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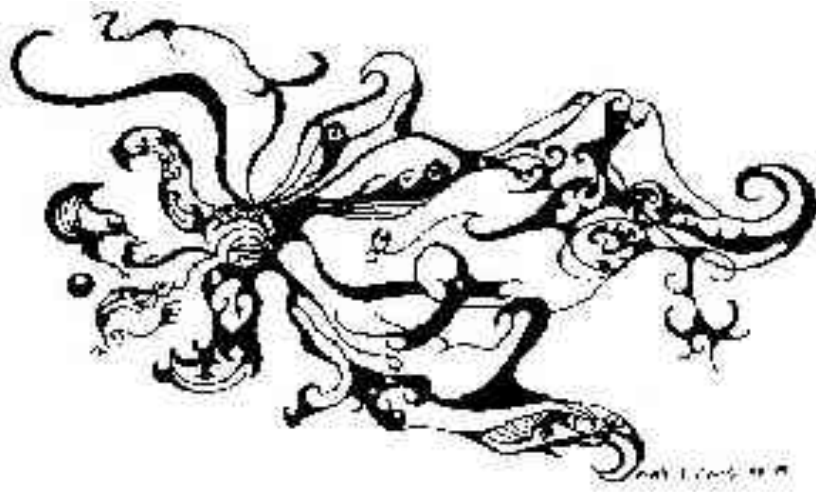
**This ish is dedicated to my Anonymous Benefactor. You'll find out why later.**

**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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Contributions (LoCs, articles, reviews, art, etc.) can be sent via e-mail to [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. Queries welcome. LOCers' addresses intentionally left out (unless otherwise instructed); if you need one, ask me. Fanzines reviewed will have their addresses included from now on, unless I forget again. **Next editorial deadline: March 20, 2006 (don't worry, I'll get caught up).**



## *Silent eLOCutions*

*[editorial comments like this]*

*Brad W Foster*

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12/05

I'm trying to catch up on things fannish here at the end of what has been a much too busy year. So many family things happened (father-in-law died after living in our home the past year, dealing with his "estate" as it were, Cindy having -two- cancer scares, the second needing surgery, our second cat to have gotten a tumor and now into treatments, many of my art festival appearance having lower sales for same amount of work, etc etc) I've left the fun stuff, like keeping up with fanzines, to float.

I got *Peregrine Nations* 5.1 back in June, but don't believe I ever did even send you an acknowledgment that it had arrived. Sorry. Even if I've no time to do a decent loc (or, more exactly, one of my sorry excuses for a loc) I do try to let a fan editor know the zine arrived.



*Christopher Garcia*

I was getting worried I wouldn't see another *Peregrine Nations* before the end of the year, but you delivered. I loved, L-O-V-E-D, the Tragedie of Frodo Baggins so very much. Of late, since I've got a sound card in my PC at work again, I've been listening to Leonard Nimoy's "The Ballad of Bilbo Baggins" just about every day. It always makes me smile.

Looking at your letter column, I'm getting the idea that you've got a very interesting readership. Sheryl, Pete Sullivan, Frohvet, Burnett, Hertz, diFilippo, just a great line-up of letter hacks!

Nice interview with Glenda Larke. I've never read any of her stuff, but it's always nice to look behind the printed words with a completely different set of printed words. I love that she wrote a piece when she was 11 set in Scotland despite having no Scottish connections. I've done that over the years. My screenplay for "5 Suicides" was originally set in Finland, a country where I have no connection nor any real knowledge. I did a lot of research and I still don't know how to pronounce any of the words that I've used for places and very few of the names of people.

Wiscon is a con that I know I wouldn't fit in at, but it's also one that draws a bunch of folks I'd like to see at BayCon, like Allen Baum and once in a while, Cheryl Morgan. I doubt I'll ever make it to one (I do dream of being a con completist) since 'Ill never miss a BayCon (they made me Toastmaster, I owe them!). I have heard that my belief that Wiscon is a feminist rally disguised as an SF con is false, but still, I don't think I'd work there.

I love *Emerald City*, it's one of those fan -- I mean semi-prozines that I really enjoy. The fact is, just editing a fanzine does not make one a member of fanzine fandom. There's a certain requirement, entirely unspoken but pretty obvious, that one has, if not a certain set of values, a certain belief in the way fanzines are done. I've run into far too many fanzine fans who will completely dismiss sercon zines, which *Emerald City* is probably one of the best examples of, as not being fanzines. I really don't hold to that, as my favourite fanzine that I regularly read (and usually write for) is the

wonderful *Some Fantastic*. Belonging to fanzine fandom is a definition that will never be given to some people because of the way they interact with the rest of fandom. I, myself, hope that I'm a part of fanzine fandom, though I certainly don't hold a lot of the thoughts that seem to populate the rest of it.



