

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

What have I learned from experiencing a hurricane first hand?  
 The first thing I learned was that it can too happen here. Being a thousand miles inland no longer protects you from having your city crippled by a hurricane. Never again will I believe something cannot happen because of my geographic location.

The second thing I learned was how resilient civilization can be. Within hours, little enclaves of electricity were restored, enough so that people could get meals at a few restaurants. A few libraries got power back by Monday and were able therefore to let people charge cell phones and laptops.

The third thing I learned was that I was tougher than I thought. Before this, I never would have considered lugging a heavy laptop nearly a mile. But I did it because that was the only way I could recharge it and get on the net.

— Lisa

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Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2008**  
 Our **12th Anniversary** is **November 22, 2008**

The 54<sup>th</sup> Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **June 28, 2008** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Napoleon was the winner.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 1, 2008** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Deweycheatumnhowe became the first undefeated horse to win the Hambletonian but his absence in the Yonkers Trot means no Triple Crown for the trotters this year.

The 116<sup>th</sup> Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **October 4, 2008** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Deweychutmhowe was the winner in a dramatic match-race runoff after losing the second heat.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 1, 2008** at Freehold Raceway in Freehold, NJ. Art Official was the winner.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 18, 2008** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, OH. Shadow Play was the winner, in spite of a hoof separation, which means no Triple Crown for the pacers this year, either.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **October 25, 2008** at Yonkers Raceway.

The Breeders' Cup World Championships will be **October 24-25, 2008** at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, California, which you will remember from *Seabiscuit*. (They have a statue of him.)

Printed on October 7, 2008  
 Deadline is **December 1, 2008**

## Reviewer's Notes

Speaking as someone who has a Facebook page, I wonder about the community feeling the users have. You may style me hypokritos if you like. It is possible to use them as an auxiliary to connections. One of the happiest parts of my family life this year has been dealing with my Chism cousins. I met the daughters through Facebook. But then, I made sure I met them personally, and then through them, their parents. Hannah and Amanda, and their parents Jim and Marcia, are all good people, good to know, good to encounter, good to share relationships with. As we found out when we and the elder Chisms had dinner with Pete and Martha Cassidy, Martha being another relative eager to make family ties.

But Martha (and I) had memories of the days in Hopkinsville when cousins abounded. What will Hannah and Amanda have?

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



We regret to report the death of **Ralph Summers Plaisted** on **September 8, 2008**. Back in the sixties, Plaisted was talking with some snowmobiling friends, and the idea came up, “Why don’t we go to the North Pole?” Then he took it seriously, and organized two expeditions, the first in 1967, and the second (successful) one that reached the Pole on April 19, 1968. Plaisted was therefore leader of the first independently verified expedition to reach the pole by travelling over the ice, and very possibly the first overall.

**The Boys Admit Dad Did It.** In a public statement, Robert and Michael Meeropol have admitted that the deluge of evidence — the VENONA decrypts released in 1995, the testimony of Soviet agent Alexander Feliksov (in his book *The Man Behind the Rosenbergs* (2001)), the recently released Grand Jury testimony, and finally the recantation and confession of fellow agent Morton Sobell — has left them with no choice but to admit that their father Julius Rosenberg, Agent LIBERAL, was indeed a spy for the Soviets. But, their mother, first name ETHEL, who was a FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN, but did not work due to health, was framed and unjustly executed. Thus putting them in harmony with J. Edgar Hoover.

I finally got a copy of Nathaniel Philbrick’s book *Sea of Glory: America’s Voyage of Discovery, The U.S. Exploring Expedition 1838-1842* (2003) and made some observations. The Old Navy had some serious seniority problems, since Charles Wilkes was commanding a squadron of six ships as an independent command and still only had the rank of lieutenant — there weren’t any open slots for promotion, you see.

Wilkes also had personality problems, and it didn’t help that he sacked all the officers he disliked early enough that they could go home and write nasty letters about him to the Navy Department. He also had relative problems, being the great nephew of John Wilkes, and hence apparently a relative of John Wilkes Booth. Due to the early death of his mother, Charles was raised by his aunt, who had the patience of a saint. We know this because the aunt in question was St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The next time the Navy gave Charles Wilkes a ship, he managed to kill Prince Albert, nearly get the U.S. into yet another war, and inspire *Stars and Stripes Forever* (1998). Then he got promoted.

(Incidentally, Peter Tsouras, the maven of the alternate alternate history community, has just brought out his own take on this, *Britannia’s Fist* (Potomac Press, \$29.95), first of a trilogy. Presumably the Royal Navy will be able to sail the proper course to New Orleans and not confuse it with Biloxi.)

Honorary Lieutenant **Tul Bahadur Pun**, V.C., 6th Gurkha Rifles, has finally had the government recognize that he has strong enough ties with the United Kingdom. Remember that the Prime Minister himself has declared that he has nothing but respect for the armed forces. Among the petitioners for the government to give Tul Bahadur something physical was **Joanna Lumley** (as in “The New Avengers” and “Absolutely Fabulous”) whose father Captain (later Major) James Lumley owed his life to Tul Bahadur, during the fighting around Mogaung.

O thirty million English that babble of  
England’s might,  
Behold there are twenty heroes who lack  
their food to-night;  
Our children’s children are lisping to  
“honour the charge they made — “  
And we leave to the streets and the  
workhouse the charge of the Light  
Brigade!  
— Rudyard Kipling, “The Last of the Light  
Brigade”

Ayo Gurkhali.

## MONARCHIST NEWS

**Prince Kardam of Bulgaria**, oldest son and heir of **Simeon II**, was injured in an automobile accident near Madrid on **August 15, 2008**. His wife, **Princess Miriam Ungria**, was less severely injured. The prince had a fractured skull and hand injuries severe enough that double amputation had been considered, though in the end he only lost two fingers; he has been in a coma since the accident.

We regret to report the death of **Kniaz Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov**, known as Prince Michel Fedorovich Romanoff de Russie, in Paris, on **September 22, 2008**, and by an eerie coincidence, the death of **Kniaz Mikhail Andreievich Romanov**, in Sydney, also on September 22. The two princes were first cousins and both were born tomorganatic marriages, therefore ineligible to succeed. I don’t know if either of them ever ate at Romanoff’s in Los Angeles, and what they could have said to “Prince Michael Romanoff”, the boss there, born Herschel Gegzuin, would have been interesting.

## IT HAD TO BE WEREWOLVES

Review by Joseph T Major of

**STAKED**

by J. F. Lewis

(Pocket Books; 2008;

ISBN 978-1416547808; \$14.00)



John Simon the hypercritical dramatic critic also wrote a column for *Esquire*, not on plays or films, but on the English language. These were collected in a work with the paronomasiac title *Paradigms Lost; Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline* (1981). One column in particular discusses Erica Jong’s oeuvre, and one image Simon used struck me as particularly relevant to this discussion; the protagonist of the book in question has in perception and imagery reduced her boyfriend to a piston of extraordinary size and warmth. (Is Simon fannish? He learned to read English with *A Princess of Mars*.)

And this, I think, is the problem with the romance genre. In the bulk of them (I’m saying this to shut up the shrill chorus of “but not in this one!”), though such are very few and far between) the male lead exists only to be tamed and captured by the female lead. He is reduced to a piston of extraordinary size and warmth, if occasionally not so explicitly.

As for someone who has thrown a piston, the problem that grew as Chelsea Quinn Yarbro’s Count St. Germain series progressed was that St. Germain was a ninny. Yes, I’m talking about the novels; in the short stories in *The St. Germain Chronicles* there wasn’t time for him to do correspondence, so he had to act, but in the novels, time and again he would get into a situation of deperate peril and sit around writing letters, building an alchemical setup, picking up a new girlfriend, and expounding upon mystic powers, true love, and the false death. Anyone with that much money could buy his own country.

So with this book, which could be another Vampire Romance. Not quite. Far from being only the targets of the other protagonist, our protagonists have aims, goals, and attitudes of their own. They’re also targets, but that’s another matter. Or other things; if the fabled Buffy staked our protagonist Eric, he’d pull out the stake and kill her. Except, of course, Buffy couldn’t even get to Eric’s place of business. Network standards wouldn’t let a show in early

prime time venture into a strip club. (Okay, in fan fiction, but in fan fiction, Buffy would be bedding the other protagonist, Tabitha . . .)

Indeed, Eric lives in a world overflowing with legend and legendary creatures. As we notice in the opening chapter, when he gets involved in a knock-down drag-out fight with some werewolves. In the downtown of Void City. In the Transylvanian forest he couldn't try to escape the sunlight by tipping over a dumpster and dragging it the three blocks to the strip club.

Werewolves are merely Eric's latest problem. He's had a bad memory ever since his partner Roger had him embalmed, after his death. His former fiancée Marilyn has become his memory-provoker and general house-mother of the club. She doesn't want to become a vampire, unlike Eric's current bedmate Tabitha, one of the strippers. (Question; how can a vampire work in a facility that has a lot of reflective surfaces?)

Yes, there is a bit of **Hot Sex™** going on, both human and vampiric. Maybe that last should be **Cold Sex™**. Eric can get it up, even if it's blood he, er, ejaculates. It's the only fluid he's got, so he cries blood. (One wonders, nervously, what would happen if he sweated.)

Tabitha wants to become a vampire. In spite of his low opinion of her and the situation, Eric proceeds to do so. It's not the blood that's messy, it's the other removals that make for the problem. Lewis has constructed a complex structure of vampirism that doesn't quite match what others have. Wearing his home earth in his shoes wouldn't do Eric a bit of good. On the other hand, if he gets out of the sunlight quick enough, he can put out the fire and regenerate, even his clothing. Did I mention that these vampires catch fire in sunlight?

There is a ranking of vampires in this world, depending on their power. Eric is a Vlad, the most powerful; as I've said, he can survive a stake through the heart. Lesser vampires have fewer powers and more final endings. As for Tabitha . . .

Someone is out to get Eric, and having to fend off constant assaults by werewolves is only a part of it. Something is deeply wrong here, and what with his other handicaps, Eric is rather hard put to find out what. But his luck isn't entirely bad; he encountered Tabitha's mysterious sister, Rachel (Tabitha doesn't like to talk about her family in general and her sister in particular, but Eric saw a picture once) who turns out to be very helpful and devoted. In more ways than one, seeing as she let herself be drunk from right after they met. Meanwhile, Eric's business partner Roger, another vampire, continues his questions about Eric's habits, and Eric painfully learns that their relationship is not quite what it had seemed.

Tabitha finds herself exploring the nature of her new status and the alternative society that she has been put into. Sometimes it is a very destructive one, as when she tanks up on some stored blood before going out on stage and ends up devastating the club. (It's explained that the vampires pay a lot of money to keep Void City under a charm to make people ignore and/or

suppress such a series of unfortunate events.) That, as it turned out, was because the stored blood had been poisoned, so to speak. Then, she gets out and meets other vampires of power. She has left Eric, for all that she still loves him, and has no other ties to her life, not after her sister Rachel died.

The two tracks of plot run on different but related courses, as Eric and Tabitha learn about their (somehow "life" is the wrong word here. "Status", perhaps?) status and the ramifications and problems involved. There is something deeply wrong going on and the consequences can be explosive, as we find in the final scene. The book ends rather abruptly, and apparently a sequel, or perhaps rather a Part Two, is on the way.

Lewis has developed an interesting and detailed society, even if in some places it is a little hard to believe. How can the Void City charm cover up all the deaths? Eric ran a strip club because it attracted people who wouldn't be missed, but in his first drinking he kills someone who was indeed missed. And people do have out-of-town connections.

Yet the vampire society (not to mention the werewolf one, and presumably others) is fascinating and intriguing. If he can stick to it, there will be a lot to see when this bloody tale of the Un-Dead is . . . [To Be Continued]

### IN AN OCTOPUS'S GARDEN

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*SEA WITCH*

by Virginia Kantra  
(Berkley Sensation; 2008;  
ISBN 978-0-7394-9789-0; \$7.99)  
"The Children of the Sea"

Avram Davidson discusses mermaids and selkies in his *Adventures in Unhistory* (1993, 2006). One example he quotes is that of a Scots dominie who wrote of how he came upon a mermaid, or perhaps a selkie since she had no fish-tail, sitting by the seashore, combing her hair. She had laid aside her seal-pelt and had not donned mortal clothes. [Pages 290-292]

(Being fair, Davidson speculates that it was more likely a human woman, having taken a refreshing dip, and sitting down on a rock to dry off before getting dressed. Ah, there is no glamor, or even glamor, in life!)

But Maine is as inhospitable for swimming nude as Scotland, which means that World's End, ME, police chief Caleb Hunter is a little surprised when a woman wearing what was pretty obviously things

she found to cover, well, nothing underneath, approaches him one May night on the beach. However, as we are first seeing things from the point of view of Magred the selkie, she begins with the certainly interesting self-observation, "If she didn't have sex with something soon, she would burst out of her skin." [Page 1]

And sure enough, though not right away, Magred and Caleb are having **Hot Sex™**. Then complications ensue. For one thing, Magred starts caring about this mortal lover. For another, it turns out there are problems both above and below the sea, and Caleb has ties to the selkies that are not quite as anticipated.

And then there's the murder.

The difference here is that the plot is not that the woman has to tame and confine the man. Rather, she has to come to terms with herself. And the man, far from being a piston of convenient size and temperature, has to reconcile his own problems, both mundane (Iraq left him with a maimed leg) and faerie — and in the climax (no not **that** climax) both together. It seems, you see, that there is also a demon on the loose, who has a perfect disguise as a possessor of humans, and a certain animus against selkies. Caleb has to make a great and dire sacrifice to stop him.

It's rather interesting that Kantra begins the work with a quote from the *original* version of "The Little Mermaid". You know, the one before the Poopy Panda Pals got hold of it and Princessified it, the one where the Little Mermaid died, but she had finally gained a soul, instead of just dissolving into sea foam upon her demise. I suppose you could say that this is "The Little Mermaid" with explicit **Hot Sex™**. You know, for a romance this is about a woman who starts out being really hot for a guy, and ends up falling in love with him. Usually, the guy is the one who goes through that attitudinal shift, or perhaps extension.

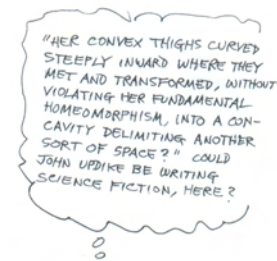
While these people have their problems, others are also on the outs, and their story is worth telling in *Sea Fever* (2008).

### COCONUTS AND STRAWBERRIES

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*THE LOST FLEET: VALIANT*  
by "Jack Campbell" [John G. Henry]  
(Ace; 2008; ISBN 978-0-441-01619-8; \$7.99)  
Sequel to *The Lost Fleet: Dauntless* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #1),  
*The Lost Fleet: Fearless* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #1), and  
*The Lost Fleet: Courageous* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #1)

For a change, the principal threat isn't from the Syndic. Instead, there's someone in the ranks out to get Captain Geary.

This would seem to rank as utter absolute lunacy. The fleet has already lost its command element once, and were it not for the accident of preservation that made the legendary "Black Jack Geary" so profoundly senior in rank that there was no possible alternative, the fleet's captains wouldn't have been able to agree on a decent replacement. (The one that did show up, the equally legendary "Fighting Falco", turned



out to be insane on his own.)

The legend doesn't have feet of clay, save those he himself can see. Geary realizes all too well that he is merely John Geary, skilled but not miraculously skilled, and truly unworthy of being worshiped as he is worshiped.

The naval conflict is getting less active but more wearing. Those factors that don't come into play in blazing tales of naval heroism are becoming significant; supplies, stress disorder (we can't say "post-traumatic" because there is fighting still going on), and politics.

As I said, someone is trying to get Captain Geary. And investigating it turns out to run into its own stymies. Meanwhile, his personal life is running into its own stymies. Having emotional entanglements with either subordinates or autonomous agents can lead to problems.

What will happen to Geary when he gets back? Or if he gets back? There's a hazardous course yet to traverse, with dangers both blatant and dreadfully subtle. If some hidden force is manipulating the war, even getting back to Alliance territory may not be enough for this concern when this tale is . . . **[To Be Continued]**



## FLASHMAN ON THE MARCH

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE MAN WITH THE IRON HEART**  
by Harry Turtledove  
(Del Rey; 2008;  
ISBN 978-0345504340; \$27.00)

"Senator Harrison . . ."

"Mr. Harrison if you please, Miss. The good people of Nebraska saw fit to retire me in 1948, as they did so many."

"Mr. Harrison, I'm Rosemary O'Leary of the Washington *Herald*. In your recent book, *The Last Day of the Old World*, you referred to a plan the President considered but could not get past Congress."

"You must mean General Monck's proposal to send a further three hundred thousand troops to Germany for a year to conduct an intensive anti-partisan drive, what he called a 'surge'. Yes, I think it would have worked, and Ivo Köpfler wouldn't be Chancellor today . . ."

— Not from *The Man With The Iron Heart 2*

One point George Macdonald Fraser made about *Flashman on the March* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #6) was that the Abyssinian campaign established a lesson that should have

been followed later; the British marched in, disposed of the wicked leader (*Negusa Nagast* Tewodros II), and then pulled out, mission accomplished. Most societies these days are more complex, and not to be changed so decisively by the removal of one man.

In one sense, *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947; NHOL G.048) is an early (though not the earliest) venture in what would become a popular genre, that of the Renascent Nazis. Thriller writers, or so it seems these days, couldn't do without Nazis, the perfect villains, white and not progressive, always ready to surge back and take power, were it not for the lone scorned hero and his true love . . .

The real thing was not up to the standards of literature. Perry Biddiscombe's *Werwolf!; The History of the National Socialist Guerilla Movement 1944-1946* (1998) (cited by Turtledove) describes the reality and it was, while annoying, far less successful than other such insurgencies.

In Otto Basil's *Wenn das der Führer wüßte* (1966; English translation titled *The Twilight Men*), the Werwolf has survived the National Socialist Final Victory and become yet another party militia, joining the SA, the SS, and probably a dozen others including the National Socialist Cavalry Corps (NSKK). This shows Basil's understanding of the nature of the Nazi polity, where every leader had to have an army; and at the head of the Werwolf, the reserved Ivo Köpfler outmaneuvers the other top *Bonzen* and succeeds Hitler.

A successful insurgency requires a great many things. Having a refuge, for example; this was one reason the Americans turned south into Bavaria in the final campaign of the war. (Another being that they figured the Soviets should have all the casualties of taking Berlin.)

In this world, it turns out there is a National Redoubt of sorts. It seems that on a certain day in Prag in 1942, the *Reichsprotektor's* driver decided that he should drive faster when that kerl with the defective weapon jumped out on the road; and so the village of Lidice was spared. Among other things.

But, as the war ground on, Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich (you were expecting Otto Skorzeny?) concludes that some sort of survival strategy is in order, and so disappears underground. Not just figuratively, for he commands the building of a vast complex of underground bunkers. Think of what they said at the time that 'Usama bin Laden had, but for real and more so. On the other hand, they don't have to worry about pensions for the builders.

Then the war ends, the army surrenders, and it's all over for the Nazis. Right? When Patton and Koniev are killed in dramatic attacks by the *Werwolf*, it looks like "Wrong!" is more appropriate.

The occupation becomes more bloody and draining. Werwolf attacks continue, though usually not as dramatic. Casualties among the occupying forces mount. The Soviets resort to their usual tactics. I believe Turtledove is making an error, probably to keep from confusing people, when he has NKVD officers investigating the various attacks. At that time

and place, it would be SMERSH, but does he want people thinking of James Bond? (See *Stalin's Secret War* by Robert W. Stephan (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #5) for some information on how that setup really worked.)

The casualties begin to affect the home front, too. Particularly one mother, bereft of her son, who begins Mothers Against the Madness In Germany, a campaign for the rhythm method, or perhaps the Flashman method, of ending such conflicts. MAMIG becomes extremely popular, gaining support across the nation and across the political spectrum, leaving the President besieged and bothered.

If that were not bad enough, the Werwolf extends its reach outside the occupied territories. They've already been doing improvised explosive devices — er, boobytrapped wrecks, and now they have suicide bombers driving trucks to the Eiffel Tower and Westminster Abbey.

Peace-weariness spreads. The U.S. is waist deep in the *Groß Schlammig* and getting mired deeper and deeper by its efforts. (Uh, you do remember Pete Seeger's "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy"?) In spite of some last-minute gains, a few most dramatic, the public perception has settled on a resolution and the President is left with little recourse but to follow.

Never mind the likely future in Germany . . .

At the time, there was a substantial literature devoted to exposing the innate wickedness of Germany and the firm methods needed to eradicate it. Works such as *What to Do With Germany* by Louis Nizer (1944) and *The Moral Conquest of Germany* by Emil Ludwig (1945) sold well. Nizer was a member of the War Writers Board, a group led by Rex Stout, which promoted such matters. Henry Morgenthau, the famous (or notorious) planner, penned a justification of his thesis, *Germany Is Our Problem* (1945).

The solutions proposed in these works are, in retrospect, insanely ill-advised. These writers worked from assumptions almost as biased as the Nazis had; they called for the complete demilitarization of Germany, the breakup of the country into many small states, a prolonged and massive occupation. The whole thing smacks of Robert Conquest's theory that the explanation of the actions of an organization is that it is secretly controlled by its worst enemies. (And then there was the ultimate gift to the *Propagandaministerium* then and the Holocaust deniers today, Theodore N. Kaufman's *Germany Must Perish!* (1941), which called for the sterilization of all Germans and the partition of the soon to be empty land among the bordering countries.)

This in turn descended from an equally lurid wartime literature, fuelled by propaganda regarding the Fifth Column and the seemingly unstoppable power of espionage, which limned in grim colors the vast reach of Nazi spies. Works such as *Total Espionage* by Curt Reiss (1941) and *Sabotage!; The Secret War Against America* by Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn (1942) described the vast secret network of the

Nazi Spy Machine, which had infiltrated its tentacles into every crevice of American society. There is no record that Reiss, Sayers, or Kahn amended their views when the war was over and it was learned that the Germans had given no aid to America First or had any successful sabotage missions in the U.S. (Then in later times you had *The Plot Against America* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #6), not to mention Max Wallace's *The American Axis* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #6).)

As such opinions existed in our time line, it is not unreasonable to assume they would exist in this time line as well, since the point of departure has no bearing on their proponents. Would not an equally vehement anti-German movement be in polarizing conflict with the pro-withdrawal movement here? I can imagine an even more divided American society. (Okay, write your own damned book then!) Worse yet, a more anti-Semitic society.

Because of this belief in a pervasive Nazi underground, it is not unreasonable in such a work to present a more active Nazi resistance. Such a resistance might well have such influences on the American body politic; whether they would be quite like, well, later events, is another consideration. Similar causes produce similar effects; the question then becomes how similar, and how different, when all the factors that should be in play are considered. There is not exactly a correspondence when history, or allohistory, repeats itself, and the reader will have to judge himself how the parallelisms and divergences would work out.

