



"The Toothsome Twosome" — Elric and Megumi © 2003 by Trinlay Khadro

# *PEREGRINE NATIONS*

*VOLUME THREE, NUMBER FOUR / JANUARY 2004*



*This Time 'Round We Have:*

Silent eLOCutions / art by Trinlay Khadro / 3

Book Review by Lyn McConchie / art by Rod Marsden / 10

In the Interim: Fanzines Received / art by Marc Schirmeister / 11

The Agriculture and Cuisine of the Shire by E.B. Frohvet / art by Brad Foster / 12

Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? / mascot art by Brad Foster / 15

*Additional Art:*

Trinlay Khadro/ cover

Alan White / masthead

This version has the addresses of contributors removed, for privacy reasons.

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**peregrination**, n., *L.*, A traveling, roaming, or wandering about; a journey. (The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, Avenel Books, New York: 1980).

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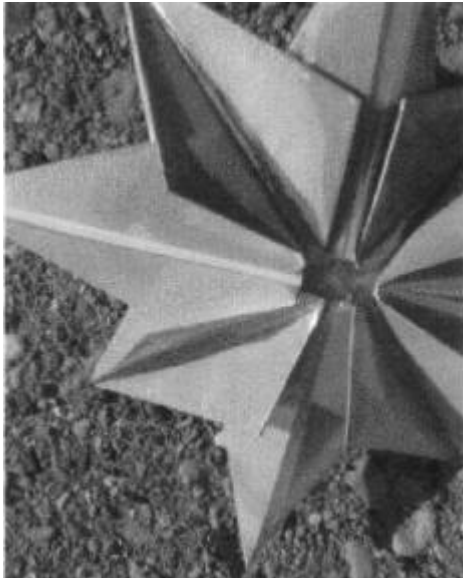
This issue is dedicated to the animals with whom many of us share our lives. They make us laugh and keep us warm (furry or not), and their departures are never easy. To all the critters in fandom, here's a scratch and a smooch. Thanks for joining us on the ride.

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Contributions are welcome in the form of LoCs, articles, reviews, art, etc. in two methods: e-mail to me at [tropicsf@earthlink.net](mailto:tropicsf@earthlink.net) (please use Peregrine Nations in the subject) or via regular mail. **No attachments unless previously arranged.** Clearly scanned artwork is also welcome. Main articles should be around 800-1,200 words, reviews 200-500 words. Exceptions can be made. Queries welcome.

**Next editorial deadline: April 10, 2004.**



## *Silent eLOCutions*

*Letters of Comment*

*[Edited, this time 'round ...and my comments will look like this 'ere.]*

*Cuyler Brooks // 15 Nov 2003*

Thanks for the zine. You should have had IGOTS 25. [*IGOTS it, and thanks.*] Beautiful color cover — seems a bit influenced by Maxfield Parrish. [*I have to agree, and Parrish is one of my favorite artists.*]

I started with computers when the program and the data were on paper cards, and progressed to PCs programmed in DOS. My feeling about computer manuals is that they were to be referred to as a last resort — I never "read" one. Any decent software will present a fairly self-evident interface to the user. Information Technology may be like a fire hose aimed at a teacup — but the teacup is supposed to have some discrimination. [*The teacup also needs a towel once in a while, which is what I consider the Help file's function.*]

Nice photos of the antique typewriter! I collect those things, and have over 200 of them, most of which still work. [*But do they tapdance?*]

In Virginia when ordering a pizza "with everything" you had to be careful to specify that the anchovies be omitted if you didn't want them. Here in Georgia the place we use doesn't offer them at all. I always thought hot anchovies were disgusting, but didn't mind them cold on a Greek salad.

I also failed to receive the first two issues of V.3; and according to my index, V.2 was represented by only a #1. [*If you can't download the missing ones from efanzines (or lack a printer) then e-mail me and I'll send 'em.*]

I have been fortunate most of my life — hardly sick at all other than the usual childhood things and an appendix removed. Now I have "Lichen Planus" — or rather, I have always had it but now it has appeared in my mouth and is a great nuisance. Rather like a sunburn on the tongue. There is apparently no cure, though I have been given a treatment that alleviates the symptoms. [*Hey, there's one to add to the list of Phreakish Phannish Phaelings! Sorry. Must be a real nuisance.*]

I killed a rat in the basement this fall, and trapped three smaller things that were either mice or juvenile rats (they seemed too big for mice to me) when they got caught inside after I finally found the passages from the unfinished crawlspace and sealed them up. [*So who's Fafhrd?*] The man who services the a/c said that many homes he visited had had similar problems and that it mean a severe winter. [*He wasn't far wrong — my folks say the snowfall we've had to date this winter is the most they've seen in this season in many years.*]

RAEBNC is used in apas a lot - it means Read And Enjoyed But No Comment. [*Thanks muchly, and I included this for others reading this who may have been unfamiliar with the acronym.*]



*Brad W Foster // 29 Nov. 2003*

Your response to Sheryl about printing out e-zines brought up a new point for me as well. I've yet to be totally comfortable reading long e-zines on the computer. Someone else suggested printing them out, and when I looked at the first one and realized I was going to have to run my printer for a while and use up half a cartridge of expensive ink, I was even less inclined to like e-zines. [*I don't print out every e-zine*

*I get; if it's more than 20 pages, I have to have a really good reason to print it out, like I'm in the midst of another Meniere's episode and I can't sit up long enough to read it from the computer, and I wanna LOC it as well. Epson's Stylus series of inkjet printers are fairly reliable and inexpensive (in my experience), and the cartridges don't cost that much. Of course, "expensive" is relative to a person's income level. If one doesn't have the \$23-\$26 needed per cartridge, then it's too expensive. If you want to read paper copies of some of the ezines available at efanzines, send me a list and I'll see what I have. I don't collect all fanzines, Horror of Horrors.]*

When I saw the article title "One: A Neapolitan Ghost Story", my eye mis-read that as "Neopolitan", and I was expecting some kind of weird riff of a story on a three-flavored ghost. Imagine my surprise!



