were not found until 2001, when

they received his Medal of Honor in a ceremony sixty years overdue. The Navy did try to find his next of kin but Tomich was born in Croatia. When he came to the United States he was already a grown man of twenty. LTM)

Warren ("Red") Upton
Radioman 3/c "C" Division

MY EXPERIENCES AT PEARL HARBOR DECEMBER 7, 1941

Upon reaching the main deck, it sounded as though "hell had broken loose." Additional explosions shook the ship and what seemed to be a third large explosion occurred.

The ship immediately took a sharper list to port and started to settle. Someone shouted: "so that's their answer, the dirty yellow b____s," no doubt referring to the negotiations going on in Washington, D. C. By this time almost everyone was aware of what was happening; we were being attacked by Jap planes. By now most of the ships in the harbor had opened fire on the attacking aircraft.

Eyewitness Report of
John "Jack" Vaessen, F2/c USN

[Editorial Note. John AKA "Jack" Vaessen was trapped inside the USS *Utah* when she capsized. Shortly after 1100 a rescue crew from the USS *Raleigh* was sent to assist Warrant Officer Stanley Szmanski and Chief Terry MacSelwiney of the *Utah* (Ref: USS *Raleigh* deck log dated Sunday, 7 December 1941). This crew literally cut Vaessen from the air pocket in the bottom of the ship. Due to Jack's unique story he has been swamped by reporters, historians and others in quest of his story over the years. He was kind enough to forward a brief synopsis of the days events for publication on this Web Site, with the reminder that his complete story may be found as follows: Oral History Department, University of North Texas, at Denton, Texas. (Interview #587)]

[The] Navy custom was to relieve the watch 1/4 hour before the watch change. Joe Barta was on duty and said that between readings he put new batteries in emergency kits and checked supplies. In the meantime, Roy Sonnleitner came down and dogged down the hatch stairs to be painted. Roy said to cross the Amplydne room to go up the other side of the ship

Joe Barta then said activate cranes after 0800 as there was lumber on deck to be loaded for Navy Yard. He wanted to go topside to get a Sunday paper. He became trapped in the battle grating and was unable to make it. The blisters [on the side of the ship] were wide open, having just been painted and when the first torpedo hit they filled fast. Then batteries began exploding. I was hit with

deck plates, fire extinguishers, etc.

I pulled fans and all the power and headed to the hatch to the dynamo room as the ship was turning over. In the dynamo room, the wrench for the hatch to the bilges was where it was supposed to be open up. Asbestos flew like a snow storm as I crawled up to a bottom through the bilge, tapping for a hollow sound. In the meantime I could hear the superstructure break and water would rush closer.

While I was tapping with the wrench I got an answer then silence, then rat-a-tat-tat. I thought that was a pneumatic tool. It was strafing and the rescue crew ducked behind the bilge keel.

After I was out and joined the salvage crew LTCDR S. S. Isquith got a motor launch to the 14th Naval District Headquarters to report. He told the Commandant of the rescue and that on the [USS] *Oklahoma* there must have been the same type of condition. The Admiral said he had been preoccupied and had an aide call "Boys Town" where many yard workers lived to explain the very dangers job. People familiar with steel cutting were a high priority. Another Aide got blue prints and supplies and as a result 28 to 32 men were rescued. I never met any of those rescued from the *Oklahoma*. LTCDR Isquith presented the Admiral a list of names for medals.

Talking to me, the Admiral said "You and the young fellow on the switchboard only, plus Tomich who kept the steam up." [This would be Chief Watertender Peter Tomich who received the Medal of Honor posthumously.]

I still have the flashlight and the wrench which I used to find my way to the ships hull; they are kept in good working order. Stanley Semanski, Warrant Machinist and Terry MacSelwiney, both *Utah* men, heard my tapping first. They went to the USS *Tangier* to obtain cutting equipment but were turned down, by probably a new OD, because the equipment was Title 'B' equipment.

They decided to try to obtain rescue equipment from the USS *Raleigh*, although the *Raleigh* was in bad condition herself. The Warrant Carpenter on the *Raleigh*, Ray Tellin said "yes, and I will send a crew with you to help." The following is a list of those in the rescue party from the USS *Raleigh*:

William Hendrickson, a Chief Petty Officer
William D. Hill of Knoxville, TN
Robert Hill of Bridgeport, AL
Steve White of Malad, Idaho. Being from Idaho, Steve had experienced pulling sugar beets out of the ground. Thus he was the one who pounded

out the hull plate as slag from the cutting process was holding it in.

Al Knaovich of Phoenix, AZ
Elvin Groseclose of Speedway, IN
Ray Kulpit of Chicago, whom I did not meet afterward.
Littley from Big Springs, TX was killed later in the war.

John Vaessen
F2/c USS *Utah*
December 7, 1941

(Additional information: John Vaessen was awarded the Navy Cross. William D. Hill was awarded a Commendatory Mast. A letter written in 1967 by Retired Navy Admiral S. S. Isquith (Senior Officer on board *Utah* on 12-07-1941), indicates that the rescue of 32 men from the USS *Oklahoma* on December 7th, may have been inspired by the rescue of our own Jack Vaessen)

ALBERT T. D. WAGNER
Chief Yeoman, USN

... As it was Sunday, many of the Chiefs were still in their bunks. Suddenly, the air was rent by a terrific explosion. Rushing to the porthole I saw a huge column of black smoke bellowing high into the heavens. At the same time that I saw the smoke, I saw three Japanese war planes nearing the edge of the harbor from over the horizon coming straight at the USS *Utah*.

... It made as beautiful a war picture as I ever saw. Shells and bombs bursting everywhere with puffs of smoke and flame filling the atmosphere. The Japanese planes were flying high above our fire and zooming down at their targets.

We lost 57 men from the UTAH, and a little over 2400 men over the island.

Albert T. D. Wagner, Chief Yeoman, USN

Eyewitness Report of Henry West

This is what I saw December Seventh, the day of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor.

... Then someone said the Japanese were attacking and we thought he was crazy, but they sounded the "bombing stations" alarm, which was two decks below. We had just gotten down there and they sounded abandon ship. When we started topside, the ship already had a twenty degree port list and there on the ladder up was a Chief Petty Officer frozen with fear and you could not break his hands loose from the handrail. Another Chief behind him gave him one hell of a kick in the rear and he went up like a shot.

When I reached topside I could see the hell that had broken loose. I ran toward the fantail and my division Boatswain Mate stopped me and told me

to get my boat and I told him to go to h—, if he wanted it he could get it himself and I kept going, as the bow of my boat was going under water at that point.

I went around number five turret and started for the side of the ship and I was lucky that I had looked forward because a Jap plane was machine gunning the deck and I jumped back under number five turret which saved my life. Then I ran to the handrail, grabbed it and jumped down to the blister [on the starboard side of the ship] and into the water. I was going swimming that day anyway, but this was to soon.

I swam to Ford Island; when I got there I turned around and looked back at the ship. It had rolled ninety degrees over and standing on the keys that are used to tie the ship to forward and forward and aft. They are about twenty feet square and a few feet out of the water, about fifty some men were standing on them. The Japs were shooting at them and killing a lot of them. . .

/s/ Henry West

(This is the last of the survivor reports from the Utah website. A list of those who did not survive follows. LTM)

Arbuckle, William D.
 Gift, Kenneth Mace
 Norman, Orris Nate
 Barta, Joseph (N)
 Gregorie, Charles N.
 Odgaard, Edwin N.
 Bigham, Virgil C.
 Harveson, Herold A
 Parker, Elmer Anthony
 Bielka, Rudolph .
 Hill, Clifford Dale
 Perry, Forrest Hubert
 Black, John E.
 Houde, Emery Lyle
 Phillips, James W.
 Blackburn, John T.
 Jackson, David G.
 Ponder, Walter Howard
 Brown, Pallas, Franklin
 Jones, LeRoy Henry
 Reed, Frank Edward
 Brunner, William Frank
 Juedes, William Arthur
 Scott, Ralph Edward
 Burgarin, F.T.
 Kaelin, John Louis
 Shouse, Henson T.
 Chestnutt, George Jr.
 Kampmeyer, Erick T.
 Smith, George R.
 Clippard, Lloyd Dale
 Karabon, Joseph N.
 Smith, Robert Daniel
 Conner, Joseph Ucline
 Kent, William H.
 Sousley, Joseph Byron
 Crain, John Reeves

La Rue, George Willard
 Strinz, Gerald Victor
 Crossett, David Lloyd
 Little, John III
 Tomich, Peter (n)
 Davis, Billy Rex
 Lynch, Kenneth Lee
 Ulrich, Elmer Herbert
 Dennis, Leroy (N)
 Marshall, William E. Jr
 Villa, Michael W.
 Dieckhoff, Douglas R.
 Martinez, Rudolph M.
 Wetrich, Vernado
 Dosser, William Hugh
 Michael, Charles O.
 White, Glen Albert
 Eidsvig, Vernon J.
 Miller, Marvin E.
 Gandre, Melvyn Armour
 Norman, Donald C.

(“Freedom is never free.” Author Anonymous. Honorable mention to Jack Vaessen and all the others who offered up their lives to save others but fortunately were allowed to keep said lives. The names published above were listed on documents obtained from the National Archives of the United States. Today the *Utah* rests in an active military area. It is possible to visit her grave but permission is required. Some have gotten to see her memorial by asking retired military to sponsor their visit at other memorials in Hawaii. LTM)

For current information on visiting the *Utah* Memorial contact the Navy Public Relations Office as follows

Telephone (808) 473-2888
 Fax (808) 473 2876.”
 (11/27/2001)

A message for relatives/descendants of our shipmates listed above:

It is believed that the remains of some of those KIA aboard *Utah* are interred in graves marked “unknown” in the Cemetery of the Pacific aka “The Punchbowl” on the Island of Oahu near Honolulu. In an effort to identify the remains of those sailors, the Navy is offering a DNA kit to female relatives and descendants of these men.

For further information, please contact the Navy Missing Persons Office, 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055. Or Call toll free 800-732-9298. Posted March 22, 2004.

(I doubt very much that this will be useful to our readers but I’m including it in the off chance it might be helpful to someone. LTM)

“BLADORTHIN?”

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE HISTORY OF THE HOBBIT
PART ONE: MR. BAGGINS
 (Houghton Mifflin; 2007;
 ISBN 978-0-618-96847-3; \$35.00)
PART TWO: RETURN TO BAG END
 (Houghton Mifflin; 2007;
 ISBN 978-0-618-96919-7; \$35.00)
 by John D. Raetliff

Those of us who had, at great personal expense and inconvenience, acquired all of Christopher Tolkien’s gargantuan *History of Middle-earth* [1983-1996] were aware that some names had changed between initial composition and publication. And other features: Viggo Mortensen would hardly have wanted to play, and Arwen Warrior Princess (Liv Tyler) [“Arda cried out for a hero . . .”] would not have looked serious being romanced by, a rather reserved hobbit with wooden shoes on his horribly burned feet and the footsy name of “Trotter”.

And indeed, earlier scholarship had indicated that at first, after the initial burst of composition following from “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit” some characters had shifted ground, so to speak, it is a trifle disconcerting to read the very first version of the Unexpected Party (or what happens when your guests invite their posse without telling you) and have to note that when “Gandalf” says something, it’s the chief of the dwarves talking, and the old guy with the staff is called “Bladorthin” (but was his name “Olórin” in the West that is forgotten?).

The book contains the texts of the various drafts of the work. What’s surprising is how little changed; there were no major plot differences between the first draft and the published version (as far as the first draft went) and the final completed draft is very close to the published one.

The most notorious change is discussed, all the same; the original version of the Riddle Game appears here [Pages 153-197; all but the first eleven pages being notes of various kinds]. For those who recall “Thief! Thief! We hates it for ever!” it will be a trifle disconcerting to see this amiable, honest, helpful Gollum who concedes fair and square and shows Baggins the way out. The riddles didn’t change much between composition and publication, either. To be fair, that was the fifties revision, to bring the text in line with *The Lord of the Rings*.

An unexpected inclusion is the text of the proposed revision from the early 1960’s [Pages 765-838]. Some of it is only augmenting the continuity; for example, the dwarves stay the night at an inn in Bree. Others are less helpful, in Raetliff’s opinion; for example, the changes to Thorin’s character make him seem more greedy to begin with. If he only became corrupted by having all that gold to hand, that makes him more complex, and his final change of heart more powerful.

The book is copiously annotated, with references to the state of a manuscript, the background of a phrase, and the like. In addition, Raetliff has included tangential speculations of various kinds. For example, after his demise at Gondolin, why did Glorfindel come to Middle-earth again? He was looking after Elrond’s family [Pages 433-434]. Other matters discussed include whether the Arkenstone might be a Silmaril (it isn’t) [Pages 603-609], whether the Sackville-Bagginses are named after the British aristocratic family (as the name was originally “Allibone Baggins”, probably not) [Pages 699-700], why Gandalf the

Wizard left his horse Rohald in Rivendell (it seemed cruel to let him be eaten) [Page 803], where this list of nineteenth-century country horrors that included “hobbits” came from and did JRRT read it (he probably didn’t) [Pages 841-854], and so on.

Some textual measures come to hand. For example, Raetliff discusses the various problems having to do with the moon-runes on the map of Erebor, both text and nature.

He sets the book in its context, discussing (for example) dragons in other works. This entails arguing that Anne McCaffrey’s works are really romance novels with a gloss of F&SF [Pages 541-542]. (One can’t read everything; Barbara Hambly’s *Knight of the Demon Queen* (2000) and *Dragonstar* (2002), the sequels to her *Dragonsbane* (1985) and *Dragonshadow* (1997), with their flocks of magically-enslaved wizards riding magically-compelled dragons, are examples of her ability to write a bad sequel to a good story.)

Other background items include the little story “The Hobyahs”, about the evil nasties that tried to eat the family, but were regularly driven off by the loyal dog — until the father got tired of mutilating the poor beast for barking in the night and cut its throat, whereupon he learned the fate of those who show such gratitude [Pages 855-865]. This probably isn’t relevant, but it is an element that has to be tracked down. (Mother’s friend Mrs. Williams had a set of volumes of stories for children that had that story, so I read it about the time I first read *The Hobbit*.)

This work isn’t for everyone. It’s the sort of academic work that is generally found in large university libraries, unchecked out for twenty or thirty years. Yet this is a regular publication. Seventy years on, people are still noting that “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.”; and now we can see the original excavations and filled-in adits and shafts that made up that hole.

For more on the followup, respected Tolkien scholars Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull (who, a few years ago, proved their devotion by marrying each other, much to the gain of Tolkien collectors who bought their duplicates) have compiled *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader’s Companion* (Houghton Mifflin; 2005; ISBN 978-0-618-64267-0; \$30.00) which explains much that is mysterious, odd, referential (i.e. Saruman as the most modern of people), or even continuity-breaking.

. . . Gríma gazed up at the enormous Face. Forty years it had taken him to learn what kind of smile was hidden beneath the dark fane. O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! Two ale-scented tears trickled down the sides of his nose. But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Sauron.

— Not by Eric Arthur Blair or Tollers

POWER OF THE PRESS

Review by Joseph T Major of
MAKING MONEY
by Terry Pratchett
(Harper Collins; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-06-116164-3; \$25.95)
A Discworld™ Book

After a brief and cryptic introduction, we begin our tale with an intruder breaking into the Ankh-Morpork General Post Office. This is a clever, cunning thief who climbs up drainpipes and reacts quickly when detected. Someone tell the Postmaster!

Er . . . this is the Postmaster, Moist von Lipwig, *Going Postal*, no that was the previous book (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #1), but he is looking for new worlds to conquer now that he has the Ankh-Morpork Mail and even the clack up and running as valuable economic assets. So he’s breaking into the institution of which he is the manager.

As it happens, a new world is to hand. The Royal Bank of Ankh-Morpork is in something of a desuetude; its majority stockholder is an elderly and peculiar widow with a little dog. The Patrician, Lord Havelock Vetinari, “suggests” that Moist visit her for a friendly little chat. (You will recall that his last “suggestion” in that line to Moist had been that Moist either take the position of postmaster, or a long drop down a very deep shaft; since *Going Postal* has more than two chapters, it is easy to guess whether he took the red pill or the blue one . . .)

The dog takes to Moist, and the morning after he discovers he is now the inheritor of the dog, its owner having made a quick will and passed away very suddenly. Only . . . while she left the dog to Moist, she left her stock in the bank to the dog, which with the one share it already owned, makes the dog majority stockholder in the bank!

And with this inauspicious beginning, we are launched into an exploration of the nature of banking, or why money isn’t wealth, it’s a measure of wealth, and so the measure ought to be convenient. This explains why Moist is working on the printing of dollar bills. (This has more about Ankh-Morporkian currency; just to make confusion more confounded, the \$AM is divided into shillings and pence.)

However, the dear deceased left other inlaws, most of whom have their own ideas about how to run the business. Some of this involves caninicide, and the owner too.

One would expect that Moist would have protection, from his affianced Adora Belle Dearhart, the protector of the golems. If The Golems Do Not Get Them, her constant smoking of cigarettes would. She goes about in a tobacco haze; one can imagine how *horrified* the standard Person Brought from Mundania to Save Fantasyland in the processed fantasy product novel would be upon encountering her. Assuming he didn’t curl up and die from the secondhand smoke.

But she’s out of town at the moment, digging up something. What? Anyway, it didn’t work. (This is possible because of the good feeling engendered by the peaceful resolution of *Thud!*

(2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #6); in other words, the events of the last novel have mattered, unlike your usual novel in a series these days.) Which has to do with our brief and cryptic introduction.

Back in Ankh-Morpork, the situation goes from bad to worse, as usual. Moist is used to people who are trying to kill him, and financial pressures, but it’s the scale that gets to him. Then it slowly comes out that one of those heirs isn’t thinking on merely the scale of the bank. And the bank has its own hidden problems, as well. Now if only Adora Belle would turn up with that surprising help . . .

Pratchett began, all those years ago, with a satire on the fantasy field. As another writer observed, the tale grew in the making, and from being an in-joke, his writings turned into observations on the real world (whatever that is), commentaries on the very real failings and foibles of humanity.

Indeed, the foibles are very much a part of the characterizations here. Pratchett has gone beyond the failings of such people as Harrison and Westlake, who present a world of eccentric **incompetents**; being different, being odd, does not prevent one from being able to do a task well, no matter how unusually.

This is not quite the novel of redemption that *Going Postal* was. It does look into how a city, a society, a world works — and that it does so with a laugh, a witty observation on the silly things that make the world work, the silly way the world does work, makes it all the more appropriate and enjoyable. If PTerry has more money than the Royal Bank of Ankh-Morpork, it’s work of this sort that has earned him it.

Not to mention the lawyers: “All thirty-one of the Lavish lawyers stood up and spoke at once, incurring a total cost to their clients of \$AM119.28p.” [*Making Money*, Page 352].

One small side note: “jikan no muda” is Japanese for “waste of time” [*Making Money*, Page 264].