The costs of this unreconstructed Germany are hinted at, and one may well shudder at the dark prospect that the novel ends with. The reader may well wish to consider one of Turtledove's first stories, "Hindsight" (as by Eric Iverson, *Analog*, Mid-December 1984, the "Kelvin Throop" issue). After reading "Mark Gordian's" story about the collapse of American will in Vietnam, the characters, having just gone through a victorious war, wonder what happened to American will. Which was what Michelle Gordian, maker of a Point of Departure, was about.

**THE VALLEY-WESTSIDE WAR:  
A Novel of Crosstime Traffic**

by Harry Turtledove  
(Tor; 2008; ISBN 978-0-7653-1487-1;  
\$24.95)

... Tortha Karf would arrive in a few minutes to discuss the proposal before the Paratime Commission to deny Dhergerbar University further access to other time-lines. After the scandal where it was determined that the victorious mercenary leader was actually a graduate student given extensive memory-alteration and then planted in the timeline, for the purpose of "providing proper balance", the Paratime Police had had about enough of their "experimentation". Vall shouldn't have become attached, but the sight of the ruins had stirred feelings in him that a proper Paratime Policeman shouldn't be feeling.

Karf would have to wait. He would understand, he had been there, done that. Vall was working on double-emergency effort to deal with a crisis. A paratime investigator had carelessly allowed Home Time Line artifacts to be captured by soldiers of a Fourth Level time line . . .

— Not by H. Beam Piper  
(and very much not by John F. Carr!)

The alternate history television series *Sliders* could have been a classic for AH fans; yet it is an object of derision. Partly, this is because of its plot clichés. Quinn Mallory and his jolly band of timeline-travellers would slide into a new timeline, whereupon they would immediately encounter a member of the UNDERGROUND (I'm following Robert Bloch's strictures on politics in SF) who would exuberantly tell them about the point of departure. Writers have to communicate this somehow, yet there are better ways to do it. Then too there is the problem that Piper raised in "Crossroads of Destiny" (*Fantastic Universe Science Fiction*, July 1959); people just don't know the original history to begin with.

Now if HBO or Channel 4 or somebody would begin a Crosstime Traffic miniseries . . .

Dan would have no idea what either of those was. A hundred thirty years ago, the Fire came by, and the world died. Now, amid the ruins of Los Angeles, he and the army of the Valley prepare to fight the Westside for control of the land, including the ancient campus of the University of California at Los Angeles.

Liz Mendoza doesn't like the place either. It's too depressing, even though it's radiologically clean, more or less, mostly. There are too many symbols of loss and destruction around for her to be calm about it all.

Her home time line wants to know what caused the nuclear war in this one, a hundred thirty years ago. There may be some clues in the stacks of UCLA — if the traders of the Mendoza family can keep from suffering the all

too common fate of civilians in a war. Nobody's going to come up to Liz or her parents and say, "As you know, the decisive event in our history was when the Fire fell because of . . .", either.

One review of Turtledove's Basil Argyros stories (collected in *Agent of Byzantium* (1987, 1994)) exulted at the skill, indeed wizardry, that enabled Turtledove to present such things as printing and gunpower as skiffy high-tech. The Valley Army has a superweapon of immense power and decisive effect — a M2 fifty-caliber machine gun. Their more common armaments are of their circumstances, as it were; Dan is exhilarated to be promoted from the archer corps to the musketeer corps. Some lucky few carry Old Time weapons, which are far more devastating — when they work. Someday there won't be any more Old Time ammunition.

Then things go pear-shaped for them both, and Liz and her family have to flee, in time and in space. This leaves the locals free to investigate what exactly it is about the Mendoza shop and home, and it seems that some people were just a tiny bit too media-oriented . . .

Turtledove is rubbing in, again, one of his recurring points: "technologically backward" does not equate to "stupid".

"Crossroads of Destiny"  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/18632>

**KRAKATAU WEST OF JAVA**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**DESTROYERMEN: INTO THE STORM**

by Taylor Anderson  
(RoC; 2008;  
ISBN 978-0-451-46207-7; \$23.95)

The incinerator compartment of the USS *Okinawa* was dim, lit up only by the fire that was broiling the steaks they were having for dinner. The diners were reminiscing about some of their near escapes. Beer Bottle Bates was talking about his brother, "... Rich Richardson himself pulled him off the *Walrus* so they could do those torpedo tests, which made him damn mad at the time!"

Satchelraft took a swig from a bottle of beer. "I know what you mean. I got jerked off the *Walker* right before she vanished, assigned to the base, and then when the Japs came I had to get away to Australia. Those Balinese girls . . ."

"That's nothing," Fatso said. "You remember old Rock Torrey? The admiral who married that nurse and she used to see him off at the dock . . ."

— Not by Admiral Daniel V. Gallery

It may surprise you to learn that there are British naval fiction writers besides Richard Patrick "Patrick O'Brian" Russ. Writers who don't even have to use the tropes of Gernsbackian pulp, too. The guy who seems to have made the modern market his for the moment is a fellow named Douglas Reeman, though he also writes Napoleonic-era novels as

MY NAME IS LOKI. I'M A PRIVATE  
GEE — GOD TO YOU! I LOVE IT  
HERE IN NOIR LAND!

↳ LIKE THE FIMBUL WINTER  
WITH CENTRAL HEATING!



At least Turtledove didn't have Skorzeny. Come to think of it, he hasn't written a Byzantine novel about Belisarius, either. Well!

**SLIDERS**

Review by Joseph T Major of

“Alexander Kent”. Not surprisingly, he specializes, or specialises, in his own fleet, and he has swollen the WWII Royal Navy with vessels and heroes no end. Reeman has covered everything from battle cruisers (*Battlecruiser* (1997)) to motor gunboats (*The Volunteers* (1985)). (I prefer the earlier ones myself, like *A Ship Must Die* (1979).)

His American oppos seem a little more limited. The first few years after the war saw more or less works about the citizen-sailor adjusting (or not) to military ways, the navy’s version of *See Here, Private Hargrove* (1944) [incidentally, the memorialist, Marion Hargrove, who could have missed a lot of gender-confusion fun if he had used his first name of Edward instead of one of his middle names, went on to be a script writer, including episodes of “My World and Welcome to It” and “Fantasy Island”]. So we had things as serious as *The Caine Mutiny* (1951) [incidentally, one of Wouk’s biggest fans by way of this book was Admiral Dan Gallery, of whom more later] and as silly as *Don’t Go Near the Water* (1956, 1957).

After the first fervor died down, some writers did do more extensive novels. Wouk returned to the entire war, albeit with a strong naval component, in *The Winds of War* (1971) and *War and Remembrance* (1978), the tales of go everywhere and do everything Victor “Pug” Henry, the successor to Upton Sinclair’s Lanny Budd. [Gallery, when not aiding Wouk with his naval research, dipped more into postwar stories, sometimes with a humorous turn, such as his Fatso books, and sometimes serious, as *The Brink* (1973).] James Basset’s restaging of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the sticks, *Harm’s Way* (1962) became the John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and Kirk Douglas epic *In Harm’s Way* (1964) [which has great acting and wretched special effects; where are the reimagining sfx guys when you need them?]. Then he stuck a little more to the real events in *Commander Prince, U.S.N.* (1971) with the Java Sea, an allied tie-in, and something terribly akin to the case of the USS *Stewart* (DD224). In the thriller department, there are Steven Coonts and David Poyer, to take two of the better-known more recent writers.

But most of the novels have been sub boys, from the Man Who’d Been There, Edward L. Beach, with *Run Silent, Run Deep* (1955) and its sequels, down to guys like R. Cameron Cooke, who does both then and now. Destroyermen are few and far between. (This has been shifting, with the arrival of such writers as John J. Gobbell, author of such works as *A Call to Colors* (2006) about a destroyer at Leyte Gulf.)

None of which is relevant to Lieutenant Commander Matthew Patrick Ready, USNR (Ghod, a feather merchant), thrust into command of a disintegrating tub not worth the fuel to steam her home to scrap, USS *Walker* (DD163), a “four-piper” flushdeck destroyer, one of those turned out en masse for the World War. [This is incidentally about a month before another four-piper, USS *Buchanan* (DD131), blew up after ramming a dry dock.] Worse yet,

he’s stuck in the doomed Asiatic Fleet, fighting the Japanese in the Netherlands East Indies. Or just trying to get away from the Japanese. He could use Commander Custis Morgan Prince and his British sidekick Commander Algemon “Beaver” Monk, or even Fatso and Rich Richardson.

Instead he gets a gaggle of odd passengers, from an eccentric Australian petroleum geologist to a pair of displaced Air Corps pilots. Oh, and did I mention the six Navy Nurse Corps officers? (What are we in, *Operation Petticoat* (1959)? Come to think of it, Captain Ready could even use Commander Matt T. Sherman [Archie Leach] and Lieutenant Nicholas Holden [Bernie Schwartz] of that film.)

So, with this ill-assorted guard, Captain Ready is ready to escape. Except he runs into a couple of problems, of which the lesser is a Japanese battlecruiser, the *Amagi* (which in real life was in line to be converted to an aircraft carrier, only to be damaged in the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923). When fleeing the *renko kantai*, the *Walker* and her sister ship the *Mahan* (DD102) run into a storm. Quite a storm, in fact. Worse than the storm a guy named Padway ran into in Rome, back before the war.

This storm seems to have cleared off the Japanese. Which is odd, but fortunate, considering that the *Walker* and the *Mahan* are both pretty badly shot up. The closest base seems to be Perth, so they set course for there. This entails passing by Bali, where they discover a most remarkable sight — not somewhat-dressed pretty girls, but big ugly scaly things. Just like the big ugly scaly thing that ate the whaleboat with the Japanese (except for the one who was out cold, who they hauled aboard). Meanwhile, the *Mahan* goes off in another direction.



A pause. Harry Harrison did one alternate history series that was not derided before he did the ill-favored *Stars and Stripes* wank; the Eden Trilogy [*West of Eden* (1984), *Winter in Eden* (1986), and *Return to Eden* (1988)]. In this, the point of divergence was far in the past; in that world, humanity (sort of) shared the world with intelligent descendants of dinosaurs. The conflict of different intelligences is a fascinating concept in itself, never mind the other interesting ideas Harrison includes; John W. Campbell would have loved Harrison’s Ylane (particularly how it worked out for them, too).

This is a world where evolution worked out

differently, and there are two intelligent species to be found; the Grik and the Lemurians. The Grik are not so big ugly scaly things. The Lemurians are cat people. (“I Remember Lemuria” is utterly irrelevant.) The Grik are just a tiny bit hostile, and the *Walker* finds herself thrust into a battle against a sailing ship the size of a small island, crewed (somehow saying “manned” doesn’t fly here, but not for the reason it doesn’t fly today) by not so big ugly scaly things.

Then, when the humans make First Contact with the Lemurians, they find something utterly unexpected: “*Haec dixi . . . orationem . . . vestrae?*” The Lemurians have a sacred tongue, passed down through the ages, a gift from some strange beings who came to their world in ancient times, leaving writings of great worth, and artifacts of immense incomprehensible power. Latin.

Vae!

Being able to communicate, if in a limited sense, removes one barrier to functioning. And so, forced into alliance with the Lemurians, the crew of the *Walker* set about trying to make do.

With one or two little problems. You see, they have only two translators who know anything of Latin beyond “*Futuemos.*” And while one is the slightly daft geologist, the other is *kaigun tai-i* Tamatsu Shinya. That’s right, the Japanese prisoner, who has his own problems, being Americanized and yet a Japanese officer.

Commander Ready is burdened with problems. Some of them are solvable, as they are in an area that has the same geology as its equivalent in his original time-line. That is, there is crude oil underground, and he has someone who knows how to make it usable.

Some might be remotely solvable. There may be other humans out there, and it seems unlikely they’ll ever be going back, so he can hope that he can find women for his crewmen. (And then marry the chief nurse, whom he has fallen for.)

Some might be a little hard to solve. The Air Corps Captain seemed a little bit round the bend and know-it-all, and when some guys from the *Mahan* turn up, Ready and the others find out how out of it Captain Kaufman is. (There are no strawberries, and he does not seem to be into rolling ball bearings; his derangement is of a different order.) At the best, he might only get irreplaceable resources lost; and what if the *Mahan* is captured by the Grik?

Oh yes, and there’s the Grik to consider. Problems are everywhere.

It’s all very well to note that the characters are perhaps a bit stock; admittedly, stereotypes come from somewhere and there are well-known “types” that people become under such circumstances.

You will recall Tortha Karf’s comment to Verkan Vall about how Calvin Morrison was fortunate to have been transported to someplace where his knowledge was useful. Imagine, for example, if Professor Martin Padway, out for a hike in the Pennsylvania woods, and concerned about being hit by lightning in a storm as he nearly had been that day in Rome back in thirty-

nine, had been swept up by the results of an unintentional encounter between two Paratime transporters and found himself in the Principality of Hostigos, about to be conquered, and himself not knowing how to make gunpowder.

Therefore, having conveniently skilled people transported to the past or elsewhere is a temptation to the writer to make his story work well. It's possible to write a story where the transportee doesn't know (i.e., Poul Anderson's "The Man Who Came Early" (*F&SF*, June 1956)), or has some other flaw, but that becomes a short downer, not a longer explanation of possibilities. Providing enough people who know enough things solves that problem (and adds the problem of internal conflicts), but there comes a point at which having too many of the right people beggars plausibility. It is a judgment call at where to draw the line. And then there are other concerns. For example, where it just happens that the Japanese officer they rescue is a *nisei* who has his doubts about the Imperial Way.

Not that Anderson isn't handling the internal conflicts. As when Lieutenant Tamatsu, already distrusted by many of the crew, get into a conflict with an aggressive Grik and finds out what and how much his rescuer has against him (something about a son in the fireroom of the *Oklahoma*).

This ill-assorted, if resolute, guard has much more to confront in the next few weeks and months, and there is far more out there, from both worlds, that will have to be dealt by whatever means possible when this is . . . [To Be Continued]

Admiral Torrey's aide, Commander Holden, led me in, saying as he did, "I hope you've got some good news, Rich. The phantom pain has been really getting him down, and he tore into Pug Henry. Maggie's as worried as the rest of us."

I said, "I'm afraid not. Commander Monk and I have been choking on the dust from their records, and there's no trace whatsoever we can find of what happened to the *Walker* or the *Mahan*."

— Not by Captain Edward L. Beach

Douglas Reeman

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

Marion Hargrove

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0362992/>

*In Harm's Way*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0059309/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In\\_Harm's\\_Way](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Harm's_Way)

USS *Walker* (DD163)

<http://www.hazegray.org/danfs/destroy/dd163txt.htm>

### SPECIAL TASKS

Review by Joseph T Major of

**THE LOST SPY:**

*An American in Stalin's Secret Service*

by Andrew Meier

(W. W. Norton; 2008;  
ISBN 978-0-393-06097-3; \$25.95)

The motive for eliminating Oggins was not so simple. According to news reports, Oggins was erroneously and unlawfully arrested by the NKVD and sentenced to eight years in a concentration camp for anti-Soviet activities. At the same time, it was reported that Oggins had arrived in the Soviet Far East under false Czechoslovakian papers. The reality of his story is this: Oggins was a Communist sympathizer and a member of the American Communist Party. He was also a veteran agent of the Comintern and NKVD intelligence in China and the Far East . . .

— Pavel Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks* (1994, 1995), Page 278

Isaiah "Cy" Oggins is a footnote to history, a shadow in the fringes of great events. He was nobody and yet he touched everybody.

Yet far more interesting than his own life was the process by which Andrew Meier found out about it. Pursuing the oblique reference in *Special Tasks* brought him to (Mr.) Robin Oggins, son of Cy. And from there Meier was plunged into a search that led him around the world, into the depths of the Soviet Archives, and into the drawing rooms of exiled royalty.

Yes, one of his sources was Prince Michel Fedorovich Romanoff de Russie, the aged Parisian boulevardier (who just died). Once upon a time, the Prince had been in the heart of the White Russian exile movement, and this impotent, absurd band of fantasists had been a Ultimate High Priority target of the competent organs; including their agent Cy Oggins, who with his wife and newborn child had lived in Paris, watching the Romanoffs and their hangers-on pretend that it had all been a bad dream and they were going home tomorrow, or next week at the latest.

And that, in many ways, describes both Oggins's life and circumstances. He lived in a world of far greater social capital; there were organizations, groups, networks, connected by far-flung, slow, but firm means. There were groups within society; even communist groups had some sort of coalescence.



Yet at the same time it was so trifling.

Oggins's greatest achievement seems to have been brokering the sale of Italian airplanes to the Kwantung Army. (I rather think Meier understates the capability of the Japanese airplane industry.) What was it all for?

His end similarly betokens a certain combination of cruelty, arbitrariness, and pointlessness. Oggins was arrested on the usual vague charges of Trotskyist connections that essentially the entire group of Comintern agents were guilty of, sentenced to eight years in the Gulag without a real trial, and then when his term was up, executed as a test subject in the use of curare as an assassination poison. They didn't want him talking to anyone else.

The story of Nerma Berman Oggins, Cy's wife, is an equally striking annal of how life was different then. She spent the thirties and forties quite literally without any regular source of income. How she and Robin managed to survive, moving from apartment to relative's house to friend's place to . . . yet the Futurians, to take an example that may be familiar to you, existed in a similarly marginal fashion at about the same time. They may even have met Mrs. Oggins at YCL functions.

Oggins did indeed brush up against various people of note; Whittaker Chambers for one. Yet in the end he seems to have kept his own counsel, even to the end. It's hard to sympathize with someone who strove so to bring into being the system that made his own casual death.

### THE BEAR AND THE LION

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE KING AND THE COWBOY:**  
*Theodore Roosevelt and Edward the Seventh,*  
*Secret Partners*

by David Fromkin

(The Penguin Press; 2008;

ISBN 978-1-59420-187-5; \$25.95)

"BULLY!" the President said. "I always wanted to see Morocco and I think Tangier is just bully. And Edward, to finally meet you in person at last!"

"You have been one of the wonders of the world, Theodore," the King said. "Ah, and who is this lovely lady?"

The fair-haired, cool goddess approached, smiling. "Mr. President, your Majesty, I have the honor of presenting our host, Mulay Achmed Mohammed al-Raisuli, the Magnificent," she said warmly.

Then the Berber bandit spoke in slow but liquid English. "Mrs. Pedicaris, you were a great deal of trouble, but not now."

— Not from *The Wind and the Lion II*

One of the striking scenes in *Hadrian the Seventh* is where the world leaders of the Congress of Windsor are relaxing, after their great remaking of the world: "The Ninefold King, with one arm resting paternally on the shoulder of the young King of Spain, was telling (as his own) an extremely funny story (which he had heard five minutes before from Cardinal

Semphill), to the President of America.” The author of that essential history of the formation of today’s Middle East, *A Peace to End All Peace* (1989, 2001) has written a work showing that the ambility “Baron Corvo” has between Edward of England and Theodore of America was quite the case.

He begins by sketching in the backgrounds of the two personalities. Neither was considered to be really qualified for the position he assumed, but both had unobserved depths. For example, Edward had a wide range of acquaintances in the administrations of Europe; everybody thought he was worth talking to. Similarly, Roosevelt read everything and met everyone.

There were differences, though. Fromkin describes Roosevelt’s two marriages, both deeply pursued and passionately held. Edward, by way of contrast, married for policy and pursued women as a hobby. (He seems to have been competing with his nephew, of whom more later, for the Dusko “TRICYCLE” Popov performance award.) The scene in Donald R. Bensen’s *And Having Writ* (1978) where, having been given an instant recovery pill by one of the stranded aliens, the King proceeds to have Mrs. Keppel informed that he would like some personal time with her, is a quite correct item of characterization. (What Edward would have with a woman who displayed to him her *most immodest* nether garments would have been interesting, but he hardly would have stopped at cigars.)

Their correspondence and collaboration, though slender, worked from a growing perception of a commonality of interests. The capstone of this collaboration was at the Algeiras Conference in 1906, where the Americans played a significant role in backing up the Entente to resist the German proposals. The proposed original setting for the conference had been Tangier, on the grounds that a conference in Morocco ought to be in Morocco. The governor of Tangier at the time happened to be al-Raisuli, the historical basis for Sean Connery’s forceful, colorful, and dramatic character in *The Wind and the Lion* (1975).

Did in fact this “collaboration” matter? The common interests of the two powers had been converging for some time. Perhaps the best example of the value of “collaboration” can be discerned by the relationship of each of the two countries to Germany. They had common interests; yet Wilhelm’s personal attitudes and political appointments, influence, and activities led the country into opposition and eventually to outright war.

A more serious problem is that the two “secret partners” seem never to have met. Roosevelt went to Edward’s funeral.

A more explicit exploration of these themes may be found in Robert Conroy’s *1901: A Novel* (1995, 2003), where these interests converge in a striking perception of common defense. The book ends with President Roosevelt calling for an end to splendid isolation through a mutual defense treaty with Britain. Whether he would

like hearing the King tell him a funny story he had just heard from a cardinal is not explored here . . . Fromkin has produced an interesting, attractive, but in the end speculative work.

**And as year follows year,  
More old men disappear,  
Someday no one will march there  
at all.**

Report by Joseph T Major

We regret to report the death of **Gladys Powers** at her home in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on **August 24, 2008**. Born Gladys Stokes in Lewisham in London on **May 10, 1899**, Powers served in the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps and then in the Women’s Royal Air Force. She married Edward Luxford, a Canadian soldier, and moved to Canada, marrying a total of three more times.

She was the last female veteran of the World War.

We regret to report the death of **Stanley Charles Stair** of Animal Hill, Jamaica, in **April 2008**. Born in **April 1900**, Stair served in the West India Regiment. He was, therefore, likely the last surviving black soldier of the World War. (Unless, of course, in some village in the depths of Tanzania, there is a fantastically aged askari from Lettow-Vorbeck’s army . . .)

The claim of **Netherwood “Ned” Hughes** of Accrington, Lancashire to veteran status has been established. Hughes is a long-service lorry driver, who had been called up for service in 1918. The Army Service Corps was restyled “Royal” in late 1918 as the result of the devoted service of such men; it has been merged into the Royal Logistic Corps.

Martin Morse Wooster has been so kind as to forward a report from the BBC. **Henry John “Harry” Patch**, late Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry, received his award as a Chevalier of the Belgian Order of Leopold, for his services in the World War. Patch is the last surviving British soldier to have been in the trenches.