Joseph Major // November 14, 2003

It's been my opinion that perhaps we whiteys don't deserve the Indians, whose devotion to a government that hasn't been the most helpful (euphemism) to them is deeply moving. Don Fitch's description of that patriotic and traditional Memorial Day service is an example of this. (I was also reading an article on the *Jewish World Review* website about Jewish veterans on Veterans' Day. There were 550,000 Jews in the armed forces during World War II.)

Usually when the print zine goes online (with much publicity about heading into the twenty-first century) what happens is that the regular updates become much less regular, then die off entirely. *Omni*, for example, or Algis Budrys's *Tomorrow*. But online means available. Why would Bruce [Gillespie] want to go to the obstacle of having a password-protected Web download? *SFC* is available as a .pdf, perfect for distributing over the Net by whatever means. [*True, but if he wants to try and control who gets it, having a password-protected download option is a nice thing.*]

We had a problem with one of the new cats. He had some scabs on the corners of his mouth. I woke up in the middle of the night and wondered if he had bit an electric cord and burned himself. Lisa took him to the vet and they said that. So we have to give him antibiotics and pain medicine. He got a dose of the pain medicine last night and this morning hid very thoroughly.

Er, if you've read/seen "I, Claudius" (the miniseries with Sir Derek Jacobi is one of the few adaptations that can be held up well against its source) you will know that "Drusilla" was not one of the more fortunate people in the book. Let's just say that her brother/lover (sounds like a setup from out in the hills) read the bit about Cronos and his kids just a little too closely . . . [*One of my favorite BBC productions, right up there with "Elizabeth R" and the Henry VIII series. All of which one can purchase on VHS or DVD at [bbcamerica.com](http://bbcamerica.com), as I understand it. I'll have to surf over there and check on that.*]

"St. Josaphat" was canonized mostly by popular demand, the way saints were canonized before the formal process existed.

The paperback of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* would not be advisable, I think. Paperbacks that big split. {*Then why the hell would the publisher even print it? Chorus: "To soak readers for even more money!"*}

And I have Crohn's Disease. [*Very sorry to hear that.*]

So Charisma should never have **been** a winner. I've heard that lately: "Our horse is too small, our jockey's too big, our trainer's too old and I'm too dumb to know the difference!" "Seabiscuit" [came out on] DVD December 16.

At the Horse Park Lyn could have seen another horse who shouldn't have been a winner. He was too small, from an undistinguished lineage, and oh yes he had the most terrible temper. You can go out in front of the park and see the burial place of Man o' War. On the way, there's a set of posts that compare the strides of horses. Man o' War had a **long** stride. So did Secretariat. But the mean little horse in the

Hall of Champions had a longer stride than Secretariat. His name is John Henry and he was the champion horse of the Eighties.

After we moved into our current house Lisa started finding dead mice. Then she saw a live one. So did Sulla, my then fourteen-year-old declawed house cat. Sulla pounced. No more mouse. [*Hail Sulla!*] The new cat (the one with the burns) is named Sarang, after a seeing-eye tiger from a novel. He even looks tigerish, being pale-marmalade with a incredibly **loud** purr.

I did read Dinosaur Summer and enjoyed it thoroughly. How many novels are dedicated to a character in them? Emergence was all right, I think, but Palmer's **next** novel, the less said the better.

I still haven't got an issue of *Trap Door*. [*Robert Lichtman, are you reading this???*]

My father died after a long struggle with cancer on December 21, 1971. Please recall that my birthday is Christmas Eve. [*Belated Happies!*] December is the cruelest month . . . I know it's a hard time, but we are all around you. [*Yes, I know...I keep bumping into these rather sold blocks of air from time to time, and I think, oh, that must be another fannish hug arriving. Thanks to all who send them.*]



Lyn McConchie // 25 Dec 2003

I've been writing a new book and wanted to get it done by Christmas. Re: Alan White's comments on technology. I get that here, I use my computer to do e-mail, and write the revised draft of work on. That's pretty much it. I also don't bother with a lot of other tech items on my farm and a reporter once described it as looking like something out of the 1950s. I like it that way. Less stress, and fewer distractions.

As for ghost tales, I'm having a true-life, cat-ghost tale published in an American ghost-story anthology in 2004. It's from Ariad Press in Texas, and is to be titled Haunted Encounters: Ghost Stories from Around the World. And yes, it is all true and the events extend over several years with three adult human witnesses. No urban myth this.

But I must fly, going over to open presents at my next-door neighbour's (and oldest friend) in an hour, Christmas Day and I'm writing LoCs, that's dedication for you. Merry Christmas, Happy New year, and may 2004 be pleasant, production, and profitable. [*It's looking that way so far; do that again next Christmas, please?*]



Lloyd Penney // December 11, 2003

More marvelous Alan White cover art. He's making my choices for Best Fan Artist Hugo very easy to make.

An online fanzine has an easier time of getting onto the Hugo ballot because it has a wide distribution with no extra cost. At least, that's my theory. Cheryl Morgan posts notice of the newest *Emerald City* on various Usenet areas, and sends direct notice as well. [*She also puts a lot of work into her fanzine, and has recently posted her 101st ish.*] Can you imagine how much distributing a paper fanzine would cost if it was done the same way? Ouch!

Hey, Alan White...did you put out more issues of *Black Cat* than just issue 0? Just curious...