LAWRENCE’S RIDE

Review by Joseph T Major of
EMPIRE OF IVORY

by Naomi Novik
(Del Rey; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-345-49687-4; \$7.99)
“Temeraire Book 4”

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café.

I would have wine of sunny Italy today, for my heart yet turns to that fair land. My memories of it are many and I have just now been a guest there, just as I am your kind guest, most gracious sir!

You must know, then, I was chosen by the Old Comrades of the Dragon Corps to represent us at the rededication of the ancient tomb of Luces Vorenes, the founder of the Roman Dragon Corps. They had restored the bas-relief commemorating his famed quest for Xéne, the princess of warriors . . .

— Not by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Naomi

Novik

“Wars are not won by evacuations,” and somewhat surprisingly, we pick up right where we left off at the end of *Black Powder War* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #4), with Téméraire and Captain Lawrence still flying the Prussians out of Danzig, all the way to Blighty as a matter of fact. He does get rather ired that there has been no escort on the last part of the flight. There was no escort available. Most of the Royal Dragon Corps is dreadfully ill or even dead; aside from some carefully quarantined fledglings and the feral dragons they found, Téméraire is the bulwark of Britain’s air defenses. The Few indeed!

Then, detailing this, he has a conversation with various people, including the Duke of Nelson, victor of Trafalgar, still wearing his dragonfire-melted medals as memorabilia of his victory. Also, the Reverend Josiah Erasmus, whose support of Abolitionism is very personal.

(Nelson didn’t wear medals at Trafalgar. He wore the “stars” of various orders, including two invented ones. Novik constantly refers to “medals” in an anachronistic fashion; the only medals awarded in the OTL equivalent were awarded by private organizations, so we’re talking about an unnoticed change. Also, Nelson *was* a duke; Duke of Brontë in the peerage of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which inspired an Irishman named Patrick Brunty to change his name and perforce that of his daughters and son. The current Duke of Brontë is Alexander Nelson Hood, Viscount Bridport, descendant of the Rev. William Nelson, the first Earl Nelson.)

Téméraire might be sick, and certainly there are others he’s been in contact with who are. This means a sea voyage to recuperate in South Africa, with the usual hostility between the surface warfare blokes and the Fleet Air Arm chaps. Not to mention not liking the Rev. Erasmus, who is along for the ride.

The Boers aren’t too fond of these new invaders, never mind the old ones, and evidently the prospect of trekking into the wilderness to establish a super-scientific arch-aristocratic, gender-equal autocracy never occurred to them.

Well, it turns out there is a snakish autocracy of sorts out there: while searching for the mushrooms needed to provide some sort of treatment for the dragons, Lawrence and several of his fellow aviators are captured by the Tswana. It turns out that the Monomapta Empire is now the Dragon Empire, and the draconic king is not too pleased with invaders. In fact, the Tswana retaliate, wiping out the Cape Colony. (Reverend Erasmus has already bought the farm.)

Lawrence and his surviving colleagues escape, to yet another problem, namely that his fellow pilot Captain Harcourt is, er, enciente. This does put her in a bit of a bind.

But they have the mushrooms and to spare, and manage to get back to Blighty, which is under assault by Boney’s seemingly inexhaustible dragon corps. However, there’s an answer to it, and it has to do with returning a prisoner. Which so horrifies Lawrence that he

does something that makes me at least lose sympathy for him, and he’ll be in real trouble when this is . . . [To Be Continued]

YOU DON’T KNOW DICK

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE ANDROID’S DREAM

by John Scalzi

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 978-0-7653-4828-9; \$6.99)

Somehow a book that starts with a prolonged fart joke seems less serious than it could be. And the plot then goes on to discuss a quest for a sheep. Didn’t Terry Pratchett write this?

This world has a need for Dr. Henry G. Kiku (the real lead protagonist of *The Star Beast* (1954; NHOL G.124)), the arch-diplomat so agile at resolving irresolvable confrontations with nonhumans, even when they have snakelike tentacles. Mostly because the fart joke, which relied on an alien sense of smell that had a side job as an additional form of communication, turned out to have gone a little too far.

To make amends, the State Department sends its agent Harry Creek out to find a sheep. A particular sheep. A task made more difficult because someone is poisoning all the sheep of that particular breed. However, the DNA of the sheep has not *completely* been extirpated . . .

And heretofore Robin Baker had merely been a pet store owner. Before she can even catch her breath she finds herself in the middle of a shootout in a shopping mall, then being shanghaied on a trip to the stars, after which matters start getting really interesting.

The behind-the-scenes maneuverings are also intriguing. As seems to be the usual case, the left hand is not quite sure what the left hand is doing, never mind what the right hand is up to, and when you consider the presence of additional manipulative organs on other sentient species, the consideration enters new realms of incoherence and incomprehensibility. Robin is, it seems, a pawn in the complex political dynamics of clans striving to complete or derail a governmental succession, and Harry has the small problem of staying alive himself, never mind keeping her alive. Not to mention his own past, which comes back to haunt him.

Indeed, there is a great depth of detail here, including complex interstellar politics, religious beliefs, species nature, intelligent systems, and more. Remarkably, Stross brings all this together at the end with a brilliant climax that connects all the disparate threads of plot, drawing from the natures of his different parts to connect them and make his ending not only satisfying but complete. (It may be a bit too presentist, I fear.)

Hugowise, Scalzi may have stepped on himself, as this got 15 nominations while *The Ghost Brigades* got 23. Thirty-eight nominations would have put a book on the ballot (beating out *Eifelheim*, with 35, but that’s life). It’s the price of being so broadly capable, I suppose.

I have a problem with one or two matters here:

Robin Baker was adopted at the age of four days by Ron and Alma Baker, a nice couple from Woodbridge, Virginia, who had opted not have [*sic*] children on their own after a geneticist read their charts and found nightmare after nightmare of recessive genetics in their makeup. This may have had something to do with Ron and Alma Baker hailing from the same small town in downstate Virginia where the same four families had been interbreeding almost exclusively for centuries, therefore reinforcing several undesirable genetic traits. Ron and Alma, while only nominally related on paper, had a genetic consanguinity somewhere between half-siblings and first cousins. Their geneticist declared this a neat trick and strenuously advised them against making any kids the old-fashioned way.

— *The Android’s Dream*, Page 125

What’s wrong with that family setup? Lisa and I think it’s perfectly normal.

INVESTIGATIO LOCI DELICTI: BRITANIA

Review by Joseph T Major of
MEDICUS:

A Novel of the Roman Empire

by Ruth Downie

(Bloomsbury; 2006;

ISBN 978-1-59691-231-1; \$23.95)

As you will recall from Vicki León’s *Working IX to V* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #4), in many fields, Roman technology was remarkably close to that enjoyed by more recent workers. Builders had equipment similar to that used by their Victorian — if not modern — colleagues, for example. That this could not have been done in the intervening centuries poses a serious challenge to the currently popular thesis that there were no real dark ages.

Medical services were another such field of activity, as those who saw Titus Pullo’s brain surgery (*Rome*, Season I, Episode ii; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. IV # v) will recall. Dr. John H. Watson, Army Medical Detachment, had a few medicines not available to his predecessor, the protagonist of this book Gaius Petreius Ruso, but much of the equipment and many of the drugs would have been the same. However, while Dr. Watson had a Great Detective to do the crime investigating for him, *medicus* Petreius Ruso has to do his own.

And so this first novel in what looks to be an intriguing series begins. Petreius Ruso is here in the backwater of the empire because his personal life has come apart. His wife divorced him, his father died leaving an estate built on an intricate and inexplicable network of debts, and his book is going nowhere. So he joined the people who joined the legions. Here he is, in spite of being well-educated stuck here in Deva Victrix (the town named for the Goddess of Victory) patching up soldiers of *legio XX Valeria Victrix*, and looking over dead women fished out of the river.

The live ones are about as bad, as when he buys a sick slave woman with a broken arm for L denarii, figuring he can patch her up and sell her for MMMM denarii, a nice return on investment. She turns out to have her own plans, and while some of them involve going on to the next world, others don't.

While his slave Tilla (or so they call her, her real name has somewhat more to that) plots, Petreius Ruso goes in and out of the headquarters, the local taverna, and his own decaying home, trying to figure out what the connection is and why the women are disappearing. There turns out to be a connection linking all of them.

Downie does well portraying the "grit" of life then. The book is set in AUC DCCCLXX (AD 117). Petreius Ruso is be-lemured (there's a grand total of one reference to Christianity in the book, so "bedeviled" doesn't fit) by his past life, even the time he saved someone from an earthquake in Antioch, and the burden forms a substantial plot element.

The book is nevertheless somewhat slow, but then it is a first novel and is building the setup for later works. A sequel, *Terra Incognita*, will be released next year.

(Those interested in that time and place should search for Patricia Finney's *A Shadow of Gulls* (1977) and *The Crow Goddess* (1978), a pair of novels that veer from comedy of incomprehension to horrifying reminder of the grimness of paganism, and manage to encompass both Cúchulainn and Hadrian. *A Shadow of Gulls* was her first book!)

INFAMY

Review by Joseph T Major of
**UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT:
Political Correctness and the Shameful
Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Case**
by Stuart Taylor, Jr. and KC Johnson
(Thomas Dunne Books; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-312-36912-5; \$26.95)

How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy. . . A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.

Many of those who featured in this case — perhaps fourscore and twice four, perhaps — may have imagined that by their efforts they would bring into being a "hopeful society where the poor share the table of the rich as never before in history, where persons of all colors, of all faiths, are siblings as never before in history". And you know what, I'll bet if you asked they would all resolutely denounce McCarthyism.

Sports at universities are a constant source of scandal. In *Horse Feathers* (1932), Huxley College had a constant turnover of Presidents due to a long period of inability to field a

winning football team against its old rival, Darwin College (someone among the writing team of Kalmar, Ruby, and Pearlman was having fun). The new president Quincy A. Wagstaff sent two rather disreputable fellows out to find players and much trouble ensued.

Lacrosse, for example. In spite of its origin as a "Native American" sport, it is seen as a refuge for the oppressor class, but not particularly a Crucial University-Making Sport. President Richard Brodhead of Duke would not send Pinky and Baravelli out to a disreputable, rowdy bar to recruit lacrosse players. Sometimes they play a little rowdy themselves. The Duke Lacrosse team had done well and figured they deserved a blowout, complete with exotic dancers.

Speaking of dubious women, the McMartin Preschool case began with one. Judy Johnson tried to enroll her child there, was turned down, and left him there anyhow; they noted his neglected state, took him in and cleaned him up, returning him to his mother. No good deed goes unpunished. While Johnson dwindled into the depths of schizophrenia, the prosecutors took off from her allegations and made sure there was plenty of evidence.

Crystal Mangum had the sort of life where being a stripper was a bastion of stability, commitment, and decency. And she didn't even have the pretext of having come from a family that was broken, poor, crime-ridden, or any combination thereof. She was an alcoholic, a drug-abuser, and seems to have had some psychological problems. Being hired to dance at the lacrosse team party on March 13, 2006 was an odd choice.

As a performer, she wasn't quite as advertised; she was intoxicated and acted somewhat more lewdly than what they were prepared for, so she left early, while some of the team members had left even before that. And, thanks to the wonders of modern technology and science, that has been firmly established.

Because, you see, Crystal went to a hospital from the performance and said she had been raped. They went through the proper procedure, which involved not only medical samplings but also a call to the police. This was where the controversy began.

Every Judy Johnson must have a Lael Rubin. And so it was here, thanks to the resolute Michael Byron Nifong, acting District Attorney for Durham County. His actions in this case propelled him to a level with Lael Rubin (McMartin), Sara McArdle (Wee Care), or Scott Harshbarger (Fells Acres), if not his redoubtable sometime colleague in Miami. Nifong faced a serious election campaign, due in part to his having vowed not to run for a full term once appointed to fill the position, his predecessor having become a judge. He sought support once he changed his mind — and guess what, Crystal was an African-American, a person of color, a representative of an Oppressed Group. While the honky toubob whitey lacrosse players were of the Oppressor Race. Just the thing needed to win the black vote. Which when he won the election with their help would give him enough service time to max out his pension.

The legal contortions and vexations that Nifong demonstrated were such distortions of justice that they even outraged other lawyers (like the cavalry subaltern who was so stupid that the others noticed). Some of his tactics came across as bad prodding by an overpromoted Scout troop leader.

Not only did he have no evidence, but he refused to meet with the defense lawyers presenting exculpatory evidence. He permitted and even encouraged invalid forms of investigation (misleading photo layouts, for example). He made a complete and total reversal about the effectiveness of DNA evidence once the evidence turned out to be contrary to his indictment.

Of course he had enablers. The media — the press and the television networks — found him a hero of oppressed groups. He was reviewed glowingly across the country; editorialists followed and even surpassed his strictures on the accused and their associates.

But those were nothing compared to the efforts of the Duke University faculty. The activists on campus made it bad enough with inflammatory posters, but eighty-eight Duke University professors signed an advertisement denouncing racism, sexism, and the actions of the lacrosse team in daring to not admit guilt even though the district attorney had said they were. The authors quote several public statements (many taken off MySpace pages) by these intellectual avant-gardists which demonstrate that it's impossible to parody that sort of thought — no, postmodern brain-sludge.

Fortunately the accused students had lawyers. The lawyers had several burdens; the obloquy of defending Public Enemies, the problems of payment (the three accused players were from upwardly-mobile, not rich, families), and of course the great problem that Lemuel Gulliver noted: ". . . my lawyer, being practiced almost from his cradle in defending falsehood, is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, which as an office unnatural, he always attempts with great awkwardness if not with ill-will." Some accused Grand Child Molesters have had a hard time in prison because, thinking they're not guilty, they have refused to admit their guilt. Evidently the system isn't set up to encompass wrongful conviction in that sort of case. (But only that sort of case.)

For all that he had the power of the press, the activists, and the law behind him, Nifong began floundering. His principal witness kept on changing her story, while *all* the forensic evidence was against him. He persevered nonetheless, with his case gradually eroding.

Things fall apart, the center cannot hold, and gradually the case did come apart. Indeed, it came apart quite thoroughly, with Nifong finally removing himself, the replacement dismissing charges, and then worse. Nifong has been dismissed, disbarred, and even sentenced to a symbolic one day in jail; he has indeed become "deserving of the maledictions of all honest men." Stone dead hath no fellow, no one now defends what Nifong did or what they said in defense of him and his acts. However, saying "I

was wrong” is too transgressive and not in keeping with the latest journalistic ethics.

There were some noteworthy points of light. The Duke women’s lacrosse team proudly and aggressively supported their colleagues. The Duke student newspaper, and indeed the student body in general, took issue with the postmodern sensibilities and old-time injustice of their teachers. The accused players had family and friends giving strong support.

Yet, still, the old cry still has relevance: “Where do I go to get my reputation back?”

Edward Humes *Mean Justice: A Town’s Terror, a Prosecutor’s Power, a Betrayal of Innocence* (1999) describes the expedited legal processing of one man in California. Whether or not he was actually guilty, it seems clear that his case was egregiously mishandled. And this is not an isolated occurrence, not in Bakersfield, much less the entire country. Yet other cases show as devastating a bias on the side of the defendant with sufficient resources, e.g. the wall of sound that Phil Spector’s defense team used to obscure the events of Lana Clarkson’s abrupt demise. The justice system is badly broken, and there seems to be no way to fix it.

PRETTY WOMAN

Review by Joseph T Major of

NEVER ENOUGH

by Joe McGinniss

(Simon & Schuster; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-7432-9656-6; \$25.00)

In the original version of the screenplay of *Pretty Woman* (1990), Vivian (Julia Roberts) was supposed to go back to walking the streets after doing her part. However, Richard Gere, who plays the financier Edward Lewis, wanted the story changed to a more romantic ending.

I suspect, however, it was that he wanted to have his character reward the character who gave him a life-changing insight. Vivian, you will recall, asks Edward what he does for a living **and he can’t tell her!** Not unwilling, but unable; he cannot describe it to her, he cannot define it in his own mind. Which realization of his self-emptiness leads him to make a real change, to buy the shipyard and get it working again (lots of luck), and it would be wrong for him to desert the woman who made him realize his lack of personal definition.

Robert Kissell did something like that; he was a distressed-debt specialist, he found companies that could be rehabilitated, engineered takeovers, and when they returned to functionality, was overwhelmingly rewarded. He might have been better off picking up a \$200 streetwalker than staying with his wife.

The controversial author of *Fatal Vision* (1983) [one wonders what would have happened if Janet Malcolm had decided to look into Allan Weinstein] turns his focus to a less notorious case, one where the background overwhelmed the incidents, and then linked up with an eerie coincidence.

The description of the expat lifestyle of Hong Kong is enough to wonder if it would breed monsters. There, “Greed is Good” never

died, and Nancy Kissell could shop till she dropped with the best of them. Their new home, Parkview, was an enclosed community that contained shops enough that a resident need never walk the streets. *Blade Runner* has indeed come to pass, **Orwell That Ends Wells** is not just a cinematic trope. How affluent were they? Robert bought Nancy a two million dollar home in Vermont, gave her a million to furnish it; she overspent that and he complained, not because he couldn’t afford it but because he hadn’t been consulted.

By contrast, the bit where she fell for the studly handyman and conducted a long-distance romance with strings of cheap hotel room couplings sounds comfortingly familiar. (Except, of course, for when her husband controlled her cell phone, so she made collect calls to him to pour out her passion. Ten thousand dollars’ worth in one month.)

The actual murder turned out to be so lame that it hardly seems worthy of the name. Nancy coshed Robert on the head with a heavy statuette she had, wrapped his body in a rug, and had it carried down to the storage room. Somehow all that got *noticed*.

She pleaded self-defence; given the coverup effort, insanity wasn’t even an option. The other didn’t work either.

In a contrast, McGinniss covers the story of Robert’s brother Andrew, who had been less honest than his brother. In fact, just before he was about to go to prison as the result of the collapse of his long string of frauds (he’d looted the accounts of a condo he managed), he was murdered. Makes honesty seem futile.

CAT PAINS

by Joe

It began when we noticed that Red Wull had a sore spot on his little nose. So we hurried down to the vet for his and Sarang’s shots, and to get the place looked at. Sarang got the shots but Red Wull had to wait, because of that place on his nose.

Two weeks later, the sore had healed up, but he was still losing weight, and after blood tests and an X-Ray, the vets concluded that they didn’t know either and bring him back in two weeks for further examination.

So, a week later, on Sunday morning, as I was bringing up the laundry to be sorted, I took a look at C’Mell lying on the bed. With an oval patch on her side, just in front of her left rear leg, all raw and pink. We hustled her off to the vet’s. They gave her a shot, some antibiotics, and put her in an Elizabethan Collar, which is a big funnel meant to keep her from licking the spot. So much for the library that day.

The weekend after that, we took our two patients back. The vets were pleased with Red Wull’s condition, he was gaining weight (though he still has a lot of arthritis), less so with C’Mell’s. She had to have an antihistamine as well as the antibiotic.