*Joseph Major*

1409 Christy Ave., Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040  
jtmajor@iglou.com / October 31, 2005

**Silent eLOCutions:**

**Sheryl Birkhead:** Martha Berry, a Fan here in Louisville, swore by Rubbermaid tubs. They are watertight. Her basement flooded and the tubs floated around, but their contents remained dry.

**Ned Brooks:** I was rereading [A Culture of Conspiracy](#) which discusses David Icke. He seems to have gradually come apart, from being a Green Party spokesman to his current obsession with lizard people. Michael Barkun (the author of ACoC) thinks he got it from Robert E. Howard and the Minions of Set.

The pi=3 bill was introduced in Indiana. The legislators, having a bit more sense, sent it to committee which was an end to that.

**Jason Burnett:** The library at the University of Kentucky has sliding bookcases. The biggest problem I have with library books is not the getting down to them per se, but having room enough to do so. With their set up the "aisles" are wide enough to get to the book. Of course, if someone is looking at a book in the next shelf over, you might have to wait a while . . .

**Sue Bursztynski:** There have been proposals floated for metric time here and there, so the metric clockmaker wasn't unprecedented, just farcial.

As I'd said, the incident with the geese is in Livy's Roman history. Lindsey Davis had some of the corollary events feature in one of her Roma sub Rosa novels, where her protagonist, the informer Marcus Didius Falco, has to spare his dog Nux from being the one chosen to be crucified as penalty for the guard dogs having

slept and not heard the attacking Gauls.

I'd rather children heard about Agent GARBO, Juan Pujol Garcia, who made up his entire spy ring in Britain while sitting in Lisbon with an old railway timetable. Then British intelligence found out he'd already offered to help and they had turned him down, whereupon they set about reversing that decision, and he spent the rest of the war making up spies as he went along.

**E. B. Frohvet:** I've heard deer referred to as "rats with hooves". There was an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* a few years ago about the problems of exotic deer in Marin County; there were no predators, hunting was banned (they didn't want to kill Bambi), and the deer were destroying all the trees.

**Christopher Garcia:** I wondered if D. F. Jones had worked at Bletchley Park, and was sliding something past the Official Secrets Act. One reason was reading about the history of the espionage war during WWII and noticing how many of the incidents in James Bond's career were slightly-altered incidents from the war. For example, Auric Goldfinger got his start by selling made-up espionage information; this was just like Juan Pujol Garcia and another man in Spain, Paul Fidrmuc.

**Trinlay Khadro:** I wish I could recall if the story about the fortune-teller's crystal ball focusing sunlight and starting a fire was true, or only an urban legend.

"I think Siren Sam and BoomBox Betty live in my building." You didn't have to live under Hi-Fi Harry. "I like it loud." This explained using my apartment as the resonance chamber for his sub-woofer. And playing one song every hour on the hour on Saturday night — Sunday morning. Oh yes, he was drunk.

**Lloyd Penney:** Yes, I remember staying at the little motel in London (London, Ontario, that is) on the way to TorCon, where the owner talked about the blackout day and how the temperature had got up to 40 degrees, which to Lisa and me was a searing Hundred and Four.

**Helen Spiral:** Cemeteries are where I look for my late relatives.





Lloyd Penney

1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2

November 19, 2005

I know I'm very late getting this letter of comment to you, but I did see on Trufen.net that the current deadlines were not graven in stone. Sure hope you're feeling better. My own time has been filled with running a con suite for a con in Rochester, New York last week, and doing a sudden daytime assignment in addition to my regular evening assignment at the *Globe and Mail*. Time? What's that? Something I don't have enough of, but now that it's the weekend here's a loc on PN whole number 18.

**The local:** I know what **Ned Brooks** is talking about; already, my knees are protesting, probably a side effect of the car accident I was in a few years ago. It's an effort to look on the lower shelf, or under the bed. I like the idea of rotating shelves as in a doctor's office, but they must be expensive, and there aren't many doctors going out of business these days, having a sale on their old equipment.