Interesting how many people have issued condolences to those who didn't make it to Torcon 3, but who qualify it by saying that it was just as well you weren't able to make it, or that you made the right choice. Add in what seemed like hundreds of people who tried to sell their memberships at the last minute, and I have to wonder what attendance at Torcon 3 might have been like. Boston will be better. [*One can only hope.*]

We hope you'll have the best Christmas with your family, and that the new year is kinder to you, to all of us. [*Thanks, and well said.*]



Steven H Silver // 13 Nov 2003

A lot of people seem amazed at the inclusion of Brother Guy's article in my fanzine. The secret to getting it was...to ask him. Brother Guy has a tendency to come to Chicago for cons and, I imagine, attends them in other parts of the country as well. He is a fan, active in the (dis-)organization GT, which is made up of technogeeks from around the Midwest, and further afield. When I saw Greg Benford at the Windycon staff meeting last week, he commented on Brother Guy's article and I mentioned Brother Guy would be at the con. Greg asked to be introduced. The first time I saw the two men together was at closing ceremonies, when they happened to be sitting three seats apart, so I introduced them at that time.

Ghost stories are, of course, appropriate at [Hallowe'en], even for a confirmed rationalist such as myself. I do have a sort of ghost story to add to the ones told by you and Jack Calvert, although I tend to think of it as a rather odd coincidence rather than a ghost story. On Halloween in 1987, when I was living in a manor house in England, a group of students decided to hold a séance in the same room one of the former owners of the house had used in an attempt to contact her dead husband. As they chanted her name, nothing happened until suddenly there was a drop in temperature and one of the students started to violently throw up. A couple of days later, I was doing some research into the history of the house and came across a photograph of the spiritually-minded former owner. She had a distinctly similar appearance to the girl who had become ill at the séance. [*One wonders from what illness that former owner died.*]

[I] was also in town in conversation with a friend and couldn't remember the title of a book I know very well. But they say writing and doing puzzles ... keeps the mind stretched so that sort of problem is less and takes longer to appear. Hopefully with all my writing, reading, and puzzling, I'll be dead before the problem arrives.

— Lyn McConchie

Ted White's encounter with Hurricane Isabel was interesting, particularly since my family had taken a vacation to Virginia about a week before the hurricane came ashore. At the time, the weather was reasonably good (the day it rained, we simply did indoor things). I'm working up a trip report on it, but I probably won't publish it. We spent most of the time around Colonial Williamsburg with a brief side trip to Hampton, VA. I also had the chance to spend some time with Murray (Will Jenkins) Leinster's daughter and granddaughter and watch my daughters play with his great-granddaughters. This is the second time I've left an area shortly before a hurricane came through. The last time was in 1992 when I up and left Hawaii a week before hurricane Iniki (also an "I" name, I wonder if I should take that as a hint). [*Good thing you took a hike.*]



John Hertz sent another welcome batch of Vanamondes and notes:

My Torcon III report is in the Jan/ '04 *Chronicle*.



William Breiding abjures "Clean your printer!" [*A combination of cleaning the nozzle heads and using a different paper type selection in the Print window seems to do the trick; I'm making it standard practice for all my printed documents. Apologies for the apparently lousy printing in your copy (and many others, I fear).*]



Dave Szurek //

Actually, I'm originally from Michigan; moved out here in 1980 from Detroit.

I dropped out of convention-going 20 years ago, partly lack of income to accommodate that lifestyle and partly ennui. If I were rich, I'd probably attend one now and then, anyway, but I still don't think I'd go hog-wild. Maybe one or two a year.

As you've probably gathered, I've been a lot more active in film fandom lately than in SF fandom, and even then, via mail only. My social life nowadays consists of a lot of people we used to call Mundanes. [*And some still call them that.*]

I've always been in favor of same-sex marriage, but I figure that in the spirit is where it counts. The certificate doesn't mean sh\*t. [*"We don't need no piece of paper from the city hall / Keepin' us tied and true, no, my old man / Keepin' away my blues..." I love the opportunity to quote lyrics from favorite songs; that's Joni Mitchell's "My Old Man," for the unknowing.*] My wife and I have one, but I feel that we'd be married in spirit whether or not one existed. It's just a way of making money. There are people with an official license that aren't married in spirit and there are those without who are — and I suspect the same principle will hold true with gay couples. Most tragic marriages of all are those entered into just because "it's the thing to do" and despite all of the alleged progress in our society, some of those can still be found. And then there's this neighbor woman who's been married ten times and she's not even fifty yet. When asked, she's candid that she still believes it is necessary to marry someone in order to go to bed with him...at least she's doing it proper-like in the eyes of God. [*A thing more preposterous I cannot imagine just now, and I wonder how much money she soaked out of each of her ex-husbands.*]

Much enjoyed the interview with automatic writer Caroline. Paranormal stuff turns me on, anyway. [*Dave edits Weirdness Before Midnight, a horror-film fanzine.*]



E.B. Frohvet // November 16, 2003

(*Frohvet sends his recommendations for others to nominate in Hugo the Fan Artist category, as he says he won't be voting this year*): Steve Stiles (nominated last year but deserves a rocket), Sheryl Birkhead (same), Alan White and Marc Schirmeister. I have great respect for Brad Foster and Teddy Harvia but both are nominated almost every year and have received multiple awards.

**Dedication**: Of the fannish folk who have left us recently, we should all recall Colonel Harry Stubbs, AKA "Hal Clement", who died recently at age 81, apparently peacefully, in his sleep. [*Recall also Julius Schwartz.*] In his honor, I propose this trivia question: How long is a "year" on Abyormen?

**Don Fitch**: A most interesting further explanation on the custom of a "veteran's dance" at Indian powwows. Never seen one myself, I suppose such events are not common here in the East. [*I think perhaps they are more common than you surmise, just not well-publicized where you are.*]

**Joe Major**: I agree with most of what he said about Varley. Concerning David Palmer, his second novel Threshold, intended as the beginning of a series, was indeed bad, but it was creatively bad! It so shamelessly twisted and exploited every cliché of every bad fantasy novel, that it almost had a perverse charm. I still have my copy — I may even read it again one of these years.