Remaining are:

**Australia**

Claude Stanley Choules (107) Royal Navy  
Sydney Maurice “Syd” Lucas (108)  
Sherwood Foresters  
John Campbell Ross (109) Australian  
Imperial Force

**Finland**

Aarne Armas “Arska” Arvonen\* (111) Red  
Guards

**France**

Fernand Goux (108), 85e régiment  
d’infanterie et 82e régiment d’infanterie  
Pierre Picaut (109), Armée d’Terre

**Italy**

Delfino Borroni (110) 6° Reggimento  
Bersaglieri a Bologna

**Poland**

Józef Kowalski\* (108) Polish Army

**United Kingdom**

Henry William Allingham (112) Royal

Naval Air Service/Royal Air Force  
Netherwood “Ned” Hughes (108), Army  
Service Corps

Henry John “Harry” Patch (110) Duke of  
Cornwall’s Light Infantry

William “Bill” Stone (108) Royal Navy

**United States**

John Henry Foster Babcock (108) 146<sup>th</sup>

Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force  
Frank Woodruff Buckles (107) United  
States Army

Robley Henry Rex\* (107) United States  
Army

\* “WWI-era” veteran, enlisted between the  
Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles

National totals: U.K. 6; France, 2; U.S. 1+1;  
Australia, Canada, Italy 1 each; Finland, Poland,  
1 WWI-era each. British Empire 8.

We regret to report the death of **Albert Edward Pryke Briggs, M.B.E.**, Lieutenant (ret) R.N. on **October 3, 2008**. Born March 1, 1923, Briggs entered the Royal Navy as a signalman and gaining a commission in the fifties, participating in the Suez Canal operation and serving at various training centres until his retirement in 1971.

What made him so worthy of note was that on May 24, 1941, Briggs was in battle against the Germans. He was the only survivor of the bridge crew of HMS *Hood* and the last of the three survivors of the encounter.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH — Part 2**

DenVention 3, the 66th World Science Fiction  
Convention

Trip Report by Joe and Lisa



**Wednesday, August 6, 2008**

**Denver, CO**

**WorldCon**

We indulged in the hotel’s continental breakfast before coralling a baggage cart. This involved following a woman who was taking her luggage out to her car, and as I put it, honestly, “I covet your baggage cart.” She didn’t seem to mind.

The trip downtown was nice. Like most large towns, Denver is built up, but the traffic flow in mid-morning was smooth enough, and thanks to maps and pre-planning, I had no trouble finding the hotel, though trying to see if there was a second entrance took a bit of extra



driving.

They let us park in the parking structure, naturally, that's a profit center. I'd called beforehand and they said we would get a refrigerator, but when I checked at the front desk they said it would be a while before the room would be cleaned, but if we came back about two, they might have it.

The convention center was a short walk down the street, about a block and a half. The air was fresh and clear, the sky perhaps a bit clouded, but we were there. I've never seen before double crosswalks, red lights all four ways for traffic to stop and let people cross cater-cornered.

Registration was open a little bit early, and we got into line before the big pile-up began. And who should we see upon our way but our old friends from NOTA, **Mike & Sue Baugh** and **Linda Wyatt**. Go all the way to Denver and the first people you see were from home. However, behind us in line was **Robert Kennedy**, come all the way from the other coast. Bob says this may be his last WorldCon, which is a pity. Let's hope he can get to Texas.

Then, when we got to the front of the registration line, who was in the next line over? Hugo-nominated author and fan writer (blog writer) John Scalzi! I tried to introduce him to this strange and exotic thing called a paper fanzine.

While waiting for the panel, we plopped down outside the location. I found the Green Room and got some hot tea. Thanks for not minding Lisa. But we went out soon and had a talk with **Martin Morse Wooster**, during which **Mark & Evelyn Leeper** came by and I reminded them of the upcoming Faneds Dinner.

#### 11:30 AM Heinlein — Short Fiction **Bonnie Kunzel (m), David Silver, Graham Sleight, Joseph T Major, Pamela Somers**

This had been going to be a panel on the Juveniles. Just to make sure, I had taken out a copy of *Heinlein's Children* and *The Past Through Tomorrow* and *Off the Main Sequence*, so I'd have original sources. I had been very disturbed not being able to find them, and it turned out I had left them at home.

The panel went well, I think, as we discussed various facets of Heinlein's short-story telling efforts. It helps that they are almost all available in two large books, *The Past Through Tomorrow* and *Off the Main Sequence*. It should not be surprising that Heinlein pioneered so many of the noteworthy ideas of science fiction.

**Taras Wolansky** was outside and we had a talk about the trip. I also ran into **Joel Zakem** around this time. Then Lisa and I went up towards the Dealers' Room. Larry Smith, understand, wasn't next to the entry but he was on the other side of the aisle. We chose out the first of many volumes that would burden our vehicle. (I will point out that the Dealers' Room here, unlike in the convention center in Collinsville, was not a dead zone for cell phones, so I could call home and inquire what people wanted.)

Coming down the steps, I ran into **Mike**

**Resnick**, who was busy getting some books autographed by **Harry Turtledove**. He praised Lisa's horse writings and opined that Curlin could have taken Big Brown any day of the week. After that, we went over to the Fanzine Lounge, where **Chris Garcia** had set up operations, no doubt producing two or three issues of *The Drink Tank* while doing so.

About twoish we went back to the hotel. No room, they were still cleaning it. We waited. The wifi worked in the lobby so we could do that — a tribute to the advance of technology. I inquired about the room twice or thrice. No room in the inn yet; they were still cleaning it.

Finally, about four — the official checkin time, for what it was worth — we got a room. I will say there were no long lines. I've been in long lines at con hotels, but not here. We got a room, a baggage cart, and proceeded to unload that huge mass of stuff in the car. The room was fine except for one little thing.

No refrigerator.

I called down to the desk. They were working on getting one. We waited. More internet. About five-thirty, the man came with a refrigerator. I gave him a big tip, put my insulins in the thing, and we went out to eat at a Chili's on the Sixteenth Street Mall.

And this, kiddies, is why we didn't get to the Opening Ceremonies.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 7.9

Books read: *Kushiel's Mercy* by Jacqueline Carey

#### Thursday, August 7, 2008 WorldCon

We tried the hotel's breakfast buffet, which was not too bad. They didn't give you a separate check, but automatically charged the bill to your room. This might not work for some people. I saw a familiar face there and spent some time telling everyone at the con that Robert Lichtman was at the con. It was, of course **Fred Lerner**. Sorry, guys.

#### 11:30 AM History & Alternate History **Harry Turtledove, John Maddox Roberts, John Strickland (m), Steven H Silver, Walter Hunt**

Someone from the audience (Not me! Not me!) asked Harry Turtledove a very rude and stupid question, and got properly told off. When I encountered the professor, his wife, and one child afterwards, I told him it had been a good panel, and sympathized.

I also got to meet John Maddox Roberts afterwards, and learned much to my dismay that the third novel in the Hannibal's Children series hadn't been taken up by the publisher. Sales. May Jupiter, Hades, Serapis, Ammon, and Baal-Hammon eternally rend their bowels! (As they didn't do when I told Roberts about my grand fan fiction pile up involving Decius Caecilius, Lucius Vorenus, Caesar . . . and Xena.)

Finally ran into **Guy Lillian**, who had wild hopes for Saturday. He'd been driving longer and harder than I have, but then he doesn't have

my health problems.

I dropped off Johnny Carruthers's site selection vote.

We ate dinner in a little burger joint in the Sixteenth Street Mall.

And so to bed.

Books read: *The Anubis Murders* by E. Gary Gygas  
*Into the Storm; Destroyermen* by Taylor Anderson

#### Friday, August 8, 2008 WorldCon

#### 10:00 AM The Use of Horses in Fantasy and SF: Doing it Right

**Beth Meacham, Karen Miller, P. C. Hodgell (m), Tanya Huff**

Horses are not machines, but all too many writers forget this.

I finally did our site selection votes, like there was a big choice in the matter.

#### Sidewise Awards

**Short Form (tie):** "Quaestiones Super Caelo et Mundo", Michael F. Flynn

"Recovering Apollo 8", Kristine Kathryn Rusch

**Long Form:** *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* \***sig**\*

Flynn and Rusch posed for pictures with their awards, including one where they pretended to fight for one plaque. I told Flynn how much I'd appreciated *Eifelheim*. **John G. "Jack Campbell" Henry** was also there, and we discussed the prospects of future novels about Paul Sinclair. Henry comes by his naval background honestly, being a retired Lieutenant-Commander. (He wanted to see my reviews, so I e-mailed him the relevant issues when I got home. You're welcome.)

Guy Lillian had eaten at one of the many good restaurants on the Sixteenth Street Mall, so we went down to scout out the Appaloosa with the Leepers and a friend. The food was good and tasty, once I figured out the menu. The items each had a single number printed under them. Maybe they should take up this radical new innovation called the *dollar sign* ("\$\$"). Then, we had to sort out the check, reminding me of the article in *MAD* back in the fifties about eating at Chinese restaurants, where the discussion about sorting out the ticket had the inimitable line, "Anyone have change for a penny?"

Afterwards, Lisa and I walked down the mall to the end, where there was the Tattered Cover used book store. It was quite large and open, and as with many such places, is as much a cultural center as a commercial enterprise. We encountered a truant; Martin had gone to the Rockies game and was browsing on the way back.

(Incidentally, people seemed surprised that we walked a considerable distance without distress. Perhaps it's the difference in humidity that made up for the difference in air pressure. As Johnny Carruthers put it, here in the Ohio Valley we have air you can wear, and Denver was pleasantly low-humidity.)

Books read: *Queen of Atlantis (L'Atlantide)* by Pierre Benoit

### Saturday, August 9, 2008 WorldCon

After going to the Appaloosa, we had noticed again the Einstein Brothers Bagels place a little further down the mall, and decided to give it a try. We should have gone there instead of the hotel buffet. It reminded us of Dooley's here in Louisville. However, we had eaten at an Einstein Brothers before, in Detroit, before going to see the Henry Ford Museum.

Then there came the big panel:

### 11:30 AM Pubbing Your Ish: Making Fanzines Happen Evelyn Leeper (m), Guy H. Lillian III, Jeanne Mealy, Joseph T Major

Fortunately, unlike the infamous panel at Xanadu, there was no panelist shouting out the utter superiority of online-only fanzines. We explained the basics in, I hoped, a thorough fashion. There was perhaps a bit too much on APAs, but Jeanne was an apahacker and Guy does a few apazines.

What should have concerned us more was the comparative lack of new faces. There were plenty of old hands out there, including Roger Sims and Andrew Porter, but few newcomers. At least no one asked us to publish her new 700-page epic of passionate passion between Buffy and Wilma Deering . . .

### Faneds Feast

We collected in the hallway after the panel, and then set out for the short, invigorating walk to the Appaloosa restaurant. Somehow, we lost Mike Glycer on the way. The restaurant had seated a party of forty on very short notice Thursday night, so having us was within their reach.

Lisa and I ended up sitting across from Tom & Anita Feller. The Lillians were next to us. Others present included the Leepers, Chris Garcia, Bob Kennedy, Sheliah Kennedy, Milt Stevens, Rich & Nikki Lynch . . . When it was all over, Guy exuberantly proclaimed that this was an historical event, and we all pledged to meet again in Montréal. Cathy Palmer-Lister, one of us eaters, volunteered to reconnoiter Montréal for a place to eat. After stopping off in the Virgin Records store across the street, we went back to the con.

I was sitting in the Fanzine Lounge talking to Chris Garcia when a procession came by. They were singing "The Ants Come In One by One". Chris and I saluted. You see, they were taking the Hugo Awards to the auditorium for the ceremony.

When we went ourselves we linked up with Bob, his niece Sheilah, her husband Brad

Cozzens, and Martin. We ended up sitting way back, but near the door.

### First Fandom Awards

Hall of Fame: Mike Ashley and Ray Harryhausen

Posthumous Hall of Fame: Isaac Asimov

Sam Moskowitz Archive: Frank Robinson and Bob Peterson

Big Heart Award: Suford Lewis

### Hugo Awards

Hot off the presses...  
and the Hugo winners are...



Best Novel: *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon

\*sigh\* \*sigh\*

Best Novella: "All Seated on the Ground" by Connie Willis (*Asimov's* Dec. 2007)

Best Novelette: "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate" by Ted Chiang (*F&SF* Sept. 2007)

Best Short Story: "Tideline" by Elizabeth Bear (*Asimov's* June 2007)

Best Related Book: *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* by Jeff Prucher (Oxford University Press)

BDP Long Form: *Stardust*

BDP Short Form: *Doctor Who* "Blink"

Best Editor Long: David G. Hartwell

Best Editor Short: Gordon Van Gelder

Best Pro Artist: Stephan Martiniere

Best Semiprozine: *Locus*  
(The Locus Award)

Best Fanzine: *File 770*

Best Fan Writer: John Scalzi  
(Langford Defeated!)

<http://scalzi.com/whatever/>

Best Fan Artist: Brad Foster

Campbell Award: Mary Robinette Kowal

There was a distressingly large number of no-shows among the award winners. Ironically, the only Best Novel nominee absent was Chabon. George R. R. Martin, his proxy, looked rather like the arch-villain (to be fair, there's really no good guys in it) of Chabon's book. The award ceremony went off well, with no technical bobbles, long delays, barrages of minor awards, or the like.

And for a change, I'd actually seen beforehand a BDP nominee, the Doctor Who episode "Blink". Which is really strange, because the Doctor barely appears in it at all. And it explores several other complications of time-lines.

Also, to no one's surprise, Australia won the 2010 WorldCon. We finally made a party, theirs, and picked up various memorabilia. That was where Lisa got the Tim Tam candy bars.

And so to bed.

Books read: *Thief with No Shadow* by Emily Gee  
*Ranger's Apprentice* by John Flanagan

### Sunday, August 10, 2008 Denver — Colorado Springs, CO WorldCon

Back to Einstein Bros, and then we loaded the car up and checked out before going to the convention center. I settled up with Larry Smith. The cost of books, after discount (and a hefty discount it was, too), was \$290. They couldn't believe I could pack it all into my canvas bag from Huntsville Space Center. I also got some pictures of a prize-winning hall costume of Xena. As I told the lady, my wife would be very irritated if I didn't get a picture.

Then I spent some time chatting with Bob Kennedy and Mike Glycer waiting for Lisa to finish her last sweep through the dealers' room with Sheliah Kennedy. By the time she was done, the room closed, the Closing Ceremonies were over, and so we said most of our remaining goodbyes and went out front. I went down the street to the hotel, along with Guy part of the way, calling out to him the address of the Richthofen Castle as we parted. There was an occasional drizzle, which discomfited me, since I didn't have a raincoat. When I got back to the hotel, I discovered that the passcard they had given me to get out of the parking structure didn't work in the gate. After a kindly employee got me out, I finally got to the convention center, where Lisa put the \$290 book bag in the car and we were off.

The drive to Colorado Springs wasn't too bad, and it was pretty country, somewhat wooded, with lovely mountain views. I do think that they would be less impressive in a freezing rain with the prospect of a blizzard and below-zero temperatures, but then we don't think we'll be going there in that kind of weather.

It was still raining when we got to my cousin Rives's place, and after navigating the streets, I found to my horror that I didn't know where I

had to go, so had to turn around in a driveway, pull to the side of the road, turn on the computer and check the address. It was a dead zone for Verizon cellphones — and the driveway I'd turned around in was Rives's and Jan's!

They greeted us heartily, and we had a long talk explaining how things were at home, including the brand new pictures of Rives's mother Mary Alice. Their son popped in for about thirty seconds; at least he's doing something legal, if exhausting.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 70.0

### Monday, August 11, 2008 Colorado Springs

We went out to get breakfast and see a little of the town, ending up making a very long loop before finding a retro place, which was perhaps not an inappropriate setting in which to read *The Man With the Iron Heart*. Then we went touring the sights and found . . .

### Garden of the Gods

This is more impressive than words than say. Begin with a layer of sandstone between harder rocks, tilt it sidewise and then erode, wind-blast, and let the occasional raindrop fall for years and years. This has produced fantastically carved red stone in more and bigger quantities than you've ever seen, available free to the public.

That alone was worth the trip, though perhaps if we ever do go back we'll set time and funds a little more carefully so we can take the cogwheel railway to the top of Pikes Peak.

### Air Force Academy

We pulled up to the northern gate and the guard asked for proof of non-possession of weapons of individual destruction, a driver's license, and the opening of the trunk. At the latter we laughed. The guard who looked in the trunk picked up one suitcase, saw that if there were a sword in there getting to it would take long enough for even a television security guard to see that not all was well and successfully intervene, and we were waved through.

Rives, you understand, teaches at the Air Force Academy Preparatory School, as well as being an AFA grad and indeed a Major in the Air Force Chaplain Corps. Therefore, as we walked amid the bustling students preparing for their service in StarGate Command as well as mundane affairs, he was constantly returning salutes and introducing various students of his to us and contrawise. The first-year cadets wear a distinguishing pattern of BDU (Battle Dress Uniform) to identify them as the maggots who haven't yet fully earned their presence in those hallowed halls.

Also, the library does not have *Heinlein's Children*.

After the tour we went back to Rives's and Jan's house and talked about various family matters. Rives's grandfather, my cousin Gladstone Major, had been to Colorado Springs to see the place when Rives graduated, and he seems to have also liked it. I showed Rives the

picture of my grandfather Ike; his mother had been kind enough to say that Ike looked a bit like Gladstone. (They were second cousins once removed, and my grandfather was born a month before Gladstone's father.)

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 100.1

Books read: *The Man with the Iron Heart* by Harry Turtledove  
*The Lost Fleet: Valiant* by "Jack Campbell"  
*The Valley-Westside War* by Harry Turtledove

### Tuesday, August 12, 2008

#### Colorado Springs — Abilene, KS

Rives, may his ventures ever prosper, fixed a splendid and delicious breakfast. And so we left that glorious haven amid the clouds with full stomachs and great regrets. This is one place we could live, which is more than I could say for some places that have had WorldCons.

The drive from Colorado Springs to I-70 was uneventful. I had expressed concern about getting stuck behind a combine — the landscape was in some ways very reminiscent of the roads between Bowling Green and Hickman, aside from being flatter — but Rives said that there weren't enough people for that to be a bother. Though we were somewhat amazed to find ourself passing through Simla.

There are a few buffalo wallows visible from the interstate. Can't have the animals themselves any more, but the places where they rubbed great holes in the ground are another matter. They all happened to be south of the road, so we hadn't particularly noticed them on the way out.

We got to the hotel, which was right off the interstate, just fine and it did indeed have a refrigerator. However, there was a different problem. There are no places to eat in Abilene. None more palatable than McDonald's, that is. So we ended up driving back to Salina to eat.

Try and figure this out. We pulled into the motel and the lot was almost totally empty. By the time we got back from Salina, it was full. When we entered the restaurant it was almost totally empty. By the time we had finished dinner, it was full.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 497.7

Books read: *Staked* by J. E. Lewis

### Wednesday, August 13, 2008

#### Abilene — Independence, MO Eisenhower Presidential Center

There is the library, the museum, the meditation center (we must preserve the separation of Church and State, doncha now), the Eisenhower Birthplace, and a visitor center. The buildings are impressive, occupying a campus in the downtown of a town now rather like Cadiz, Kentucky. Once upon a time Abilene was the terminus of the Chisholm Trail, full of range drivers with money and high spirits; how things have changed.

With some irony, it's the memorial to

perhaps the last Supreme War Lord — a man who dressed like a filling-station attendant.

We drove down the street from the hotel and got our tickets to go through the complex. The Library has a small exhibit, and the Museum has the usual biographical material and exhibits. They have stayed away from controversial material, and so there is no mention of Patton, not much of Kay Summersby, and nothing about Dixon-Yates (a conflict of interest scandal over a contract to build a power plant in Arkansas for the A.E.C.)

There is coverage of Eisenhower's two careers. Since he sought an appointment to one of the military academies as a way of rising in the world, it seems unlikely to me that he'd drop it all on a whim to take up a life in itinerant music played by people of a disfavored group ("Ike at the Mike", Howard Waldrop, *Omni* June 1982). He was a very devoted organizer. The Interstate Highway System dates from the frustration of an army transport officer trying to move a convoy over twisted mud roads bordered by farmers who threw out tacks.

The Eisenhower family home is somewhat larger than Lisa's Aunt Delta's place. But then, the Eisenhowers had six boys. The General came home after the fighting was over and appeared with his mother. (In John Birch Society mythology, another thing not mentioned, Ike's older brother Milton was supposedly his puppet master for the International Communist Conspiracy.)

We visited the American Indian art museum next to the center, then departed for an easy drive to Greater Kansas City. The last time I had been downtown there was for MidAmeriCon, and I suppose there has been a great bit of change. The café where I met Sam Moskowitz for example . . .

### Truman Presidential Library

Alone as was ever his habit, Conan stepped forward into the ancient chambers of the long-dead monarch, which had been preserved in the state they were when he laid down his tenure of the throne. He gazed around the oval, seeing the images of the other rulers, the setting where the monarch laid down the laws and ruled the land, the throne and the seats for the king's intimates. Then the hair rose on his head as a voice resounded in the still air. "This is the Oval Office . . ."

— Not from "The King Who Made the Fire Fall" by Robert E. Howard

The Eisenhower museum is majestic. The Truman museum is personal. This may be because Ike had the sense to get out of Abilene, while Harry found more congenial climes in his hometown. For example, Independence has restaurants, though I believe the President preferred the Muehlenbach in Kansas City, where MidAmerCon was held in 1976 (my first WorldCon).

It was not much trouble finding the museum, even though we did end up not getting in the left-turn lane where we should have turned.

Everything in Independence is "Truman" the way everything in San Antonio is "Alamo" (and everything in Louisville is "Derby").

Not surprisingly, the displays skim over the Pendergast Machine, just as Kay Summersby gets only the slightest of mentions at the Eisenhower Museum.

Truman was a very partisan politician, and the museum presents many recordings of his speeches among the memorabilia of his campaigns. They even have a copy of the *Chicago Tribune* with the famous headline, albeit not the original copy.

One of the sights of the museum is the replica of the Oval Office. It has the furniture and art that was there during Truman's term and otherwise replicates the layout of the place. How can I be so sure? He himself said so! When the tourist enters the room, the presence triggers a recording of Truman explaining the layout and content. I understand HST used to do that himself.

Harry and Bess are buried out in the courtyard, behind the building. Margaret, their daughter, and her husband are nearby.

We had driven past the hotel on the way to the museum, and so it was no trouble finding the place again. There was a refrigerator. We got things stowed and went out to eat, in a very home-like Hometown Buffet.

Several years ago, we had dinner in a Bob Evans restaurant in Dayton. Looking at the menu, I noticed something missing. Dinners were served with a choice of rolls or biscuits. Here in Louisville, the choice is rolls, biscuits, or cornbread muffins. The Hometown Buffet in Independence had cornbread with their biscuits and rolls. Well, I understood the Unionists were around St. Louis.