There's a name from the past -- **Gordon Carleton**. I know Gordon and his wife still run MediaWest\*Con in Lansing, MI. MWC is the annual convention for media fiction writers, readers and publishers, maximum attendance 800, no at-the-door registrations. I have been at the hotel they are regularly at, but for another convention. 800 would fit fine, and I guess they wouldn't want more. Gordon came to Ad Astra way back in 1982 to do "Supraman," one of his fun parody plays.

I remember the controversy around reintroducing wolves to some areas of the western US, seeing they'd nearly been exterminated. If I recall, about 30 wolves from Alberta were caught, and shipped south, all tagged and chipped so scientists could track them. Some were killed by farmers, some were killed by each other, but many survived and started families. I've had a wolf pup on my lap before, and they are beautiful animals. We fail to understand them,

and assume they are dangerous.

I have purchased my membership for Corflu in Toronto this coming May, but seeing that Yvonne and I are trying to save enough money to go to the LA Worldcon next year, I may wind up not taking a hotel room, and simply commute back and forth. Food also costs, so I might bring some with me. It sounds cheap, and part of the convention is to go out for dinner with friends, but I will do only what I can afford, and these days, that's not much.

**Trinlay**, you're a hobbit all right -- I think Prof. Tolkien meant for them to be around 5 feet tall, give or take a few inches. I'm 5'4", and Yvonne is 4'8", so we seem to be the perfect hobbit couple. All we need is a bit more wardrobe, and hairy feet.

A follow-up on my loc: As I write, last weekend was Astro-nomicon 9 in Rochester, NY, and Yvonne and I were asked if we could run the con suite for the chairman, Wayne Brown. We said sure, especially given the guest list, which included Spider Robinson. During the convention, Spider came up to the con suite for his traditional Beatles sing-along, and one of the topics of discussion between songs was our first conventions. He asked if anyone remembered what he had termed Nonexistacon, Erincon 3 in Mississauga, and had anyone here actually attended it? To his surprise, two hands went up -- mine and Mike Glicksohn's. We talked about the convention, I even reminded him of the chairman's name (he lives as a real-estate agent in Redmond Township, Michigan, if I recall; I don't have the Web up right now), and the Beatles were almost lost in the discussion.

I think Cheryl Morgan wants to feel a part of the fanzine community, but has been attacked lately for producing what she wants, and not what others feel she should be producing. I can see she might feel a little on the outside; I often feel that way myself. I download *Emerald City* regularly, and while I can't possibly afford to get even a few of the books she gets, I will make comments where I can, and I do not expect my letter to make it into the zine. The comments are the most important part; the printing of them in a local is the egoboo, and secondary.



*Helen Spiral*

11/8/05

Oooo lovely yellow daisy cover!

**Ned Brooks:** David Icke pronounces his last name as in yikes but without the first and last letters.

What you have to understand about the spaghetti harvest hoax is that it was narrated by the man who was probably Britain's most respected television broadcaster, on the BBC's most serious documentary programme, so it was mostly the medium combined with the presenter which fooled people not the content.

**Chris Garcia:** So the Computer History Museum where you work is full of dead computers? That sounds like the "famous last words" opening line of any number of second rate horror movies. I should watch out if I were you. The newer computers might start reanimating the older ones!

**Trinlay Khadro:** You've discovered my secret. If I had to be a fictional monster I'd certainly pick Gajira/Godzilla who is better even than dragons.

Wouldn't that be a revealing question in a psychological test, "If you had to be a fictional monster which would you be?"

**Lloyd Penney:** I generally can't stand music 'n' chat radio programmes but Wogan's breakfast (here) show on BBC Radio 2 is exceptionally good. He seems to attract internet listeners from all around the world and they're by no means all expat Brits. Do you qualify as a T.O.G. ?

**Jan:** The ex-library books from my local libraries were sold off individually for a few pence to passing library users and I assume those which weren't fit for that were sold for pulp. Changing the subject to something slightly less distressing (although not to sensitive mass market fiction authors who might want to avert their gaze to the next paragraph) did you know that in Britain, and presumably elsewhere, unsold mass market books are more expensive to store than to reprint later so those which can't be sold through remaindering are pulped and used as one of the underlayers in road construction! Britain's motorways are built on a foundation of action

thrillers and romances which have literally become both pulp fiction and softcore.



*Peter Sullivan*

An excellent lettercol again – it almost seems to be developing into an APA-like structure, where we all spend our time discussing each other's points from the previous issue. I think it was **Chris "Not Arnie Katz, Really" Garcia** who noted that you put the letters at the front of the zeen, rather than hide them away at the back – was this a deliberate decision to make them a focus, or did it just "feel right"?