**Jack Calvert**: Thanks for the kind words. Any relation to the Lords Calvert, founders of Maryland (early 17th Century)? [*Um, I'd call them "European colonizers" myself, since technically there were other people in Maryland before the Calverts got there.*]

**Trinlay Khadro**: Good news for KT getting into a better school and taking Latin. (Which will probably pay off someday, even if she doesn't go into medicine or law.) Many years since I took it in school; I used to be able to sing "Gaudeamus Igitur" in Latin, it was taught as part of the class! !'Now let

us all rejoice” is the opening line. [*I used to know all the words to “Gaudete,” which is a Christian Christmas carol I learned from listening to Steeleye Span. Beautiful melody.*]

**Lyn McConchie:** How can anyone not be familiar with the Doors? “The Crystal Ship” was on their first album on the Elektra label. [*Knowing the name of a musical group and being familiar with their entire oeuvre are two different things. I never heard of “The Crystal Ship” either.*] Do you have a CD player? I’ll find it for you.

Jack Calvert’s ghost story has “urban legend” written all over it.. .As for your friend’s encounter, ummm.. (But my mother still tells the account of being in a relative’s house, and standing frozen at the door of a particular room, unable to force herself to enter.) ...Ted White’s account of the hurricane was about the same as mine.

**Pub Crawl:** "How many of you knew that the Vatican even had an observatory?" Well, I did. In common with most observatories in/near large cities, it is unlikely to accomplish anything dramatic due to light pollution.

In Zenna Henderson's “The Closest School,” the town grump hurries into the local store and barks for service: He needs color film to take pictures of the changing leaves!

I have freed up some desperately needed storage space (I can now get into the walk-in closet) by sorting and indexing all back fanzines which are no longer publishing. Giving them away — anyone who wants a copy of the index, ask. If there is no interest I will simply toss them. [*I’ll take a copy of that, please!*]



Trinlay Khadro // Nov 16, 2003

Thanks for another lovely ish.

**Don's LoC** reminds me how disappointed I was to miss Indian Summer Festival in Milwaukee this year. If you ever get to Milwaukee, you may want to go to the Milwaukee Public Museum to see the very wonderful display they have about Native American art, artifacts & culture, the Pow Wow diorama includes life-size portraits of some well know Wisconsinites. (It’s across from the Buffalo Hunt diorama, also with life-size figures. Buffalo Hunt also has a hidden button to make the rattlesnake shake his tail.) This exhibit was updated with the support and input of several of the Native American communities in the area.

My great uncle, before he passed away, when asked what tribe he was from — rather than explaining that he was not Native American — would run with it. When he was in the nursing home he answered the questioning of the nurses and the other service people by regaling them with tales of his Seminole childhood in Florida. I know that during much of WWII he was stationed in Florida, but I don t know how much exposure to the Seminole he had. Toward the end of the war he was in Europe serving as a translator for the US Army, as he was multi-lingual. I strongly suspect he translated for the agencies taking war crimes testimony. He never talked about the war though, except when someplace would be on TV and he'd say "I was there"... He had been able to do some traveling and tourism as well.

The American Legion story does feel like an urban legend, though the only apparent hole that I see is what would inspire the former German soldier to go to the American Legion hall, or would THAT not be so odd? I like the inclusive attitude described by your experiences with the Veterans’ Dances. I doubt anyone with an ounce of compassion would even think of mentioning the “violation of flag code” in that company, or to make an issue of it — the mother dancing with the funerary flag is obviously so reverential as to not be capable of being a violation. (Compassion and reverence trump even Grandmothers. <grin>)

**Brad Foster’s** space lotus is AWESOME. I love it! And would like to see it poster size. [*Are you reading this, Brad?*]



**Joseph Major:** I can see how the SFBC error with the photos could happen. Sometimes the layout people aren't fans, just people working a job.... Someone assigned to "get photos" grabbed the wrong one, or just got confused at some point. What does surprise me is that with all the checks and reviews before things like this go to print, or even when they come in at shipping from the binder, NO ONE IN HOUSE apparently even noticed. Once Upon A Time I worked as a order gal for a non-profit dedicated to industrial and operational quality (yes, the demons responsible for pushing TQM — and corporate double speak that calls employees "associates" but treats them like Mexican Peasants...) and I once took a call with a customer complaint. The Quality Control Tome they had received had a entomology tome bound inside the QC tome cover. When we saw it, it was amazingly funny... we sent him a good copy, and sent out notices to customers that they could exchange their entomology edition for the QC edition. I was somewhat surprised by how many just reordered the QC book and kept the entomology one. I wish I'd kept one. (When the shipment came from the binder, the warehouse never did the skip-lot sampling of it that the society so happily promoted....)

**Jan:** I like what you did with the Typing Demons! I had originally called them Typo Demons: the causes of typos... "Hey where are the function keys.." Bwah hah hahahahaha! I sent Jan a stack of photos. Elric is looking forward to being a Cover ferret. [*And got his wish fulfilled thish.*]

**Sheryl:** Who also has Fibromyalgia — my insurance won't allow narcotics anyway... I'm doing the physical therapy which has helped quite a bit with my mobility and is helping with my strength. As for pain management, it's of limited help. Doctor has been making noises about the trigger-point injections... My Dad says he heard something about a one-time treatment that helps but didn't remember what it was.

The trigger-point injections are not acupuncture, but I'm not real sure what they ARE. My insurance is not going to even consider acupuncture. [*Ask them anyway — patients have more clout than they are led to believe, and if there's good clinical evidence that acupuncture can help alleviate your symptoms, this is a point to bring up. It can be very frustrating, tiring and nerve-wracking when one has to "negotiate" with a health-insurance provider, but it can be fruitful. Try looking for a national-board-certified acupuncturist in your area and consider getting a consultation. The Journal of the American Medical Association has published one major study on acupuncture already.*]

So far a soak in a hot tub, avoiding chills, getting enough sleep, and keeping active seem to be the best coping tools I have at this point. That and I'm crocheting an afghan with Megumi's "help" (I believe, based on this project, that cats certainly CAN see color, just not quite the same as we do, but she definitely prefers blues and violets.) I'm still taking what I feel is a LOT of medication, but I still can't get through the day without it (none of it is narcotics).