That night, I finally got through to Grant, and learned that there had been a call from a woman in California about her mother. I guessed and called my cousin Lin. Her mother Mary Grace had died Monday. Mary Grace was a World War II vet of the WAVES, having joined after her first husband had been killed in a training accident.

Oh, and Lin had married her partner Janet, now that they could do that sort of thing.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 178.3

Books read: *Operation Sealion* by Peter Fleming

#### Thursday, August 14, 2008 Independence — Henderson, KY

Another long drive, and we got to Lisa's father's home at a reasonable time. Mr. Thomas is recovering from his back surgery well enough. We told and showed them, and Lisa's sister Esther (the teacher), who turned up to hear the stories, about the things we had seen and done.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 435.7

#### Friday, August 15, 2008

#### Henderson — Louisville

Lisa had to get some special shoes. The shop is just down the road from the Loew's where my nephew works, and so after getting her shod we went by there. He was out.. The remaining drive home was uneventful. When we got home Grant had already gone out, so we unloaded the car, went to dinner at Texas Roadhouse, and came back and did a little unpacking.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 137.5

#### Saturday, August 16, 2008

Dooley's Bagels in the morning, NOTA in the afternoon. Laundry was Sunday.

The membership was low — the estimates I've seen have been on the order of four thousand. It didn't seem cramped.

The convention center facilities were not too bad, even if we had to enter at one end and go all the way to the other. We were fortunate to get through registration quickly, but then they opened up early and we were there early. Program participant registration was particularly convenient (one of the few black marks of LoneStarCon was having to go all the way to the other end of the building to get to participant registration).

The party hotel, the Sheraton, was a little farther off. This and our disinclination for partying may have kept us out of it.

The convenience of the Sixteenth Street Mall made for a delightful addition to the con. There were plenty of other outside attractions that our friends mentioned.

There were far too many reminders of loss. Never mind the memorial ceremony, played in by some splendid fan performers. **Dave Kyle** couldn't make it. And I had a pang when I looked at the message board and saw **Eve Ackerman**, but no entry for **4SJ**.

Total mileage: 3057  
Gas bought: \$457.60



Time out: 10:30 AM  
Time back: 6:10 PM

States passed through: 7 (KY, TN, IL, MO, KS, CO, IN)

— Joe

As always at the conventions, I wished I had the ability to attend two panels at once. In the huckster room I came across a dealer selling rocks and who reawakened my childhood interest in them. I was tempted by a long dagger but in the end did not buy it, for which I was to be duly grateful at the Air Force Academy. We spent much pleasant time in the fanzine lounge with Chris Garcia.

After the convention it was on to Colorado Springs where we would be staying with Joe's cousin Reeves and his wife Jan, who generously opened their home to us. Reeves even gave us a very nice tour of the Air Force Academy.



We also saw a wondrous place called Garden of the Gods, where you can actually walk around and through the magnificent rock formations. If you are ever anywhere near Colorado Springs, you won't regret making time to see this park.

Before I saw the mountains I would have rated Philadelphia as my favorite spot outside Kentucky but no longer. Now that ranking goes to the mountains. They were very much worth the long, tiring drive to get there.

After we left the mountains we made two more important stops, the first at the Eisenhower Library and the second at the Truman Library. The Eisenhower Library was very interesting but the Truman Library I thought better. There's a replica of the Oval Office. When you step inside you hear Truman's recorded voice telling you about the Oval Office. It is very impressive to hear that voice come out of nowhere and speak to you.

One big regret was that I couldn't bring my friend Jane anything from the Denver Democratic convention. One day not long before the trip she failed to show up at work at her branch. The boss had the police stop by. They found her dead on the floor. It still seems impossible to me that I will never hear her funny little giggle ever again. She was always eager to share her chocolates. Jane was one of the many unsung poll workers making sure our democracy works on its most basic levels. She never missed working the polls and never missed a chance to talk about the candidates she believed in. Anyone who came to her branch seeking help could depend on Jane to do her utmost to see that they got to the proper place where they could get the needed help. I wish I had been able to bring her some of the Australian chocolates.

— Lisa

#### TO THE PERSON SITTING IN DARKNESS — The Sequel

Saturday, we ate out. Afterwards, Grant

wanted to go to Big Lots, so we did. We happened to both pass the large hardware section at the same time, and jointly pondered the purchase of a generator. It was more than I wanted to spend at the time.

Sunday, I got the wash started, and about one o'clock was at the computer, listening to the wind blow. As you will recall, Hurricane Ike had blown through the Texas coast, then turned north and drifted through the Plains states. We were getting wind gusts of seventy to eighty miles per hour.

Thus, then it was with a \*blip\* that the lights and everything else electric passed away. I sat in the sunlight coming through the window and listened to what sounded like two opossums fighting it out on the roof. I believe it was apples falling. Lisa dug out the battery-powered radio and we listened in fascinated horror at the reports of widespread devastation and darkness. By five in the afternoon the wind had died down enough that we could get out.

A tree had blown down across Christy Avenue, fortunately behind my car. And maneuvering down the streets was tricky as there were many new barriers. It was as bad as when they have the mini-Marathon and half the streets are blocked.

There were some places open on Bardstown Road but we ended up going to Rafferty's in DuPont. It was the first place in the area that had an empty parking place. It began to fill up, mostly because that area was one of the few with restaurants that had power. Understandably our dinner took a while but we weren't exactly hurrying to make it home. We got home, I dug out the big LED flashlight from the trunk of the car and we sat around a while before going to bed.

Monday morning I got to practice shaving in the dark. The descent into the darkness of the first floor, lit only by a flashlight, stirred strange avatistic feelings in me. I ended up working half an hour extra most days, since I only took half an hour for lunch — there was nothing to do at home. At least I could recharge my cell phone at the office. I had taken to keeping it on hand, on the nightstand, so as to open it up and see the time. Lisa had to work that night, and the library had power, so I went down there to pick her up and use the library's power and wireless internet. It was somewhat melancholic to drive home through the darkened streets.

The city maintenance crews got the tree across Christy cleared off Tuesday. Also that day, we ate at Royal Palace Mongolian Buffet. Lisa worked Wednesday and Thursday nights. On Tuesday, also, I took my insulins to the office. Wednesday morning I got in at seven instead of 7:30. All those days I'd been taking half an hour for lunch — there wasn't anything to do at home.

We'd sit in the bedroom at night, shining the flashlights off the ceiling, and listen to the radio. On Wednesday, Lisa took some of the clothes out of the dryer and put them on the drying rack. Then, she cleaned out the refrigerator, leaving it full of warm bottled water.

Friday, I had so much time accumulated that I left work at one in the afternoon. And went

back about two, to plug in my desktop computer and get some of the files off it. Elizabeth had an offer from Red Lobster for a discount, and the restaurant did have power, so we went there Friday night. Grant had brought in a cooler full of ice, and I put my insulins next to his.

Saturday, we still didn't have power, though Dooley's Bagels did. So did the Bon Air Library, and as we were watching "Serenity", Grant called me and said that the power had come on for thirty seconds and then the transformer had exploded. Disheartened, after the meeting broke up we went out to Golden Corral for dinner. After about the second plate I got another call from Grant, reporting that the power was back on again. After finishing our dinner, we went by Kroger's to get milk and juice . . . but we still ate out Sunday night.

— Joe



Hurricane Ike left a swath of devastation along the Texas coast. Sunday its remnants arrived in Louisville and left a swath of downed trees and power lines. Joe and I sat for several hours and listened while the wind poured around our house. The trees whipped and shook in the powerful gusts. Our house got bombed with apples. At that we were lucky. Some of our neighbors were bombed by trees. We did not get to the library for our usual Sunday outing. We love the library, but not enough to go out in a hurricane. Our power went out about one p.m.

Grant generously let us use his small battery-powered radio while he was at work. The announcers told us we were getting upwards of 75 miles an hour in gusts, which is the force of a Category 1 hurricane. I've lived here all my life and I can't remember ever hearing of a hurricane having this much force this far inland. I never expected to have to sit through a hurricane here in Kentucky. On the whole, though, it was not nearly as scary as the February 5 tornado. The air pressure never did the scary drop it did that fearful night. Unlike Galveston, we did not have to worry about storm surge. There was only one fatality, a boy who was mowing the lawn when the winds came.

When it was safe I took the camera out and chronicled some of the devastation within walking distance. Most of the damaged trees looked as if parts of them had been blown off but one huge tree looked as if the wind had

yanked it out of the ground, roots and all. There was a five-foot hole where it had been and a big swath of dirt and grass piled around its exposed roots. The wind had thrown bricks on several feet of a sidewalk, as if to show us humans who the real boss was. A child's small plastic swimming pool was freakishly shoved up under a car's rear bumper and crumpled against the car's wheels.

I call my friend Beth, whose poor health kept her asleep through the storm. She asks me why her power is out. I tell her Hurricane Ike. She makes a comment about how it could have triggered it. I tell her Ike itself came through Louisville. She says that is impossible, hurricanes don't come this far inland. I tell her they do now. The response is stunned silence. I describe the damage I have chronicled.

Joe and I decided to go out to eat and went in search of a restaurant with the power to cook our food. Fortunately Rafferty's and Red Lobster were open. We ended up at Rafferty's, which for some unknown reason was swamped. It took some time to get seated and longer to get our food. When it came, though, the tilapia was pretty good.

After we came home I listened to Grant's radio until bedtime, when I returned it to where he had left it. Monday I walked down to the corner Walgreen's to see how things were faring along Bardstown Road. The Walgreen's and the other places in its lot were open but everything else looked pretty dark. On impulse I went into the Walgreen's and looked through their electronics section. They had a radio similar to Grant's for five dollars and batteries to run said radio for ten dollars. I bought both and walked home again. I spent the rest of the morning listening to the local announcers discuss our energy crisis. I learned that the radio had been a very good idea, because it might be two weeks before we get our power back.

This year's spider seems to be literally gone with the wind. She was a funnel web spider I recently named Funicula. She had an elegant burrow of glistening white silk in which she sheltered. I had hoped she had managed to hide under the house's siding but her web is a tattered mess and there's no sign she's repairing the damage.

Wednesday morning I braced myself and emptied the refrigerator. Out went the big pizza I had been saving for the cool time, the microwaveable panini kept back in case it turned too hot to use the oven, all the ice cream, all lunchmeats and the Greek cheese I had bought on impulse. When I had finished the only things left were bottled drinks, mostly water. I lugged the two full trash bags out to the bin and managed to get them in. I only hope the raccoons don't get into the bin before trash day. Throwing the food out was a heavy psychological blow. I haven't really missed the TV. I haven't missed the electric light all that much. Only having internet at the library has been a big inconvenience. But none of that was as big a blow as throwing out all the food. Somehow that brought things home in a way nothing else did except maybe the loss of Funicula, whose tattered, empty web has come

to symbolize the way our lives have been overturned. (No comments from the studio audience about the ridiculousness of getting emotionally attached to a creepy-crawly spider will be welcome.)

Thursday another fatality was announced, this time a twenty-two-year-old woman who had been running a generator in her house, which is a big no-no. She was less than half my age and now her life is snuffed out. The ten-year-old had been trying to earn his allowance. His family must be really sick with guilt.

Friday, no power yet. I do however observe that Funicula's burrow is back. I pull the camera from my purse and take a picture. Funicula is there but I can't tell if she's alive or dead. I decide on cautious optimism and will check her later. On our get together we go into Books A Million. I observe there a strange box with moving pictures of people. It seems to be used mainly to sell things.

Saturday we head out for NOTA's monthly meeting. Grant calls us there and reports that we had power for thirty seconds before the transformer blew. Oh well, we're no worse off than we were before. I buy a battery powered CD player at Big Lots so that I can share my audiobook with Joe.

We leave NOTA and go eat at Golden Corral. We are nearly finished when Grant calls and says that power is now on again. We have a moment of quiet thanksgiving and then go to the grocery, where Joe buys perishables for the first time in a week. I buy soymilk, consider ice cream but decide to wait until tomorrow so that the freezer can get truly cold again. At home I transfer the storm pictures to the desktop and get a good look at Funicula. She is definitely not curled into a dead ball.

I've been changed. Our comfortable security of not being touched by the main part of a hurricane is gone. The experience itself was not as scary as a tornado but the widespread destruction through my city hurts. I have seen most of my modern conveniences turned into mere clutter. Everyone in Ike's path has had a brutal reminder of life's uncertainties and just how fragile our civilization really is. It is scary to learn my city is vulnerable to hurricanes just as the coastal cities are. But I have also learned there is life without TV. The next time I will not be so unprepared. I will have me no hand foods which do not require cooking or refrigeration. The Ryder Cup, golf's version of the Breeder's Cup, is being held this weekend. I have little interest in golf but it has given me no little sense of pride that a hurricane has not stopped my city from putting on a good show for our international visitors.

The recovery efforts were hampered at first by the absence of crews who had been sent to help the stricken Gulf, especially Galveston, which took the brunt of the storm. We had agreements with the Gulf to send help in emergencies and which we were morally and legally bound to honor. Nobody could have anticipated that a hurricane could do this kind of damage a thousand miles inland. Everyone close who could have sent help could no more spare crews than we could. We did eventually get help from Wisconsin, Florida and California, who no doubt stripped themselves as much as possible to extend help to us and all the other stricken communities. One such worker died helping us.

Those libraries with power became popular hangouts where people came to charge cellphones, laptops and get on the net.

— Lisa

Niner in the stretch. She ran magnificently that day but failed in the other Triple Crown races. She did not do well as a broodmare, producing only three foals, none of whom did well on the track.

Vindication, Breeder's Cup 2006 Juvenile died July 10, 2008 of complications from colic. He was only eight years old and should have had a long future of siring champions like his sire Seattle Slew got. I've never forgotten his magnificent charge at the Juvenile which was like watching Slew run again. Sadly, he was injured and never got a chance at the Triple Crown. Now he's been cheated of a promising career at stud.

It is no longer possible to see the leading money-winning horse at the Horse Park. You can still see Cigar, but he is no longer the champion earner. Curlin took the honor from him with his win in the Jockey Cup. Now all Curlin has to do is beat Big Brown.

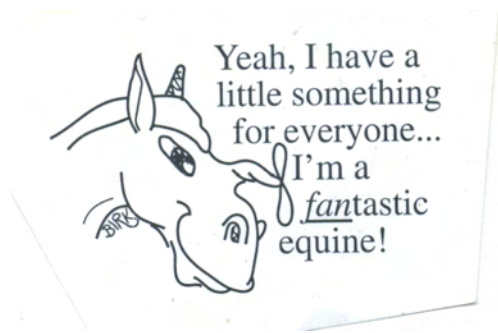
## KENTUCKY FUTURITY

Race Report by Lisa Major



## HORSE NEWS

by Lisa Major



I think that Monday I will begin work on cleaning out the living room closet and turning it into an emergency storage for batteries, flashlights and nonperishable food. It will be some time before I feel secure enough to have a freezer full of food. Even then I intend to keep on hand such things as Vienna sausages and other foods that don't require cooking. I definitely also recommend keeping on hand a small battery powered radio. The one I bought on impulse has served as our connection to what was going on in the city. I heartily recommend the immediate purchase of such to any of our readers who don't have one.

Derby runner-up Eight Belles now lies at Churchill Downs. They had a very moving memorial service. Her trainer had to fight from breaking into tears. Churchill Downs president promised that there would be more research to prevent other breakdowns.

Genuine Risk died August 18. She was the last living filly to win the Derby and also the oldest Derby winner. She reached the grand age of 31. When I heard the news I sat down and thought back the twenty-eight years to when I had watched a big blocky filly outlast Forty-

The last leg of the trotting Triple Crown was held October 4. With the previous legs each going to a different horse, there was no crown on the line. Disappointingly, Napoleon, winner of the Yonkers Trot, was not there but Deweycheatumnhowe, winner of the Hambletonian, was. He managed to win the first heat but the second heat went to Celebrity Secret. By the rules, this meant the two colts would have to run yet a third race that day. My heart beat faster, for I had never seen a runoff. Windsong's Legacy, Glidemaster and Donato Hanover had all managed to win both heats. The colts were given an hour between the races. The starting wagon pulled away. They hit the stretch together and came driving to the finish, neither giving an inch. It was the kind of race I love to see, two top horses battling it out, giving all that is in them and which I never thought I would get to see in person. Dewey managed to get his head in front at the wire. In the winner's circle he was patient for perhaps five minutes before insisting on returning to the barn. Barked, he swung his head impatiently and nearly knocked his groom down, after which he started for the barn,

dragging his attendants with him. He had, after all, trotted three hard races that day and had certainly earned the right to a good rubdown. I watched him go and marveled at the stamina it had taken to trot those three hard races with only an hour between each race. And I will not forget Celebrity Secret, who made him work hard for his win and whose name deserves to be written down alongside that of Easy Goer, Alydar and Winning Colors, the other horses who made their conquerors work for their wins. He lost but he was not found wanting.



### PAUL NEWMAN

January 26, 1925 — September 26, 2008  
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000056/>  
 Obituary by Lisa

I grew up watching his marvelous performances. I remember best his marvelous performances in *Hud* and *Exodus*. His passing leaves a tremendous void in the film world. In addition to being one of the world's great actors, Newman was legendary for his contributions to charities.

"He was a man, taken all in all. We shall not look upon his like again."

### THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston  
 Terminal Effects

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

As a follow-up to my recent column on weapons, this one is on bullets.

Bullets were around thousands of years before firearms. Slings could use stones or purpose-made lumps of heavy metal, such as lead. Those last were bullets. The word comes from the French boulet, or small ball, which in turn comes from the Latin bulla, or knob.

No-one knows who actually first used a firearm to hurl a bullet. No-one knows who first purposefully made a tube for shooting a bullet. Once the properties of black powder were known, however, this use must have occurred quickly to many people. The fact that the dirty, smelly stuff could throw a stone or bullet much farther and faster than even the best slingsman would have made the extrapolation obvious to

anyone with a bit of intelligence and imagination.

What held things back was materials science. Even modern black powder is far from an ideal propellant, and the crude bronzes, brasses and irons available during this period were far from the ideal gun-making materials. The mechanics of loading, aiming and firing were also very rough and impractical. Still, even the earliest, crudest "hand gonne" of the late Fourteenth Century was more effective than any sling and most bows, and lighter than ballistas and so forth. Not just when they hit, either; the unexpected flash, the thunderous bang and the cloud of white smoke mystified and terrified those not used to them.

The earliest firearms bullets were monsters. In part this was because the smiths of the time could make large-bore guns more easily than smaller ones. However, given the limitations of the early firearms, using large bullets made sense. As the metals and manufacturing techniques and even the powder itself were improved the bullets grew smaller. By the time of the War Between the States most military long-arms were around sixty caliber. (That is, sixty hundredths of an inch in diameter.)

For the most part, progress was slow to this point. Oh, you'd occasionally have someone get a bright idea which actually worked and was accepted, but through much of the history of firearms a soldier might be issued a weapon his grandfather would have recognized. Or perhaps even the same weapon! The British Brown Bess musket — counting those converted to percussion cap ignition — was in service for over a century.

However, even during the Civil War there were radical new weapons in use. Repeating rifles and pistols firing complete cartridges, for example. These units of ammunition contained powder, bullet and primer in a single, handy package, resistant to weather and fast and easy to load into an appropriate gun. Things were changing, and the rate of change often left military planners far behind. Perhaps the most significant development in firearms during the Nineteenth Century was new propellants. "Smokeless" powders weren't entirely smokeless, but the quantity was greatly reduced over that produced by black powder. That was very useful in war, especially to those firing from concealment. More importantly, the properties of these new chemicals could be tailored to make far better propellants.

Velocities soared during the second half of the Nineteenth Century. And with this new speed came a realization.

Bullet design had changed much by this time, going from simple, round balls of lead or soft alloys (ordinary military small arms ammunition is still termed ball) to the Minnie Ball. This was an elongated projectile with a conical or ogive nose and hollow base. On firing, the skirt of the base would expand to help engage the rifling and seal the gasses behind the bullet, increasing velocity.

The two most important qualities in the "stopping power" of a bullet — that is, how quickly and effectively it stops an enemy from

acting — are shock (which depends on transfer of energy) and wound channel, the second of those depending upon both diameter and length for effectiveness. Both of these characteristics depend on the size of the bullet. If a bullet doesn't expand, or only expands slightly, it needs to start out large. If a bullet does expand significantly, its success depends on A) how much it expands while B) holding together to C) penetrate deeply enough to reach vital organs. To stop an opponent quickly you need a combination of quick deceleration, rapid expansion and deep penetration. The first two of those requirements go together; the third conflicts with them. To get all three requires a great deal of energy.

Lead and some of its alloys turn out to be very good at expanding under impact at low to moderate velocities without going to pieces. However, with the higher velocities possible in the new firearms, lead and the softer alloys turned out to not be very well behaved inside the barrel, and to fragment very quickly after impact. If you're using rifling — and by the time smokeless powders were developed just about everyone was for handguns and longarms using single projectiles — lead will be stripped off the bullet by the lands in the bore. This is bad for that bullet, and very bad for the shooter when the next round is fired. Harder lead alloys will work to a point, but beyond that more is needed.

In metals strength is closely associated with hardness. The trick with bullets is to have something which will be dense enough to still pack a punch, malleable enough to "take" the rifling, strong enough to hold together in the bore, and yet not so hard as to rapidly wear away the rifling. For high velocities no one material could do all that. The answer was, of course, to use more than one.

Jacketed bullets began to appear, in a rapidly growing variety. Early jacket materials were cupro-nickel, nickel and copper. (Cupro-nickel is an alloy of copper, nickel and strengthening impurities, such as iron and manganese. It has the advantage of being very resistant to corrosion, even in salt water.) Even with that narrow assortment of materials the shape of the bullet, jacket and combination made for a huge variety. Full metal jackets completely enclose the projectile, but don't expand very well. Soft point jacketed bullets have a tip of lead or some other material sticking out past the end of the jacket. They expand, some quite well, but can be easily damaged in handling and loading. Hollow-points avoid the exposed lead tip but may not expand reliably without much fiddling in the design.

With the increased speed all this made possible, bullets began to shrink. Actually, given recoil they pretty much had to. While the diameter of bullets became smaller, shock effect was greater due to the higher velocity. Kinetic energy began taking over for brute force momentum, at least in rifles. Handguns, with their shorter barrels and greater recoil — both literal, due to lighter weight and perceived, due to being braced just with the hands — couldn't provide enough muzzle velocity with a good-sized bullet except in specialty firearms.

As time passed and the science and technology improved, greater specialization began to be seen. The best design for a bullet depends on its job. Rifle or handgun? Military, police or civilian? High stopping power or high accuracy?