Several of your letter-writers made various sensible points about cows in *The Shire*. The only thing I would add is to point out that the "business end" of a cow (from the point of view of milk and cheese) is the udder, which is of course at convenient hobbit-height.

Far be it for me to speak for **Cheryl Morgan**, but I think it's possible to draw a distinction between "fanzeen fandom" fanzeens and "science fiction fandom" fanzeens. Although I personally would prefer to think of them as a continuum. But even I can see a clear distinction at one end between a "fanzeen fandom" fanzeen that discusses great fanwriters of the past, runs faan fiction and argues about who sawed Courtney's boat, and something like *Emerald City* at the other extreme, which actually talks about and reviews science fiction and fantasy books. Me, I like both types of fanzeen – I guess I'm just a fanzeen fan full stop, without qualification. But there's no saying everyone has to be like me.



WAHF: Lyn McConchie (who's had her share of highs and lows: she sold her 19th book [[Vestiges of Flames](#)] and won her second Sir Julius Vogel Award for Best SF/F novel written by a New Zealander, for [Beast Master's Circus](#) -- but Andre Norton, with whom she's collaborated on several novels, died in March, and her beloved Ocicat Tiger died in July; I thought *I'd* had a bad year!), Trinlay Khadro (to whom condolences should be sent on the passing of her beloved Uncle, and on the passing of her cherished ferret, Elric).

*Yet Another Episode of  
"Tragedie of Frodo Baggins"*  
courtesy of Joseph Major

Act III Scene ii: *A heath by Anduin. Thunder.  
Enter the three NAZGUL, meeting ANGMAR.*

Goth. Why, how now, Angmar? You look angrily.

Ang. Have I not reason, terrors as you are,  
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare  
To trade and traffic with the rest  
In riddles and affairs of death,  
And I, the master of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never call'd to bear my part,  
Or show the glory of our art?  
And, which is worse, all you have done  
Hath been but for a wayward son,  
Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,  
Loves for his own ends, not for you.  
But make amends now. Get you gone,  
And at the pit of Acheron  
Meet me i' the morning. Thither he  
Will come to know his destiny.  
Your vessels and your spells provide,  
Your charms and everything beside.  
I am for the air; this night I'll spend  
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.  
Great business must be wrought ere noon:  
Upon the corner of the moon

There hangs a vaporous drop profound;  
I'll catch it ere it come to ground.  
And that distill'd by magic sleights  
Shall raise such artificial sprites  
As by the strength of their illusion  
Shall draw him on to his confusion.  
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear  
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.  
And you all know security  
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.  
Music and a song within,  
"Come away, come away."  
Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,  
Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.  
Exit.

Goth. Come, let's make haste; he'll soon be back again.

*Enter BOROMIR.*

Bor. How now, you secret, black, and midnight lags?  
What is't you do?

All A deed without a name.

Bor. I conjure you, by that which you profess  
(Howe'er you come to know it) answer me:  
Though you untie the winds and let them fight  
Against the churches, though the yesty waves  
Confound and swallow navigation up,  
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,  
Though castles topple on their warders' heads,  
Though palaces and pyramids do slope  
Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure

Of nature's germaines tumble all together  
Even till destruction sicken, answer me  
To what I ask you.

Goth. Speak.

2 Naz. Demand.

3 Naz. We'll answer.

Goth. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,  
Or from our Master's?

Bor. Tell me, thou unknown power-  
Should a lowly one, unworthy of the burthen,  
Entrusted with a matter great, by the hap of fate,  
Beheld by one more justly regarded  
By right and main to take up such a task  
Be suffered yet to outdo his strength and will?  
For certes, such powers as he does have  
Whiles I see lives, do better upon the elder  
A soldier such as I, skill'd in war  
And tempered by the richneses of lore.

Goth. What of your band?

Bor. Who doth lead us but a paltry fellow,  
Long kept in wastelands of the wretched North?  
A captain, in his fancy, of a knavish band,  
Those famish'd beggars, weary of their lives;  
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,  
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves.  
And, in record, left them the heirs of shame.

Slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth,  
Where the glutton's dogs licked his sores;  
And such as indeed were never soldiers,  
The cankers of a calm world and a long peace;  
Ten times more dishonourable ragged than an old fac'd  
ancient;

No eye hath seen such scarecrows.  
Yet being chief of such a band is accounted worthy enough  
To set him by our elders in authority of this venture.  
Withal, in our train, there number a handful of rabble,  
Milk-sops, that never in their lives  
Felt so much cold as over feet in snow.  
Yet such are deemed worthy of a burthen mighty.