My trick with "training kittens" is to provide a scratch "toy" that is more interesting, and more effective than the furniture and carpeting. Catnip helps with this, and cats are indeed trainable. When training cats & kittens, though, one has to think like a cat, and remember that the cat is not a dog, and needs to find the new behavior more attractive than the old one... It's up to us primates to figure out how to do that. A dog wants praise, some cats don't care.

There is another Milwaukee area fan with Fibromyalgia and I also have a friend who has had it for years, to the point that she can no longer work. It seems like I know of about half a dozen fans with "something odd" and dozens with more "common" illnesses like diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. I DO think that fandom is as healthy as any other community, but we tend to communicate quite far afield with each other. I think the communication level may be the actual difference between fandom and the general population, rather than illnesses or the kinds of illnesses.

**Lyn:** Megumi regularly leaves a toy mouse on either KT's bed or-mine as a token of esteem... that and "slain" hair scrunchies.

Re: "Neapolitan Ghost Story," just because a story fits a folklore motif doesn't mean it's not true. And yep, there is a class of "Phantom Hitchhiker" and subclasses of it. Resurrection Mary in Chicago, for example, is a highly documented and regularly reported ghost. They even know who Mary was, and there

is an account by the boy who danced with her in 1934 the night before the car wreck that killed her. Early versions (starting around 1939) of the Resurrection Mary story also have her hitching rides to get to the dance hall. There are accounts of the young men who danced with her who noticed that she felt chilled when they were dancing with her, but only noticed she was a ghost when she vanished from the car on the ride home as they drove past Resurrection Cemetery. It's not the archetypical "Phantom Hitchhiker" but it's probably the best documented.

The Moving Finger Writes: Now it'd be freaky if she'd done her "automatic writing" before it had been published, or even before it was originally written. In the world of Origami Enthusiasts a recurring phenomenon is that identical or nearly identical patterns get invented at the same time and get sent in to the Origami groups within weeks of each other FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES! I expect this sometimes has something to do with the nature of origami (particularly more traditional forms of origami) and a pattern's time just having come. Perhaps it is "Warped minds think alike"—or in the case of the Origami geeks, "Creased minds think alike." [*Brains with many folds — or creases — were once cited as the reason for a person's intelligence level; more creases equaled higher intelligence.*]

**Pub Crawl:** Re: *Argentus 3*, I would suggest that [a good way] to get a Jesuit Brother (or for that matter any other sort) [to write an article] is to find a topic or theme that would be irresistible and overlap with your pet topic... toss them the question or theme, a possible title, and see what happens. It particularly helps if said target author is also a friend so you'd know what would be an irresistible topic. (Does an android have Buddha-nature?) YO! Steve, you forgot to send ME #3!!!

WAHF: Mark Proskey, a most faithful subscriber. Thank you, Mark!

## Book Review by Lyn McConchie // 20th Century Dart by Rod Marsden, 1st Books Library.

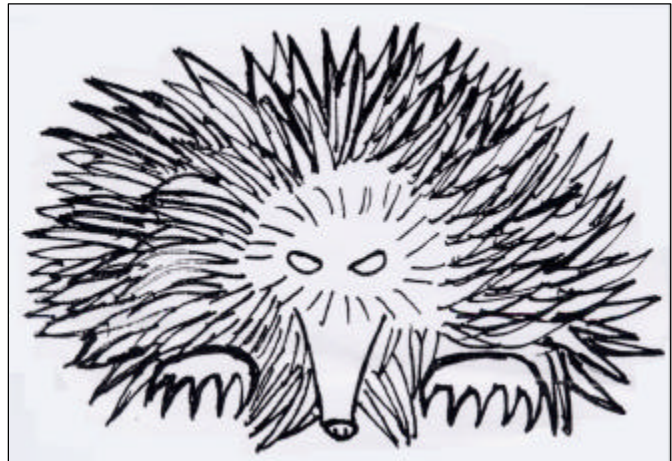
This is a new and interesting variety of the super-hero genre. Written by longtime Australian SF fan Rod Marsden, it's the tale of Eddie Dart, who becomes a super-hero by melding with the spirit of the Australian echidna (spiny anteater) and finding his own humanity and abilities. Many of the original chapters were stories which appeared in small-press American magazines; I met some of them there first.

I found Eddie far more realistic than many of the American super-heroes. He's a normal person who retains his own weaknesses and fears. As the book says, even with the ability to stun your enemies, it isn't easy being Eddie. But his connection with Australian Aborigines, the Djara of the Dreamtime, helps keep him strong, adding a uniquely Australian component to the story.

The book has an environmentally friendly message and it is the echidna spirit which infuses Eddie that gives the tales some of their edgy and more interesting angles. The main stories are bracketed by two shorter portions, set after 3000 AD, which serve to place the whole work neatly in perspective.

The foreword is by the author himself, and serves to explain some of the book's thrust and foundation, how it came into being and why.

20th Century Dart starts with pilots in a spaceship heading for another planet. On board as passengers are a number of people from another world. Having ruined their own, they are now migrating to a new



Drawing by Rod Marsden © 2000

planet — where it is clear they will follow the same pattern. How the pilots deal with this forms an excellent prelude to the main story.

Then we're into the Dart stories themselves with Peter Kooliabiak, son of a migrant to Australia, lost in the lethal desert of Central Australia. He is rescued and survives, but this is the beginning of his metamorphosis into Eddie Dart. One of the interesting divergences in these tales is that there isn't just one Dart, the abilities are passed down, not always in a direct line, but they are handed on. Something almost unheard of in the more Americanised tradition.

Between some chapters, there are also timelines showing the rise of super-heroes in general, and of historical events as well. These were great. They helped place perspective within the tales and within super-hero genre development in general. For female readers, there is a female hero who gets involved in some of the tales on a solidly equal basis.