Military ammunition has requirements not found in other venues. For example, the enemy may be wearing body armor, and may be inside a vehicle (which may or not be armored) or behind a wall (which may be reinforced for defensive purposes). Therefore, penetration is of very high importance. Ball rounds are very good at penetration. Adding a steel or tungsten core greatly improves the penetration without altering the shape or appearance of the bullet. Instant stopping power is generally a secondary requirement, though much work has been done to improve that in bullets which meet the primary requirements. The fact that soldiers — both allies and enemies — are almost always in groups is also taken into consideration. Instant kill is much less important than quick incapacitation. There are even international treaties making this official policy.

Police requirements are similar to those of the military but not quite as extreme. Police may be engaged in extended shootouts with felons inside buildings or vehicles. The sheet metal of a modern auto is pretty thin, and most modern handgun bullets can punch through this with plenty left to hurt or kill whoever is inside. Windshields are much tougher, and can even bounce a .357 Magnum bullet if it hits at a shallow angle. Side and back windows are less formidable, but can still drastically affect the path of a bullet. And, of course, there's far more to a car body than sheet metal. Mechanisms and reinforcements inside doors can stop bullets, for example. Still, except for the engine, automobiles aren't very good protection from bullets.

A military level of penetration is not good for most law enforcement use, since the bullet can go completely through the intended target and endanger bystanders. One reason the .38 Special LRN (Lead Round Nose) cartridge was used for so long (with the main one being sheer inertia) was that it rarely overpenetrated while having fair stopping power. However, it was obviously underpowered for penetrating obstacles and as a low-velocity round produced little shock. Criminals killed by it could still have time to kill others before finally expiring. Since police officers are usually alone or in small groups in the field, they needed something more likely to stop an opponent quickly.

Police agencies for decades tried various combinations of cartridge and firearm (the .41 Magnum being strongly marketed as an ideal cartridge for those patrolling the highways) to try and find the ideal. The .40 S&W was developed from research done by the FBI with the 10mm cartridge. It is just slightly smaller in diameter than the venerable .45 ACP but is a modern, high-pressure round. Combining high velocity (for a handgun) with a decent diameter it is a very good stopping round. It can also fit ten rounds into a space which will only hold seven .45 ACP. Most police agencies today use

the 9mm in any of several modern handguns, but the .40 is catching up.

Civilian handgun defensive rounds have yet a different set of requirements. Reliability in rapidly stopping an attacker is of paramount importance, since a civilian using a firearm defensively is usually alone. Also, they will rarely be against someone wearing body armor or behind a significant barricade.

Some on this list may already be familiar with the Thompson-LaGarde Tests of 1901. Some may even know of the Thompson-LaGarde Cadaver Tests of 1904. The severe deficiencies of the .38 caliber revolver had been made obvious in several then-recent military actions, and the Army wanted more. As a result of these tests and other evaluations, the military services of the United States adopted the Browning M1911 in .45 ACP. This offered a cartridge with a velocity typical of the day in a ball round (for legality and feeding reliability) with a large enough bullet diameter to have good shock and wound channel characteristics without needing to expand.

Now, these tests were deliberately focused on finding an effective military cartridge. Their relevance to civilian or even police applications is remote. Yet many to this day — and in spite of many developments in firearms and ammunition — still hold them to be revealed truth. At the opposite extreme are those who flatly state that the only thing they demonstrated was how stupid steers are. (The most common reaction of the test animals — steers about to be humanely slaughtered for food anyway — to being shot in the lungs was to look around to see where the noise had come from.)

Keeping in mind the specific goals of military handgun ammunition is important. The .45 ACP has a strong reputation for stopping a fight with one shot to anywhere on the torso, while it's greatest rival, the 9mm, is widely regarded as a wimp. Yet far more military forces — including most from the US these days — use the 9mm. There are many reasons for this. The 9mm is far from useless, and it has much better penetration than the .45. More can be carried for the same weight and volume. Many consider the recoil to be more manageable, but this varies widely with the specific handgun. Finally, the handgun of whatever caliber is secondary to the rifle or submachine gun. Yet many parts of the US military retain the .45 ACP and more are going back to it, simply because the 9mm cartridge in military trim just isn't as effective as the .45.

For generations, cartridges and their bullets were designed through a combination of experience, intuition and testing. Some worked well, some worked poorly. Theories came and went as to what made a good self defense round. Today there are two primary schools of thought, which can be simplified into the theorists and the statisticians. The theorists have a model, tested in ballistics gel and/or other media, with results they believe to be significant. The statisticians compile actual data on shootings, usually those where a single shot to the torso ended the fight quickly and thoroughly.

Their results disagree. Not by a huge

amount, but the difference is there, and it is significant. The statisticians tell the theorists that they need to change their theories. The theorists tell the statisticians that their data is at best anecdotal and badly analyzed, and at worst a work of fiction. Still, the two camps do agree in some areas. Personally, I lean strongly towards the statisticians. I'm an engineer, and am trained to select real world data over theory. As noted below, the difference is primarily in which specific bullet is best for a particular cartridge.

Today, with better materials and modeling techniques, as well as a large, organized body of data, bullets are tailored very exactly. Expansion characteristics can be precisely set, based on cartridge and bullet weight. No longer is the same basic design — usually proprietary by company — used for every hollowpoint. Instead, jacket thickness, cavity depth, core alloy and serrations can be adjusted to provide the desired penetration and expansion reliably for a specific goal. The difference in effectiveness comes with where the designer of a particular load (the cartridge/bullet weight combination) believes the balance between penetration and expansion should be.

If you believe the statistical data, these days the difference between the best-performing rounds in various calibers is a matter of only a few percentage points. Yes, specific cartridge/bullet combinations are better in specific situations. For general self defense use there's at least one cartridge in all of the major calibers which will reliably stop a fight with a single shot to the torso well over 90% of the time.

What is a major caliber? These include (and while I'll try to be thorough I may miss some) 9mm, .45 ACP, .357 SIG, .40 S&W, 10mm, .45 Colt, and any of the centerfire Magnum cartridges except perhaps the .32. Note that many of these are so potent that most beginners should not consider them. Many are also not chambered in any autopistols suitable for self defense. (Note that this definition of major caliber is for stopping an enemy. There are shooting competitions where some of these cartridges would not be considered major caliber.)

Lesser cartridges are far from harmless. For example, pistols chambered for the .380 ACP are very popular as a hideout or backup gun among law enforcement officers. The best of the loads for this are fairly effective, being somewhere in the 70% range for one-shot stops. (This is still better than the .38 Special with a traditional load, which is in the mid sixties.) However, the round seriously lacks penetration. One member of an online shooting list I belong to described an accidental discharge of a .380 auto pistol in his kitchen, caused by a defective striker. The bullet *bounced off a single pane glass window*. (He didn't mention bullet weight or design or angle of impact.)

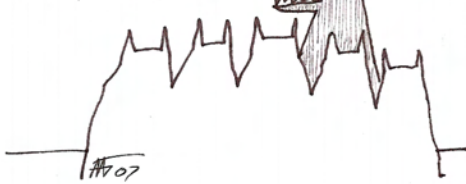
However, the size and weight ranges of .380 pistols overlaps largely with those of defense-suitable 9mm pistols, so there's really no reason to go with the less powerful round for normal self-defense, except for people who have



such low hand strength that they can't cycle the slide on any 9mm. There are some models of .380 ACP pistols which are loaded by tipping the barrel up and sliding a cartridge into the chamber, rather than racking a spring-loaded slide.

So there you have a brief (yes, really) overview of how bullets work, their history and the current state of the art. This is a complicated subject; people can and have spent decades on it. This is partly because the process of making a better bullet is ongoing, and there's always something new coming along.

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



**OVAL OFFICE ODDITIES:  
An Irreverent Collection of  
Presidential Facts, Follies and  
Foibles**

by Bill Fawcett

(HarperCollins; 2008;

ISBN:978-0-06-134617-0; \$13.95)

Reviewed by Rodford Edmiston Smith

This is more than simply a book of trivia about US Presidents and their home, though that content is certainly there. Fawcett and his collaborators have provided a great deal of often interesting information on the history and practice of the Presidency, in many cases showing how it relates to the larger picture. If you think any recent president was the most corrupt/incompetent/irreverent/psychotic/promiscuous, brother (or sister) you don't know history!

Fawcett wrote most of the book, but several of the chapters were written by other authors. (Mike Resnick's chapter on Theodore Roosevelt prompted me to buy his book *The Other Teddy Roosevelts* when I saw it at Denvention.) This provides a range not only of viewpoints but subject matter, improving the variety of the book and reducing the chance for monotony. Even so, the book is best taken in small doses. *Oval Office Oddities* is a good read for the bathroom or the doctor's office.

There are myths confirmed and others debunked. For example, in this book you will learn the truth behind the movie *The Wind and the Lion*. Turns out there is very little connection between the fiction and the fact. For example, the primary kidnap was a young woman, but a 64-year-old man. And there were no small children involved, but only a grown stepson.

On the other hand, as portrayed in another movie, *55 Days in Peking*, Herbert Hoover and his wife acted quite heroically during the Boxer Rebellion in China.

JFK once told a group of writers, artists, musicians and scientists having lunch at the White House that they were "the greatest assemblage of talent to eat here since Thomas Jefferson dined alone." Well, maybe. Actually, probably not. We've had a lot of very intelligent Presidents. Interestingly, the correlation between intelligence and success at the job is not very strong.

Neither is the correlation between educational accomplishment and success as President. (Want to know which high GPA graduates of prestigious universities botched the job? Read the book! :-). Practical knowledge and experience were often more useful than book learnin'. People say they want politicians who are honest, and free of the corruption of organized politics. The problem with this is that political innocents — no matter how honest or how much integrity they have — are far less able than those who know the ropes at fighting corruption. And there was corruption — and special interests — in place well before Washington took office.

So what makes a President successful? If there is a common factor for successful Presidents it is determination. On the other hand, many people with great determination failed as Presidents. Given how the office, the nation and the world have changed since Washington, most likely at least some of the requirements for being a successful President have changed. This book won't help you predict who among a selection of candidates will be a good President, but it can give you a good idea of why some Presidents of the past were successful . . . or not.

In the Introduction Fawcett notes that no matter how talented and noble, Presidents are human. This was especially true before the near-veneration and microscopic scrutiny of recent decades. Presidents and their families felt little need to alter their accustomed behaviors just because they were living in the home of the President of the United States. In that casual era there was also far less concern about safety. Before the Twentieth Century presidential children living in the White House would run in and out with little supervision or concern. Anyone was free to enter and attempt to speak with the President or simply ask for an autograph. Even well into the Twentieth Century presidents and their families were treated more like human beings than royalty.

Of course, while presidents used to be more accessible, they were also subject to more distractions. And more vulnerable. While I think that today's nanny society isolates the President (and many other politicians and administrators) far too much they do need both some isolation (if only so they can concentrate) and a good deal of security (if only because replacing an assassinated bad president can cause more trouble than the bad president would have).

I like this book. Anyone with an interest in history and how it affects and is affected by

individuals should, as well.

**THE FILM CLUB**

by David Gilmour

(Twelve (Hachette Book Group USA), 2008, 225 pp., \$21.99, ISBN 9780446199292)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

The three main characters of this memoir, which takes place in Toronto, Canada, are the father, the son, and the high angst. Dad is out of work. He was a movie reviewer on TV. The son, 6'4", Jesse, is 16. He hates high school because he's neither academic nor athletic. It's quite evident that he wants to drop out. Jesse has lived with his mother. She is divorced from the father, and author of this volume, who has remarried and lives not too far away. Both parents decide, Jesse, should live with his father, to learn the masculine role in life.

Complicating matters, Jesse loves girls and they fervently return the sentiment. So Jesse is edgy not only about school, which he is, not surprisingly, failing at, but about his girlfriend of the moment, most notably his relationship with Rebecca Ng, which he thinks he's failing at, too.

Father is nervous, also, being out of a job, yet he continues to dine at fancy restaurants. He also frets about Jesse's relationships because they appear to be the same situations and heartaches as dad's relationships had been in years gone by.

Finally after days, weeks, and more of worry over Jesse's situation, dad offers the son a deal. He can drop out of high school on the condition that he watches 3 movies a week with dad! By the way, dad tells Jesse he can live rent and food free and get pocket money, also. [Note to readers of this review, no this is not a SF book!]

Jesse takes the deal in a flash (wouldn't you?). And so the routine begins, movies roll on CDs or at the theater. Dad does mini reviews of many famous flicks (*Duel*, *Scarface*, *Mean Streets*, *Last Tango in Paris*, etc.). He screens other movie genres, too (horror, western, musical). [A filmography of movies viewed is found at the book's end.] Some films Jesse likes, others he doesn't care for. Ever so slowly, however, he learns all about the cinema. Is this educating him? Readers will have to decide for themselves.

In between movie watching, Jesse is sleeping, eating, or smoking, and going out, getting drunk, meeting girls, partying, dumping girls, forming a rap singing duo with a buddy, and performing. Oh, dad doesn't seem to mind that his teen son drinks a tad. Father even provides the booze on occasion. *But* he doesn't want Jesse to touch drugs. He swears and promises his dad that he'll never go near dope. But he does, much to dad's continuing and growing angst.

While Jesse is having his worse relationship, with the world and worldly beauty, Miss Ng, dad comments on it to the point where a reader might wonder if dad has a thing for the girl. But, finally, Jesse and Rebecca break up only to get back together. Both son and father go through more angst with this lady from Asia. The same

thing happens throughout the book with other girls from elsewhere

Jesse becomes a successful performer, moves out of the house, and thus raises dad's angst. Then dad tests Jesse on his movie knowledge. He passes the test. Around this time, Jesse goes back to finish up a brief course to conclude high school. It comes to the father like a *deus ex machina*. But, at least, the story ends on an up-note.

The author, now less angst-ridden, concludes in one of his final paragraphs: "Many, many other things lay ahead — his [Jesse's] first days in college, his inexpressible delight at a student card with his name and face on it, his first assignment ('The Role of Multiple Narrators in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*'), his first after-class beer with a college pal."

David Gilmour, the author, has written 6 novels. His last book, *A Perfect Night to Go to China*, was a prize-winner in Canada. Moreover, he's hosted his own TV talk show that won him another award.

Recommended for those who enjoy guilty pleasures.

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### MR. HOLMES, MEET MR. JANE

Review by Johnny Carruthers of  
*The Mentalist*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1196946/>  
<http://www.xanga.com/janusfiles>

Earlier this week, I watched the series premiere of *The Mentalist*. I was intrigued by the promos that CBS ran during the summer, and as I watched them, I began to develop a pretty good idea about the title character.

Here's a quick rundown, for those of you who may have missed the promos and the first episode. Patrick Jane is the aforementioned mentalist; a former TV psychic who now works as a consultant for the California Bureau Of Investigation. (There is a flashback to Jane's days as a TV psychic, and he seems to remind me of John Edward more than anything else.) As Jane himself clearly states more than once, has no psychic abilities; he is just very, very good at observing the people and places around him.

As I said, I began to develop a theory about the character from the promos. As I watched the first episode, my suspicions were confirmed:

Patrick Jane is Sherlock Holmes.

If you have doubts about my reasoning, pick up a volume of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. In most of them, within the opening paragraphs, Holmes is astonishing his latest client (and usually, Dr. Watson) with several important facts about the client — all of which Holmes has gained just from a brief initial observation. One of the best of these recitations may be his initial encounter with Jabez Wilson in "The Red-Headed League." My personal favorite, however, is in "The Greek Interpreter," where Sherlock and his older brother Mycroft begin alternating observations on a couple of men on the street outside the Diogenes Club.

Patrick Jane shares more than a few similarities with Sherlock Holmes. He is highly intelligent — at one point in the first episode, he

casually refers to himself as being the smartest person in the room. He pays attention to the smallest of details, and is able to reach an accurate deduction based on those observations. (He also seems to share Sherlock's assertion that modesty is not a virtue).

But while Jane shares more than a few personality traits with Sherlock Holmes, he does share one thing in common with the other Holmes brother, Mycroft. While he might be able to tell you who committed a particular crime, he is unable to provide the evidence that would send the perp to prison. (With Mycroft, this was due to what Sherlock called a lack of ambition and energy. With Jane, it seems to be more a case of a lack of authority and training.) So, he is merely a consultant for the CBI, working with a quartet of Inspector Lestrades (or perhaps Inspector Gregsons). They are the ones who follow up (at least with some degree of suspicion) on his leads. They also apparently have the unenviable task of keeping Jane on a short leash when his hypotheses become overly outlandish -- something that seems to happen on a regular basis. And the newest member of this team is firmly convinced that, despite Jane's assertions that he has no psychic powers, he genuinely is a psychic.

Based on what I saw in the series premiere, the producers of *The Mentalist* are going to be playing fair with the viewers. For the most part, we will be seeing what Patrick Jane sees; we will be given the same clues that he is given. It is up to the viewer to see if he can reach the same conclusion that Jane does. Here's a hint: Follow his eyes. If it isn't feasible for the viewer to see what Jane is seeing, we will see him looking at something — for instance, when he (correctly) states that a murder victim is gay because he noticed the victim's pedicure in the autopsy room. If the viewer wants to match wits with Patrick Jane, he will have every opportunity to do so. On the other hand, if the viewer just wants to sit back and be amazed by his talents, that's perfectly fine, too.

I'm looking forward to more episodes. I think I will especially be looking forward to the DVD releases, so I can watch some scenes in slow motion, and catch the details I missed with the first viewing.

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### FRY'S TURKISH DELIGHT

Candy Bar Review  
by Johnny Carruthers

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

This bar is one of several that I have picked up at World Market. It's a British import, made by Cadbury. I've been meaning to write a review of this one for some time.

There's not much to say when it comes to describing the Fry's Turkish Delight bar. On the outside, it's covered in milk chocolate. Inside is a dense, reddish-colored gel.

I have tried other imported bars by Cadbury. The milk chocolate seems to be the same here as in those other bars. And it seems to be a little richer than most American milk chocolates. It also seems to have a slightly different taste from the American Cadbury chocolate, but I can't be

certain without a side-by-side comparison.

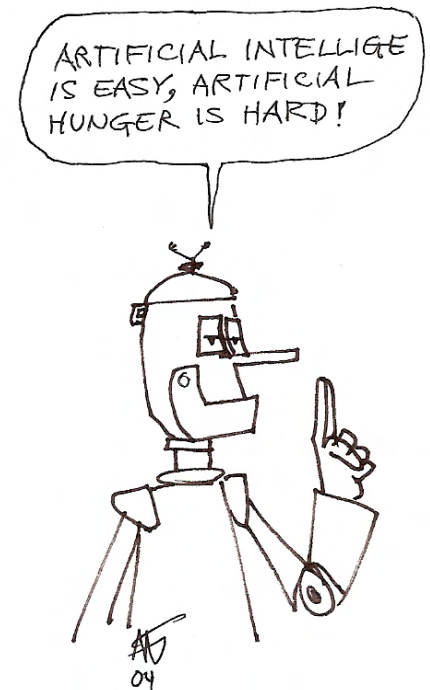
As for the gel center — well, I'm not sure how I can describe it. It has a texture similar to that of a Gummi Bear. The flavor is sweet — but beyond that, I have no idea what that flavor is. It's slightly fruity, but again, I have no idea what fruit it is supposed to be.

When you take a bite, the chocolate is the first flavor you notice. The flavors of the chocolate and the gel blend together a few seconds later, and the chocolate slowly fades away, leaving you with the lingering mystery flavor of the gel. For me, it's slightly maddening. Even as the gel's flavor lingers, I still cannot decide what it is.

"Delight" is a good name for the bar, because I think delightful is probably the best word to describe it. It would be nice if Cadbury (or rather Hershey, the company who has the license to the Cadbury name here in North America) would make a US version of the bar. I know of at least one person who would be jumping for joy. For that matter, there are probably other British and Australian imports who miss this bar as well.

ADDENDUM: I was in World Market a few days ago, and when I went by the candy section, I saw one woman acting . . . well, like a kid in a candy store. From what she told me, she grew up in Canada, so most of the candy bars that World Market carries were old familiar friends. This included Fry's Turkish Delight, so I asked her what the flavor of the gel was supposed to be.

She told me it was raspberry. Really? Hmm, I may have to try it again. Obviously, the flavor didn't register as raspberry on my tastebuds the last time.



**SNICKERS ROCKING NUT ROAD**

Candy Bar Review

by Johnny Carruthers

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

I saw this Saturday at Walgreens. As best as I can tell, they had just received a shipment of this candy bar, and I think I may have been the first to buy one. (Or more than one. You really can't do proper research for these reviews with just a single sample.)

With this review, I think I'll cut right to the chase. This is quite possibly the best Snickers variation that Mars has produced.

My one complaint is with the name. Why "Rocking Nut Road"? Why not just call it "Snickers Rocky Road"? That's obviously the idea that Mars is trying to convey, so why go with the longer and (in my opinion) more awkward name?

As for the bar itself, I'll let the text on the wrapper do the talking. (Somebody obviously spent a good deal of time getting those words just right; why not show some appreciation for their hard work?) The wrapper describes the Rocking Nut Road bar as "almonds, caramel, and marshmallow-flavored nougat wrapped in dark chocolate."

First, major points to Mars for enrobing the Rocking Nut Road bar in dark chocolate. When it comes to candy bars where you have chocolate as the outer covering for other confectionary delights, the overwhelming majority are covered in milk chocolate. Don't get me wrong; I like milk chocolate. But there are many, many times when I will be enjoying a candy bar, and I will think, "You know, this would have been even better if they had used dark chocolate instead of milk chocolate."

The marshmallow nougat appears to be a little softer than the nougats Mars uses in any of the other Snickers bars (or in the Milky Way bars, for that matter). It is clearly a marshmallow nougat, though; there is none of the sponginess you normally associate with marshmallow. Instead, it has more of a chewier feel to it.

The caramel is the same caramel Mars uses in all of its bars. Not too firm, but not too soft, either. (I suppose Goldilocks would say that it is "just right.") In the regular Snickers bar, the caramel and nougat have about the same degree of firmness. With the Rocking Nut Road Snickers, though, the caramel is quite a bit firmer than the nougat, so it takes the role of being the backbone of the bar. The almonds are imbedded in the caramel, and they provide reinforcement to the caramel, as well as adding a firm crunch to the bar.

The nougat and caramel combine to give the bar a chewy, almost fudgy feel to it. And when you add the chocolate and the almonds to the mix, the overall impression is that you are eating a piece of rocky road fudge. The flavors of the chocolate, caramel, and nougat blend together well. There isn't one flavor that dominates your tastebuds; instead, all three flavors swirl over your tongue harmoniously, as first one flavor, then another, and yet another becomes the most

noticeable on your tastebuds. As is usually the case with candy bars containing nuts, the flavor of the almonds isn't as noticeable. Instead, they provide a firm and satisfying crunch that acts as a counterpoint to the chewiness of the caramel and the nougat.

Now, for the bad news. This is a limited edition bar. I sincerely hope that this release is not a one-time thing. Even if Mars doesn't make it a regular part of its product line, the Rocking Nut Road Snickers deserves to be brought back on a regular basis.