On the other hand, Red Wull could get his vaccinations and then with certificates in hand I paid the licence fees for the bunch. Including the late fees for the other three. And theirs will

come due again in January, so I had better keep the other certificates.

C’Mell is easier to give medicine to than the late and mourned Sulla. Being semi-immobilized with the Elizabethan Collar helps some. She sleeps on the bed with us now, and in the morning, after my shower, I detour by the refrigerator to get the medicine, come up, and shoot a cubic centimeter (remember, “One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments.”) of Clavamox into her mouth. She glares at me disgustedly. Evenings are more of the same, except when she gets her antihistamine. This requires a second go-round.

We went back before Thanksgiving. In spite of getting out at a painfully early time for a Saturday, we were still waiting for almost two hours. There was a large wolf-dog mix in the waiting room who had a wildly wagging tail; it knocked the newspaper out of my hands. Once we actually got in, they quickly checked her over and gave us more Clavamox (“A gramme is worth a damn.”) She will have to come back the first of December and we will bring Gemellus and Delenn and have them all get their annual shots.

The fun part of doing that was rounding up Delenn. That and getting up at 6:30 on Saturday morning. She was sleeping in the chair in my office, and ran to hide in the boxes. When she came out again, we unceremoniously dumped her into the cat carrier. C’Mell and Gemellus went easier, and we set out for the clinic with **Piteous Mews™** resounding in our ears.

Two hours later we were on our way home again. The raw spot on C’Mell’s flank was healing. And Delenn turned out to be so shy that she went back into the carrier on her own. They were otherwise fine, and all got their year’s shots.

Being at the vet’s is rather mixed fun. It does give me time for reading; I finished reading *The History of The Hobbit* there, for example. And one gets to see other pets; big dogs lying on the floor (or wagging their tails energetically), little ones in baby carriages, pretty white cats or cute torties, and even a container of ferrets, all pale and cuddling each other. But we have to get up early to get there early and it’s still long waits. Rather like going to a people doctor. And the expense — don’t let’s talk about that. Or sitting in the examination room reading the poster about arthritis in dogs and noting that I had all the symptoms except “Constantly licking a joint.”

Oh, the weight? Red Wull didn’t like the new cat food, so he didn’t eat . . .

TIME TO RECONSIDER?

By Johnny Carruthers

<http://purpleranger.livejournal.com/>

From the Constitution of the World Science Fiction Society, Article 3 — Hugo Awards:

Section 3.3.14: Additional Category. Not more than one special category may be created by the current Worldcon committee with nomination and voting to be the same as for the permanent

categories. The Worldcon Committee is not required to create any such category; such action by a Worldcon Committee should be under exceptional circumstances only; and the special category created by one Worldcon Committee shall not be binding on following Committees. Awards created under this paragraph shall be considered to be Hugo Awards.

Tricon, the 1966 Worldcon, used that section to create a one-time Hugo category — “Best All-Time Series.” The nominees for that award were:

The Foundation Trilogy by Isaac Asimov
 The “Barsoom” series by Edgar Rice Burroughs
 The “Future History” series by Robert A. Heinlein
 The *Lensman* series by Edward E. Smith, Ph.D.
The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

The winner was The Foundation Trilogy.

Now, I will readily agree that these five series should be ranked among the best that the genre has produced. But are they really THE best SF/Fantasy series of all time?

I have heard it suggested that the modern science fiction era began in 1926, with the publication of the first issue of *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted exclusively to science fiction (or “scientifiction,” to use the term Hugo Gernsback coined for the genre). Yes, I know that there is probably someone out there who would try to engage me in a Long And Pointless Argument on the matter, but I will choose to ignore that person. For one thing, while I can engage in Long And Pointless Arguments just as well as the next fan, I’m not interested in doing so on this subject. For another, choosing 1926 as The Beginning Of Science Fiction As We Know It, and the reasoning behind that choice, seems plausible enough and sensible enough to me.

In any case, my point — and as Ellen DeGeneres once said, I do have one — is this: There were 40 years between the beginning of modern SF and the selection of The Foundation Trilogy as the Best All-Time Series. Well, make that 39 years, because the 1966 Hugos were presented for works first published the previous year (something that still holds true today), so the Hugo voters of 1966 would have considered series published through the end of 1965. It has now been 41 years since Tricon was held. More time has elapsed between Tricon and the present than between the beginning of modern SF and Tricon.

Can we honestly say that there have been no series published in the intervening 41 years that are at the very least equal to those five series? Were the people involved in running Tricon being just a little presumptuous in thinking that these five series were superior to any other SF or Fantasy series that would ever be published? Haven’t there been series published since 1966

that should be at the very least considered the equal of these five series?

In case you haven’t figured it out by now, my answer to that question is this: Yes, there have been a number of series published in the past 41 years that are probably just as good as the five nominated back in 1967. Maybe even better. (Yes, I know that some members of SF fandom are right now accusing me of having committed blasphemy. Deal with it.) But if next year’s Worldcon, Denvention 3, announced that they would be administering their own Hugo for Best All-Time Series, I would be willing to bet on at least two things happening. First, there would be some members of fandom who would be outraged, utterly outraged, and be demanding to know (in the loudest and most strident voices possible) how Denvention would dare commit such an act of sacrilege. (And it would be likely that just as many fan, if not more, would be wondering what the big deal is, and why these people would be causing such a fuss.) Second, you would not see the same five nominees on the ballot in 2008 that you did in 1966.

I suspect that The Foundation Trilogy (which Asimov expanded upon in later years) and *The Lord of the Rings* might stand a good chance of making this hypothetical ballot. But what other series would make the cut? At the moment, I can think of several that might be considered.

Important Disclaimer here: Please keep in mind that some of these series I have read, others I have not. I mention some series because I know they have strong followings in fandom, and I know that some of their fans would support their nomination most enthusiastically. Other series I mention because I like them, and they are among the ones I would nominate if this hypothetical situation became real. In no particular order, they are:

The *Dune* series by Frank Herbert — I read the original *Dune* once, a long time ago. To be honest, I found the book drier than Arrakis itself, and I was never tempted to pick up any of the sequels. But there must have been a lot of readers who liked it; it was the first novel to win both the Hugo and Nebula Awards for Best novel. (As a matter of fact, the original *Dune* won the Best Novel Hugo at Tricon.)

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis — I strongly suspect that this series just missed the ballot back in 1966. I don’t know if the Hugo administrators of that era were required to publish a list of nominees that just failed to make the ballot, as they are today. If they were, I would be interested in learning what series just missed being in the top five.

The Time Quintet by Madeleine L’Engle — *A Wrinkle In Time* was the first SF novel I can remember reading, and based on some of the things I read after her recent death, she was the introduction to SF for a lot of other people as well. L’Engle may have been thought of as a “children’s writer,” but she never wrote down to them. I reread *Wrinkle* both when I was in high school and as an adult, and I found the book just as enthralling as I did when I first read it in fifth grade.

The Dragonriders of Pern by Anne

McCaffrey — Two of the books in this series received Best Novel nominations, and I was rather disappointed when both of them lost. While I haven’t read some of the more recent books, I have thoroughly enjoyed the Pern books that I have read. I should also mention that McCaffrey has written a number of other series, and one them could conceivably appear on this hypothetical ballot instead of the Pern books: The *Crystal Singer* series, *The Rowan* and its sequels, and the Acorna series (which McCaffrey co-wrote with Margaret Ball).

The *Amber* series by Roger Zelazny — I have read only a couple of Amber short stories. I remember those stories because *Realms of Fantasy* published them in 1995, just before Zelazny’s untimely death. The stories I did read made me want to read more, but as of yet, I haven’t done so. (You know the old saying — so many books, so little time? Applies here.)

The “Ender” series by Orson Scott Card — Card was the first person to win back-to-back Best Novel Hugos, and both of those winners were in this series. Personally, I have never read any of the “Ender” books (let’s face it, it is impossible to read everything in SF now), but I’m willing to bet that any series that has won two Best Novel Hugos is going to be given some serious consideration by the people who nominate and vote on the Hugos.

The “Miles Vorkosigan” series by Lois McMaster Bujold — Bujold is the only other writer to win back-to-back Best Novel Hugos. In fact, Bujold has won four Best Novel Hugos (which puts her in a tie with Robert Heinlein for the most Best Novel Hugos), and three of them were Vorkosigan novels. I’ve read parts of the series, and what I like most about it is the humor. It isn’t the absurd, over-the-top humor that you find in the “Hitchhiker’s Guide” books; it’s a more subtle humor that has you chuckling before you even realize that you are reading something funny.

The “Darkover” series by Marion Zimmer Bradley — again, I have not read any of these books (so many books, so little time), but I do know that this series has been more than a little popular. As a matter of fact, about all I know of the series is its name and that Bradley wrote it. That, and I know that the series has some very enthusiastic fans.

The “Honor Harrington” series by David Weber — This is probably my personal favorite of the series I have listed. E.E. “Doc” Smith may have been the one to create the subgenre we call “space opera” (he even invented the term, as I recall, or at the very least used it in one of his *Lensman* books), but Weber has taken the concept and refined it with not only the Honor Harrington books, but also with other books such as *March Upcountry* and its sequels (co-written with Eric Flint). I remember a blurb in one of the Honor Harrington books (taken from a *Starlog* review from the 1990s) suggested that Weber would enter the new century as the new master of military SF.

The “Tek” series by William Shatner — Okay, not really. I just threw this one in to see if you were really paying attention. Of course, I wouldn’t put it past some people to nominate

this series simply as a means of discrediting any hypothetical additional category along these lines.

The "Hitchhiker's Guide" series by Douglas Adams — Or as the series is now usually described, the five-book "Hitchhiker's Trilogy." Douglas Adams created a thing of exquisite beauty — a science fiction series that is rip-roaringly hilarious. And he did it in at least a half-dozen different media; all telling the same basic story, but each version having slightly different details. (And each one is unfailingly funny.) Some comedian once said that dying was easy; it was comedy that was hard. Adams has proven that, because I cannot think of another SF writer who has even come close to writing anything as funny as Arthur Dent's (mis)adventures.

The "Skolian Empire" series by Catherine Asaro — I like Catherine Asaro. First of all, I have had the chance to meet her at a few conventions, and she is a very nice person. Second, she is a damn good editor, which is how I originally became aware of her. And third, she is an amazing writer. She writes novels that garner rave reviews from not only the nuts-and-bolts hard SF lovers, but also romance readers. And she has won awards in both genres. That is probably much harder to do than it looks, and Dr. Asaro makes it all look so very easy. Oh, and she is also an honest-to-Goddard rocket scientist. (Did I mention that I think she is a really cool person?)

I am sure that you have noticed that I have listed considerably more than five series here. There is a reason or two for this. For one thing, I mentioned the series that most quickly came to mind when I started writing this entry. I realize that for every series I mentioned, there are an equal number of series that I haven't mentioned. For another, I didn't want to list only five series and then say that they would be the ones to make the final ballot if there were another Best All-Time Series Hugo, because quite frankly, my track record when it comes to predicting Hugo nominees and winners is woefully abysmal.

Besides, we all know that Shatner's "Tek" series would be the clear winner, don't we?

AFTERWORD

by Joe

Asimov opined (In *Joy Still Felt*, Pages 405-407) that the Best Series Hugo had been created to give Tolkien a Hugo (never mind that JRRT had won the International Fantasy Award in 1955) and claimed to have been surprised when he himself won.

I suspect, though, that it wouldn't be Goulart's "Tek" series that won. Twenty years ago, sure. But now it would be some animé. While the series that got nominated half to discredit the award and half by the followers of its publisher's er org would be Mission Earth..

There are so many potential nominees! For example, Jo Clayton's "Diadem"

series, with eleven books in the main story, and three spin-off series. It was a story set in the classical skiffy universe, full of strange peoples and half-understood things, places, and events.

SPLITTING HARES

Taral Wayne

Last night I was watching my new DVD of the first season of *The Power Puff Girls*. As is usually the case, the disk included a variety of special features. The ones that most fascinated me were animatics produced by Craig McCracken at Cal Tech, and shopped around while trying to sell the series. (Originally it was called *Whoop Ass Girls* or *Whoop Ass Stew*. Thank goodness even in the show biz there are rare lapses of bad taste.)

I'll spare you any extended speculations on the animatics themselves, or *The Power Puff Girls*, but here's my revelation where it concerns a project I worked on a few years ago.

Back then a friend of mine named Joe Strike had invented a concept called *The Incredible Hare*. In brief, an absent minded professor has his mind scrambled with a lab rabbit's in a freak accident, and gains the power to morph into a rabbit guy. Yeah, it does sound silly, but how is it sillier than gaining spider powers from a bite?

Joe paid me a modest stipend to draw a storyboard based on his script. I did what I could, but admittedly it was a bit rushed since it was a lengthy job and Joe could hardly afford professional rates. At any event, he was delighted with the boards and has used them in several different ways to help market his concept. Alas, much to Joe's puzzlement, he has had no success. It distresses me as well. Unless *The Incredible Hare* is sold someday, I'll never see another nickel on that job.

The question on my mind is why? Why has Joe's concept gathered dust all these years, instead of being programmed four times a day on the Cartoon Network or Teletoon? Sure, it's not *The Power Puff Girls* . . . or even *Atomic Betty*. But 90% of the animation I see on TV is easily as harebrained. Even without reading the storyboards for *The Incredible Hare*, can you imagine them any worse than an average episode of *Loonatics Unleashed*? For some time I've believed Joe had overlooked some more fundamental issue than quality, which has rarely been a criteria for television programming.

Watching the pilot made by Craig McCracken may have enlightened me. Unlike my storyboards, his reduced the origin of the *Power Puff Girls* to a few iconic images. (They in fact became the opening sequence for every one of the production cartoons.) Once the Girls' origin had been established, McCracken straight away began a typical, if very abbreviated, story. What occurred to me at that moment is that the storyboard I did for Joe dwelled at far too great a length on The Hare's origin. Unfortunately, it wasn't really very important how The Hare came into being. Far better than an exhaustively detail account of Harold Hopper's lab accident, would have been a very short story that illustrated the character of the Hare in an

exciting and graphic way. After all, *The Incredible Hare* wasn't *Lord of the Rings*. The point of the animatic was to sell the concept, not to chronicle the history of Middle Earth and the end of the Third Age.

Think of the ideal animatic as being a theme, in so many beats:

1/2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6...

1/ — Begins an almost throwaway explanation of the Hare's origin. "Here's Harold Hopper, bitten by a radioactive bunny, he gains incredible hopping powers!" Cut to the second beat.

2/ — Start of a typical day for your hero. "Today I have to precipitate a titration of guinea pig brain and chicken soup, dum de dum . . . Wait, what's that? The Rabbit Alarm?"

3/ — He turns into The Hare! and bounds off to save the day.

4/ — The hare arrives on the scene of the trouble, and discovers that "The Hip-Hopper" is teaching some naïve kid on the street to disrespect his family, his teachers, and his flag by talking funky jive. "Yo, man. That's whack! Booyah! Now ya got talk!" The kid repeats the ebonically mangled English of The Hip-Hopper, graphically illustrating the terrible extent of the emergency.

5/ — Hare tries to reason with the kid -- remind him of his loving family, the efforts of his teachers, and that the Patriot Act punishes little snots like him who don't show respect to the sacred flag. When that doesn't work, The Hare demands The Hip-Hopper back off.

6/ — Hip-Hopper laughs him off. He and The Hare square up to fight. It's an epic battle of words. Hip-Hopper speaks almost impenetrable rap-speak, but The Hare's impeccable rendering of JFK's "Ask Not" speech sends him packing back to the 'hood.

7/ — The kid drops his Ebonics like a dinner of refried beans and cabbage. Beaming with pride he speaks perfect English, now, as he expresses his gratitude to the Hare for saving him from a future of petty crime and diseased hoers.

8/ — Hare flies off, theme music swells to orgasmic levels, the day is saved.

9/ — Back at the lab, our hero discovers his tritirated guinea pig brains have congealed. "Fap!" Canned laughter.

The whole thing should take about thirty seconds. Forty-five at the outside.

There is of course the basic question — did the idea suck. I hate to say anything as blunt as that, though some people I know have. (Professional jealousy among animators is endemic.) I would prefer to say that Joe's love of cartoons must have been imprinted on him in the 1970's. The Incredible Hare aimed to educate and instill positive social values, rather like *School House Rock* or *Captain Planet*. Thoroughly 70's goals that were utterly out of step by the 90's. The trend then (and now) was

toward wacky humour or imitative anime, and the bottom line was whether or not a line of toys and card games could be marketed on the back of the series. Or was it the other way around? None of the suits cared.

What could be done about to revive *The Incredible Hare* now, I have no idea. Ideally, Joe would reach deep into his pockets for money and pay me to do the storyboard all over again, updated, punchier, and then work it into a well-orchestrated campaign of forcing the New Improved Hare on hapless studio heads. But I rather suspect that's way out of the question. Joe's pockets are shallow and contain mainly fluff. In all likelihood *The Hare* is fated to remain in the can.

But I have this fan-TAS-tic idea of my own about a loaner Batmobile... Seriously. Let's have a working lunch over it.

THE TELESCOPE: Its History, Technology and Future

by Geoff Andersen

(Princeton University Press; 2007;

ISBN-13: 978-0-691-12979-2;

ISBN-10: 0-691-12979-7; \$29.95)

Reviewed by Rodford Edmiston

A good general text on the basics of how telescopes work, the different types (with details of their relative strengths and weaknesses) and their history, as well as current plans for new ones.

While this book is a good one for beginners, it is also useful for those of intermediate interest in astronomy. As an example of how the author achieves this dual goal, he only provides a single equation in the body of the book, having been warned by the publisher that math is death for science popularizing books. However, Appendix A has much more math, as well as some basic explanations of units of measure.

Appendix B explains the basics of the medium of astronomy; that is, electromagnetic radiation. Appendix C provides guidelines to help beginners decide on which telescope to purchase.

Anderson obviously not only knows astronomy, but enjoys learning about it, and sharing what he knows. He also has had exposure to a number of advanced — even experimental — instruments, including some still classified. (One of the photos in the chapter on the use of telescopes in surveillance is from an Air Force project. This photo was taken with the smaller of two experimental, ground-based telescopes, since images from the larger one are classified. It shows the Orbiter *Columbia* just four days before its tragic loss. Details such as equipment pallets in the cargo bay are clearly visible. Whether the larger telescope could have given enough detail to prove the Orbiter was in danger is unknown, but it is likely this is one of the resources NASA engineers were trying to use when their managers sabotaged their work.)

I generally keep up on what's happening with astronomy, subscribing to several science magazines (including one titled *Astronomy*) as well as subscribing to an e-mail newsletter and

frequently visiting related online sites. However, some of the recent and planned developments described in this book are new to me.

I like this book, and recommend it. Anderson not only knows the topic, but is good at explaining it, and also tells us why certain conventions are used and not others.