Goth. Ay, sir, all this is so.  
He knows thy thought:  
Hear His speech, but say thou nought.

*Music. The Nazgul dance and  
then vanish with Angmar*

Bor. Are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour  
Stand ay accursed in the calendar!

*And then there came Frodo's famous soliloquy, "To use the  
Ring, or not to use the Ring . . ." but that is overdone.*

*Later of course came Theoden's stirring speech before the  
siege of Helm's Deep:*

Act III, Scene xiv

Helm's Deep

*Enter KING THÉODEN, ÉOMER, ARAGORN, GIMLI,*



*LEGOLAS, and the ARMY of ROHAN*

The.. How far into the morning is it, lords?

Ara. Upon the stroke of four.

The. Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.  
Bid let me speak, then thou thereafter.

His ORATION to his SOLDIERS

More than I have said, loving countrymen,  
The leisure and enforcement of the time  
Forbids to dwell upon; yet remember this:  
Eru and our good cause fight upon our side;  
The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,  
Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces;  
Saruman except, those whom we fight against  
Had rather have us win than him they follow.  
For what is he they follow? Truly, gentlemen,  
A bloody tyrant and a homicide;  
One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establish'd;  
One that made means to come by what he hath,  
And slaughtered those that were the means to help him;  
A base foul stone, made precious by the foil  
Of Isengard's chair, where he is falsely set;  
One that hath ever been Eru's enemy.  
Then if you fight against Eru's enemy,  
Eru will in justice ward you as his soldiers;  
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,  
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;  
If you do fight against your country's foes,  
Your country's foes shall pay your pains the hire;

If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,  
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;  
If you do free your children from the sword,  
Your children's children quits it in your age.  
Then, in the name of Eru and all these rights,  
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords.  
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt  
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;  
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt  
The least of you shall share his part thereof.  
Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully!

Eom. In peace there's nothing so becomes a man  
As modest stillness and humility;  
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,  
Then imitate the action of the tiger:  
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,  
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;  
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;  
Let it pry through the portage of the head  
Like the brass cannon: let the brow o'erwhelm it  
As fearfully as doth a galled rock  
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,  
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.  
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide;  
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit  
To his full height. On, on, you noblest Rohirrim,  
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof-  
Fathers that like so many Alexanders  
Have in these parts from morn till even fought,  
And sheath'd their swords for lack of argument.  
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest  
That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.

Be copy now to men of grosser blood,  
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen,  
Whose limbs were made in Rohan, show us here  
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear  
That you are worth your breeding- which I doubt not;  
For there is none of you so mean and base  
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.  
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot!

The. O Eru of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts,  
Possess them not with fear! Take from them now  
The sense of reck'ning, if th' opposed numbers  
Pluck their hearts from them!

Ara. Let them come.  
They come like sacrifices in their trim,  
And to the fire-ey'd maid of smoky war  
All hot and bleeding will we offer them.  
The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit  
Up to the ears in blood. I am on fire  
To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh,  
And yet not ours.

Leg. Eru's arm strike with us! 'tis a fearful odds.  
Eru bye you, Princes all; I'll to my charge.  
If we no more meet till in the Halls of Mandos,  
My dear Gimli, and my good Lord Éomer,  
And my kind kinsman - warriors all, adieu!

Gim. Farewell, good Legolas; and good luck go with thee!

Éom. Farewell, kind lord. Fight valiantly to-day;

And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,  
For thou art fram'd of the firm truth of valour.

*Exit LEGOLAS*

Ara. He is as full of valour as of kindness;  
Princely in both.

The. Now, Gandalf, our hopes are answered.  
He said the enemy would not come down,  
But keep the hills and upper regions.  
It proves not so. Their battles are at hand;  
They mean to warn us at Helm's Deep here,  
Answering before we do demand of them.

Ara. Tut, I am in their bosoms, and I know  
Wherefore they do it. They could be content  
To visit other places, and come down  
With fearful bravery, thinking by this face  
But 'tis not so.