Just give it a better name with the next release, please?

**FANZINES***The Altitudinous Route*

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*Banana Wings #35 August 2008*

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*Beyond Bree August 2008, September 2008*

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Not available for The Usual; \$15/year

*The Drink Tank #178, #179, #180, #181, #182, #183*

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*Feline Mewsings #33 August 2008*

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*The Knarley Knews #129 August, 2008*

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**NEW ADDRESS**

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*MT Void V. 27 #7 August 15, 2008 — V. 27 #13 September 26, 2008*

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*Opuntia #65.5 August 2008 #66A*

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*Plokta #26 "Summer Special 2008"*

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*The Reluctant Famulus #66*

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*Science Fiction/San Francisco #72 August 27, 2008, #73 September 17, 2008, #74 October 1, 2008*

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*Vanamonde #758-762*

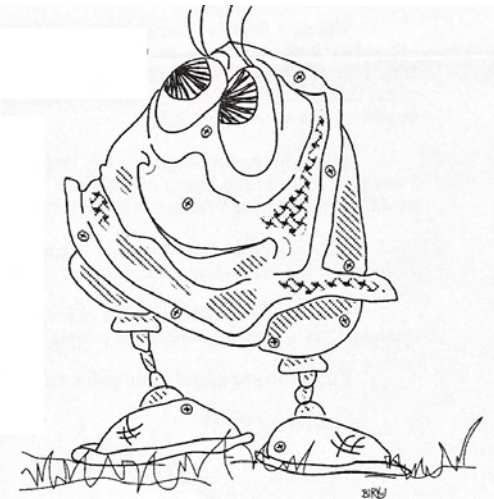
John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.  
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*Visions of Paradise # 132, #133*

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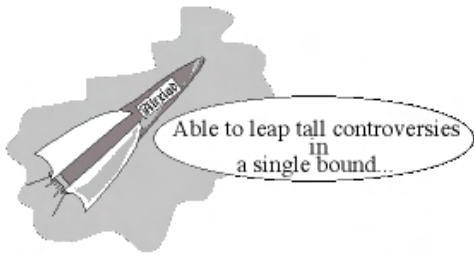
*WCSFAzine # 13 September 2008*

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**Egoboo is the currency of fandom ...  
be a Bhig Spender!**

## Letters, we get letters



From: **Dainis Bisenieks** July 27, 2008  
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,  
PA 19143-3310 USA

This letter got stuck into a book that remained in the back seat of the car while we were in Denver, so I couldn't enter it. Our apologies.

I certainly wanted, from the first, the company of others cognizant of Tolkien's Middle-earth. But to live there? Unless, perhaps, as a gentleman of leisure, a *rentier* . . . It must be kept in mind that Tolkien meant his world to be our world, earlier in time: pre-technological except for the works of Sauron and Saruman. This means traditional agriculture, traditional medicine, traditional sanitation. Backs bent by labor. And, of course, the attitude that you are not to get above yourself, far from extinct today. Well I remember third grade (1945-6) in a German school, where I was resented both as an *Ausländer* and an overachiever. Good Aryans all, the local kids were, and I breezed past them . . .

I've never thought of naming a child or a pet after a Tolkien character, either. My cat is safely Shakespeare: Thisby.

When the ideas of Darwin and Wallace burst upon the world, surely somebody must have pointed out that what distinguishes us from the beasts and our beastly ancestors is the ability to forgo or throw away advantage. And the corresponding ability to recognize gifts; which are not bribes or rewards; they invite but nowise compel praise and thanks and remembrance. The practice is far from universal but without it we would be . . . well, orcs. Yahoos. Morlocks.

This simple statement should have settled everybody except the creationists, already turning away from all the evidence about the age of the Earth. Instead we got a century and a half of foofaraw, still ongoing; we got Social Darwinism, which turns that idea on its head.

True intelligence arised when a creature can consider future actions and consequences, and suppress the first impulse. Consider cats that have caught their claws in something; they pull and pull when the deliberate act of sheathing the claws would solve the problem. But I have in mind something different, like the first impulse of swatting the errant cub, and what might

humanely replace it.

From *TLS* I have learned of yet another author (after Malcolm Pryce) not yet available in the U.S. — R. S. Downie (a woman) whose second book got a short review: *Ruso and the Demented Doctor*. The setting, Britain during the reign of Hadrian. A quoted sentence: "British rain was rarely that simple. For days on end, instead of falling, it simply hung around in the air like a wife waiting for you to notice she was sulking." Mention was made of the first novel, *Ruso and the Disappearing Dancing Girls* (2006). Is Lindsey Davis looking behind her nervously?

The first book was reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #6 under the title of *Medicus*. I have seen it on sale here. As Lord Jaxom squealed when the white dragon broke shell, "Her name is Ruth!"

For two bits I got a very nice library discard of her only non-Falco novel, *The Course of Honor*; its protagonist is Caenis, Vespasian's significant other. Hereabouts, the best discards come from a library branch I can readily visit. They work by the calendar, so many years and out. Main library discards tend to be worn-out copies.

I re-read John Crowley's third novel, *Engine Summer*. Featured in it is a sect or community of Truthful Speakers, who had their origin before the downfall of technical civilization, when there were telephones. They found it salutary to acquire the art of speaking truthfully over the telephone. What an interesting idea! I thought of a dictum of Mark Twain and realized: you can't blush over the telephone . . . and when speaking truthfully, they did not need to. The book was written before the advent of on-line communication, which I suppose is even more disingenuous. How to offer and invite transparency?

September 24, 2008

As I glanced at a discarded copy of *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul*, the word *palliative* came to my mind. I've never had occasion to use it before, and whoknows when I last saw it in print — but now was the time. The one defines the other. What more is to be said?

Recalling how last year's planting of cucumbers ceased to bear well before the end of the growing season, I put some more seeds into the ground in late June, and the new crop is coming on line just as the old planting is failing. It was good until mid-September, though diminished by leaf-wilt. Next year I'll try a different schedule.

If dead horses are to be beateh, I'll take my usual whack at the Appendices of the Ace Tolkien, photocopied so that page references don't match the edition they are in. And Ballantine reset type several times without fixing any errors. I have seen newer printings that share the corrections (and the new typos) of the edition of 1994 or so; about further correction by Ballantine I don't know and will not lift a

finger to find out.

Overhearing some talk between Hillary and her friends, I said mock-earnestly, "We adults don't find grossouts funny any more." 'S truth! On reflection I think it marks a genuine transition, one (I am sure) of several, not all coming at the same time. But the humor of indignity seems to be innate and lasting; it occurs among shit-flinging apes. I (an adult) have repoded with irrepressible guffaws at young Calvin's snowmen, or a picture of a topiary in the form of a man taking a rude and insulting posture.

As for us fans, I have long asserted that we are all the same age inside. What that age might be, I will not precisely state, but one sign is a liking for word play. More broadly, playgrounds of the mind.

What rapport could there be between me and a woman who had none? Romantic attachment is a separate matter that may be added to such rapport. Or not. I'm thinking of a woman, about half my age and in any event impossible to romance, who likes exactly my favorites in verbal and pictorial wit. Gerard Hoffnung. Susan Herbert: just the other day I got for next to nothing a duplicate of her book *Impressionist Cats*, which I then happily presented.

Don't give up. My cousin Bob's last wife was younger than his daughter, and their son Wade was born when Bob was 73.

A couple of my lending copies of Jasper Fforde happen to be U.K. editions. At least in *Lost In a Good Book* (#2) there are textual variants; at the time, the U.S. edition came about a year later, and the author did a bit of revision. I will not study the matter but will accept all revision as improvement. It is certainly so in one of the last chapters, where the visitors, originally a man and his young daughter, become a couple honeymooning in Swindon. Which, a correspondent explained and I had already surmised, is a town of negative distinction. Think Hoboken. The Seven Wonders of Swindon tea towel was already in the first version.

The name of Goodwood had no connotations for me until I learned that it had been a race meet. Not too terrible. Somewhere in his history, Churchill cited his own stricture against levity in the naming of military operations.

Those operations — EPSOM, GOODWOOD — were named after race meets. For what it's worth, I've read that Michael Wittman's glorious bag of British tanks, like much of the Super SS Legends, has been exaggerated.

Peeking at a library copy of the recent *The Robot* . . . by Lisa Nicks, just to see what was said about Asimov, I came across a reference to "Joseph Campbell (then editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*)". Must write a letter; how sarcastic do I want to be?

When library discards reach the freebie

stage, I generally pick up a few things that might be interesting to have around and which I can later part with. I haven't read anything by Scott since *Ivanhoe*, ever so long ago (do adults ever read *Ivanhoe*?). There was a handy copy of *The Antiquary*. I like to look at glossaries and notes first; and there was the excellent word curfuffle, "state of excitement or agitation", which I have seen as kerfuffle, probably in fannish usage. Ned Brooks has pleaded not guilty; he spared me the trouble of looking in *OED*, which has that same book for the earliest citation. Has anybody here used that word, and can you recall where you first saw it?

Foofaraw is another nice word that I'm sure I found in fannish usage.

Why does AAA not recognize the category of dead former members? I have received yet another mailing for Betsy (it's been four years!), with a handy reply envelope that I used. Otherwise I'm down to the last stubborn mailer.

Desperate for something to read in French, I picked up a (freebie) copy of something by Mary Higgins Clark, but I couldn't stand it in French, either. I have concluded that I don't like books about modern people, who are rude, greedy, and ambitious. These negative qualities inhere in people who are not sensibly amenable to civilizing influences; but at least the fictional characters in historical novels are in the main not represented as being rude. And mere behavior is not a center of interest; the warts tend to be omitted.

"Talk to the hand, the face don't understand." Such a loud is beyond comprehending Señor Wences, and would seem to merit a dagger through the extremity desired to be addressed.

— JTM

From: **Marty Helgesen** August 18, 2008  
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

John Hertz in *Vanamonde* wrote, "Joseph Major writes ... Why has there never been an English translation of *Amadis of Gaul* [16th Century — Maybe]?" There have been several. The catalog of the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov>) lists at least four. (I say at least because I found those by a title search for *Amadis of Gaul*. A title search for Amadis produces a lot more titles and it is possible that some of them are English translations with slightly varying titles.)

One of the four is for a two volume translation published by the University of Kentucky Press in 1974-1975. *Amadis of Gaul*: a novel of chivalry of the 14th century presumably first written in Spanish rev. and reworked by Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo prior to 1505; translated from the putative princeps of Saragossa, 1508 by Edwin B. Place and Herbert C. Behm. Worldcat, which is available through libraries that subscribe to it, as mine does, lists many more but they seem at a quick glance to be different editions or printings of the same four.

Several libraries in the university system in

which I work have copies of it. My own library has a copy of the three volume 1872 edition, but while I intend to glance at it I doubt I will read it. I'm in the middle of too many books right now.

I realize, with dismay, that I let a deadline for your fanzine go by again. As I think Oliver J. Dragon used to say, I agolopize.

Thanks for the information. I'm surprised that Lin Carter didn't put out a paperback edition.

September 29, 2008

Thank you for the August *Alexiad*. The hard drive of my home computer connected to the web died. I have a new computer, but for a combination of reasons it is not yet set up. I'm writing a brief loc on my computer at work. Stuff in my house is in disarray so I'm writing only about it, not the recent back issues which have hidden themselves.

My sympathy about your father. Last year I became older than my father was when he died, but I don't recall thinking of it as a major milestone.

Jack Speer was able to invent the quasiquote because typewriters aren't designed or programmed to be inflexible. I don't recall ever finding a way to do quasiquotes on a computer (except "-like this-") but I'm glad the word processing software that came with my first computer (WordStar) made it easy to change the character used in semi-cancels from a - to a /.

As I read your zine I saw mentions of several books that I thought should be in the library where I work. I checked our catalog and found that some of them are. I'll see about getting at least some of the rest.

I put "Turning a Cold War Scheme into Reality" into Google in quotation marks and got the text of the report. I may read it some day. I was puzzled to see that the text has rambling, broken lines of yellow dashes running through it. They don't make it impossible to read and I was able to print the first page, which came out with the text intact but no yellow dashes.

I've read Frederick Rolfe's Hadrian VII, a Mary Sue about an Englishman who had been unsuccessful in his desire to become a priest, as Rolfe had, and suddenly was ordained a priest and taken to Rome where he was chosen as Pope. I've also read the biography *The Quest for Corvo* which mentions that he used to abbreviate his first name, Frederick, as Fr. so he could sign his name "Fr. Rolfe".

The review of *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism* was interesting and not surprising, although Prometheus Books is a publisher with a strong antipathy toward religion. However, I was sore distressed to see that a physician who wrote a book about Islam wrote, after describing the background of an anti-Semitic remark, "So I was like ..." AAAUUUGH!!

I'm sorry to learn that you might be developing glaucoma. I hope it doesn't happen.

Taras Wolansky's report of the Heinlein centennial mentions Don D'Amassa's bizarre definition of "fascism". That looks like a clear

example of taking a word with a real meaning that is objectionable and turning the word into a generic attack or smear word. That's really liberal.

I hope that Taras' mention of "straightlaced readers" was a typo. The word is "straitlaced". And it just occurred to me that someone who laces his boots in the ladder-laced style would be wearing them straightlaced.

Christopher J. Garcia writes that the first appearance of Reality TV is from 1948 and *Candid Camera*. Starting in 1947 Allan Funt did the same thing for radio in a show called *Candid Microphone*. I remembered listening to it when I was a kid and found the dates (1947-1948, 1950) on the web.

Jim Stumm writes, "It doesn't matter if a priest is heterosexual or homosexual so long as he observes his vow of celibacy." That should be, "so long as he lives chastely." Unfortunately, the words "celibate" and "celibacy" are undergoing a shift in meaning, probably resulting from people not knowing what they mean. The second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, which I have access to online through the library where I work, defines "celibate: as The state of living unmarried. ... 1754 HUME Hist. Eng. ii, The celibacy of priests was introduced into the English System by Dunstan. ..." and says: celibate, a. and n.2 A. adj. Unmarried, single; bound not to marry. ... B. n. One who leads a single life, a confirmed bachelor or spinster; one bound not to marry."

However, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 4th ed says:

**celibate** n.1 One who abstains from sexual intercourse, especially by reason of religious vows. 2. Unmarried, unwed <from a Latin word meaning unmarried.

**Usage Note** Historically *celibate* means only 'unmarried' its use to mean 'abstaining from sexual intercourse' is a 20th-century development. But the new sense of the word seems to have displaced the old, and the use of *celibate* to mean 'unmarried' is now almost sure to invite misinterpretation in other than narrowly ecclesiastical contexts. Sixty-eight percent of the Usage Panel rejected the older use in the sentence *He remained celibate* [unmarried], although he engaged in sexual intercourse

I think that in this context the fact that the vow of celibacy is a vow not to marry is important. Since God said that sexual intercourse is only for a man and a woman who are married to each other, God's law is that everyone who is unmarried must abstain from intercourse.

Word meanings are shifting into ignorance, as with the woman who had twins born a year apart. By "twins" she meant two (out of five, btw) of her children who had the same father.

— JTM

When I read the cartoon caption, "Be the first one on your block to have dual props!" it occurred to me that seconds carry duel props.

From: **Fred Lerner** August 19, 2008  
81 Worcester Avenue, White River Junction, VT 05001-8011 USA  
[fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu](mailto:fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu)

Thanks for alerting me to the *Commentary* piece on *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*. I read Ruth Wisse's review, and couldn't help thinking that she fundamentally misunderstood Chabon's motives in writing that novel. It was evident (to me, at least) that Wisse was unfamiliar with modern science fiction and with the alternative history subgenre as it has emerged in the past two decades. (And I take Chabon's joining SFWA earlier this year as evidence that he is consciously identifying himself with modern science fiction and its traditions.)

Given the unflinching negative and ugly portrayal of Jewish life and culture set forth in Chabon's novel, I think Wisse has a certain understanding of Chabon's intent. Chabon referred to *Commentary* as "Bizarro World" which indicates his political attitudes strikingly.

— JTM

Had I the talent, which I don't, I would try constructing an alternative history in which East Prussia was turned into a permanent Jewish homeland for the survivors of the Holocaust. I wonder what direction Jewish life and culture would have taken had it been reestablished within Europe; and I wonder what the effect on the rest of Europe would have been.

From: **John Hertz** August 15, 2008  
236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Grand seeing you at the Worldcon. When I saw the newsletter was *Necessity*, the Mother of Denvention, I wished I'd thought of that. No doubt you saw contributions solicited under the head "Submit to *Necessity*".

If you think I'm about to comment on the Hambletonian victory of that fine horse Deweycheatumhowe, you have the wrong fanwriter.

Our fanzines, and our s-f cons, were once, each in their way, the only game in town. So people rolled up. But these amusements were and are subtle and elusive for the inattentive mind. Improvements in technology, and a widening interest in some s-f or other, made it easier to go do something more superficially attractive which, if it proved less substantially enjoyable, or nourishing, in the long run, well, the long run is long, and by then such folks were down the road.

I recur to Tennyson's "Better to promote the good than to rail against the ill." Good fanzining can be fun. Even if it's a proud and lonely thing.

Where are the new chums? Well, we don't do much to let them know where the party is, do we? Walking a few blocks between my hotel and the Colorado Convention Center with Jane & Scott Dennis's Westercon LIII bag on my shoulder, or stopping at a shop for coffee, or copies, I was asked "What's that?" The picture on the bag was Jane's brilliant introduction of a flying saucer into a Gauvain, for the year Westercon was in Honolulu. I said, "The World Science Fiction Convention is in town." People said, "Really! Where is it? Can anyone go?"

We ourselves pick up bad habits. I asked fanziners for comment on the exhibit I built about the Rotsler Award. They hadn't seen it; they hadn't found the Exhibit Hall; not because they were too busy, but because they were too bored. Tom Whitmore says we should return to our fannish nature and the motto of Kipling's Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, "Run and find out."

September 5, 2008

There are many good reasons to do amateur writing. Many good reasons to convene. Fanzines and SF cons can be fun.

Please, "straitlaced". Don't trust that computer!

I yet hope we may get around to reading Heinlein — or many another author — and unfix our attention from "the concerns of their careers."

From: **Henry Welch** September 2, 2008  
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<http://tkk.welchcastle.com/>  
**NEW ADDRESS**

Thanks for the last two issues of *Alexiad*. Belated condolences on the death of Red Wull.

In No. 3 Martin Morse Wooster talks about people living without the internet. During my recent move I went for about two weeks without land-line phone, internet, and TV as we waited for new service in the rental house. I kept busy with my studying, some console games (the landlord left his TV) and some anxiety over missed e-mails. I only ended up with one e-mail that was time sensitive enough to cause any issue and I was able to make adjustments in my shipping method. (This was for a book sale on half.ebay.com)

I booked the intermediate stays for our WorldCon trip at hotels that had free wireless internet. There were only a few days when I had to clear up fifty or sixty spams.

— JTM

Jim Stumm also addresses federalism. A blanket statement that there is no federal power in the area of education is too strong. The federal powers have overlap with education. E.g. the commerce power has some overlap even if it is a bit of a stretch. But all of this ignores the

strong coercive power that federal money can have despite the reservation of un-enumerated powers to the states under the 10th amendment. The Supreme Court has indicated that congress can condition receipt of federal funds with reasonably related legislation and goals. So, if you want your money, you'd better . . .

Sheryl Birkhead should know that our dog recently escaped while under the supervision of a dog sitter. The chip embedded in his shoulder was instrumental in getting him back. One quick scan and animal control had called our cell phone and we were able to arrange for his return. Now, as for the cat, he hasn't run away yet . . .

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Sept.2, 2008  
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8093 USA  
[mmwooster@yahoo.com](mailto:mmwooster@yahoo.com)

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 40. I don't think the article I sent you about the Berlin Tunnel (which came from the CIA's historical journal) was meant to erase George Blake from history. I thought the piece was designed to provide information about how the tunnel was constructed and what tasks the tunnel's creation was meant to accomplish. I see that Blake is still around and has just received Russia's highest civilian honor.

As for Sir Peter Ustinov — I had no idea that Ustinov was German and a hereditary noble to boot. Since a "freiherr" is a German hereditary noble, does that make Ustinov Sir Sir Peter Ustinov? He could have been the equivalent of those Germans with two Ph.D.'s who insist on being called Doctor Doctor so and so.

"Freiherr" means "Baron", so he'd be Baron von Ustinov.

**Robert Sabella's** comments about Michael Chabon strike me as slightly misguided. I've never read a Chabon novel, except for a lot of *Gentleman of the Road*, but it seems to me that his goal is to remind mainstream readers of the importance of plot and story. The joke among sf pros is that sf and the mainstream traded Chabon and Jonathan Lethem and we got the better of the deal. I don't think Chabon wants to "be one of us"; it seems to me that his goal is to try to lower the barriers between sf and the mainstream. While some of his articles praising the fantastic seem embarrassing to me (such as his *New Yorker* piece on superhero costumes) Chabon should be encouraged.

Am I the only fanzine reader who is worried about the Hugos abolishing the semi-prozine category? I have no idea why supporters think this is a good idea, but the result would of course be to eliminate the fanzine Hugos, since *Locust*, *Ansible*, the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, and *Interzone* would now be considered "amateur magazines" and crowd out real fanzines. I really think this move shows the weakness of fanzine fandom these days; if you're going to abolish Hugos, I'd begin with the "Editor: Best Long Form," since I don't

think voters really know what a skilled editor of books actually does. (And I speak here as someone who has done a lot of online editing.)

The proposal calls for retaining the category but eliminating the award; presumably to keep *Locus*, *Ansible*, *NYRevSF*, and *Interzone* out of the Fanzine category.

— JTM

**Taras Wolansky's** report on the Heinlein Centennial convention was belated, but interesting. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Heinlein had so many friends and admirers in Los Angeles. One would like to know more about how well Dorothy Parker, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Errol Flynn knew Heinlein or what sort of "confrontations" caused Heinlein to stop going to LASFS meetings. I'd also like to know how Heinlein acted as a "West Coast recruiter" for *Astounding*; I just read Jeffrey Marks's biography of Boucher, and Marks doesn't say that Heinlein recruited Boucher for ASF.

From: **Lloyd Penney** September 6, 2008  
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<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>

I'm making a concerted effort to handle all the fanzines I've let pile up, and it's been quite a pile. *Alexiad* WN 40 is up next.

I've heard about another Sherlock Holmes movie being produced, but with Daniel Day-Lewis as Holmes, and Russell Crowe as Watson. Everything's been denied, of course, but who knows? If someone told me there'd be a version with Matt Frewer as Holmes and Kenneth Welsh as Watson, I would have laughed, but that was released some years ago now.