As a final plus factor, there is a section in the middle with some gorgeous color plates.

THE MAN FROM KRYPTON

Edited by Glenn Yeffeth

(Benbella Books, 2005, \$17.95)

Review by Johnny Carruthers

<http://purpleranger.livejournal.com/>

Do you want just one reason to get this collection of essays? Okay, how about this? Larry Niven's essay "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex" is reprinted here.

If I'm not mistaken, *All The Myriad Ways* has been out of print for at least a few years. And while Niven's somewhat irreverent look at Superman's sex life can be found on the Internet, there is just something about reading it in book form that makes it a little more . . . satisfying, I guess.

Okay, I did say that "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex" was a good enough reason to pick up this collection of essays (subtitled "A Closer Look at Superman") if you needed just one reason. If, on the other hand, you want more than just that one essay, there are 19 others for your edification as well. Some of the essays, like Niven's, take a look at the lighter side of the Man Of Steel. Others take a more serious, almost scholarly approach to the subject.

Lawrence Watt-Evans starts the collection with "Previous Issues." I am going to have a hard time looking at Superman's costume with a straight face for a while after reading this essay. There's a good chance that you will, too.

Adam Roberts asks the question "Is Superman a Superman?" In other words, is Kal-El a superman in the way that Friedrich Nietzsche meant when he coined the word *Übermensch*? As Roberts gives a cursory explanation of Nietzsche's term, he goes on to state, "But since the 1950s (roughly speaking), English-language scholars have stopped translating *Übermensch* as 'Superman,' generally preferring the translation 'Overman.'" Roberts seems to be more than a little amused by some of the explanations generally given for the preference, when he (and anyone with more than three functioning brain cells) knows that English-language philosophers couldn't stand the thought of having their wonderful philosophical concept compared to a mere comic book character like the Man of Steel.

In "You Will Believe a Man Can Walk," Sarah Zettel writes about actor Christopher Reeve, both in the roles he had other than Superman, and about his life following the 1995 accident that left him paralyzed. She opens her essay by mentioning a certain scene in the movie *Deathtrap* (yes, that scene), and her reaction when she initially saw the movie was quite close to what mine was when I saw the movie.

Keith R.A. DeCandido takes a look not only at Christopher Reeve, but at all of the actors to portray the Man of Steel in "Actor and Superactor." At the time *The Man From Krypton* was published, *Superman Returns* was still in production, so this was taking a look at the very big red boots that Brandon Routh was going to have to fill. I agree with DeCandido on a few things. I get the impression that, like me, his first exposure to Superman outside of the comics was Bud Collyer's voice. There is something about the way that Collyer dropped his voice an octave as he said, "This is a job . . . for Superman!" that makes it quintessential. On the other hand, I like Dean Cain's portrayal of the part much better than Reeve's, and I suspect that we could get into an argument on that subject.

And speaking of the star of *Superman Returns*, Lou Anders has "A Word of Warning for Brandon Routh." Anders takes a look at the so-called "Superman curse" that has befallen a number of actors to play the part. His thread of logic gets stretched very thin, especially when he draws parallels to the US Presidents who have died in office. Very thin indeed.

In "The Mirror of Gilgamesh," John G. Henry writes about the one person that Superman fears the most, and the one person without whom he would fall victim to that greatest fear. And yes, in the process, Henry does make some comparisons to the ancient myth of Gilgamesh.

Chris Roberson's "Jewel Mountains and Fire Falls" takes a look at Krypton itself. The backstory of Superman's birthworld has changed as much as he has over the years, as different writers and editors have added information on the now-lost planet, edited it, and in a couple of cases completely revamped what we knew.

And as I mentioned at the beginning, "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex" is reprinted here. I was a little disappointed at its positioning in the book. It should have either been the first essay, or at the very end (saving the best for last). Instead, Yeffeth chose to put it somewhere in the middle.

This is but a sampling of the essays in *The Man From Krypton*. Other essays take a look at Lex Luthor, at the TV series *Smallville*, at the idea of Superman as modern mythology, and at the parallels between Superman and Batman, among other topics. But I won't give a rundown of every single essay, because what would be the point of your picking up the book and reading it for yourself?

The Man from Krypton presents a vast array of viewpoints — or at least as vast as you can get in 20 essays. Even if you find the thesis of one essay to be absurd, boring, or just merely annoying, turning a few pages will bring another essay with something that is perhaps more palatable to your tastes.

There is one more piece that I wish Yeffeth had included in *The Man from Krypton*. That would be the lyrics to Tom Smith's filk "Superman's Sex Life Boogie." Yes, it was inspired by Niven's essay. (As I understand it, Niven was delighted when he first heard the

song, and even joined Smith in singing it at a convention where the two were guests.) Perhaps if BenBella publishes another collection of Superman essays, it will be included.

And I think there is potential for another collection of closer looks at Superman. The Man of Tomorrow has been around for almost 70 years (next year marks the 70th anniversary of *Action Comics* #1), and the character has become thoroughly ingrained in our culture in those seven decades. There are a lot more viewpoints out there. Finding and collecting them — well, that might be a job . . . for BenBella Books!

HERSHEY ORANGE MARSHMALLOW PUMPKIN

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers

Pumpkins and oranges are only similar when it comes to color. They don't share any sort of similarities when it comes to flavor. So if you are going to produce a candy pumpkin with a marshmallow interior that is the color of a pumpkin, why not also give it the flavor of a pumpkin?

Hmmmm . . . I may have just gone into overanalyzing when it comes to these reviews.

Like Russell Stover, Hershey has its own version of an orange marshmallow pumpkin. Outside, it's Hershey's milk chocolate. Inside is marshmallow that has been both tinted and flavored orange.

The orange marshmallow seemed to be a little denser than the marshmallow in the Hershey Marshmallow Pumpkin. It's still not quite as dense as the marshmallow in the S'Mores bar, but it doesn't have the sponginess that I have found in some of the other marshmallow pumpkins.

The orange color of the marshmallow in Hershey's pumpkin is as bright and vivid as that of the marshmallow in Russell Stover's version. The flavor, however, is another matter. Hershey's pumpkin has a very noticeable orange flavor. It reminds me of the orange flavor in the Cadbury Orange Creme Egg that was produced for the first time this past Easter — very sweet, with a pleasant orangey aftertaste that remained in the mouth long after you finished with a bite. The stronger orange flavor harmonizes well with the milk chocolate, and would probably do equally well with a dark chocolate shell. (Not-so-subtle hint here!)

Okay, maybe a marshmallow pumpkin with a pumpkin-flavored marshmallow wouldn't sell as well. I think it would be interesting to see a pumpkin-shaped candy that actually tasted like pumpkin. Well, pumpkin pie, at least.

3 MUSKETEERS MINIS MIX (2007 edition)

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers

When I reviewed the various limited edition Minis that Mars released last year, I commented in each review that Mars had made one big mistake. All of them were released about seven weeks too early, in the middle of summer. I thought that Mars should have waited until the

Halloween season rolled around, because the small size would have been a natural to give out to the assorted ghosts, witches, Power Rangers, and other trick-or-treaters.

The inordinately immodest part of me (yes, there is a part of me that's like that) wants to think that someone at Mars must have seen those reviews. The more practical side of me suspects that lots of other consumers felt the same way, and told Mars on their 800 line. Whether someone at Mars read my reviews or not, whether someone at Mars even saw my reviews or not, someone agreed with the sentiments expressed in those reviews, as I learned when I saw store personnel at Walgreens stocking the seasonal aisle with Halloween candy.

I think bags of the Twix Minis Mix were the first to catch my eye. They were the same as last year's Minis Mix — Original, Dark Chocolate, and Triple Chocolate. I haven't seen the Snickers Peanuts Chews, but there is a Snickers Minis Mix that has the original Snickers, Snickers Almond, and Snickers Dark Minis. (No Snickers Dark Almond, though, which is something of a disappointment.)

Then I saw the 3 Musketeers Minis Mix. It turned out to be slightly different from last year's version. This one doesn't contain the original 3 Musketeers in mini form. (Both the original 3 Musketeers and the recently-released 3 Musketeers Mint get bags of Minis all to themselves.) It does have the French Vanilla and Mocha Cappuccino varieties that were released last year. Joining them in this year's edition is a third variation, 3 Musketeers Strawberry.

(I should point out that this may be a case of Mars bringing back a blast from their past. From what I have read, the 3 Musketeers bar originally had three different flavors inside — chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry. As far as I can tell, though, Mars abandoned the three different flavored centers for just the chocolate nougat center long before I was born.)

The French Vanilla and Mocha Cappuccino varieties are the same as they were in last year's Minis Mix, so you might want to refer back to my earlier review for those two. (Just look for the "3musketeers" tag.) I think I may have suggested that either of those two might be even better if they had been enrobed in dark chocolate instead of milk chocolate. My initial encounter with the 3 Musketeers Mint a few weeks ago strengthens that earlier opinion. Dark chocolate would provide a stronger flavor contrast with both the vanilla and coffee-flavored nougats.

Like the other two, the Strawberry 3 Musketeers Mini is covered in milk chocolate. Inside is a bright pink strawberry-flavored nougat. Unfortunately, the strawberry flavor is mostly an artificial flavor. It's more than a little noticeable on the tastebuds, too; there is something that says "almost, but not quite" strawberry as the nougat rolls over your tongue. Using natural flavors would have been a great improvement with this Mini.

Becoming reacquainted with both the French Vanilla and Mocha Cappuccino Minis reaffirmed my desire to see either or both of

these 3 Musketeer variations as full size bars, whether they are covered in milk chocolate or dark chocolate. I think the Strawberry still needs just a little tweaking before I would want to see it as a full size bar, though. If it is ever produced as a full size bar, though, the Strawberry definitely needs to be covered in milk chocolate. I think the flavor of dark chocolate would overwhelm the strawberry flavor.

RAZZBERRY M&Ms

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers

I just saw this new limited edition earlier this morning. To give you an idea of just how new it is, I was in the same store last night, and the display with the Razzberry M&Ms was not in place then. (And the retail display for this candy is not easy to miss; if it had been there last night, I would have noticed it.)

The Razzberry M&Ms are larger than the standard M&M size. If I'm not mistaken, they are the same size as the Mega Size M&Ms. I would probably say that they are about twice the size of the standard M&Ms. They are milk chocolate, which has had raspberry flavor infused into it. Instead of the usual multi-hued rainbow, the outer candy shells are a uniform dark pink. I think Mars was trying for that shade of magenta that most of us think of as "raspberry," but what they got was just a shade or two lighter. The color I think they were trying to get is the primary color of the wrapper. Now, that is a shade I would call raspberry.

I like the combination of raspberry and chocolate. (Hell, I like the combination of chocolate with just about any fruit.) And Mars did a fairly decent job with the Razzberry M&Ms. The raspberry flavor is subtle; almost a little too subtle at times. I think the candy could have been improved if the raspberry flavor was slightly more intense, but that may be my own personal preferences coming into play. And as always, the crunch of the candy shell adds an interesting texture to the blend.

The raspberry and milk chocolate go well together, but I think that raspberry is a flavor that goes best with dark chocolate, and I was a little disappointed that Mars didn't try this as a Dark Chocolate M&M. Again, though, this may be just my personal preferences coming into play.

As I said, I saw the Razzberry M&Ms for the first time today, so they should be around for at least a month or two. I don't really see this becoming part of the regular Mars product line, though. For some reason, it just has the feel of something that Mars released because they thought it would be fun to do.

THE CULT OF THE AMATEUR: how today's internet is killing our culture

by Andrew Keen

(2007, 228 pp./indexed, \$22.95,
ISBN # 9780385520805)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

Keen is a man from the Silicon Valley/Internet scene. He's put in many years

working and promoting both. Now, in this slender volume, he turns around and bites 'the tail' that he supported and that took good care of him. His arguments against the Web 2.0 world, which is a term the author borrowed for the current Internet scene, are many.

Suffice to say, he sees where those professionals, in this culture, who write and perform music, making CDs, are losing their livelihoods because of the pirating going on thanks to amateurs and the easy use of the internet to download without or with extremely low payment to the creative people. Keen sees professional movie producers with stolen versions of their films, too, and much more is being appropriated by amateur users of the internet to the detriment of the professional producers of these products.

In short, wherein this culture it was possible to make a living and then some by creative people and products, now that is evaporating. Sure, it's nice and/or cheap for those amateurs who want to listen to the music or see the movie and not pay for the privilege. Yet it's robbing those who deserve to be rewarded.

The author goes deeply into blogging, also. Sure, these primarily amateurs report the news or have Wikipedia, but much of former is a rip-off of major print news sources and the latter, done by amateurs or unknowns for the most part, hurts the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. And newspaper circulation has fallen off sharply. Consequently, many papers are laying off journalists and others. Here again, this culture's professional journalists and encyclopaedia experts are getting knocked out of the box, while bloggers and Wikipedia people are thriving except they're not making much, or any, money doing what they do. In brief, then, no one is winning-only losing.

Many other examples abound in this book. Yet the author isn't totally pessimistic. He believes solutions are at hand. In fact, he devotes the whole final chapter to ways of solving the problems.

Joost is one of these new solutions. It's:

... a new digital media initiative, for a world in which the Internet and television are rapidly converging. Joost is a service that promises to provide professional creators of video with a peer-to-peer platform for distributing and selling their content over the Internet. The platform will enable professional content producers to combine the traditional one-to-many broadcasting functionality of network television with the many-to-many interactivity of online content. . .

Brightcove is the name of another solution. And there are many others spelled out in this book.

Andrew Keen's writing has appeared in the *Weekly Standard*, *Fast Company*, and *Forbes*. He hails from Britain but currently resides in Berkeley, California.

Recommended.

HE DIED BETTER THAN HE LIVED (AD 69)

As soon as he faced a usurpation, usurper though he was, addicted though he was to every pleasure, our lord Otho marched against the enemy, only to suffer a costly, if not necessarily final defeat. Yet, beholding the field strewn with Roman corpses, he fell on his sword to spare his countrymen further slaughter. No epics will be written about him, but one might argue that Salvius Otho was more a friend to mankind than god-like Achilles, who killed and killed and would have gone on killing, had not a lucky shot from Paris's bow put a stop to him. Say this at least of Emperor Otho, who reigned but a few months: He died better than he lived, more nobly, more pure — better than he lived.

— Darrell Schweitzer

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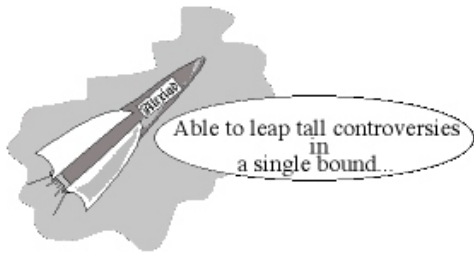
WCSFAZine #3 November 2007, #4 December 2007

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Letters, we get letters



From: **Richard Dengrove** October 10, 2007
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I enjoyed *Alexiad* v6 #5 August 2007. However, I doubt a game can subvert a ruling ideology like it does in Harry Turtledove's *The Gladiator*? Not unless it exploits a fatal flaw. Of course, all ruling ideologies have fatal flaws, especially those that aspire to 100% control over our lives and demand 100% of our time. Everyone then knows who to blame when things go wrong.

By the way, it is even a fatal flaw when ruling ideologies reveal themselves. Using that criteria, Capitalism, I suspect, despite its conceits, has revealed too much of itself.

Of course, people who believe the same ideologies may differ over strategy. Lynne Olson's *Troublesome Young Men* claims that the difference was really great between Chamberlain and the Troubled Young Men. She says Chamberlain really believed in his "Peace in Our Time" speech; that Britain would not have to go to war.

I have heard a different view. I remember reading in John F. Kennedy's *Why England Slept* that the German negotiator at Munich believed Chamberlain was just stalling for time. Chamberlain felt Britain needed it to catch up with Hitler's war machine.

You have read a lot about this, Joe. Which is it? Peace in our time or War in time?

If the British were unready, so were the Germans; Munich delivered the Skoda plants into German hands. Three of the ten panzer divisions that won the Battle of France were equipped with the Czech Pz38(t) tank. And then there was The Oster Conspiracy of 1938 (by Terry Parssinen; 2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #4). Chamberlain would have been better advised to retire to a farm in Sakartvelo and raise groundnuts.

We have enough trouble understanding the strategies of our minds to reliably understand the strategies of our genes. A colleague of mine at work, a Dr. Basiotis, sent away to the

National Geographic's genetics project to find out about his ancestors. He was astonished at what came back. As far as he knew, his family was Greek Orthodox from way back. However, the DNA analysis claimed that, at some point, his family had been Ashkenazi Jewish (i.e., Middle European Jewish).

I, on the other hand, suspect that, even though I am Ashkenazi Jewish, an analysis will reveal Turkic blood. An analysis of my father's original family name suggests that.

Whether that is the case or not, my father will belong to the wave of Jewish influence on American life. Sometimes, influencing it in surprising ways.

One night, while traveling, I somehow found on the dial a radio show about Jewish folk music, specifically on an instrument called the klezmer. The announcer showed several popular American tunes were originally klezmer pieces. Even ostensibly Latino music by Xavier Cugat.

As us Jews, the Chinese have had a great influence on humanity. However, so far no one has proven they discovered America. I presume Robert Sabella is right; and *1421: The Year China Discovered America* has failed to prove it.

It would be difficult to prove the Medieval Chinese discovered America, anyway, because they lacked maps. At least, that is what I have heard. We are dependent on Chinese mariners' descriptions, which do not necessarily distinguish one island or continent from another.

Another thing that has had great influence on us is the computer. That is, if we can get it up and running. Sheryl Birkhead has had a problem scanning in Photoshop Classic on her Version 4 Mac.

I thought the Mac always came with its own software for graphics; and, I presume, for scanning. Sheryl, couldn't you use that software to scan your images. Then you could save them and open them in your Photoshop Classic. . . Just another crazy suggestion from Richard D.

The Roman Empire did not have computers but it had decadence. However, Taras Wolansky wonders whether I am mistaking our idea of decadence for the Ancient Romans' idea: ours being sex, drugs and Rock n'Roll.

I didn't think I was. It is true conservative Ancient Romans would have considered replacing Roman troops with foreign mercenaries decadence. However, they also would have considered sex, drinking and 'violent' music decadence too. I don't think the Romans distinguished between civic virtue and moral or religious virtue.

Another comment by Taras brings us from the facts of the past to predictions of the future, i.e., on Global Warming. He sums all cures for it as the River City Ploy (a la The Music Man). Young people are being led astray, but a youth orchestra is not necessarily the answer.

My only disagreement is the cure for Global Warming is unclear. One reason it is a hot topic is because people can tack on their pet cure.

Going from the Global to Heavenly, Marty Helgesen says he has never heard people advocate that the Bible is the final authority on everything. I have. I have never seen anyone

practice it, though.

Finally, going from being argumentative to being grateful, I would like to thank Sue Burke for her account of the varied ways different towns in Spain run their bulls.