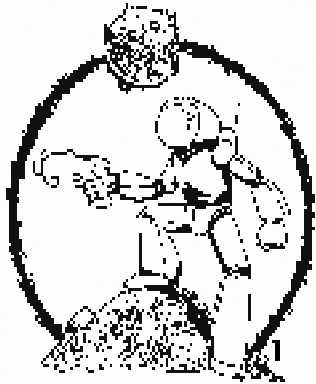
*Re-enter LEGOLAS.*

Leg. Sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed:  
The Orcs are bravely in their battles set,  
And will with all expedience charge on us.

The. All things are ready, if our minds be so.

Eom. Perish the man whose mind is backward now!  
Eru's will, my liege! would you and I alone,  
Without more help, could fight this royal battle!

The. Why, now thou hast unwish'd five thousand men;  
Which likes me better than to wish us one.  
You know your places. Eru be with you all!



## Cherryh's The Faded Sun: An Appreciation

by E.B. Frohvet

Generally when I write articles, they're my own ideas. For similar lessons, when I was doing a fanzine, I never liked pitching article ideas to other writers. In this case, however, Janine suggested the basic thrust of this article. For the record, I would have turned down the idea flat -- as I did with a suggestion from another tamed -- if I didn't feel I could say something useful about it.

It's no secret that our Worthy Editrix and I have in common a partiality for the writing of C.J. Cherryh. Our specific taste is not identical; Janine for instance has more interest in Cherryh's fantasy, which mainly bores me. However, we both like the Chanur Saga books. In correspondence, I chanced to say something to the effect that The Faded Sun had "a special place in my heart" (or something of the sort). And Janine challenged me to explicate on the why of that whichness.

This brings us to the question of why particular authors appeal consistently to specific readers; as a corollary, why some writers (Heinlein, McCaffrey, Bujold) achieved a wide readership, while others of arguably equal talent and creativity (Diane Duane, Christopher Rowley) remain midlist figures at best. *De gustibus non est disputandum*, goes the proverb: Of taste there is no disputing. My fiction reading has always been character-driven; and in SF especially, motivated by an interest in societies and cultures. Writers who do speculative dissertations on physics theory, thinly disguised

under a facade of fiction and cardboard characters, will not likely appeal to me.

From the outset (Gate of Ivrel, 1976), C.J. Cherryh has always had a knack for presenting characters with empathy. And no one in SF has done "alien" societies better than she has. It has become the staple motif of many Cherryh stories, one person's quest to fit into a different society -- whether strictly human (Fletcher Neihart's struggle to reach an accommodation with the family he's never known in Finity's End), or more literally among aliens (Tully's closeness with the hani in the Chanur stories).

It is, in short, all about defining loyalties.

Nowhere is this more evident than in The Faded Sun. The two principal characters, Duncan and kel Niun, have in common that they are both lonely, embittered soldiers who feel their talents have been wasted and they've been screwed over by the vagaries of high command, on opposite sides of the recently-concluded war between humans and regul, who had hired the mri Kel (akin to a warrior caste) as a mercenary army. Duncan takes a job as military aide to Stavros, the new human governor of Kesrith sector, unaware that the mri have a contractual claim to Kesrith as their "homeworld" of preference. The pair are thrown together when the regul find it expedient to rid themselves of their mri mercenaries.

Everyone finds this act of genocide convenient, except Duncan. In conversation with the author, I once observed that Stavros, who was willing to tolerate an atrocity, did the wrong thing for all the right reasons; while Duncan, who goes over to the enemy survivors, did the right thing for all the wrong reasons. Cherryh considered this and then agreed with me.

Both of the main characters have to redefine their loyalty systems -- Duncan more so, of course. Niun is mri, and of the Kel, and would be nothing else even if it cost him his life; yet he is so miserable and alone in the face of enemies, that -- realizing Duncan is a soldier, a sort of human kel -- he spares the human's life, accepts his company, even argues on Duncan's behalf with the shepan (the mri leader). Duncan, the only human to see past the warrior front of the mri, to get even some grasp of their culture and ancient history,

sees merit in the enemy.

It has been observed elsewhere that once a war is over, especially one conducted on honorable terms (which, yes, is possible -- it's part of the point that only Duncan recognizes the human conduct of the war was NOT honorable by mri standards), it's not uncommon for veterans of both sides to greet each other civilly; even to feel a sense of identity with each other better than they do with their own civilians who sent them off to die.

Duncan, then, unhappy and isolated in his own society, resentful of a gross injustice that no one else seems to mind -- all that resonated very particularly with me -- decides that the mri need him more than humanity does. It's a gallantly stupid decision, but once made, he commits to it one hundred percent and never looks back. I admired that, too, the whole-hearted willingness to embrace a new and totally barren lifestyle. In a peculiar way it's reminiscent of renouncing the world for the monastic life which is something else I've always understood and admired, though it's something I would never do myself.