Peter Ustinov used to spend a lot of time in Toronto, it seemed to be one of his favorite places. He was quoted as saying that Toronto is "like New York if it were run by the Swiss", and that was very much the complement. I'm not sure how much he'd like it now, but . . .

As I read your reviews here, Joseph, I sense a trend . . . **Hot Sex™**. I wonder who trademarked that, and how do they collect the royalties?

Well, Yvonne and I did not go to Denver. . . really, not much interest, and we had thought that LAcon IV would be our last Worldcon until our friends in Montréal decided to go for a Worldcon, and they won it. Still, I am interested in trip reports, going to Worldcon vicariously, I suppose. And I guess I'll have to wait until next issue to get to that report.

I also had no intention of going to the Heinlein Centennial event, but I have been to a number of space development conferences, and I have certainly found out how much of them is actually a science fiction convention, and how many of the organizers are fans. We'll see if that's still true in the new year; we plan to go the International Space Development Conference in Orlando next May.

New Worldcon bids . . . I should get in touch with the Zagreb people, to see if Krsto Mazuranic is still around. Yvonne and I were the Canadian agents for Zagreb when last they bid in 1993.

The letters section . . . good to hear that Kristina Kopnisky will be producing another issue of *Consonant Enigma*. The study of fannish psychology is always interesting. Blogs seem to be more an informal chat, while zines are more formal, or at least are better at presenting complex ideas (often in the form of articles) for the reader to digest and think about, instead of merely reacting the way the blog format demands. Hey, Chris, you'll always get a loc from me.

Chris Garcia pretty well called the Hugo for Fan Writer . . . Scalzi, followed by Langford. I haven't read anything by John, and it looks like I should. And, *Yiddish Policemen's Union* got its Nebula and Hugo. Congrats to Brad Foster on getting another silver rocket.

I am still working on the concept behind my own zine, with the working title of *Arcade*. I must make a list of people to pester for articles (I've got plenty of artwork), and then I will have to see if I can produce the zine using QuarkXPress v5.0 and still have Bill Burns at eFanzines.com able to .pdf it. It may not be possible with the software I have, but Bill may have the software to do it.

Yes, the same few names keep showing up in the local, and I seem to be one of them. I could show a little ego and say it's because of the quality of my writing, but I know better. I am told that locs are the heart of fanzines, that they provide the boost to the ego of the faned, but I often wonder if locs simply fill the remaining column inches of the publication at hand, at least for some faneds.

Al du Pisani is still having job problems . . . I am hopeful that mine will soon be ending. I have been able to get a contract position as an agency proofreader with Tri-Ad Graphics of Etobicoke, and I start on Monday. Tri-Ad purchased a couple of advertising agencies in the vicinity, and in turn was purchased by Southern Graphics Systems of Louisville, Kentucky. I hope this will be the end of short-term employment for some time. I hope SFSA will continue on and expand beyond the ten mainstays of the club.

Well, I have done what I can, I think. I have one more day of relative freedom before I start at Tri-Ad/SGS. (I will also be keeping my job at the *Globe and Mail* for the first three months, or if they hire me, six months, for I do not expect the three-month contract to serve as the three-month probation should they decide to hire me. Only after that can my life get back to normal, and I can stay home in the evenings. Take care, many thanks, and see you next issue.

Good luck with the job. I had a very bad patch of poor work or none at all in the eighties, and I think that was when my Crohn's Disease flared up for the first time..

— JTM

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** September 3, 2008  
4030 8<sup>th</sup> Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA



Thank you for *Alexiad* 74, the August issue, which I am belatedly answering in September, without even the excuse of going to the Worldcon. I did have my 77th birthday on August 10th. Which reminds me, by the time my father was my age he was seven years dead already.

Joe's review of *Saturn's Children* by Charles Stross was thoughtful as well as entertaining, but Stross is the first author of whom I am aware to acknowledge that space travel may not be for humans. His solution is a cast of robot characters, far superior to the clunky Zoromes of Neil R. Jones, but still a tad offputting to the human reader. It may be possible for robots or remotely directed machines to build habitats in space where humans can thrive, and it may be possible for humans to colonize them, in a one-way trip not unlike a seed falling far, far from home. But the long duration of space travel, combined with the slow lethality of cosmic radiation means that the old space operatic trope of taking a ship from point A to point B and back again via points C, D, and E, has become obsolete. So once again science has nudged sci-fi over the line into fantasy. Joe's review of *The Man Who Loved China* appears to have been distracted a bit by trivialities. As, for instance, he takes umbrage at Needham trying to get Lu Gweidjen jobs, "getting his mistress work where she would be available to him." The lady may have been his mistress, but she was also his collaborator, so it sounds neither undue nor bourgeoisly sentimentalistic. Certainly Dr. Needham (a nudist, and folk dancer among other things) seems to have had no difficulty getting laid. Joe's question: "To what extent is the study of Chinese society deformed by . . . the requirements of the Chinese government," applies in many cases, but when you have a magisterial study (21 volumes and counting) of why China ceased to innovate after the 14th Century, a little trimming in the 20th may have been necessary but is probably inconsequential, being the sort of current events better left to future historians. Indeed, the issue so raised is of vital interest to the Chinese government, which validates the author's importance by calling it the "Needham question." One last point: By implication the "curious nature" of those early Chinese inventions suggests that encyclopediast

Needham might have been rewriting history like a party hack. Does Joe have any specifics to justify putting Needham in such meretricious company?

Perhaps it was his response to the Great Leap Forward, which triggered the most massive famine in Chinese history, of which he said that the Chinese People were very proud of their communal kitchens.

— JTM

Lee has gone up the old learning curve on the website, doing fifty-four pages in three hours yesterday, with the consequence that today I find out each cartoon page will need meta markers, such as title (87 characters), description (258 characters) and keywords (258 characters), which I (who better?) have been tasked with supplying. Sigh. I already said it was bigger than we ever imagined, even as more bells and whistles keep crawling out of the woodwork. We ARE making progress and the site will be going up in the next month or two. A pity my life keeps getting in the way.

If Sheryl Birkhead is considering solar energy, due deliberation is not a bad thing, because the field is changing rapidly, especially in the area of polycrystalline quartz. Cheaper and more efficient solar arrays seem to be coming on line fairly fast. Less fast, perhaps (*The Economist* 8/23, P.70) would be the newly invented nano-antennae that

works on infra-red, providing alternating current, albeit at trillions of cycles per second.

What else? An election is coming, but I've been sick of it already for six months. Hurricanes are streaming westward, but Gustav was less awful than Katrina, Hanna is breaking up, and Ike and Josephine are merely pending, unless you're at sea.

From: **Guy H. Lillian III**  
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Just a note to say how glad Rosy and I were to see you at Denvention. Conscious of the obvious pun, we had some high moments indeed. (I'm working on a trip report. Is "Altitudinous" a word?)

Possibly the best time (for me) was the Fan-Eds' Feast organized by Joe Major — the second of a series. We hope to continue it in

Montreal. Cathy Palmer-Lister has volunteered to help us find a suitable restaurant.

We'll keep in touch about it!

From: **Alexander R. Slate** Sept. 15, 2008  
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Thanks for the issue. Joseph, you don't seem to like *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* any better than I did. I couldn't find any interest in the characters. The protagonist was not someone I cared for. Nor did the alternate history basis do anything for me. I can't see any reasons for the particular premise.

Cats. We've had some interesting developments with our cats in Dayton. The oldest, Pepperoni, died. We are not sure exactly how old she was as she adopted us several houses ago in San Antonio. We guess that she was close to 20, if not actually 20 years old. She was a pleasant, even tempered (for the most part — except she would not put up with any guff from kittens) cat. So our oldest is now Snowball who is probably about 14 or so. Still slim and trim and very active. Cheddar developed diabetes and is responding well to insulin shots. Mitzi has become psychologically stressed. She cannot abide Oreo (the youngest), who on occasion likes to chase her. We have had to separate these two, and so now Mitzi spends a lot of time in Melissa's room, unless Oreo has been put in the basement for the night. First year in DC is done, with a little less than 1 to go. I am now working on positioning for the job in Dayton to follow.

We'll see you at the Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium, then.

— JTM

From: **Richard Dengrove** Sept. 19, 2008  
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More comments and then more comments about *Alexiad* August 2008.

About your review of *Hubert's Arthur*, I am not so certain. Given Rolfe's eccentric views, it could be that he had the same view of Jews as the Middle Ages, although that view was rarer in the late 19th Century. It would be one thing if his characters just voiced that view. However, he actually shows his 'Giwen' engaged in the ritual murder of Christians. I agree it sounds more like a work of the Middle Ages that way, but —

On the other hand, I can't object that a Jewish man might have changed his name to cheat the Angel of Death. That could have been a Jewish practice. I know Jewish children were never named for living relatives because the Angel of Death might get confused.

Maybe I'm being unjust; but Bostom in his *Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism* gives the impression that he is only giving the facts that prove Islam anti-Semitic. No facts that don't prove it need apply. If you can only give

evidence for and none against, it is impossible NOT to prove your point.

About Maimonides, I am sure Maimonides made that complaint about Islam to Yemeni Jews. Things apparently were bad there. However, there is another quote I read recently where the complaint was less all encompassing. He said that he was happy to be in Egypt, at that moment, as opposed to Yemen or Spain.

Strangely, there is a Jewish tradition that Arabs always treated the Jews well then. Sir Walter Scott seems to reflect that view in *Ivanhoe*. Stranger still, even after Jews and Arabs were at loggerheads over Israel, my Conservative Jewish teachers taught that in Jewish Sunday school.

I'm sure Sol Hachuel would have been quite comforted by that. After all, the headsman only nicked her shoulder with the first swing, so she could admit at the last minute that she had surrendered to Islam after all, and it was only her pertinacity that kept her from acknowledging it. So of course she had to be beheaded as an apostate.

The "evidence against" is the mainstream Shiny Happy Caliphate doctrine that is the norm, as you've demonstrated.

About my review of the *DaVinci Code*, I had forgotten that Moslems have had the theory that Christ didn't die on the Cross. You reminded me. I gather the normal practice has been to make Christ a prophet somewhat below Mohammed, which he couldn't as the son of God.

Or do you think they have a insidious motive?

I would like to thank Alexis Gilliland for having his cartoons put up on the web. They are a faanish treasure.

Jim Stumm asks me what my sources are on the Fall of Rome. I freely admit they are willy nilly and dependent on my ever porous memory. If such sources are not sufficient, that's fine. At the present moment, I am not interested enough in the Fall of Rome to do deeper research.

Come to think of it, what are Jim's sources? And his position on the Fall of the Roman Empire? In addition, Jim asks what could cause general crop failure. It's simple: cold and drought. In the case of the Fall of the Roman Empire, my willy nilly readings say cold. There's a theory that a volcano in the 6th Century produced it. However, I would have thought the cold had begun earlier.

Finally, Jim asks me how great the crop failure would have to be. I thought I explained that in the June *Alexiad*.

Another comment about Arabs: a comment about your comment. I hope both fathers were sent away for a long time after they killed their daughters out of intolerance for American ways. On the other hand, there has to be more than two incidents like that. On the other hand still, would they even typify all the Arab Moslems in the world? Certainly they wouldn't typify all the

USFA MET IN MY PLACE  
FOR A LOOOONG TIME,  
38½ YEARS, UNTIL THE THIRD  
FRIDAY IN JULY, 2006. AT  
WHICH TIME THE CLUB  
VOTED TO LEAVE CHEZ  
GILLILAND, SETTING THE  
STAGE FOR A PERFECT  
FAN FEUD.



②



Arab Moslems in America. American Arabs, I have observed, are an extremely diverse lot.

No, the one guy hasn't even been caught, and if there are any moderate American Arabs condemning honor killings, they have been very quiet about it. Outside that group, that behavior seems to get excused for cultural reasons.

— JTM

George Price says that Nazi weapons were as advanced as American weapons; they just didn't produce them in the same quantities. I will defer to him on that.

From: **Milt Stevens** May 16, 2008  
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In *Alexiad* V7#4, Joseph mentions has now survived longer than his father did. Back in the middle of the 20th century, surviving longer than your parents was almost the rule rather than the exception. By now, I think it's a maybe and maybe not situation. Medical services in the US have been pretty good for quite a while. In my case, my father died at 81 and my mother died two weeks short of her 99th birthday. Am I going to live to be 81? I dunno. On police departments, there is another factor in calculating longevity. You want to collect a pension for as long as you were on the job. Time in excess of that is referred to as gold time. I was with the LAPD for 29 years full-time and have been collecting a pension for ten years. That means I have to collect a pension for 19 more years to be on gold time. It also means I must survive to 84. I guess we shall see.

Robert Lichtman is almost certain to mention that Jack Speer wasn't the only surviving founding member of FAPA. He was the only founding member who was still a member and had been a member continuously from the beginning. Forry Ackerman and Frederik Pohl were also charter members, but they both dropped many years ago.

In his review of *Saturn's Children*, Joseph does his bit to undermine the very foundations of science fiction. He points out that robotic life wouldn't reasonably want to hang around on planetary surfaces with their corrosive atmospheres. Don't mention this to any AIs you may meet or it's all over for all sorts of high mileage SF idea. If robots aren't interested in planets like Earth, they wouldn't have any particular motive for wiping out humans. They would want to get off Earth and establish the Atmosphere Free State. I just thought of a semi-related idea. I wonder if the Outsiders in Larry Niven's Known Space Series are really AIs. There's no reason they couldn't be AIs. I'll probably suggest that possibility to him.

As long as I've been undermining the Foundation, can I undermine

the Empire of Science Fiction, too? Actually, I picked that comment up from a critique of the original *Battlestar Galactica*; the other guy asked why would robots like the Cyclons want planetary surfaces, anyway.

—JTM

I guess a robot like Freya would have a sex drive if someone has thought to program her with one. I don't think you could think you have a sex drive without having a sex drive. Of course, it helps immensely if you can actually think, but some folks seem to manage without doing it. Building a pleasure center into a robot brain introduces a whole new set of complications. It also brings up the question of what pleasure is. Giving a robot senses far more acute than our own would be fairly simple, but what can a robot feel?

In the letter column, Joseph asks what's so hard about storing a cactus. (A fan had sent Bruce Pelz a cactus labeled as a fanzine.) Bruce didn't have a problem with it. He had the cactus on top of a bookshelf for years and years. However, now the Eaton Collection has the cactus. If they dump the cactus, people may doubt their status as completist collectors. Is the proper storage of cacti covered in library science doctrine? If so, librarians may be even weirder than fans.



\* The Arlington Sci/Fi-Fantasy Meetup Group

From: **Jim Stumm** September 20, 2008  
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0029 USA

George W. Price: You ask if I'm saying that in the Federal Zone Congress can restrict free speech in the same way the states can. Yes, in the same limited way that the states can, i.e. they can prosecute such crimes as slander and libel. You think I mean that the First Amendment doesn't apply in this zone, just as it doesn't apply to the states. No, it does apply, but in a less strict sense, much like what you refer to as a term of art. Since the passage of the 14th Amendment, the Federal Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment, does apply to the states in some sense.

The First is a limitation on the powers of government. In the Federal Zone, the Federal Government has broader powers, so it is necessarily

LESS limited there than it is elsewhere in the

country, outside the Federal Zone, where there are state govts that can pass necessary laws.

As for the 2 types of jurisdiction, in most of the country, the several states have jurisdiction along with the Federal Govt. The First did not apply to the states before the 14th Amendment. But after passage of the 14th, the First does apply to the states in some sense. But as to the Federal Govt, in most of the country, the First should be taken as an absolute prohibition, meaning the Federal Govt should make no laws dealing with these matters at all. Leave it to the states.

But in the Federal Zone, no state has any authority. So there the First applies to the Federal Govt in the weaker sense, as a term of art, which allows the Federal Govt to outlaw such crimes as libel and slander in that Zone only, tho of course, the First does prohibit any broader interference with freedom of speech or the press.

So where does the First apply? Everywhere in the country, in one sense or another, to the Federal Govt and to the states.

You ask if the First has ever been interpreted to allow unrestricted publication of obscenity, libel, and so forth. When the issue has been raised, the controversy has always been: what is obscenity? What constitutes libel?

You insist that certain kinds of communications are not protected by the First in the same way that pogroms and human sacrifice are not protected. I agree with that, with the emphasis on IN THE SAME WAY. And that way, in most of the country, the Federal Zone excepted, is by state law, not by Federal law.

I'm not aware that the Founders ever wrote anything about obscenity.

It wasn't much of a concern as long as dirty books were expensive and so available only to the upper classes. It was only when cheaper volumes became available to the lower classes in the late 19th century, that the pornography panic (Comstockery) ensued.

In order for there to be a case where someone publishing obscenity got away with it by being acquitted, you must first have a prosecution. And before that, there has to be a law as the basis for that prosecution.

I don't think there was any such Federal law before the middle of the 19th century. So of course, you won't find a Federal case before then. So I'll bounce the challenge back to you. Cite me a case in which someone was convicted in a Federal court for publishing obscenity before the end of the 19th century.

There WERE prosecutions under state laws, as indicated by the famous phrase: banned in Boston. That was possible because, before the 14th Amendment (ratified 1868), the First didn't apply to the states. Then in the Slaughterhouse Cases decision (1873), the Supreme Court in effect nullified the privileges and immunities clause of the 14th. It was only in the mid 20th century that the Supreme Court began to piecemeal nibble away at the Slaughterhouse Cases decision (without ever explicitly overturning it), in effect restoring the original meaning of the 14th as a pro-freedom limitation on the powers of the states.

The argument some people raise against the 14th Amendment is based on the dubious way it was ratified. Southern States, while occupied by a Federal army, were forced to ratify the 14th as a condition for readmission into the Union. Without this forced ratification, which the Founders certainly wouldn't have considered valid, it would not have been approved by a sufficient number of states. But despite that, the 14th is now generally accepted as a valid part of the Constitution.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 25, 2008  
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Thank you for Vol. 7, No. 4.

I just returned from six days in Kissimmee, Florida for my Navy ship reunion. It was a very small turnout, but nevertheless an enjoyable reunion. Next year in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina should see a much larger turnout. Anyway, at this year's annual meeting I was sitting quietly and minding my own business when suddenly I was elected Secretary and Newsletter Editor. I am replacing a shipmate who has done both jobs (and they are jobs) for the past 15 years and it will be impossible to perform the tasks as well as he. I feel like a deer caught in the headlights.

Denvention 3 was most enjoyable and it was great to see you both again. My niece Sheila Kennedy, her husband Brad Cozzens, and Maggie Bonham (who is married to a second cousin) who were attending their first Worldcon all apparently enjoyed it too. I will refrain from going into the disaster that occurred when I tried to return home and was told that my flight had been cancelled. Well, one thing. I finally arrived home at midnight Denver time after being routed through Palm Springs.

And now you know why we prefer to drive.

— JTM

As for the HUGO Awards, nothing and no one I voted for in first place actually won. Usually there is at least one. But, this time none. It appears that I was the only person to vote for Southgate in 2010.

The report on the Heinlein Centennial by **Taras Wolansky** was very interesting.

As usual there were several books reviewed that I will have to try and obtain.

Since it is political season, I would like to recommend a book that has something for both Democrats and Republicans. *Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy* by John Fund (2008). This book is a revised and updated version of Fund's previous book (2004). Looking through the Acknowledgments, I noticed that someone named Martin Wooster did some critical research.

**Richard Dengrove**: In your fine review of *The Da Vinci Code* you make reference to Rose Chapel. That should be Rosslyn Chapel. And yes, the Priory of Sion is/was a fraud.

**Robert Sabella**: Mikhail Gorbachev wanted to make Communism a bit more friendly. He was a committed Communist and wanted to make the Soviet Union stronger. He certainly did not want to begin the collapse of the Soviet Union. What he learned too late, and the lesson the rulers of the People's Republic of China certainly learned, was that when a totalitarian regime loosens its hold the whole thing can collapse.

**Jim Stumm**: I agree with you that the sexual orientation of a priest doesn't matter if they are true to their vow of celibacy. The problem is obviously that so many didn't.

**R-Laurraine Tutihasi**: I once had a full grown cat of approximately 11 years old that I put on a leash for a short period of time upon moving into a new house. She took to it just fine and there was not any problem.

**Lloyd Penny**: Why do you want to understand evil?

**Sheryl Birkhead**: See my comment to R-Laurraine Tutihasi.

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Sept. 25, 2008  
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<http://www.weasner.com/>

It seems like every issue I find at least one book to add to my "to be read" list. As a slow reader, I find it difficult to keep up. The list just keeps getting longer.

In your trip report, you said something about a B-12 injection. What are you getting those for, if I may ask?

Impaired absorption due to damage to the ileum. Frederick A. Cook diagnosed Robert E. Peary with B-12 deficiency, or as he put it, "pernicious anemia", and recommended eating liver. Peary, likely considering what happened to Inuit who ate polar bear liver or dog liver (read Lennard Bickell's *Mawson's Will* (1977, 2000) for a description from the other end of the world), said, "I would rather die," and he did, if not right away.

— JTM

You also mentioned developing glaucoma. These days it doesn't seem to be anything to be alarmed about. My mother has had it for years and uses drops to control it.

Thank you to Sheryl Birkhead about the feline vaccine information. I will ask my vet next time one of the cats is due for one and will change vets if necessary.

I look forward to the rest of your worldcon report.

Our home-building has started. The land has been levelled and packed down and is ready for the concrete slab. The slope of the land is much more evident now than it was before.

From: **AL du Pisani** September 28, 2008  
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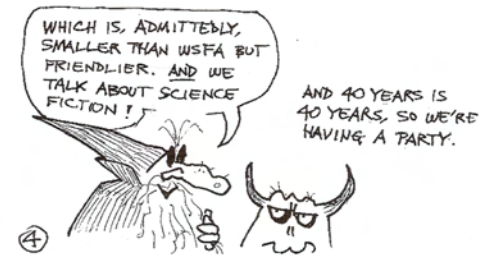
Still too busy at work to get around to all the things I want to be doing. Or at least that is my excuse.

I am fine, and have not been ill so far this year. Had to spend a lot of money on preventive care, but at my age I am in a lot better condition than I have the right to expect.

I am still working. Things are going fine. Or at least I think so. My manager has a way of speaking in veiled allusions, so that you cannot quite put your finger on the point you think he is trying to make — Usually that you are not living up to expectations of perfection. But in the current financial climate I am doing well.

The economy is biting hard. There is still jobs available for the qualified and willing — It is just surprising how many of the unqualified and unwilling, and the just plain unlucky, there is out there. A junior position in my area was advertised. Of the first twenty applicants none met the job prerequisites, or showed ability to be trained up to meet the requirements.

Luckily I work for a company that still believe it possible or desirable for the company to train the people working for it to do their jobs better.



I recently read an article by Bill Whittle, called *The Undefended City*. Now I have been reading his stuff for a couple of years, and have been a fan for all that time. Even when he is wrong, it is wrong in a hopeful way, not the smug nihilism of the people that know that they are right, and that it is hopeless to try and change the situation.