November 13, 2007

For *Alexiad* October 2007, I have a complaint: too many things to comment on.

Johnny Carruthers. About your review of David Magee's *Moonpie*, I have two tales about the Moonpie. I have been a member of the Southern Fandom Press Association, and one member, out of the blue, decided to send us Moonpies through the mail. Every APAn got a Moonpie. He said it was the symbol of the South. I, and others, distrusted any food coming through the mail even though it was in a wrapper. I suppose there was no rational reason but we did. Maybe we just weren't good enough Southerners.

The second Moonpie tale is several accorded into one. I have seen several cooking shows where some gourmet cook decided to make "gourmet" Moonpies, with expensive ingredients. I doubt any resembled the original at all. It is ironic that snobs have converted what they regard as junk food into an object of snobbery.

John Purcell. You don't have to worry about Nancy Drew being political incorrect. Not that you did. Those novels, and all the other Stratemeyer novels, have been continuously bowdlerized (p.c.-ized?) over the years to suit their times. Whatever company is publishing them has never wanted to skirt the least little bit of controversy. Certainly not in a children's book.

Me: As is usually the case, I have tried to say too much in my letter, and about topics that are way too heavy. Tch, tch.

Joe: You denied that you ever claimed that Christianity caused the Fall of the Roman Empire. However, you seemed to be advocating Gibbon's theory, and my understanding is that Gibbon said exactly that. According to him, the reason is the competent converted to Christianity, and left the material world for a more spiritual one.

I wasn't.

I have to say that doesn't mean present day Christianity, as it is practiced in North America, would have caused the Fall of the Roman Empire. Our Christianity is very much anchored in the material world: not only Protestant Christianity but Catholic Christianity as well. Not even our hermits live on pillars anymore.

Trinlay Khadro: It isn't only a village in the Pacific Northwest around 1800 that would have Japanese artifacts. I remember an exhibit in the Smithsonian claiming that storms often drove Japanese fisherman off course; and they landed, or were shipwrecked, in the Americas. According to the exhibit, there have been pre-Columbian Japanese artifacts found not only in North America but in South America as well.

Sheryl Birkhead: I'm getting DSL, or some

similar service, through my cable company, Cox. All you have to do is get a cable modem, and arrange it with the company. However, I don't know whether that option is open to you. As for noticing the difference between dialup and "DSL", I definitely do. Twenty megs download in less than ten minutes.

George Price (and others): The depression caused, or at least extended, because wages were too high? Yes, the Federal government during the Depression did encourage Unions. And it was proud that wages didn't come down too far.

On the other hand, what got us out of the Depression was World War II. It had nothing to do with lowering wages. They went higher if anything. It was an increase in markets vaster, I gather, than the New Deal ever attempted. That would indicate to me the problem was lack of markets, and not wages that were too high. A lack that, in normal times, decent wages would have remedied.

At other times, industry's problem might be a wage-price crunch. I am not certain any ballyhooed economic nostrum works for all time.

Jim Stumm. No, you're right that the Scriblerians didn't use the term Siamese Twins to describe the two ladies who were attached to one another. They referred to them as the Double Mistress. I figured, though, that term would be hard for a modern audience to understand.

Jeffrey Allan Boman. I have family in Israel, which means I can't be too anti-Israeli. One part of the family got religion and went there. Another part became more secular and moved to California. I don't know what percentage remains nearby on the East Coast.

From: **Joy V. Smith** October 21, 2007
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Culling is a good idea. I've culled a lot of books — among other things — in preparation for our move — when we sell the house. 'Course we always have new books coming in. I got Terry Pratchett's *Making Money* (sequel to *Going Postal*) from the SF Book Club recently. I don't think it's as good as *Going Postal*, but I enjoyed it. Ten books a day is commendable! I'll be interested in hearing if you make your goal of a thousand by June 18.

Re: United Way. My sister worked in an office where they were pressured to give to United Way. Not a good idea, most people thought.

Lots of interesting book reviews. Some of them I never plan to read, including Turtledove's *Settling Accounts: In at the Death and The Dreamland Chronicles*. Interesting reference in your review of *The Accidental Time Machine* — about the Time Traveller in another book waiting for the room in his house to catch up with the rest of the place. Nifty idea.

More interesting history book reviews, but I loved where in the review of *300* (movie), you

quoted the lyrics of The Sons of Hercules. That theme is playing in my mind right now — again! Thank you!! I enjoyed the bio of Moonpies too; and I've got to find some of those dark chocolate candies.

You can play it on your computer, too:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5L9pA4fqnw>

— JTM

Interesting con reports (Archon-TuckerCON-NASFiC & Conglomeration). I can see that a hotel going bankrupt can wreak havoc with a con.

LOCs: Evelyn Leeper has a good point about eating your way alphabetically through restaurants. All those Chinese restaurants would make me want Italian, and I rarely eat Italian! Lots of interesting history in the LOCs too, especially the background on wages and unemployment in the '30s (thanks, Jim Stumm). And thanks to Jeffrey Boman for the Tanya Huff/Blood Ties mention. I haven't come across the series, but I remember enjoying one of her books a while back.

From: **Alexander R. Slate** October 22, 2007
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alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil

300: I didn't really care for *300* myself, preferring the older *300 Spartans*. In fact, when I put *300* down on my Blockbuster On-line video queue, I put down *300 Spartans* as well to refresh my memory. I don't completely dislike *300* and have no problem with the cinematography (as someone else commented). What I do really dislike the modern trend comparable to the older earlier Renaissance painting trend to paint everything in "modern terms" to make things "cool!"

What do I mean by that? Old European painting depicting biblical settings with everyone dressed in Renaissance clothing. Here, Frank Miller makes the Persians into modern punks/freaks. Also the fact that he's got the Spartans going into battle essentially naked. The actual history is interesting enough.

What both *300* and *300 Spartans* both ignore is the 'irony' of the Spartans fighting for "Freedom and Liberty" given the fact that Sparta could not have existed the way it did without the Helots (in essence serfs).

You are aware of the story of the Spartans being Benjaminites. "Now Leonidas bubbeleh, such a nice shield your mother gave you for your Bar Mitzvah, come back with it or on it."

— JTM

Martin Arbagi has got to learn about context. Yah, *Alexiad* is published electronically, but it is also published in paper. And face it, postal rates have always been bad

and they are getting worse. As for the whimsy, it's a perzine, and perzines have always been about the editor's whimsy. Even those that have a 'focus' only have one because it is the editor's whimsy to have one.

Sheryl Birkhead: Thanks. Actually I don't deal with the traffic to much. I take mass transit all the way in from work, starting with the bus, which I get right at the corner.

OK, apropos of nothing else, lately I've been listening to the CD version of Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us*. It is about what the world would be like if for some reason all humans were to disappear tomorrow. However, it's more than that. It explains what would happen to various landscape features and animal groups. It discusses how we got to where we are in the first place. Why various animal groups have disappeared. It also looks at a couple of cultural anthropological issues, such as what happened to the Maya. All in all, I find it very interesting and would recommend it.

From: **Brad W. Foster** October 22, 2007
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New issue of *Alexiad* in this week, always great to get a paper zine in the mail these days!



Did want to call your attention to one thing: the address you used for me lacked a number. You had "Box 15246" on the envelope, but my correct address is "Box 165246". Folks at the post office figured it out and put it in the right box, but wanted to let you know so you could check your labeling program, or whatever. Might just have been a hiccup when it was printed, or might have lost that number in the files.

I've just finished up about 30 straight hours in bed. Wacked by a flare up of shingles. Right now half my face looks like a plague victim, and my right eye is almost swollen shut. I can't wait to get out in public and watch people try not to stare! Medications should get me through this the next few weeks, but for now it is incredibly draining on my energies. I'm trying to use the

few hours I'm up to catch up on some email, clear stuff off my desk, but creative work is definitely on stand by for a while. Stupid bodily functions!

Sounds like you can go to a con masquerade as Harvey Dent.

— JTM

I've read a couple of reviews at random so far, always my favorite parts of the zine. If/when I get the money to go out and get the books I want, instead of the ones I happen to find at discounts, you guys are responsible for a LOT of titles on that list!

From: **R-Lauraine Tutihasi** Oct. 22, 2007
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<http://www.weasner.com/>

Lisa says Caspians are good mounts for children. Am I small enough to fall into that class? I'm about 4'9" and a little over 110 right now, trying to drop more weight.

You weigh 110 pounds and you're trying to *lose* weight? We could only find the two ranches in Texas, Kristull Ranch (caspianhorses.com) and MCC Farms. Perhaps if you emailed them they could help you.

— LTM

If you follow the mailing guidelines found on the USPS web site and apply the postage yourself, whatever you're mailing will probably go through. Most postal workers don't seem to have the flexibility of mind to get past the automated system that they seem to use.

Nuts come in many varieties. Peanuts are legumes, which means they are related to beans, peas, etc. People allergic to peanuts probably can't eat other legumes. Most other nuts are tree nuts, and some of them are not at all related to other tree nuts. Being allergic, for instance to cashews, would not necessarily mean you couldn't eat macadamias or walnuts. It's pretty complex and probably varies a lot from person to person.

Anyway it turns out Mike is not allergic to cashews. The allergist agreed with me that it seemed unlikely, and the tests bore that out. Although he didn't test positive to anything, the highest readings were for wasps and bees; so I'm making sure he always has easy access to an antihistamine.

The American financial system is not as strong as some people might think. The value of the dollar is being held high by foreign investments. Also a lot of foreign importers are keeping their prices low in order to keep us buying. This is all because, at least for now, the US represents the largest market for most companies. With other countries becoming stronger, the situation may soon change. Then we'll find out what things really cost. If this happens gradually, the pain won't be so bad.

Mike's foot is just about back to normal.

I'm sorry to disappoint Jeffrey Allan Boman, but at least as printed, my name as published in his LoC was not correct. But maybe he was just funning, since I just noticed that there are two extraneous periods in there.

I'm not sure what Boman sees in *Blood Ties* that would qualify as sexy.

I was and am still watching *Smallville* on the CW (formerly the WB), but this year I've added *Life Is Wild* and *Aliens in America*. The only other over-the-air network on which I watch that many shows is CBS.

I wonder what about David Brin turned Al du Pisani off. I know he tends to talk a lot. I just tell him to shut up if I want to say something. He's good-natured and friendly when I've interacted with him.

Most people are not accustomed to having themselves translated. Many of the award acceptors may have been too nervous to think about this.

I'm sorry that Mr. Pisani didn't feel comfortable at the Hugo awards party. There are always going to be people at such gatherings that are too inwardly directed to notice a new-comer. Sf people are really not noted for being extraverts.

We have still not had any offers on our house. Now we are considering the possibility of moving before we sell. We won't be able to build a new house until we sell, but a vacant house may sell more easily than an occupied one.

Now the house market has a turndown.

— JTM

From: **Robert M. Sabella** October 23, 2007
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Thanks for another two *Alexiad* (Aug 07 - Oct 07). I never thought I would enjoy reading candy reviews, but Dark Chocolate Peanut M&Ms sounds absolutely delicious! I think I need to go find some in a supermarket.

Having not been a reader of *Analog* since Ben Bova quit as editor, I've never read anything by Edward Lerner, but recently I've seen several strong reviews of his fiction: Lisa's of *Moonstruck* and several of his recent collaboration with Larry Niven *Fleet of Worlds*. Both look fairly interesting. I went to several online reviewzines to find for other reviews of Lerner's books, and could not find any. I wonder if most reviewers stay away from *Analog* writers, or is it just coincidence? Sometimes it seems that many critics, in their haste to embrace the "new" space opera, have tended to shy away from traditional stuff. That's a fairly short-sighted viewpoint, since many traditional writers (Jack McDevitt, for example) are as good as many "new" space opera writers, perhaps not as cutting edge. For me at least, there is good and bad in both the traditional stuff and the new stuff; quality is quality. Anyway, perhaps Lerner is worth a read someday.

It isn't recent; Malzberg's and Greenberg's *Neglected Visions*, of writers unjustly neglected (in their opinion, but in my opinion they had a point), had primarily Analog-associated authors (e.g., Garrett, Anvil, Clifton), and came out in 1979.

— JTM

From: **E. B. Frohvet** October 20, 2007
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City MD 21042-5988 USA

On re-reading *Farmer in the Sky*, naturally I had recourse to my copy of *Heinlein's Children*. It strikes me that the principal difference in our approaches to the story is that you see Heinlein primarily in sociopolitical terms, and I treat the books mainly as stories. For instance, you regard George's "surprise" wedding to Molly as a sociological problem, rather than as an emotional shock to Bill. (What do you make of Bill's best friend bringing him chocolates as a farewell present? I mean, how gay is that?) Also you approach Heinlein's works as a more-or-less unified whole entity, whereas I see them as separate stories with some slight overlap. It would be interesting to see how you would approach, for instance, Simak, virtually all of whose novels were standalone works with no unifying pattern.

I don't know if you're into show-jumping, but the Columbia Classic Grand Prix is a regular event on the eastern show-jumping circuit; typically the last, or next-to-last, Sunday in September.

There's a movie in production about the German underground in World War II, with Tom Cruise playing Claus von Stauffenberg. The title is *Valkyrie*. What are the odds, a mainstream Hollywood film of which the title actually makes sense? One wonders what little-known actor has the thankless role of the most hated man of the 20th Century.

Thomas C. Mapother IV is 5' 7" (and he's also a clam, but let that lie for the moment). Claus Graf Stauffenberg was 196 cm. Depending on your references, it's as bad as Marlon Brando playing Sakini in *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956).

Ah, the Lost Cause results: Not surprising. I have long since given up on the King of Shameless, but I wonder if there's some chance that Frank Wu could be persuaded to show a little restraint and let someone else be recognized. Anyone know him? I regret that *Heinlein's Children* did not win, though I never thought it likely.

Richard Dengrove: I don't perceive our disagreement over, e.g., *Trap Door*, as being about etiquette at all. I see it as being about the critical question: Do you, or do you not, want to do a fanzine?

I'm pretty sure the date on my last LoC was not "June 21", as it was in response to the

August issue.

In general I agree with Martin Morse Wooster that fanzines are not doing enough to promote themselves; it's become a minor niche fandom. My only question: Are there any new fans? Not counting media/manga/potter fans, few of whom are likely to cross over into a general interest in SF. Far be it from me to observe that part of the problem is, fanzines have abandoned SF and become about themselves.

By the way, what is signified by "K.T."? Order of the Thistle? In an unpublished story, I had a military officer get in trouble with his own government for accepting a knighthood in the "Order of the Archangel".

The Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the premier chivalric order of Scotland.

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/Page4879.asp>

Trinlay Khadro: I once tried to throw an "ILOW" (for "In Lieu of Worldcon") party on the corresponding weekend, for local fans who didn't or couldn't go to Worldcon. Three people showed up. Late. I admire your fortitude for fighting through people's "go away and don't bother us" voicemails multiple times; I just don't have the patience. For instance, the "local" (actually a Philadelphia-based conglomerate) electric company eagerly promotes a number to call if your power is out. Invariable response, if it's been five minutes or five days: "We're working on it." Why bother? Avoiding discussing SF/fandom with mundanes, especially at work, has been much discussed lately in *Banana Wings*.

Henry Welch: No, actually, I've never had a bird crap on me. On my car, yes.

Jim Stumm: Quite right, marriage laws fall under state laws, not federal. (Which is why it's legal in some jurisdictions — New York state for one — for first cousins to marry, and not in others.) But polygamy is illegal in Utah.

If John Hertz has to dig back to Themistocles to cite even one example refuting "Nobody remembers who finished second", that supports my theory.

I remember who finished second in the 1973 Derby and in the 1953 Derby.

— LTM

Never mind classicists: Robert Falcon Scott.

— JTM

Happy birthday, Lisa. Book culling has never been much of a problem for me, but then I don't have anything remotely like 12,000 books. Offhand, I'd guess 1000 or so, and some of those are in boxes buried in the den closet, unread for years.

The Ku Klux Klan was so bad in 1923 that martial law was declared in Oklahoma. (I can't claim credit for that fact, it was an answer on *Jeopardy*.)

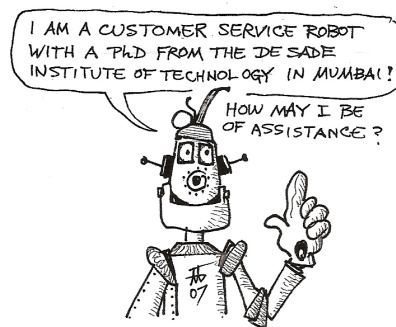
Johnny Carruthers: I'm sure I've told this anecdote before, so forgive me if it's redundant.

Once for a school celebration of Saint Patrick's Day, my mother bought a pack of white cake mix, dumped a bottle of green food coloring in, iced the finished product with chocolate icing. It was quite a hit, though it tasted pretty much like any other cake.

Rod Edmiston: If your vehicle is marooned in an isolated area, should you not have carried highway flares as a signalling device?

It is unlikely in the extreme that I will be going to the Montreal Worldcon. If I couldn't be bothered when it was two hours away in Philadelphia . . . Well, you do the math.

From: Alexis A. Gilliland October 27, 2007
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA
22204-1552 USA



Thank you for *Alexiad* 6.5, which arrived the other day along with another fanzine, an all too rare occurrence these days. It is with mild chagrin that I report a change of mind from my letter of Sept. 1, where I said: "Am I going to sift through all those boxes of fanzines to extract my cartoons manually? Not bloody likely." As of October 27th I have done 16 and have 12 to go. The count so far: 3700 including 800 collaborations with Rotsler, while the 16 boxes have yielded perhaps another 1200. Not to mention the odd essay or poem, which will be included if they are funny. When will my website go online? Soon, rather than realsoonow, I guess. I had been hoping for Halloween, but will let you know when it happens. Lee's newly assembled XP desktop is up and mning, but her XP laptop froze up the other day; a Microslop Windows malfunction, in which her laptop went into hibernation and wouldn't come back out. Going to a new computer repair place the technician had it up and mning in 15 minutes, and she considers the \$59 service charge a bargain.

To Taras Wolansky's theory that The Great Depression was prolonged by government-mandated high wages, we say: Incorrect. In the Franco-Prussian War, the victorious Germans made France pay reparations covering the total cost of the war. When World War I broke out in August 1914, Wilson initially refused loans to both sides, but later that year, acceded to Great Britain's blockade of Germany, while allowing the Allies to borrow money from the US treasury to buy arms manufactured in the US, essentially abandoning US neutrality for a

position of non-belligerence, becoming a full belligerent in 1917.

After 1918, the Versailles Treaty imposed sanctions on Germany, which made Germany responsible for the total cost of that war, and as long as Germany paid its reparations, the Allies were able to service their WW I debt to the US. The Versailles reparations destroyed the German economy, resulting in the hyperinflation of 1923, but the US came to the rescue with the Dawes plan in 1924 and the Young plan in 1929. Plans which made large loans to the Weimar Republic in order to keep German reparations flowing to the Allies, so the Allies could continue to service their WW I debt to the US.