This book is very nice work. It's catchy, unusual, and well-written, typical of the better class of Australian genre writing, in that it is, itself, Australian, with that freshness and difference. It is well worth a look and is available from [www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com). Just punch up the author's name. I'd recommend this to anyone who likes to read something in genre which is just that little bit different.

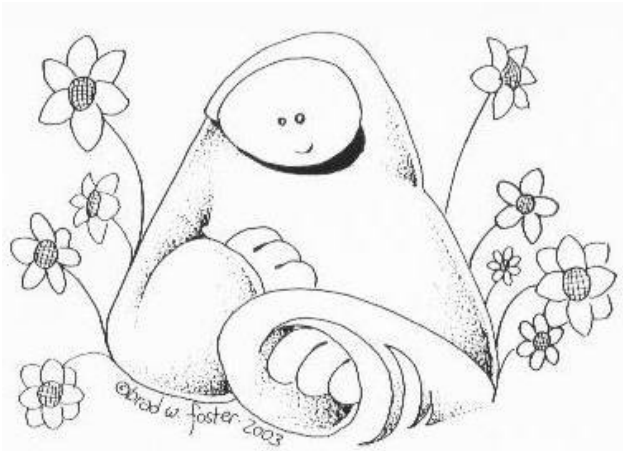
## ***In the Interim: Fanzines Received***

Because I don't feel qualified in continuing to review the fanzines I get, despite the fact that so few faneds review fanzines nowadays, I've decided to take a page from Henry Welch's *Knarley Knews* and list what I've received since the last PN was published. New readers interested in getting addresses and more info can write to or e-mail me. I'm hoping this change will allow me to LOC more often. Included this time are fanzines downloaded from the Web and read for the first time or not seen in several months. Anyone who's not seen any of these and wants a copy can contact me and I'll send it along.

ALEXIAD Oct. 2003, Dec. 2003, Feb. 2004 // ANSIBLE 197-199 // BENTO 15 // CONVERS[AT]IONS 3 // COR-FLU BLACKJACK PR #2 // COVERT COMMUNI-CATIONS FROM ZETA CORVI 11 // DE PROFUNDIS 370-373 // EMERALD CITY #97, 100 & 101 // IN A PRIOR LIFETIME 1&2 // IT GOES ON THE SHELF 25 // THE KNARLEY KNEWS 102 & 103 // THE NASFA SHUTTLE Sept. 2003, Nov. 2003 // NICE DISTINCTIONS 4 // NO AWARD 14, Fall/Winter 2003 // NO TIME, NO ENERGY & NOT MUCH TO SAY 10 // PLOKTA XP ANNOYANCE (Vol. 8 No. 1) and PLOKTA OF THE CARIBOU (Vol. 8 No. 2) // RAIN ON CHERRY-BLOSSOMS 3 // ROYAL SWISS NAVY GAZETTE 11, November 2003 // THE SFSFS SHUTTLE 157 // SLEIGHT OF HAND 2 // SMOOTH ACTIVE BADGERS, A Two-Shot Zine from Corflu 2003 // THE SOUTHERN

FANDOM  
CONFEDERATION  
BULLETIN Vol. 8 No. 4 //  
TASTE NOT THE PIERIAN  
SPRING 1 // VANA-MONDE  
518-532 // VISIONS OF  
PARADISE 96 & 97 (The  
Passing Scene, Wondrous  
Stories, Halcyon Days) //  
WEIRDNESS BEFORE  
MIDNIGHT 2 // THE ZINE  
DUMP 5.





## The Agriculture and Cuisine of the Shire

by E.B. Frohvet

It is reasonable to suppose that in prehistoric times, hobbits were much as Neolithic humans, gatherers, scavengers, opportunistic hunters. Long before the founding of the Shire, however, they were clearly a civilized people, practicing agriculture, animal husbandry, metalworking, and other crafts. The Shire was indeed founded by people looking for better — or safer — farmland.

It may well be that the Elves of Rivendell steered the hobbit settlers on the pre-existing Great East Road. After all, once you pass the Last Bridge over Mitheithel, it's open country all the way to the Brandywine — at which point the hobbits may have been bored, or tired, or simply liked the look of the neighborhood.

The Shire is obviously based on, indeed is a metaphor for, the pre-industrial, 19th Century England of Professor Tolkien's own childhood; much idealized to be sure. It therefore comes as no surprise that its agriculture is based on a European, specifically an English model.

Hobbits have been conducting animal husbandry for centuries; and unlike, for instance, Beorn, they are not vegetarians. They have kept ponies and horses (apparently not donkeys or, by derivation, mules) as long as the Shire has existed, or longer. Presumably they acquired ponies first from Men, to whom the smaller breeds more comfortable to hobbit-size would be less useful. Hobbits, like Englishmen, use horses for draft and riding animals, but would probably be horrified at the idea of slaughtering horses for meat. There is no reference to hobbits racing horses — arguably the oldest human sport — at least on an organized basis.

The hobbits keep cattle. (“The thought of these merry young people driven like cattle burns my heart.” — Book III, Chapter 2. Okay, it's a simile; still it's a simile that presupposes a familiarity with a domestic bovine.) Such evidence as there is (not a great deal) suggests that Shire farmers keep cattle principally for dairy purposes “. . . slabs of butter, and half a ripe cheese” — Book I/Ch. 10), and slaughter them for food only incidentally. Hobbits are familiar with sheep also (“Mutton yesterday, mutton today...” — *Hobbit*/Ch. 2) and use them for wool as well as meat animals.

The staple food animals of the hobbits are clearly, swine (“. . . a mighty dish of mushrooms and bacon...” (Book I/Ch. 4; “. . . and this is first-rate salted pork. . .” — III/Ch. 9). Hobbits also keep domestic fowl, for much the same reasons that we do. (“Put on a few eggs... and just bring out the cold chicken...” *Hobbit*/ Ch. 1).