Anyway, I have suddenly understood a couple of things about South Africa that puzzled me, and which the article gave me a framework to understand — I still believe in South Africa. I still believe that it is possible and desirable to build and to live here. I believe that there is still hope to be found.

And a lot of people I have met don't. They have stopped believing that anything can be done to defend and build the City, and are leaving for other Cities. And one of the things they are hoping for is that this City be left in ruin and decay. Because this would validate their choices, and show the world that they are right.

The worst part of it is — They may be correct. Unfortunately, I still believe. Even when I hear the horror stories. Ground reform has been the single policy most successful at transforming productive farms into ruin.

Education reform has destroyed more schools from the inside than arsonists could do in the past. South Africa spends 21% of government budget on Education, and is getting worse results every year. Our University system is being transformed from places of excellence, where the best go to be educated (hopefully, at least this is the theory), into places where the "deserving" go to get credentials.

Then there is the 14 year old schoolgirls who are trying to get pregnant, because that means they can stop going to go to school, and will get a government allowance of R200 per month, to raise their child. Towns where the policemen cannot speak any of the local languages, and do not want you to bother them after hours — Effectively leaving the town without police.

My country is a mess. I have stopped caring about the shenanigans the ANC pulls, such as "recalling" the country's President, because they are now powerful enough to get rid of him. Yet, in my detached way, I still believe in it.

My apologies for for this navel-gazing. I had hoped to write about more hopeful items. Yet this was what came to mind.

Welcome to modern America.  
— JTM

From: **George W. Price** September 28, 2008  
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August *Alexiad*:

Commenting on Taras Wolansky's Heinlein Centennial report, the editor says, "The 'You read my mail!' accusation refers to Panshin's reading the letters from Heinlein to Arthur Smith, the dedicatee of Starship Troopers. Panshin also denies threatening a lawsuit to get access to the Santa Cruz archives."

As the publisher of Panshin's *Heinlein in Dimension* (Advent, 1968), I can shed a little light on the Smith letters affair. Panshin wrote to "Sarge" Smith asking for information and comments on Heinlein. He got back a letter from Mrs. Smith, explaining that Sarge had just died, and would Panshin like to see some (or all, I'm not sure which) of the Heinlein/Smith correspondence? Panshin accepted the offer. Perhaps he shouldn't have. Mrs. Smith obviously had no idea that Heinlein would be upset. But let's be very clear: It was Mrs. Smith who offered to lend the letters; Panshin had not asked Sarge for them. Panshin later showed me the carbon of his letter to Sarge Smith, and the original of Mrs. Smith's reply. Alas, I did not copy them — photocopying was still in its infancy, and it was not yet routine to copy everything for the record.

Knowing that Heinlein had gone up the wall about this, I told Panshin to keep confidential whatever he had learned from the letters, and use it only for his own insight and enlightenment. Anything appearing in *Heinlein in Dimension* had to be backed up by published material. And that's what he did. I never saw any of the borrowed Heinlein/Smith correspondence, and Panshin has never told me

anything of what was in it.

This contretemps also led to Advent being incorporated. Until then we had been a partnership. When Heinlein learned that we planned to publish Panshin's fanzine articles as a book, he sent Earl Kemp (who was then in charge of Advent) a fire-breathing letter that implied — but did not quite threaten — that he would sue. (I do have that letter, but do not intend to make it public.) Earl backed off and let the project lapse. A little later I took over running Advent, and Panshin asked if I would reconsider the book. I would and did, and that's when I told Panshin to make sure that all his facts came from open sources. But — just in case — I took the precaution of incorporating Advent, as of January 1, 1968. *Heinlein in Dimension* came out in mid-1968. (I should explain that if a partnership loses a lawsuit, the personal assets of each and all of the partners can be seized to pay the judgment, but a corporation is liable only to the extent of its own assets, not those of its individual owners. Which is why it is called a "limited liability" corporation. Had Heinlein won a suit, the most he could have gotten would have been Advent's inventory; the company had, and has, hardly any other assets.) In the event, Heinlein did not sue.

That Panshin threatened a suit to get access to the Santa Cruz archives seems dubious. For one thing, I believe that RAH did not start donating those archives until 1967, so Panshin could not have used them for researching *Heinlein in Dimension*, which I was already typesetting by then.

Alexei is having a lot of intellectual disconnects with Organized Heinlein Fandom; the latest being over "Sympathy for the Devil", his intriguing analysis of "Solution Unsatisfactory". They seem to be rather at a loss at how to respond.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN CELEBRATION OF THAT  
40th ANNIVERSARY, THE  
GILLILANDS ARE HAVING A  
PARTY TO WHICH YOU ARE  
INVITED! TIME: 9PM  
DATE: NOV. 7th, 2008  
PLACE: CHEZ GILLILAND  
4030 8th Street South  
ARLINGTON, VA 22204  
Phone: (703) 920-6087  
e-mail: leeandalexis@  
hotmail.com

Y'all come!



(5)

I have no bones to pick with Alexis Gilliland's comments on my remarks about union wages in the Depression. He did catch me in one error; I wrote about unions preventing wages from falling when I should have said that they tried to prevent their own wages from falling, and did prevent some wages from falling as far as they should have in order to match up with the reduced

money supply. And as Gilliland observes, many

union men settled for less than union scale.

Gilliland also mentions that "there was a lot of stuff about Negroes not getting any apprenticeships in well-paying unions." Indeed so. I have read that the Davis-Bacon Act requiring federal contractors to pay the "prevailing wage" — usually interpreted to mean union scale — was originally intended to prevent poor blacks from competing with white union tradesmen. And that motive was openly avowed by the politicians backing the law, back in the 1930s. It is no longer polite to profess such a motive, but the effect is still the same today: the less-skilled workers (many of them black) cannot compete for those federal contracts because Davis-Bacon forbids paying them the lower wages that are all that their lower skills justify. Better to be unemployed than to get less than union scale, right?

On our present economic problems, Gilliland suggests that "government and business are joined at the hip," and that "if business can keep all gains while transferring all loss (or major losses) to the taxpayer the economy has the opportunity to fail in a new and interesting way." Quite so. The editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* has been warning of this for years — they call it "privatized profits and socialized losses." We are now reaping what we have sown, with the bailouts of companies "too big to fail."

The federal government bears primary responsibility for the present crisis, as both an instigator and an enabler. The Community Reinvestment Act requires banks to reserve part of their mortgage loans for "affordable housing"; that is, they must lend to borrowers who can't really afford it. Even worse, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac actively sought "affordable housing" mortgages, and the lenders obliged by scraping up riskier and riskier borrowers. And the Federal Reserve has pursued an "easy money" (i.e., inflationary) policy that pumped a lot of new money into the economy, making it absurdly easy to finance the bubble which is now bursting.

Like the *WSJ*, I greatly fear that not only is it now too late to avoid the bailouts, we will not do what it takes to stop them from recurring, bigger and worse. For obvious example, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should be reorganized to make them truly private companies (rather than "Government-Sponsored Enterprises"), so that taxpayers will have no responsibility at all for their losses. Fat chance! Congressmen such as Barney Frank are insisting the government get even deeper into protecting — and, of course, controlling — businesses and investments. And neither Presidential candidate seems to have a clue about what needs to be done. Ah, well.

There's also a lesson here about the temptations and dangers of euphemisms. "Subprime" implies something less than the best, but still good enough — like meat of less-than-prime grade can still be tasty and nourishing. Would the bubble have expanded so far and fast if the terminology had been more honest, like "ultra-high-risk loans"? Or even better, "piss-poor-credit mortgages"?

We had a great deal of trouble getting a mortgage for our house. I was offering to pay 50% down. That was too much for them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Robert Sabella says that my remark that the Pope and Reagan should get equal credit for the fall of Communism “ignores one of the most important players in that event: Mikhail Gorbachev.” No, Gorby gets no credit, because he wasn’t trying to destroy Communism; he thought he was saving it. The Pope and Reagan get credit because they accomplished what they set out to do. Gorbachev gets only blame, because he failed utterly (though of course we should be glad he did). To be sure, under the circumstances Gorbachev probably couldn’t have done any better. It was his bad luck to preside over the final demonstration of how right Ludwig von Mises was when he wrote in 1922 that communism was doomed because of the impossibility of economic calculation under socialism. Too bad it took nearly seventy more years of mass murder and slave labor to make it obvious to almost everybody.

\*\*\*\*\*

Richard Dengrove says to me, “I thought your original position was that high wages caused deflation, and that is what caused the depression. Now it appears that high wages can have nothing to do with either inflation or deflation.” Pretty much right. Inflation and deflation are entirely monetary phenomena; it’s the money supply which gets “inflated” (expanded) or “deflated” (reduced) by whoever controls the production of money — in our case, the Federal Reserve acting through the banks. Once the money supply expands (or contracts), then prices and wages must rise (or fall) until they match the new amount of money in circulation. Attempts to prevent prices and wages from thus rising or falling invariably bring many unpleasant consequences, such as prolonging the Great Depression.

As to what caused the Depression in the first place, I blame primarily (but not exclusively) the Fed’s inflationary policy in the 1920s. That led to the stock market crash and the banking collapse. Many banks disappeared, and so of course did the checkbook money that they had created. That was the deflation. Failure of the politicians to understand that the newly reduced money supply required equivalent reductions in wages and prices helped prolong the Depression. There were other causes as well, of course, such as the Smoot-Hawley tariff.

\*\*\*\*\*

Commenting on my continuing argument with Jim Stumm about proper Constitutional interpretation, the editor cites the Fourteenth Amendment, which forbids states from abridging the privileges and immunities of citizens. The editor doesn’t say explicitly, but I assume he means that the Fourteenth extended

the First Amendment to cover the states, so that states could no longer do anything, such as censorship, that was forbidden for the national government. That is indeed what the Supreme Court has held in the “incorporation” decisions — with which I strongly disagree.

My take is that the Fourteenth was intended precisely and only to force the states to allow the newly-freed slaves the same rights as white men. These rights do not have to be the same from one state to another. I know of no reason to suppose that the authors of the Fourteenth imagined that they were forbidding each state from continuing to have its own laws on censorship, religious establishments, and so on. The new rule was only that the states could not treat blacks and whites differently. I observe that the “incorporation” doctrine was not promulgated until well after the authors of the Fourteenth were safely dead, so they could not rise up and yell, “Hey, that’s not what we meant!” Can anyone cite legislative history showing that the authors of the Fourteenth really did intend “incorporation”?

George also sent tearsheets of a very favorable review of *Heinlein’s Children* from the SFRA Review.

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** September 30, 2008  
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Robert S. Kennedy, I’m sorry if I misunderstood you about “expert choices.” But in Europe, even without primary elections and brief final elections, you still don’t get peace, quiet, or less political crap, although, true, there isn’t all that money spent on campaigns, since there aren’t real campaigns. But the politics is still endless noise and fighting, and in spite of that, if you were here, you probably wouldn’t know the name of your Congress member, since you have no control over who he or she is, and he or she wouldn’t care what you think.

When you vote, you cast a ballot for the party, which has chosen the ticket. The people on the ticket owe their place to the party bosses. The bosses are their constituency and the only people they care about — Spanish politicians have told me that to my face. Europe has more protests and strikes because that’s the only way to get politicians’ attention.

And this is how Ehud Olmert, a man nobody likes or trusts, became Prime Minister of Israel. It’s all to ensure democracy.

—JTM

As for Italy, Silvio Berlusconi is once again prime minister. My problem with him isn’t that he’s dishonest, though he is. In the words of *The Economist* magazine, Berlusconi’s faults include “money-laundering, complicity in murder,

connections with the Mafia, tax evasion and the bribing of politicians, judges and the tax police.” My problem with him is that Italy is in trouble. Organized crime and incompetence has paralyzed the country so badly that it can’t even safely dispose of its garbage, and its food is contaminated by toxic waste. The economy and the society is crumbling. Berlusconi’s response is to call out the Army against the Gypsies. He is incompetent as well as corrupt.

What would the American candidates be like if American politics were like Spain’s? Neither McCain or Obama would be candidates. Mavericks and minorities need not apply. Palin would belong to a colorful local party, and she might be a deal maker or breaker, but she’d never get within a heartbeat of the presidency. Biden might be possible, though he’s a bit unruly. McCain’s and Obama’s campaigns would be unthinkable because they are open to public participation.

On November in California, you’ll get a long ballot asking you to decide on all sorts of individuals and referenda. In Spain, you’d get one envelope into which you’d put a slip of paper with the name of the party you prefer. At least it makes counting the results a lot easier, since you won’t really have much to say.

On a personal note, at the end of September, I won the 2008 Golden Brick Award (Premio Ladrillo de Oro) for the (deliberately) worst article in Spanish about science fiction, fantasy, or horror. The article had to be either written while dressed as a Spanish country bumpkin or include the word “Maritoñi,” whatever that meant. So I wrote 1000 awful words entitled, “No cagaos en la Maritoñi” (“Don’t Dump on Maritoñi”), and they won’t tell you anything accurate about Maritoñi.

From: **Taras Wolansky** September 30, 2008  
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Alexiad, August 2008:

Review of Charles Stross’ *Saturn’s Children*: Michael Bishop’s *Ancient of Days* (1985), about the discovery of a living *Homo habilis*, made a bit of a splash in its day. Roger MacBride Allen’s similar *Orphan of Creation* (1988), about surviving australopithecenes, was a much better book but was itself a kind of orphan: coming from an author and a publisher (Baen) associated with military SF, it never found its audience.

Review of L.M. Bujold’s *Passage*: One thing that bothered me about the first two “Sharing Knife” books was that there seems to be no way for the rangers (or whatever they’re called) to be recompensed for the time and blood they spend in defense of all. They have to scratch out a living first, and fight supernatural evil on the side. Perhaps somebody who remembers the books better than I do can correct this impression.

They aren’t.

Review of Simon Winchester’s *The Man*

*Who Loved China:* I distinctly remember reading a Joseph Needham interview/profile in *Scientific American*, some years back, in which he is asked why China, seemingly at the brink of a technological revolution, did not take the next step, while Europe did. "Well, as a life-long socialist it pains me to say so, but I think it was capitalism." Close to his exact words, I think.

Comments to George W. Price: It took 70 years for the Supreme Court to "discover" that the 14th Amendment overrode the 1st, and took control of speech and the press away from the States, and gave it to — the Supreme Court.

*Alexis Gilliland:* It's very striking to look at economic series in the *Statistical Abstract of the U.S.* over the last hundred years or so, including the Depression. For the first time, the government is "fighting" a depression; for the first time, a depression refuses to end; indeed, it does a double dip. Hoover and Roosevelt were both "progressives", what we would call liberals. They both tried to spend their way out of the Depression — which might have worked, if they hadn't increased taxes as well. It's not well known today that there were tax rebellions all over the U.S.; a faint echo remains in the movie, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938).

Obviously, television personalities, actors, and athletes are among the union workers who earn more than 30 times the minimum wage.

*John Purcell:* We can give credit to Gorbachev for the fall of the Soviet Union in the same way that we can give credit to Hitler for the fall of the Reich. (Not that Gorbachev and Hitler have anything in common other than being inept enemy leaders.)

*Richard Dengrove:* A coerced increase in wages (i.e., a governmental minimum wage or extorted union wage) can contribute to price inflation, not deflation. Double the minimum wage; a lot of fast food restaurants close; the remaining ones, with less competition, are able to charge a price high enough to pay the new minimum wage. (Or, if nobody wants to pay that much for fast food, fast food could go the way of the soda jerk.)

In private, Hitler was a secularist, who especially despised Christianity. (All that "love your enemy" and "turn the other cheek" crap!) He told Goebbels he wished the German people had been Muslim instead.

*Robert S. Kennedy:* I loved *Charlie Wilson's War*, but it stuck in my craw a bit that Hollywood, true to form, gave a Democrat credit for winning the Cold War. The Democratic Party's role, for the last 20 years of the Cold War, was mostly obstructive. And the bit at the end of the movie about "if only we had built schools and clinics in Afghanistan": the terrorists would have killed the teachers and blown up the clinics.

Or like the John Brunner story where the U.S. wins by dropping food aid and tools to the warlike Afghans. As Alfred G. Caplin used to say, "**Right!!!**"

— JTM

*Jim Stumm:* Note that the digital-analog

converter box works for over-the-air broadcasts only. Cable companies will continue to provide analog signals for some time.

I bought a Philips DVR with a hard drive, which lets me record 66 hours (that's not a typo) at SP quality, or 33 hours at the highest quality. I loved it for ten months until it broke. They're sending me a replacement.

A regular DVR can record only 2 hours at SP, like a VCR, and 1 hour at HQ.

*Martin Morse Wooster:* *Science Illustrated* appears to be aimed at a YA audience.

*Rod Smith:* In defense of *The Core* (2003), the filmmakers pretty clearly have their tongues planted in their cheeks. You may recall that the underground craft is made of "unobtainium". And, of course, the black guy who built it (Delroy Lindo) gets to die heroically! Hilary Swank is particularly good, as one of the handful of believable women soldiers Hollywood has ever given us. And Stanley Tucci is spot-on as a Carl Sagan-like blowhard scientist, who continues to dictate into his microrecorder even as he is about to be turned into a crushed cinder.

*Nancy Martsch:* I vividly recall the pirated Ace edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, with its vigorous Jack Gaughan covers that concentrated on the characters, not the scenery.

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** October 1, 2008  
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This is Jeff from Jerusalem...

(It's Rosh Hashanah as I write this — Lashanah Tova — so visiting the holiest town fits!)

This has been a busy month for me: as I write I'm trying to get my own zine done to copy out October 1st (I'll end up putting it out the next week; I don't want to rush it.). I have a convention the weekend after (a gaming one; Con\*Cept with Lloyd is mid-month). Around the time of THAT con is our Canadian election.

A few more of the fellow zine folks have joined Lloyd and I on crackboook... I mean FACEbook: Joseph and Trinlay. We will soon assimilate more (resistance is futile).

Or as the Redneck Borg said,  
"Resistance air fu-tile! Yore ass  
will be laminated!!"

My dad turns 70 this year. I hope to be one of the rare men in our family to make it into my 80s, but we'll see. I can picture how sobering it is to surpass your dad though.

Letters

Nancy Martsch: I can't help but wonder what *The Lord of the Rings* would have been like if Tolkien liked that initial treatment. Mind you he likely would have hated Peter Jackson's version too for everything cut, and for the love story; he didn't do that kind of romance.

The treatment had a lot of transport by the Eagles, which seems to have been in harmony with a popular alternative narrative

of the story. The presenters, by the way, included Al Brodax (who at the time was making Popeye cartoons, and later did *Yellow Submarine*) and Forrest J Ackerman.

— JTM

Chris Garcia: I wonder if a comicbook zine would be a fit for eFanzines. It seems the site is more SF oriented.

Brad W. Foster: I'm a faned now, but I have several blogs as well, a Livejournal, a Twitter account, plus Plurk, Tumblr, Identica, Twit Army, Myspace, Facebook... I don't sleep much.

Alexis A. Gilliland: In Montreal there was so much rain this year that many pundits have claimed that we never had a summer this year. We did, but after kids went back to school.

John Purcell: Actually the Steven Brust incident happened in 1992, long before smoking ban laws. Staff even asked him to stop, and he was rude to them. He was a last-minute guest and has never been invited back as a result.

R-Laurraine Tutihasi: I'm on the 7th floor of my building, and Montreal never has earthquakes, even though Mount Royal is a long, LONG extinct volcano.

Richard Dengrove: I'll have to ask my Indian friend what her tribe is called, to answer you and Joseph. / I mis-spoke. I was talking about Jews in IRAN, not IRAQ. That mini history lesson about Bagdad was interesting though.

Lloyd Penney: I haven't been to PCCC in a few years. The attendance did seem low, but I don't know by how much.

Sheryl Birkhead: I know now about the difficulty getting members to LOC regularly for a zine... I usually get at most an average of 3 for my zine from the entire membership of mine, unless I beg in e-mail. / I write reminders of LOC deadlines as Task deadlines in Outlook myself. / In Québec we have no fines for not vaccinating cats. Still, I just saw ny vet for an unrelated problem with my cat Squeaky and he still didn't recommend even a booster to my kitty. The potential of her having a respiratory issue late in life concerns me. She was 1 or so when she had her last shots. She's 15 ½ now.

The list of movie/TV cast gave me ideas of who NOT to put in my next script!

I'm just under the wire with this LOC! Read you all soon.

### WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.  
"E. B. Frohvet", noting his departure from fandom.

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**REIMAGING**

A poster on the [alternatohistory.com](http://alternatohistory.com) board asked what it would be like if Joyce, Faulkner, and Hemingway had written the Star Wars movies. Okay . . .

. . . Meesa no likesa thisa place it too much like hot and dry and that bery bery bad on my skin I no can swim or even bath proper like the ship is notsa so good either it be looking like blackbird painted with silver paint run by crazy mon Qui-Gon heesa going to getsa killed if he no look out by ugly mon with bad teeth and boy he no good either even if Obi-Wan saysa so he got bery bery bad karma and the girl she gotsa big big problem with the bad mons not to mention really bad hair day we gotsa go to town get food and parts it take long time we better get money too why meesa get into such a bad-ass mess only get a mon killed it be worse than when that mon Bond the bird mon came why is there no weed here dat give me some peace . . .

— From “Star Wars Episode I: Jar Jars Wake” by James Joyce

“It’s too crowded there,” C-3PO said. “He wants to go outdoors.”

“What is it now.” Padme said.

“He wants to go outdoors,” C-3PO said.

“Let him go.” Obi-Wan said.

“It’s too crowded.” Padme said. “He’d better stay in. Anakin. Stop that, now.”

“It wont hurt him.” Obi-Wan said.

“You, Anakin.” Padme said. “If you dont be good, you’ll have to go to Dagobah.”

“Yoda said to keep him off of Dagobah for now.” C-3PO said. “He says he has that meditation on the Force.”

“Let him go, Amidala.” Obi-Wan said.

— From “Star Wars Episode II: The Sith and the Fury” by William Faulkner

It was a hot day on Tatooine. Hotter than the heat at the core of a light-saber. Ben sat in the cave. It was not as hot in the cave. The sweat rolled off him like tauntauns fleeing from a hunter.

He thought of the days hunting bantha. Bantha were good trophies. Jedi hunted to eat. The heads marked the meals. There had been many good meals.

Ben looked for the wine. There was no wine. He would have to get some wine. There was wine in Mos Eisley. He remembered Mos Eisley. Mos Eisley was not a good place.

The woman had come to Mos Eisley. The boy had been there. They had been innocent then. Then the boy had become a man. The man had not been so innocent.

— From “Star Wars Episode III: The Old Man and the Sith,” by Ernest Hemingway

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

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