After the stock market crash of 1929, the US gave the Weimar Republic 90 days to pay us back all that money, and when it was not paid (Surprise, surprise the Krauts didn't have it any more!) the Great Depression was on. The US economy went into shock from loss of liquidity as major national debt was suddenly added to major losses on the stock market. The conventional wisdom was woefully, if not totally inadequate to deal with the situation. President Hoover sought to keep farm prices high by having the Farm Board corner the market in wheat and cotton (!), which destroyed both export markets, and resulted in a price-depressing glut of wheat and cotton at home. The SmootHawley tariff act was intended to protect American industry, but essentially choked off foreign trade, while Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon wanted to raise taxes to balance the budget, which of course didn't happen.

So if low wages would have pulled the country out of the Depression, what were US wages in 1932? Industrial wages had fallen from \$25 a week to \$17 a week, for a 50 hour week; sawmill workers were earning 5 to 10 cents an hour; in Tennessee female mill workers were earning less than 5 cents an hour, while in Connecticut women were earning 2 to 3 cents an hour. Wages were too high, says Taras? How low can you go, eh? If low wages could have brought the country out of the Depression, FDR would have never had to mess around with the New Deal, because he had low wages from the git go. As it was, the New Deal pushed on a lot of strings, doing little or no good, but also little or no harm, and it took World War II to bring the country out of the Depression. We note that a lot of people thought that the end of the war would return us to a depressed state, including Congress. One reason the 1945 GI Bill was so generous was to keep as many demobilized soldiers out of the labor market for as long as possible.

Which makes Henry Ford's Five Dollars a Day such a significant event.

— JTM

Responding to my question George Price mentions a number of Federal interventions that kept wages perniciously high. The "alphabet soup," which included the CCC, the NRA, the

PWA, the REA, and the WPA among others, was mainly aimed at helping people so they wouldn't abandon the Capitalist system, when that system had catastrophically failed the country. It is true that you can't do only one thing, but FDR's activism bought us time, and while the Capitalist system was pretty much bent out of shape it did survive. Did paying men to rake leaves keep wages perniciously high? How about rural electrification? That should do for now.

From: **Jason K. Burnett** November 2, 2007
4903 Camden Avenue North,
Minneapolis, MN 55430-3544 USA
BritHistorian@gmail.com

I enjoyed the latest *Alexiad*, as usual. I must confess I was rather surprised and somewhat embarrassed to see that you'd printed my Letter of No Comment on the previous issue — I'd expected to end up in WAHF. Maybe I'll serve as a positive example to others — even if you've got nothing in particular to say, faneds like egoboo.

Your reviews of *300* and *9 Agosto 378* have gotten me interested in ancient history, a period that has previously held little attraction for me. Fortunately for my bookshelves, I'm currently in the "No Book Buying" part of the year (with my birthday in October, I'm forbidden to buy books between Labor Day and Christmas — since I've got at least five years' worth of books on hand, this isn't a practical hardship, but it never fails that I'll take an interest in a new author or a new historical period in late October/early November).

Right now I'm doing a lot of reading about WW2. My mother-in-law (a yard sale addict) surprised me with John Toland's biography of Hitler — I think it set her back all of about 50 cents, far less than it cost her to ship it to me. I'm also still slogging through Churchill's history of WW2, but finding it rather dry, so I've committed to reading a few pages a day. The Toland biography is much more readable — I must admit to not knowing enough about the subject to know how accurate he really is, but it seems like he's done his research, and he does a good job at engaging the reader.

Given the sensationalist job Toland did in *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath* (1982), I have to suspect all his research. Just like with David Irving.

On the fiction front, I'm currently reading the second book of Mercedes Lackey's Obsidian trilogy. It's really better than a lot of what she's written recently — IMO she went into a slump in the late 90s but seems to have pulled out of it now. The books have all the standard fantasy stereotypes (dragons, unicorns, elves, centaurs, wizards, etc.), but she gives them each enough of a twist that she owns them without seeming like she changed things just for the sake of changing them. Next up in the fiction queue is Cherie Priest's southern horror trilogy (*Four and Twenty Blackbirds*, *Wings to the Kingdom*,

Not Flesh Nor Feathers). I read the first book when it first came out a couple of years ago, and the subsequent volumes have been my birthday presents for the past two years (an inadvertent tradition that Angel and I fell into after meeting Cherie through LiveJournal — she'd better get busy on her next book so that I'll get something for my birthday next year).

I enjoyed your con reports, but then I always enjoy con reports. It amazes me how different cons are from place to place (and even from con to con in the same place). I wasn't really aware of these regional differences until I got involved with an APA called Mutations that drew most of its members from the San Diego area. Their reports of California cons described an almost totally different set of events from what I was experiencing in New Orleans and south Mississippi cons. Right now on LJ I've been reading reports from people who went to last weekend's OVFF (Ohio Valley Filk Festival), which sounds like a con I'd like to try at some point in the future.

Chris Garcia noted that TuckerCon was not like the cons he was used to. I wish he could have come to a Kubla Khan.

— JTM

That's it for now, or any rate all I've got time for.

From: **Robert A. Lichtman** Nov. 2, 2007
11037 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, CA
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A few comments on the October *Alexiad*:

You and Lisa have a lot more books than I do, given your starting point of 12,000. I don't have mine catalogued — something I really should do sometime for insurance purposes — but I'm guessing that I have around 2,500 or so. What I have in spades is fanzines. I did some calculations recently based on John Purcell's comments on the amount of space the Harry Warner collection takes up in James Halperin's storage facility, and my collection is about a third the size of Harry's.

In your comments to Leighton you note that "The smaller envelope thing didn't work, so I went back to flats." What didn't work about it? I took a copy of *Trap Door* in envelope down to our local post office and it made it through their template for the cheapest rate. So instead of going up from 87 cents to \$1.14 for domestic copies, it's going down to 75 cents. *Trap Door* is one sheet larger than this issue of your fanzine.

Who is Martin Arbagi? And are you posting *Alexiad* electronically somewhere, since he refers to first seeing a hard copy? As for his complaints about typography, I don't find them to have any merit. That is to say, I find your type size and leading perfectly readable. Perhaps Mr. Arbagi needs to check his glasses prescription (or get some reading glasses if he doesn't have them).

Martin is a contributor to the Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium. As for *Alexiad*, it is available via email, in .pdf or text format.

Robert Kennedy's comments about a 4.5 quake in his area remind me that in late July we had a 4.2 here centered just 2.5 miles from where we were sleeping at the time. It shook the house and its contents noisily for about fifteen seconds and definitely got us up out of bed. But once we inspected things, we found only one minor glass item had fallen off a shelf and broken. That said, it was a wake-up call that we live nearly astride a fault capable of a 7.0 at any time.

You have San Andreas, we have New Madrid . . .

— JTM

Another *Trap Door* within months . . .

From: **George W. Price** November 5, 2007
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL
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price4418@comcast.net

October *Alexiad*:

Richard Dengrove questions my (and Taras Wolansky's) specifics about what "Ronald Reagan had done to bring about the fall of the Soviet Union." I had said that the Strategic Defense Initiative was what inspired the Soviets to make reforms which then got out of hand and pushed the Communist system over the edge.

Mr. Dengrove asks, "is there any direct evidence the Russians fell" as a result of this or the other factors that Taras and I suggested? Ummm, well now, I am taken aback. I had thought this was so well known that it did not need to be proven. As I recall, one or two Soviet generals have since said that Star Wars was the trigger, and they should know.

At the time, it looked quite straightforward: (1) The Soviets rightly feared that the SDI would reduce them to a second-rate power by effectively making their strategic nuclear weapons useless. (2) To match the proposed SDI technology, the Soviets tried to open up their system to get faster technological innovation and economic growth, with "glasnost" and other liberalizing measures. (3) The system could not withstand being opened, and instead collapsed. It was also obvious at the time that Gorbachev had no intention at all of destroying communism or dismantling the Soviet empire; he intended to make the system stronger. To prove these points in detail, of course, I would have to write a history of the period, which I decline to do.

Mr. Dengrove is of course free to believe that there was little or no connection between Reagan's efforts to make the Soviet system collapse, and the system's ensuing collapse. Maybe it was all just a stunning coincidence. But that's not how I remember it.

* * * * *

In the August *Alexiad* I had said that “the Founders took for granted that all the rights they protected had certain limits. For example, freedom of speech and press did not include libel, slander, and pornography.” Jim Stumm takes exception, saying that “The wording of the First Amendment is absolute, no exceptions, but it originally applied only to the Federal Government. . . . Libel, slander . . . were to be left to the States to deal with.”

He’s perfectly right that the First Amendment as properly understood applied only to the Federal Government, not the states, which could impose censorship more or less as they pleased (e.g., “banned in Boston”). But if I have understood him correctly, he also believes that the rights are absolute, forbidding the Federal Government to impose any limitations on speech or press, even where the Federal Government is the relevant authority. And that I must dispute.

My position is that “freedom of speech” (or press) never meant freedom to say (or print) just any old thing that popped into one’s head. I believe that the Founders used “freedom of speech” as a term of art which covered a wide but fairly specific area, notably religious, social, and political opinions. It meant that no opinions could be banned as heretical; any subject or position could be advanced and discussed. But it did not include libel or slander or obscenity or pornography or “fighting words” or inciting to riot, among other exceptions.

The proof is that (as far as I have ever heard) such modes of expression were never tolerated in the District of Columbia or any other place where the Federal Government ruled directly, nor did anyone expect them to be tolerated. And the Federal Government never allowed the importation of pornography or its movement in interstate commerce. The blurb on my copy of *Fanny Hill* notes that the 1963 edition was the first to be allowed in the U.S.A. (However, I suppose that if any state had chosen to let pornography be published within its borders, the Feds would have had no right to suppress it. They could only forbid its entry into interstate commerce or the U.S. Mail.)

To sum up and repeat, all our Constitutional rights have limits, and the limits are (or should be) those accepted by the Founders. Changes should be by formal amendment, not by courts deciding that the words of the Constitution no longer mean what the Founders intended.

From: **Henry L. Welch** November 8, 2007
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<http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad*. In typical form for me I’m dragging my feet on the latest TTK and it won’t get mailed until later this week.

Thanks for the brief obituary on my father. The many candy reports were timely in that they could have been used to be an informed consumer when selecting treats for Halloween. The issue of customer service (Trinlay

Khadro) is a long one. Cable companies have been notoriously bad over the years. I think it is due in large part to the sanctioned monopoly they have in most markets. Wisconsin is seeing a big lobbying push by AT&T to get the Time-Warner (Milwaukee-area) monopoly ended and allow true competition in the market. Of much greater interest is the recent news story where a retiree got so fed up with her treatment by Comcast (she went to the office and asked to see a manager, after waiting a few hours she was told the manager had left) and returned on a later day with a hammer and dismantled a phone, keyboard, and computer monitor. She was appropriately fined by the police, but I think she got Comcast’s attention.

The customer service problem I’ve had is scheduling. It got so bad I took the entire day off when the cable was installed. The last time I had anyone else housesitting, he failed to show up because he had been playing games the night before. And before you ask, no I never trusted him again.

— JTM

From: **John Purcell** November 11, 2007
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I think this is your 35th *Alexiad*. Five full volumes of 6 issues equals 30, plus 5 so far in volume 6; total is 35. Makes sense.

Say, Lisa’s opening comments about reducing your books by a thousand by next summer is a worthy goal, but sounds like a very painful task. That’s how I felt about getting ruthless with my book collection before moving from Minneapolis to Los Angeles back in 1985. I really didn’t want to move over 2000 books cross-country, so I got rather ruthless (I wonder where Ruth is?) and sold probably 75% of it to Uncle Hugo’s Bookstore in Minneapolis. Most of them were fairly common, easy to replace books. I kept the Good Stuff, of course. Now I’m in a sort of rebuilding mode, but nowhere on the scale I used to pursue. Plus, my reading tastes are more eclectic and specific now; most books I acquire tend to be research-oriented, but there are still times when I’ll buy a few sf and f titles at the used bookstores in town.

And before I forget: Happy Birthday, Lisa! and also, Happy Anniversary, you two. Our 18th wedding anniversary is Nov. 27th, so this must be the month for anniversaries.

I’ve had to send away some books I would have liked to keep but we are very hard pressed for space. I haven’t made my goal the past few days but I’m not worried about making the long-term goal. The current total of books gone is well over 800 with seven months to reach the goal (The next few days will be spent on the December *Alexiad*. I’m planning to do a lot of little reviews and a piece on

Pearl Harbor. I haven’t got rid of anything either Joe or I really care about. It’s mainly a case of making space for new books to add to the collections we truly treasure, such as Joe’s polar exploration, my South Pacific in World War II, horses, our SF, etc. Some choices are easier than others. I’m making myself read a lot of the books I bought for fifty cents apiece, which is five days overdue fines, and donating them back to the thrift store. Thanks for the Happy Birthday. Happy Anniversary yourself.

— LTM

Too bad you didn’t get the Hugo for your book. Just to be nominated is still one heck of an honor. Maybe if you wrote a book exploring the ambivalent sexuality of Arthur Leo Zagat’s fantastic fiction you’d have a Hugo winner. What do you think?

Say, *Askance* #5 is now posted to www.efanzines.com and I’ve begun running off color copies for my Dead Tree Roster. Things are looking up in terms of affording postage for mailing these to recipients around the globe, which makes me very happy.

Before I sign off here, two quick things of note. First, I’m glad you were able to get over to NASFiC to have fun and have that faneditor’s dinner. And I really loved that description of Chris Garcia: “. . . this guy who looked like he’d tried to stifle a sneeze and it came out whatever way it could.” Yup. That’s Chris, alright.

The other thing is in E.B. Frohvet’s loc, where he comments to me about the adaptability of Shakespeare’s plays, They most certainly are that; I completely agree with Eeb there, since directors can change the setting, update costumes or what-have-you, and Shakespeare’s plays still speak to us across the centuries. Love, folly, corruption, power, fear, and so on — all these subjects will never go out of style. But I do have to mention at this point that last year, the Washington, D.C. Shakespeare Company performed a production of Macbeth completely in the nude. No joke. Leslie David told me about this in an e-mail. I went to their website and checked their schedule, and there it was listed, complete with “Adults Only” disclaimer attached. All I can think of is those witches. “Bubble, bubble; toil and trouble,” indeed. Don’t get too close to the cauldron; that could be dangerous!

Seems to me the battle scenes with no armor in the Scottish play would be a lot more dangerous than any cauldron.

— LTM

Seems to me they’d have a big savings on woad, if it were chilly enough. When I was in college, I saw a commentary film on what had been done to Shakespeare in the eighteenth century, including a melodramatic scene added to *The Scottish Play* where Macduff stabbed the bad guy on stage and

delivered a pulp-hero-wins speech.
Hit's done been done wuss.

—JTM

With that thought in mind, I shall leave you.
Take care, and have a happy anniversary!

From: **John Hertz** November 8, 2007
236 S. Coronado Street No. 409, Los
Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

I did too notice "Ape" Lincoln, oh dear.
Culling 10 books a day! Roscoe! Good
luck!

Years ago I decided never to buy a book I
hadn't read. Generally when I violated this rule
I have regretted it. The question is not what
books you like, but what books you want at
hand.

Ben Yalow says, "Worldcons are impossible
to organize. NASFiCs are worse." I've been to
several; missed the 2007 one, alas.

Masquerades, like fanzines, require a let's-
try-it mentality.

November 12, 2007

Evidently, I left unanswered your question
who the senior FAPAn was. It's Jack Speer, the
only remaining charter member from 1937. Milt
Stevens and Robert Lichtman are more expert
than I.

From: **Rod E. Smith** November 15, 2007
730 Cline Street, Frankfort, KY 40601-
1034 USA
stickmaker@usa.net

Update to a Joy of High Tech I wrote a few
years ago. The results of the Gravity Probe B
satellite experiment are in. Frame drag, as
derived from Einstein's theories, is validated to
within one percent. :-)

Don't tell Petr Beckmann. Oh
you can't, he's dead. (Petr
Beckmann, Ph. D., author of the
brilliant polemic *The Health
Hazards of NOT Going Nuclear*
(1976), turned into a bizarre crank
who claimed that everything
purportedly explained by relativity
could actually be explained under
straight Newtonian mechanics.)

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Nov. 16, 2007
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Thank you for Vol. 6, No. 5.

No doubt everyone has seen the fires in
Southern California on television and read about
them in newspapers. No danger where I live.
But, tremendous amounts of ash falling,
horrendous winds, and very high temperatures.
The high winds finally stopped, but the
temperature remained high. On Monday
October 22 my power was off for 12 to 14
hours. I don't know exactly how long as I was

asleep when it came back on. After a few days
the temperature decreased. Then on Friday
night October 26 and Saturday October 27 we
had a little rain. It was just enough to wet the
ground. It has been reported that some of the
fires were started by arsonists. It is my belief
that people who start fires like this should be
sent to prison for life. If any lives are lost in the
fire the arsonist should receive the death
penalty.

**My cousin Wade lives in Malibu.
After the flames died down I
called him. The fire hadn't got
near his house, but he had
nevertheless been evacuated,
memorabilia of his father in hand.**

On September 18 I watched *Rogue Waves*
on the History Channel. It was truly frightening.
Waves 60, 70, 80, 90 feet high in the ocean that
seem to come out of nowhere. They are
responsible for the disappearance of many ships.
The ones that survive may rightly be considered
lucky. It made me consider never going out on
the ocean again.

I watched the premier episode of *Bionic
Woman* (broadcast on September 26).
Interesting was when after the operation she was
laying in bed with a bandage over her right eye.
They started to remove it when there was a
slight break. When the scene resumed they
were removing it from the left eye. ☺ I won't
watch any future episodes.

From October 10 to October 16 I was in
Virginia Beach, Virginia for my Navy ship
reunion. It was quite enjoyable as usual. The
reunion was also held there in 1999. Unlike that
year I did not rent a car and do additional
sightseeing.

As one of the thirty other people who
nominated *Heinlein's Children*, one of the sixty
others who voted it first place, one of the eight
who nominated *Alexiad*, and who also
nominated you for best Fan writer—you are
welcome.

George W. Price: You are correct that if
people are suffering from poverty that keeping
wages high will not solve the problem and that
it "is a prime illustration of the old dictum that
for any problem there is a solution that is
simple, clear, and wrong." This is basically the
same argument as for the "Living Wage" that is
just two fancy words for a higher minimum
wage.

Once again a thoroughly enjoyable issue.
But, I just don't seem to have much to say.

**Thanks for your help. Rod
Smith's and my articles on
battlecruisers were republished.**

— JTM

From: **Jim Stumm** November 10, 2007
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223-
0029 USA

E.B. Frohvet: Launching a Space Shuttle to
high Earth orbit by using 4 solid fuel boosters
sounds feasible, even if you don't strip it to

reduce mass. Obviously, 4 boosters would give
you a higher terminal velocity, thus a higher
orbit, than 2 boosters. You'd have to do the
calculation (which is beyond my ability) to find
out what particular orbit you could reach in this
way. The only problem I see is that the
acceleration would be higher, which might result
in unbearably high G forces on the crew.