Cherryh does a lot of what I call "right moments": a scene, perhaps even a bit of description, so well crafted that, even though one recognizes it as fiction, it still has the ring of truth beyond mere reality. Niun's grim trip into the hills to the cemetery at Sil'athen. Duncan carefully pulling the sheet up to cover Niun's face in the hospital, so the kel'en will not be shamed; later, the grim effort it takes him to show his own lace to the human officers. Duncan's weirdly tender encounter with the kath'en girl, Sa'er. The dusei. And a moment at the very end which I anticipated correctly, and was pleased with myself to have done so.

There are subtleties in The Faded Sun which may escape the inattentive or uninitiated reader. For instance, Duncan is in fact the character's surname -- only the civilian Boaz addresses him by his first name. This is entirely in accordance with military custom, where one is known by rank and surname. Only a friend or a peer would address a soldier by his first name. But Duncan is a SurTac, a Surface Tactical: an independent scout/ commando accustomed to operating alone outside of usual lines of command. He has few peers and no

friends. Except, possibly, Galey, and even Galey calls him "sir."

In the first chapter of the second volume, Shon'jir, Stavros the civilian governor reprimands Duncan for his fascination with the surviving mri. Stavros cites the case of the world humans call Haven, which was lost to the mri, and recovered at desperate cost with heavy human casualties. Duncan replies, "I was there." Later in the same conversation Stavros brings up the horrible night on Kesrith when the regul eliminated nearly all the mri, also at great cost. Again Duncan responds, "I was there. You weren't."

This is a complete failure of communication.

What Stavros is hearing Duncan say is something like, "I understand your view, sir, even though I don't happen to agree with it." What Duncan is saying is entirely different. A soldier in combat has to make decisions on short notice, with insufficient information, sometimes almost on reflex. The endless training of soldiers is intended to assure that the reflex turns up the right decision, or a right decision. It's a truism almost an axiom, that the judgment of the individual on the spot is entitled to great deference, and ought to be second-guessed only in rare instances. (A corollary is that the soldier who makes a decision and acts on it, even if in retrospect it turns out to have been a wrong decision, is less culpable than one who dithers helplessly and is overtaken by events.)

Duncan is citing this principle. What he is actually saying is, "I have a more immediate knowledge of the facts in this instance than you do, sir, from personal experience, and therefore you should be giving what I say great weight." This aspect goes entirely over the head of Stavros, an older and in many ways wiser man, but in this case out of his range of expertise. Duncan is a soldier, and Stavros a politician, and they don't understand each other very well.

Niun has failures of communication with Duncan, but in those instances Niun is aware of the error, while Stavros isn't.

I've never claimed that my taste in SF is especially upscale or literate. Disch leaves me cold and I find Stapledon unreadable. Though I still re-read Delany and Wolfe: win some, lose some. I would not in any sense argue that SF's highest goal ought to be escapist entertainment. Cherryh herself once said at a panel, "Science

fiction is the sociology of the future.” (Charles Sheffield nodded, and I nodded, and most of the rest of the audience looked blank.)

It is, however, possible for SF to be *good* escapist entertainment, and still aspire to connecting with the reader at higher levels as well. Remember the old “desert island” problem? “If you were going to be stranded on a desert island and could only take only ten books...” The Faded Sun would be on my list, because I have consistently found both reading enjoyment and a higher connection in it, in several re-readings over the years.

## *Everything I Need To Know I Learned From 1980s Horror Movies*

*by David Speakman*

(This marks the 10th year since I first wrote this Halloween humor guide...it even pre-dates the "Scream" movies. [you can't argue with tradition]) [*Hallowe'en has come and gone, so just pretend you're reading this before Oct. 31st, 2005.* -Ed]

With Halloween fast approaching, here are some helpful survival hints:

When it appears that you have killed the monster, ***never*** check to see if it's really dead.

If you find that your house is built upon or near a cemetery, was once a church that was used for black masses, had previous inhabitants who went mad or committed suicide or died in some horrible fashion, or had inhabitants who performed satanic practices in your house -- move away immediately.

Never read a demon-summoning book aloud, even as a joke.

Do not search the basement, especially if the power has just gone out.