The principal grain crops of the Shire are obviously wheat (“white bread” — Book I/Ch. 7) and barley (“The Northfarthing barley was so fine that... 1420 malt was long remembered” Book VI/Ch. 9). There is no mention of oats, a staple which has fed humans and our livestock for centuries (perhaps hobbits grow some form of hay or timothy as a fodder crop), nor of rye. However the reference to “white bread” as distinct from other breads might suggest that among the poorer classes at least, bread is made from unshelled wheat, rye, or a mixture of the two, as was common practice in northern Europe up to the 18th Century.

As there is no mention of hops, one may suppose that hobbits' beer, to which they are much attached, is a flat sweetish beverage, probably of rather low alcohol content, having none of the characteristic bitter

edge of modern lager. Though malted-barley beermaking has been in use for thousands of years old, hops was only added (as a preservative) in the Middle Ages.

The principal vegetables of the hobbit table are potatoes (“In the matter of roots, especially potatoes, the Gaffer was recognized as the leading authority.” Book I/Ch. 1) and turnips (“...a huge turnip field...” I/Ch. 4). The Peter Jackson film of The Fellowship of the Ring shows Shire farms growing white cabbage and carrots, which are plausible — but not mentioned in the text — and Indian corn, *Zea mays*, which is a plant originally native to Mexico. Curious that one finds no mention of onions! Presumably hobbits get their Vitamin C mainly from potatoes and fruits (see below); they clearly would have no access to citrus fruits, a tropical luxury which even in Tolkien’s own childhood would have been available only seasonally. They also grow legumes “. . .his view was screened by a tall line of beans on poles” — Book I/Ch. 7): These apparently what Americans would call “green beans” and British would call “runner beans”; but again, reasonable to assume other legumes which the author did not mention.

Obviously, everyone knows about hobbits’ partiality to mushrooms: such a characteristic, almost racial trait that it suggests some subtle difference between hobbit biochemistry, and our own.

The people of the Shire cultivate both tree fruits (“appletart” — Hobbit/Ch. 1; “they sat... under the plum-trees and ate...” Book VI/Ch. 9) and ground fruits and berries (“blackberry tart” — I/Ch. 10; “raspberry jam” — Hobbit/Ch. 1). Beorn serves honey as a normal food and mead as a recognized beverage (Hobbit/ Ch. 7) so it takes no great leap of imagination to deduce that hobbits practice bee-keeping and use honey as their principal sweetening agent.

The two most obvious anachronisms in Shire agriculture are the potatoes, a New World crop not introduced into Europe until the 16th Century, and “pipe-weed” or tobacco, ditto. It may perhaps be argued that “pipe-weed” is some other herb or weed than true North American tobacco, smoking as a habit pre-dating tobacco use. Perhaps hobbits also brew a tisane from some sort of local herb, which would explain the references to “tea” (Hobbit/Ch. 1 etc).

Not only do hobbits grow wine grapes, they are quite sophisticated in their wine-making (“... a dozen bottles of Old Winyards, a strong red wine from the Southfarthing, and now quite mature” — Book II/Ch. 1); though this is probably a sideline of hobbit agriculture, catering to a small clientele of the wealthy. Beer seems to be by far the preferred beverage. (The preservation of wine much beyond a year or two was very unusual until the introduction of glass bottles with corks, not common practice until the 16th Century. Prior to that, wine was generally shipped in wooden casks, which allowed enough air to penetrate, to spoil even good wine by oxidation in a short time.)

Hobbits seem to have no obvious source of vegetable oil. Olives, peanuts, and (for reasons previously explained) corn may be safely ruled out. Possibly rapeseed, *Brassica napus*, also a useful forage crop; rapeseed oil is also a clean-burning lamp oil. Much more likely, lard or butter or bacon grease is used for frying.

How exactly hobbits conduct their farming, that is to say in the legal sense, is less clear. Mr. Maggot is obviously a freeholder, claiming title to the land and farming it with an extended family and/or hired hands. (“You have leave to walk over my land, if you have a mind.” — I/Ch. 4). But Maggot lives in a rural and undeveloped corner of the Shire where there is ample available land. Bilbo and Frodo, by contrast, are as near “city folk” as the Shire possesses; if they own land they’re obviously not farming it personally. Like most town folk they probably have no more than a kitchen-garden for a few vegetables and herbs, if that much, and buy most of their food. (Sam leaves Hobbiton under the pretext that he is going to Crickhollow “to do for Mr. Frodo and look after his bit of garden.” — Book I/Ch. 3).

Clearly there is a significant class of the population who may do some incidental gardening, but do not grow food as their principal occupation — it may almost be said to be a defining quality of an advanced society, that it can afford to support specialists (craftsmen, scholars, leaders) not directly involved in food production. This in turn implies a professional farmer class, of whom Mr. Maggot is probably typical, who grow food substantially beyond the needs of their own families with the intent of selling it. (This in

turn implying a cash economy, and we see that's the case, gold and silver currency perhaps having been introduced by the Dwarves.)

One would imagine the typical hobbit farm to be characterized by general agriculture — grains, vegetables, some animals, perhaps a modest orchard or vineyard on the side — rather than confined to one cash crop. Even in the Southfarthing where “pipe-weed” is produced as a cash crop, there is no indication it's a dominant practice to the exclusion of food farming. (As for instance tobacco was in Virginia in the 16th Century, or cotton in the American south in the 19th.)

The raising of livestock is not clearly explained. Fowl, swine, and even sheep may be kept in fairly small areas on the edges of town, assuming one has a source of feed grain. Horses and cattle require larger areas. Hobbits are basically better people than we are (“contented and moderate”, as Tolkien said — Prologue) so it seems plausible that hobbits use a form of common pasturage, which rarely works for humans even in good times.