Rod E. Smith: I agree with most of what you
say about the Space Shuttle, but I wouldn't say
that taking an Orbiter to the Moon is stupid.
what it is, is inelegant, from an engineering
standpoint, to carry along useless extra weight.
But if your goal is to achieve an objective
quickly and cheaply, then using off-the-shelf
equipment, even if it isn't perfectly suited to the
job, may make sense. The advantage of the
Space Shuttle, and unmanned Atlas and Delta
rockets, is that they already exist. NASA could
use them, with minor modifications, to slap
together a quick and dirty Moon mission that
could be launched in months rather than years.
The key idea is refueling the Shuttle in LEO.
We routinely refuel military aircraft in mid-air.
Why is refueling spacecraft in orbit so out of the
question? What is really stupid is using manned
spacecraft to haul freight into orbit or up to the
ISS. Use Atlas or Delta for that instead.

From "Mining The Sky," by John S. Lewis
I get these numbers: the delta-V to launch any
vehicle from Earth's surface to low Earth orbit
(LEO) is 8 kilometers/second. The delta-V from
LEO to orbiting around the Moon is 3.2 k/s and
the same again to return to LEO, so 6.4 k/s for
the round trip. From this I conclude that a
Shuttle couldn't go to the Moon using thrusters
alone. But if the Shuttle is put into orbit with
the external tank still attached, and the ET is
refueled using a second launch of an Atlas or
Delta "tanker," that should give it enough fuel to
do the job.

For a landing on the Moon, use a LEM
carried in the Shuttle cargo bay. Don't land the
Shuttle itself.

Any vehicle returning from the Moon
approaches Earth at about 25,000 miles/hour.
This is far too fast to land a Shuttle. The leading
edges of the wings and tail would burn off. So
before it reaches Earth's atmosphere, you need
a rocket burn to reduce its speed to about
17,000 m/h to put it back into LEO. Then
separate from the ET, and it can land normally.

But NASA won't do any such thing because
sensible space programs are not NASA's highest
priority. Their chief aim now is to spend as
much money as they can get Congress to
appropriate, in order to preserve the health of
NASA and the jobs of its employees, and
secondly, to channel substantial money to their
aerospace cronies. NASA today is mainly
interested in pork barrel spending; it's Not
About Space Anymore.

**Any proposal can easily find
opposition from the proponents of
competing proposals.**

Evelyn C. Leeper: I mentioned only the 2
Presidents who lived in Buffalo, but if you want
to include those who died here as well, we can

add McKinley. As for Buffalo being less than eager to play up the connection, au contraire. The center of Buffalo in a sense, from which our radial streets radiate, is Niagara Square. Smack in the center of it is a huge obelisk which is the McKinley Monument. I believe this is the only monument to any President in Buffalo. Some others have streets named after them, but McKinley has that too. Bishop Timon High School, which I attended for 4 years, is on McKinley Parkway.

Trinlay Khadro: You refer to a Polygamist forcing his underage daughter to marry one of his much older friends, but it would be just as despicable if a Monogamist forced his underage daughter, etc., or if a Vegetarian forced, etc. Would such a crime justify persecuting all monogamists or all vegetarians? There is no necessary connection between polygamy and this crime.

Also, you mention a polygamist with many children by different women on AFDC. Men don't have to marry the women to do that, so again, there's no necessary connection to polygamy. In certain urban neighborhoods, men having children by numerous women and not supporting any of them, is common as dirt. If the government gives away free money, it's inevitable that some people will game the system to get some of it for themselves.

Is your argument that polygamy itself should be illegal because many polygamists are bad men who do nasty things? That's like saying the Catholic Church should be outlawed because many priests are pedophiles.

Don't go giving people ideas.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** November 29, 2007
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H, Jersey City, NJ 07302-3787 USA
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Alexiad, October 2007:

I've also been trying to limit the growth of my collection, lately. Some books I hand out at meetings of my local SF club; some I leave on the freebie table at cons (one man's trash, etc.), though I usually check to see if a dealer friend wants them first.

"According to the current thesis of espionage novels, the greatest threat to the highly successful but distrusted double agent should be his own people . . ." One of the things I disliked about Joe Haldeman's *All My Sins Remembered* was the idea that the agency that sent out the protagonist would destroy him so thoughtlessly. Only if your aim is to make your other agents defect or disappear.

Increasingly we are seeing genres where the only research for new works is from previous works of the genre. The detachment becomes profound. I'd like to write a novel where a reader of current fantasy is suddenly transported into a real medieval-style fantasy world, but

she'd die about Chapter Five, and the book wouldn't be salable anyway.

Review of the movie, 300: "the Persians as grotesques, with insanely improbable war animals . . . and the Xerxes as a human gargoyle." An essay about the film (which I haven't been able to find again) put it in the context of what the writer called the "subjective approach" of comics. The wolf the young Leonidas fights isn't really six feet tall at the shoulder; it just seemed that way to him. There wasn't really a huge, unfenced, bottomless pit in the Sparta town square. (According to ancient accounts, the Spartans threw Persian envoys down a well.) Xerxes wasn't really nine feet tall, the Persians weren't really that grotesque — they just seemed that way to the Greeks.

Speaking of faux ancients, for me, Kevin "Lucius Vorenus" McKidd is Dan Vasser, the "Journeyman". I'd forgotten his roles in *Rome* and *The Last Legion*.

Review of NASFic 2007: "We ran into Taras Wolansky in the lobby, where made his usual invidious comment." (Omission in original.) My first reaction was, wow, that was a pretty nasty hit-and-run: too vague an attack to be refutable. On second thought, though, the remark didn't make any sense: as far as I can recall, all I said was that I found the con a disappointment. And I'm easy to please: I had a great time at all the legendarily ill-run conventions, like ConDigeo and the New Orleans Worldcon. (Invidious: "Tending to rouse ill will . . . implying a slight . . . envious". Maybe you meant it as a synonym for "critical".)

This reminds me of when, a few years ago, Harlan Ellison discovered to his surprise that the phrase, "liver and lights", which he'd been using for fifty years (as in "rip out his", etc.), didn't mean what he thought it did.

Richard Dengrove: Your rendition of my remarks about the fall of the Soviet Union is rather garbled. See the June, 2007 *Alexiad*. I don't want to repeat the material here. Briefly, Reagan forced the Soviets to spend billions in hard currency (especially on Afghanistan and Nicaragua) while limiting their hard currency earnings. He moved weapons development into high-tech areas the Soviets could not afford to match. Thus, we see in the arms control negotiations of the period the Soviets trying to lower the cost of competing with the U.S., and especially trying to stop Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. And then throwing in the towel.

True, some on the Left argue that the USSR was at the point of collapse in 1980 (precisely the opposite of what they said at the time!), and that Reagan gave it a new lease on life. It's like arguing that Hitler would have been defeated sooner if the U.S. had not entered World War II — or that Qaddafi giving up his WMDs two weeks after Saddam was captured was just a coincidence.

You haven't been slithering in the sump of paleoconservative

revisionist history. Look at Bruce Russett's *No Clear and Present Danger* (1972, 1997) for a belief that everything would have been all right if the U.S. had not entered World War II.

— JTM

You also garble my views on the fall of Rome (also from the June *Alexiad*), a subject upon which I have never come to any conclusions. There's a progression — from citizen army, to volunteer army, to conscript army, to barbarian mercenaries — that ultimately left Rome vulnerable to those last. Hardly the only factor, though. Given that the decline of Rome took decades, if not generations, a single crop failure in Gaul is unlikely to be a sufficient explanation.

Darrell Schweitzer: Unlike ancient Rome, there's plenty of social mobility in American society. It shows up in IRS statistics. Also, as of 2007, at least eight of the top ten richest Americans are self-made men. (The other two are the libertarian Koch brothers, who inherited a small business and grew it into the largest privately held firm in America.)



Rod E. Smith: **"The Shuttle . . . lacks sufficient heat shielding to survive reentry from a Lunar return."** Not possible to shed velocity gradually, e.g., by skipping off the atmosphere?

Alexis Gilliland: Nice to see you and Lee again. I hope you have luck recovering your originals. (Don't know how artists can bear to let them go in the first place!) If I can find my files from when I edited *Interdimensional Journal* in the early Eighties, I'll see if I have anything. (I know I had some Rotsler doodles . . .)

Dainis Bisenieks: Nice to see you at Philcon. If I were giving Jack Vance to a newbie, I would probably go with his award winners, "The Dragon Masters" and "The Last Castle" or his most influential work, *The Dying Earth*. I was not impressed by the fantasy, *Lyonnesse*, or its sequels; I think Vance benefits from the discipline of construing fantasy stories as SF. Among his later works, *Night Lamp* (1996) made my jaw drop; at the age of 80 he was suddenly writing again as if in his prime of

thirty years earlier.

From: **Sue Burke** November 29, 2007
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Julius Caesar (Ave!) and I crossed paths again, this time in Seville, Spain. Around 69 B.C., Julius, then a mere quaestor, founded the port city of Colonia Julia Romula Hispalis on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, modestly naming it after himself and the former Carthaginian town of Ispal, which had been on that site until the Roman army cleared it out a century earlier. Julius built a bustling city that copied Rome in miniature, then returned home determined to be more than a provincial lieutenant governor — and the rest is history. And legend.

Not much remains of Hispalis's glory days, though, thanks to the Vandals, who preceded me in 426 A.D. The lack of ruins may explain the lack of stray cats in Seville. They were common in Rome's ruins, since they are legally entitled to live there, though it may be different in other parts of Italy.

So vandalism has a long history.
 Was Xena involved?

— JTM

I came not to praise Caesar but to attend the XXVth Hispacon, Spain's national science fiction convention, held Nov. 2 to 4. It was also called Ishbiliya-Con 2007, drawing on the name of Seville under its Muslim reign from 712 to 1248 A.D. I returned home with only eight books and two magazines weighing down my suitcase. My convention report will appear later this year in Concatenation, a British zine, www.concatenation.org, but in it I don't mention the brew pub next to my hotel. Hand-crafted beer has come only lately to Spain, and my husband and I did our best to help it succeed.

Shortly after I returned home, King Juan Carlos I of Spain was at the 17th Ibero-American Summit and told President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, “¿Por qué no te callas?” (“Why don't you shut up?”) thus giving voice to the fervent wish of hundreds of thousands of people in the world, including almost every single Spaniard.

Overnight, the recording of his Highness saying those five little words became a popular mobile phone ring tone. You can also buy them immortalized on a tee-shirt or listen to them transformed into music mixes ranging from techno-beat to pasodoble. The auction price for the Internet domain porquenotecallas.com reached 10,000 euros.

One restaurant has even created a menu item called “Por qué no te callas.” The ingredients include two eggs (a reference to male anatomy representing courage) served up in an arrangement reproducing the Spanish flag.

It's the phrase of the year, along with “¡Viva

el Rey!” Long live the King! Even if — or maybe because — he sometimes transgresses protocol.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** November 11, 2007
 921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,
 PA 19143-3310 USA

Durned if I'm going to count my books, but it was easy enough to measure and find that they made about 510' row; somewhat over half on the first floor, where (besides a couple of smaller things) are seven cases 3' wide and seven shelves high, the bottom having foot-high books and all the others double occupancy. Of those on the second floor, four were contrived to fit in the spaces behind doors, which cover them when open. Some carefully measured construction here eliminated almost all front-row occupancy by paperbacks. Those and other small format are about a fourth of the whole in shelf space. Large formats are about a third: from the large format nor common for fiction up to the Norton Facsimile Shakespeare First Folio and the *Lunar Orbiter Atlas of the Moon*. At the other extreme are a few of the Little Blue Books published ever so long ago by E. Haldeman-Julius.

(I once toyed with the thought of buying a pictorial volume titled *Nun*, an item different to ask for . . .)

Like going to a newstand and asking for the magazine *Unknown*. Which was why JWCjr made it *Unknown Worlds*.

From the data given, you could get a number; I will not bother. I've reckoned in those issues I could get on the cheap of *Horizon*, *American Heritage*, and *Smithsonian* (all A.H. hardcovers except one, and a few years of softcovers, all but one or two of those from a single purchase), but not *National Geographic*. Nor kid books awaiting the next generation, or my son's modest collection. Music, all on vinyl, takes up another eight feet . . . for Anna Russell we might want to subtract a tad. I have no SF/F zines except those on which I did editorial work.

Dirt-cheap or free library discards account for most recent acquisitions, such as *Tycho & Kepler* by Kitty Ferguson, which a branch library had for a mere four years; it looks so pristine that it may not have been borrowed even once. Curiously absent from that book is the portrait of Tycho from some late 16th c. book, flanked by the coats of arms of families presumably ancestral, among them Rosencrans and Guldestere. When I saw it reproduced in Willy Ley's *Watchers of the Skies* (Viking, 1963), I said, Aha! A few years ago *TLS* devoted a page to the original book and the question of whose copy Shakespeare might have seen. *Res ipsa loquitur*, is all I can say.

The question was, did Tom Stoppard see that book?

I let this sit until a week after Philcon. Spent my time there mostly hanging out and shooting

the breeze. And feeling normal in fannish company. I have long known that fannish crowds, even without giveaway details of costume, look and sound different from mundane ones. Years ago, at an airport departure lounge, I instantly identified the group of fans bound for the worldcon.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** November 24, 2007
 22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
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catsmeouch@yahoo.com

Ah yes, we are now heading down the backstretch of 2007 — from now on the time will fly by until we have to remember to write 2008 on our checks. On with the show!

Agh, I more-or-less stopped buying books a while ago. Mind you, I still buy a book every now and then, but not mass purchasing. I have absolutely no idea how many books I have and most of them are paperbacks. Let me see I actually have ten bookcases with most of my professional books taking up two of them and stacked on other shelves.

I like the new 3 *Musketeers* mint bar. I like the small size—so I am locked into eating what is the size I should be eating (well, “should” is a bit harsh . . .). I seriously doubt it will be around very long since the cost of it is not that much less than the cost of bars twice its size. I am also having trouble locating anyone selling the bar — but have found the bags of *minis* readily available.

Over the past few years I have been building a stock of emergency supplies — theoretically enough food (etc.) for 6 months. I wonder at the possibility of everything being ruined since it is sitting in the basement on the floor and, of course, that is what is going to be the first area to have problems if the emergency is of a moisture nature. I still need a suture kit and a radio — but other than that, I think I have covered the bases. My sister has been pushing me to get the supplies in for a long time. Right now the inciting cause is avian flu and what it will do. Historically, the facts point to, at some stage, the avian flu being able to be transmitted from person to person. If/what that happens, one needs to avoid any grouping of people — and if there are quarantines one **must** stay put.

Congratulations to **Chris Garcia** on winning TAFF.

It seems that the *USPS* arranged the new postal rates/sizes to just miss the most widely used sizes — i.e. that you'll **think** the rate will be less, but when you ask . . . There are also glaring holes in their brochure (in case I have not mentioned it before) such as mentioning large envelopes and then blithely forgetting to define a large envelope and the base cost. I often mail items in the small padded envelope and figured out (with lightning-like intelligence) quickly that this item did **not** meet the definition of an envelope since it is more than the 1/41' base. I simply could not find the basic cost of a package — only the additional ounce add-ons. So, until I have the rates more deeply ingrained in my consciousness or find a brochure that has more complete information, I'll be spending

more time in line at the P.O.

For *R-Laurraine* — *Cosequin* (*Nutramaxx* I believe) is the original joint treatment with *Dasuquin* being their new product (and more choices for both the canine and equine formulations than the feline) — and *Seraquin* by (agh — without looking it up it is something like *Engleheim-Boeinger* as the manufacturer) as the new kid on the block.

Eventually I may write about the “new” whirlpool bath. I know all construction takes longer and costs more than planned, but this is getting ridiculous. As of right now — the tub was installed (in concrete) and does not work. The electricians just left (again) and to my untrained eye/mind the now floating outlet under there does not bode well for staving off electrocution — there is a tale in there, but I am still a bit touchy . . . The manufacturer was called by the contractor, but I have yet to hear from them. Their representative has to come out and take a look at the leaky water jets. The irony is that (there are three “people” working separately — the contractor, the electrician, and the plumber) and each did what the installation specifications said to do — yet when put together, nothing works (or at least works in a safe manner). There does not appear to be enough space, now that the tub is “in place” for them to move the outlet to a safer spot and I worry that the only true solution is to take the tub out and start over with the roughed out space — refer to the previous comment about concrete.

Remember what happened in The First Men in the Moon when the three workers got into a jurisdictional dispute over who should stoke the fire, and adjourned to the pub to resolve the matter? (The fire went out, the Cavorite cooled, and a disaster occurred.)

So, when this is over — one way or another, I will write about it — so far I have also destroyed a cd player by dropping it in the tub while trying to get the thing (tub that is) to work — but it luckily would not since the outlet actually touched the motor. Sigh.

Lisa — I missed out on a trek to see MRI diagnostics on a Hanoverian mare — but since I was fairly certain the results (after just talking with a friend who was going with the owner for the long drive) would be serious navicular disease, I only missed out on actually seeing the procedure. Unfortunately the owner cannot understand what this means — he persists in thinking that as long as he pays for the very expensive therapeutic shoeing each month that she will go sound. It is **not** going to happen and he took out a second mortgage to buy this mare as a using dressage animal. At 7 years old the mare has a long (potential) life and he still does not understand that his fallback of breeding her is not “viable” since the mare’s sister also has similar problems. This has at least some genetic component. Caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place — can’t use/breed/sell (if you

are honest with full disclosure) this mare. Of course the horse is a sweet one I am told and I am glad I am only on the sidelines watching and neither the owner nor the veterinarian of record. FYI — the mare was even lame at prepurchase and, based on a slight injury with the trailer, was thought (?) to be sound. If I were the owner, I’d be taking a long hard look at the diagnostics that were done at that time and then finding out the local standard of care for the exam with this levels of use/age in a horse. Of course none of this helps the horse.



Thanks for the video clip about the cat trying to wake its slave. Everybody who sees it says “That’s my cat!”

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** November 30, 2007
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In *Alexiad* V6#5, it says the deadline for the next issue is December 1. That would be tomorrow. Since I try to observe deadlines, I should write an LoC right now.

Lisa describes an awesome project to reduce the number of books in your house. It seems a little bit unfannish, but I guess it has to be done. Your house is a bit larger than mine, but there are two of you and only one of me. At least, you begin with the knowledge that you have 12,000 books. I don’t know that much. A lot of the publications in my house are prozines. I have most of the prozines that were ever published in the US, but I’m probably short about a hundred. I don’t seem to have enough enthusiasm to go out and buy the two issues of *Miracle Stories* or the five issues of *Comet* or stuff like that.

Joseph is correct about the things he describes as being wrong with the United Way. However, that isn’t all. In Los Angeles, police don’t want to donate to the United Way. This is because of some of the organizations that are financed by the United Way. Back in 1966, a year after the Watts Riots, the Muslims and the police got into a full fledged infantry battle at the Muslim Temple on Broadway. In later years, it has been referred to as the Battle of Broadway. A couple years after the battle, a Muslim university was built across the street from the temple. If there was another battle, the

Muslims could catch the police in crossfire. The Muslim university is one of the organizations financed by the United Way.

Yes, there is that also. Here it was the Boy Scouts — or technically, the refusing to fund them until they agreed to certain requirements.

— JTM

Until Joseph mentioned it, I had forgotten that Archon ever existed. I had a membership, but I didn’t bother attending. I didn’t care for the hotel’s policy, although I considered it fair because of the behavior of the regular Archon attendees. The practice of making a reservation at the con hotel and then canceling it as soon as you could find a cheaper room at another hotel isn’t very ethical. The hotel is rightfully pissed at the regular attendees. However, I’m not a regular attendee, and it would never occur to me to do such a thing. So I didn’t feel like putting up with the policy. Also, NASFICs just aren’t very interesting. Years ago, I thought NASFICs were a good idea, but I don’t think that any longer.

I guess I should tell you the awful truth. I’m the one responsible for Dave Langford winning the Fan Writer Hugo this year. That one vote against Scalzi was mine. I felt I’d rather see a fan writer win the fan writer Hugo rather than someone I didn’t consider to be a fan writer at all. Never underestimate the importance of those last place votes on the Hugo ballot. If Langford and I ever meet, I think he owes me a beer.

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** Dec. 1, 2007
6900 Cote St-Luc Road #708, Montreal,
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Hi this is Jeff from Jonestown . . .
(Don’t drink the Kool-Aid!)

This year is the first time I haven’t made a wordcount win for NaNoWriMo. After a valiant effort, I finished at 46,548 words. I did score a moral victory though: this year I learned how to generate automatic text in Microsoft Word. I could have cheated and used that to make up the words I was missing, but that wouldn’t have sat well with my conscience. So, self-esteem won out.

November also proved to be a difficult month for me for other reasons: my older cat Boots was diagnosed with jaundice in late September. This meant his liver had failed. I could have him put down then, but he still seemed to want to be with me. All I could do was to keep him comfortable and loved until the end.

The end came. Boots Boman died of complete organ failure November 22nd. He wasn’t able to use his limbs the day before. I helped him to get what was his last meal on Earth. I made an appointment to have him put to sleep the next day, but he didn’t make it. I was an emotional wreck for a week after, and I still miss him horribly. I’ll always love my kitty.

I’d intended to have a dedication to him in

the free Lulu.com volume I'd get of my NaNo win. Now that it didn't happen I'll have his dedication elsewhere.

I am so sorry.

I've heard of Madeleine Engle's passing in many places now. *A Wrinkle in Time* was one of my favorite novels in my youth. / Robert Jordan's death will also leave his *Wheel of Time* storyline unfinished. He'd hoped to finish it before his death too.

I recently saw **300** myself. Leonidas seems to bellow a lot, doesn't he? I recently saw a funny clip from **Robot Chicken** based on that fact. / I really should have given in a convention report for Con*Cept 2007 when it was timely and fresh in my mind. As a program participant, it meant a very different view.

I saw a great t-shirt. It said
"THIS IS SPARTA!" above a
muddy sandal print.

— JTM

From: **Marty Helgesen** December 1, 2007
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New
York 11565-1406 USA

Early in October I was looking through some of the many piles of paper that surround me and discovered the August *Alexiad*. OIP! I missed the deadline. A few days later the October issue arrived. I realized I should write a loc soon, instead of waiting until the last minute. Of course I did. Earlier today I found the August issue again. Searching in the most likely places led me to the October issue, which confirmed my guess that the deadline is today. *psi*.

Starting with an August announcement, congratulations on becoming a great-uncle. Some years ago my sister telephoned to tell me that one of her daughters had given birth. In the course of the conversation she said, "Now you're a great-uncle." I replied, "I've been a great uncle for years."

I've seen the phrase about the clocks striking Thirteen many times, but seeing it in your review I realized something. It's a brilliant way of indicating an alien society in a few words, but I don't think it would ever happen. A society might adopt the practice of telling time from 0001 to 2400, but I think that if it retained clocks that struck the hour the clocks would strike only 1 to 12. I think that if people had to count strokes up to 24 it would be too easy to lose count in the late afternoon and evening. They might automatically convert 7 strokes in the evening to "1900" in noting the time but I think the strokes would not go beyond 12.

My thanks to Johnny Carruthers for the review of *Confessions of a Teen Sleuth*. I didn't read Nancy Drew but I did read the Hardy Boys and probably some of the other characters Nancy encounters in the book so I expect to enjoy it. I just checked and several public libraries in the county in which I live have it — how did we live without computers? — so I'll have no trouble finding a copy.

As I recall, the "This Knowledge Must Die"

ads for the Ancient Mystic Order Rosae Crucis — I googled for full name — were full or half page ads.

You say you telephoned an organization in Louisville and left a message but no one returned your call. You then emailed them and got a quick response. It might say something about old and new forms of communication, but it also might say something about the person who handles phone messages and the person who handles e-mails to the organization.

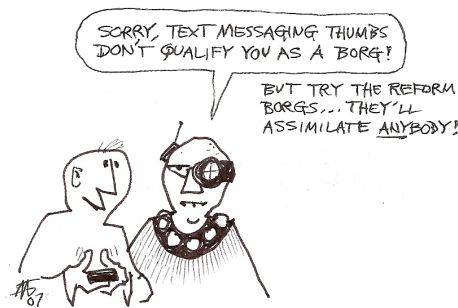
Hurrying on to the October issue, I remember the book *Will Mrs. Major Go to Hell?* and recognized your headline as an allusion to it.

Martin Morse Wooster mentions that you can't copyright stock characters but you can trademark them. Unfortunately, that fact does not stop entities such as Disney from lobbying (successfully) to extend copyright to ridiculous periods of time.

Not to mention their terms for
doing a movie of *The Star Beast*:
ALL rights, including of course the
original copyright.

E. B. Frohvet says he has heard it said explicitly that the Bible is the final authority on all subjects, whether or not they are mentioned therein. Some people, Christian and non-Christian, are less gifted than others in clarity of thought and expression. I wonder what one of the people he has heard say that would say if asked, for example, what the Bible says about how often the oil should be changed in a particular vehicle. If he replied that it doesn't say anything about that question, I wonder what he would say if asked, "How, then, is it an authority on that subject?"

Sheryl Birkhead discusses the new postage rates. The rationale I've seen is that the Postal Service modified the classes to reflect the actual cost of handling various sizes and weights. In addition to the clerks having an outline showing the size above which the higher rates apply, they have a plastic sheet with a quarter inch slot. If an item fits through the slot it goes at the cheaper rate. If it doesn't the higher rates apply.



I'm glad she mentioned Verizon cutting the copper wire connection of people who get *Fios*. I still have dialup, although high speed is available, and I've been thinking about changing. I wondered about losing the

traditional wire connection. I don't want to lose it even though I do have a cell phone, primarily for emergencies. I keep it turned off unless I want to make a call or I expect a possible call from one of the two people I've given the number to.

My niece and her husband have
no telephone land line. That has
both advantages and
disadvantages.

— JTM

Robert S. Kennedy is correct that the phrase "over and out" is contradictory, but when I was in the Army I heard people use it. I assume they learned it from movies before they entered the Army and were taught the correct usage of prowords. (I just put Military Radio Proword into Google and learned that "proword" is short for "procedure word". If I had ever been taught that, I had forgotten it.) FM24-18 has a list of authorized prowords which says: "OUT This is the end of my transmission to you and no answer is required or expected." "OVER This is the end of my transmission to you and a response is necessary. Go ahead. transmit."

Of course polygamy is not as serious as human sacrifice, Thuggee, and Suttee. Those extreme examples illustrate that free exercise of religion cannot be absolute. Whether polygamy is sufficiently incompatible with our society to put it outside the scope of the free exercise clause then becomes a matter of prudent judgment.

I didn't say Jeffrey Allan Boman was a snake or reminded me of a snake. I said his use of the phrase "stomping grounds" reminded me of that newspaper story.

Huzzah! I finished at 11:29. I'll make the midnight deadline unless my pumpkin gets a flat tire.

From: **AL du Pisani** December 3, 2007
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Between my last letter and this one, I changed jobs. I have always been told that changing jobs is one of the more stressful events you can experience in your career, but I did not believe it. Until I experienced it. And found that I slept badly, before saying "Goodbye" to my old job, and "Hello" to my new one. Once I settled down a little bit, I could sleep again.

But it is going to take a lot longer to really settle down in my new job than I had thought. The work is mostly the same, the way of doing things are different. But I had been looking forward to a change for two years now, and I am glad that I finally managed the change.

South African politics are as messed up as ever, and with the much vaunted ANC leadership elections coming soon, most of the political talk is about it. We will see what happens, but currently it looks as if the incumbent (Thabo Mbeki) is running against the challenger (Jacob Zuma), and the challenger has most of the support. Even though he is not off

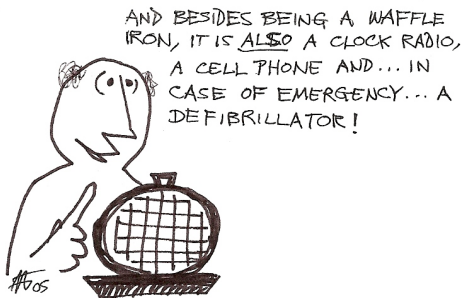
the hook yet for some corruption charges. Hopes for a third or compromise candidate have so far not panned out, and we can expect plenty of political excitement in the near future. (For me, political excitement is overrated: I prefer my politicians dull and competent.)

I read and enjoyed the reviews and the con reports. It is becoming clear that this will have to be the window through which I experience fandom, at least for the next couple of years, until such time as I paid off my debts, and can come and visit again. Thank you for this window into an interesting world, one which I am probably too shy to enter myself, but do enjoy being around.

Good luck, and have a good Christmas season, and a happy New Year.

Being in a job you don't like is always hard. It was a pleasure to walk out of the office in Richmond (the job I had before my current one). Best wishes to you in your changed life and for the new year to come.

— JTM



From: **Lloyd Penney** December 3, 2007
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I might be a little late getting to this issue, but I hope I can still get in the local . . . here are some quick comments on *Alexiad* whole number 35.

Weeding books is never fun, because the choices are always hard to make. However, they do get made, and I do have a good used book shop I can take them to. The sorrow at losing some books is made up for the adventure in seeing what you can find and take away once they're traded in. Some books are kept forever, but other make up the economy of the used book trade, which is rapidly dwindling.

I'm late in writing because of lots of work at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and it is partially, if not mostly, funded by the United Way of Canada and of Greater Toronto. Even with that, I prefer to make my charitable donations directly, instead of seeing middlemen take a slice off the top.

Hi, Johnny . . . *Starlog* 52 was a long time ago. I remember at a one-short convention in

Toronto called Millennium having Kerry O'Quinn as a GoH, and it was a fine time, with him and Mike Jittlov providing entertainment and information. This convention took place about 25 years ago, too.

Hercules . . . you probably remember some pretty bad animated Hercules cartoons from the 60s with a young centaur named Newton. The source of Hercules' power was a ring he slipped on his finger; he was just a handsome schlubb without it. Hercules lived in the hills of Caledon . . . when I lived in Brampton, just north of there was the hills of Caledon for real, and got razed about that on a regular basis.

(References to IMDB reminds me . . . the producer of the Bastards of Kirk video I worked on some time ago won his battle with IMDB for listing on the massive database, so I now have an actor's IMDB listing.)

Tuckercon attendees didn't have much interest in Tucker? A shame, but no surprise. We've tried to give the dimension of time to fandom to newer fans, but for most of them, a con is simply an event, and it's gone, and another event comes. Our fandom just isn't theirs, and there's no reason it should be, I suppose. We seem to be preserving our history for ourselves alone. I hope someone might take an interest in all this fannish folly after we're gone, and this whole hobby is wound up.

I miss Scott Patri. He had the problem down pat; what passes for "fans" these days are consumers, not participants.

We won't be going to Denver, but have decided to work on the Montréal Worldcon. Already, it is markedly different from the last Toronto Worldcon; things are happening immediately and the committee is being as inclusive and outreaching as possible; a very good sign. We'll see if we can do what we'd like to do.

I think the local Serial Dinners are around the letter H or I. It's very possible they went through their China period. We've been invited to join the Serial Dinners, but we are happy with our two monthly pubnights; both places know us well, and both treat us very well indeed.

Hello to Jeff in Montreal . . . my surgery is just over one year ago, but I will have more in a couple of years. My ophthalmologist says my retinas seem to be staying where they are, but I now have the beginnings of a cataract forming in my right eye. No real problems; I gather it's a day surgery. Working where I am now, an institute concerned with vision care and health, I am in the best possible place to be.

About fifteen years ago, my aunt had a cataract operation. Her daughter took her down, waited, and picked her up in about an hour. Science marches on.

When I posted the letter that appeared in this issue on my LiveJournal, I got a snarky remark from an anonymous poster saying that he was tired of all the nonsense being perpetuated about

Leslie McFarlane being the author of some of the Hardy Boys books. He didn't offer any fact, but only bile. I did check my sources; he didn't care to refute them. Maybe someone else can correct me, or offer alternate proof.

I read a newspaper article about him and his writing career while at Buccaneer in '98. And while that was going on, Howard W. Garis (as in Uncle Wiggly the goat) was author of some of the Tom Swift books.

— JTM

Well, a page and half may have to do under pressed circumstances. I am typing this at my evening job before I actually start it, so I will e-mail it directly to you and to myself at home for eventual installation on my LiveJournal archive. Many thanks, and see you next issue.

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Nancy Martsch, commenting on "The Usual".

Jack McDevitt, glad to hear from us.

The political arguments are on notice. I'm tired of getting calls saying, "Hi, I'm Virgil Samms, and I'm asking you to vote for my friend Rod Kinnison . . ." and when that bleeds into here it's ruinous.



FROM INSUFFERABLE SCIENCE-FICTION

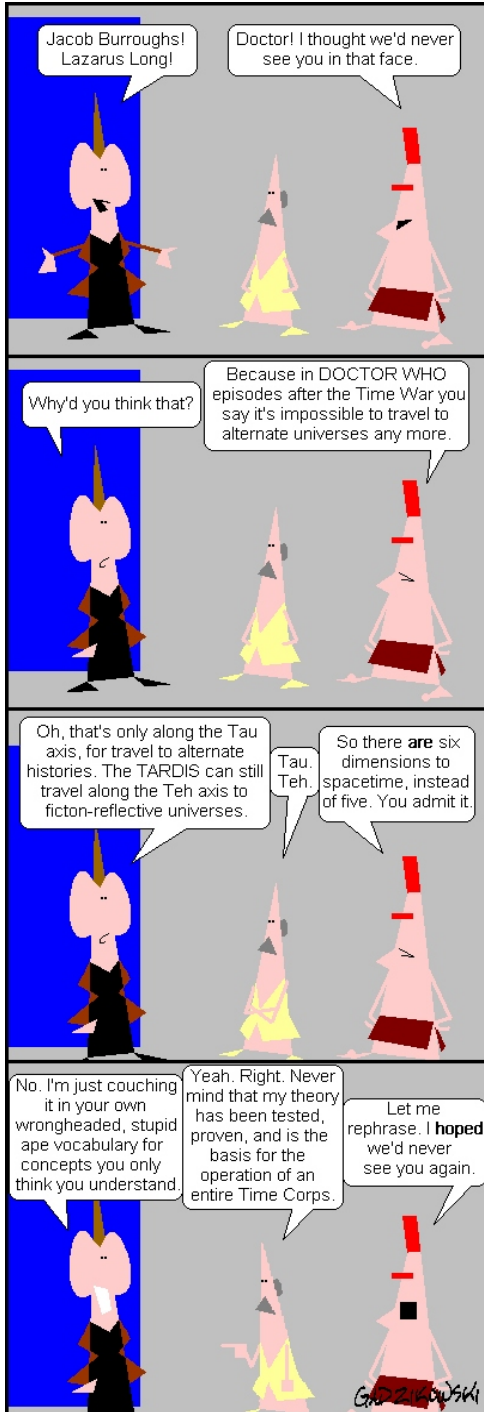
The bug-eyed monster looked at the brass braed babe and waved its tentacles angrily.

"What's this! I told ya I wanted well done not sushi! I don't give a feghoot what kind of special it is!"

— "Gibbering Galactics of Ganymede", by Deborah Tabor

THE NUMBER OF THE DOCTOR

by Paul Gadzikowski



THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

... The *Discovery* bumped against the ice foot, and Captain Scott jumped over the side, floundered across the ice, and reached the top of a hillock. He struck a dramatic pose, as would look well in the *Illustrated London News*, stuck his flagpole in the snow, and said in a thrilling, heroic voice, as the Union Flag fluttered above: **"I CLAIM THIS CONTINENT FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE!!!"**

Then a shout arose from the ship.

About half a mile away, a small round ship was moored to the ice. A man in Esquimo furs could be seen marching resolutely to the top of another height, where he planted a red flag with a blue cross edged in white on a hill top. He said something.

Captain Scott ran down the hill, over to his own ship, and shouted up, "What the devil did he say?"

On the ship, Lieutenant Shackleton said, "I think he said, 'I claim this continent for the Kingdom of Norway! Ooo, isn't that lovely!'"

The captain marched resolutely towards the *Fram*. Midway between the two ships, on the edge of the ice, he met the Norwegian captain. "See here now," he said, "I have already claimed this piece of ice and snow for the British Empire, and there's just not room enough on this continent for the two of us."

"I do believe you are right," said Captain Amundsen, and pushed.

The captain stalked on board, little flakes of ice falling off his Burberry pullover. "We bloody well can't have that! We must prepare the..." his voice dropped to a nigh-whisper, "... most secret device."

"You mean the Fisher-Wells Torpedo?"

Captain Scott scowled at his subordinate. He was really only a merchant officer and didn't understand such things.

Down below in the hold of the *Discovery* was a terrifying, potent weapon, one that could blow a vast area — no one knew how much — into 17,670,002 microcells. It was this dreadful device that Captain Scott had descended into the depths of the ship to prepare for its use.

Little did he know of what his foe had wrought!

A floe floated in the devastated ruin of bergy bits and growlers, with two men atop it. Captain Scott stared at his enemy and said, "There's just not room enough on this continent for the two of us, so off you go!" He swung his arm and the Norwegian slid off the floe, into the water.

Then he struck a heroic pose, and pluckily declared, **"I CLAIM THIS CONTINENT FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE!!!"**

Down below, clutching the edge of the ice, himself being desperately clung to by Captain Amundsen, Lieutenant Shackleton said, "B-b-b-b-big deal."

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph & Major, Lisa

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

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

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