In ancient times when hobbits lived east of the Misty Mountains on the banks of Anduin, one imagines fishing played a larger role in their diet. The Shire is on the bank of the Brandywine, which is a substantial river even that far north; but The Water, a tributary running through the Shire, is a small river or large creek. One may suppose that fishing (“...fried fish and chips served by S. Gamgee” — Book IV/Ch. 4) is an incidental food source rather than a staple. There is certainly no indication of its being conducted on a commercial scale. For much the same reason, we can safely reason that duck and goose would be rare luxuries on the hobbit table.

As for hunting, it's evident that hobbits are familiar with the idea (“Sam, however, had no objection to rabbit...” — IV/Ch. 4), and use projectile weapons. With their ability to move quietly in woods (Hobbit/Ch. 2) it's likely hobbits would be effective hunters at least of small game, rabbits and partridge and such, when they turned their minds to it. Size alone would suggest that hunting, say, deer would require teamwork, if only to carry the game home: venison, again, a luxury for special occasions, or when hunters had an especially lucky day.

The typical heat source in a hobbit kitchen would be a wood-burning stove (suggesting wood-cutting as a small scale commercial operation). Poor people might even cook at the fireplace. Some access to coal may be supposed — it's almost impossible to work iron without coal — but there's little indication they use coal for heating or cooking. Common cooking utensils would be cast iron, or possibly copper; plates and cups mostly earthenware, which may also be used for baking. Glass is used for bottles and jars, seldom for drinking vessels. (The Jackson film shows trail or camping gear of what appears to be enameled steel or iron; that is unlikely to be typical of domestic use.)

The hobbit cuisine is generally plain and hearty, rather than subtle and delicate; for all their fondness for eating, hobbits are not gourmets. Of course their cooking is not so bland as all that. They cultivate, or gather, common pot-herbs (“A few bay-leaves, some thyme and sage will do...” — Book IV/Ch. 4; “...the thyme and the sage and the marjoram...” Hobbit/Ch. 6). Though I recall no mention of garlic — or pepper, only introduced to Europe in the Middle Ages.

Bilbo was a wealthy person by Shire standards, but employed no domestics, and did his own cooking and baking. This may have been mere bachelor fussiness, but probably hobbits are simply more egalitarian than humans. The social gap between classes seems much less than in our world. Merry and Pippin and Frodo, all scions of wealthy families, with Sam, sit down democratically together with the Maggot household and enjoy ‘solid farmhouse fare’ with “beer in plenty” (I/Ch. 4). That appears pretty typical. The difference between the food served in a wealthy home, as that of the Thain, and a working-class household like the Gamgees, would be of degree rather than kind. No one in the Shire seems to go hungry.

A typical Bag End breakfast would be familiar to most Americans or Brits: bacon or ham or sausage, eggs, toasted bread and/or pastry in some form, and “tea”. Given halflings' fondness for the dish, it would hardly be surprising to see the ubiquitous mushrooms on the breakfast table, fried up in butter! Dinner or



supper would likely consist of meat, usually roasted; vegetables, baked or boiled; bread, and dairy (butter and cheese). Odd that there is little mention of soups, stews, or pottages (beans boiled with meat); all archetypal dishes of poor or busy people. This may simply reflect a lack of detail in the text.

On the whole hobbits have a rather high cholesterol diet. That they thrive on it, reaching a hundred “as often as not” (Bilbo’s attaining the age of 111 in reasonable good health was regarded as unusual but not extraordinary), suggests a more efficient metabolism, a sounder cardiovascular system, or both. There’s no mention of hobbits dying of cancer of the mouth, as might be expected of regular smokers. Perhaps they have some sort of natural advantage there, too.

Strikingly absent from hobbit society is any sort of medical or dental system, along with the cultivation of “healing herbs” that marked human cultures until the 20th Century. Hobbits must have midwifery of a sort, and some method of dealing with at least simple cuts and fractures. (Any people who deal with steel tools will cut themselves sooner or later.) It is only the Elves, whom you would think stand in least need of it, who have any organized healing, and that largely driven by magic. *Athelas* (kingsfoil) may be some sort of natural antibiotic, but the hobbits seem unfamiliar with it — Aragorn presumably learned its use from Elrond.

*Cram* (the Lake-men’s journeybread; *Hobbit*/Ch. 13), *lembas* (II/Ch. 8), and ent-draughts (III/Ch. 4) all fall outside the intended scope of this article.

*Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?* Editorial

### The Free Book Deal

Previously, Deal #7 queried thus: "In Mervyn Peake’s classic *Gormenghast* books, what is the name of the kitchen drudge who worms his way up to become a major power broker in the Groan household?" The correct answer was Steerpike. The online winner was Lloyd Penney, who will receive *A Wolf At the Door and Other Retold Fairy Tales* (edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, featuring 12 winners of the World Fantasy Award). Since no one entered the regular-mail contest for *Beyond World’s End* by Mercedes Lackey and Rosemary Edghill, that will go to the next yard sale. Your loss, people.

**Contest #8 is Announced:** The question is, “Who wrote the disaster thriller *Moonfall?*” Correct spelling, please. **Deadline is Mar. 31, 2004.** Online prize: Charles de Lint’s contemporary fantasy *Memory and Dream*. Regular-mail prize: John Brunner’s *A Maze of Stars*. Write in soon!

Winter brought between one and three feet of snow here. The sun is out more often during the daytime now, the temps are regularly over 32 degrees during the day, and spring looms. My first real winter in over a decade has been very nice. Perhaps improved health will allow me to enjoy next winter more. I’m doing okay, but I could be better — and will be soon, I think, since the acupuncture’s still working. Illness and my “needle lady” having an appendectomy forced a 5-week gap between treatments some weeks ago. So it goes. The current “active” phase has caused this zine’s delay. Next time I’ll start it sooner. &&

**Note:** Since this zine is still available at efanazines.com, for those who are willing to download and print their own copies I ask that you please e-mail me and tell me so I can remove your name from the paper-copy mailing list. Thanks muchly!