If your children speak to you in Latin or any other language which they should not know, or if they speak to you using a voice

which is other than their own, shoot them immediately. It will save you a lot of grief in the long run. NOTE: It will probably take several rounds to kill them, so be prepared.

When you have the benefit of numbers, ***never*** pair off and go it alone.

As a general rule, don't solve puzzles that open Hell portals.

Never stand in, on, above, below, beside, or anywhere near a grave, tomb, crypt, mausoleum, or other place of the dead.

If you're searching for something which caused a noise and find out that it's just the cat, ***leave the room immediately if you value your life.***

If appliances start operating by themselves, move out.

Do not take ***anything***\*from the dead.

If you find a town which looks deserted, it's probably for a reason. Take the hint and stay away.

Don't fool with recombinant DNA technology unless you're sure you know what you are doing.

If you're running from the monster, expect to trip or fall down at least twice, more if you are of the female persuasion. Also note that, despite the fact that you are running and the monster is merely shambling along, it's still moving fast enough to catch up with you.

If your companions suddenly begin to exhibit uncharacteristic behavior such as hissing, fascination for blood, glowing eyes, increasing hairiness, and so on, get away from them as fast as possible.

Stay away from certain geographical locations, some of which are listed here: Amityville, Elm Street, Transylvania, the Bermuda Triangle, or any small town in Maine.

If your car runs out of gas at night, do not go to the nearby deserted-looking house to phone for help.

Beware of strangers bearing tools such as chainsaws, staple guns, hedgetrimmers, electric carving knives, combines, lawn mowers, butane torches, soldering irons, band saws, or any device made from deceased companions.

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## Silly Kitty

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## Breakfast

by Jim Sullivan

Rested from my first overnight Pullman-Car-train ride, I cleaned up and dressed in my Marine Corps PFC summer uniform. Eagerly, I walked from my sleeping compartment on that Union Pacific Railroad train to its dining car. Just an hour after sunrise, few passengers were eating breakfast yet.

Tables were neatly set with thick, white linen tablecloths. Carefully arranged on them were heavy metal plate dinnerware, rolled-up white cloth napkins, and empty, clean glasses and coffee cups. Flowers adorned each table, too.

I chose a place to sit, alone, near the middle of the car. The soothing clickety-clack of the train's wheels was the only sound heard in there. Soon, an older, dignified-looking dining car waiter, wearing a long white apron over his trainman's uniform, approached and handed me a fancy menu. I opened it after he'd departed. The steep prices made me blush and nearly knocked me off my plush seat. Bacon and eggs, cooked any way

you'd like them, and coffee was over \$8.00. And this was back in 1957.

Just about everything else on the menu was even more expensive. Two pieces of toast and coffee were almost \$3.00. And coffee alone was \$1.00. To pay for my train breakfast, the Marine Corps had issued me, along with my train ticket, a meal chit. I hadn't looked closely at it. Now I did. The chit was good for any meal up to one dollar. Though I was hungry, the thought of filling my empty stomach became a fleeting dream. That chit was all the money I had.

When the same waiter returned, I said, "I guess I'll just have a cup of coffee."

He looked me over and said, "You're a Marine, aren't you, son?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Well, then, you need more than coffee for breakfast."

Slowly, I picked up my chit and handed it to him. "Coffee's all I can afford this morning."

Examining my chit, the waiter smiled and said, "Young man, you're in the military. This chit buys you any breakfast on the menu."

That was the first time I'd ever eaten steak and eggs. They, along with the hash-brown potatoes, whole wheat toast, big orange juice, and several cups of coffee, were doubly tasty that bright, beautiful morning on the train.

I was being transferred from Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco Harbor where I'd been waiting, following emergency leave home, for several weeks to return to my aircraft carrier, the *U.S.S. Philippine Sea*, home-ported in Long Beach, California.

Since those days, I've had more than my share of steak and eggs breakfasts, and a few suppers, too. They've all been great. But none has come close in taste to what I had that first time on the Union Pacific Railroad.

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## A Feast of Jackals

book reviews by J. G. Stinson

Sagas of Conan by L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter and Bjorn Nyberg. Tor, New York: 2004. 476 pages, tpb, ISBN 0-765-31054-6

Truth in advertising is taking more lumps. The three "novels" collected here are actually a short-story collection (Conan the



Swordsman by de Camp, Carter and Nyberg) and two novels (Conan the Liberator by de Camp and Carter, and Conan and the Spider God by de Camp), with a glossary/index of "Hyborian Names" (originally written in several sections and published in magazines by de Camp, then collected and published in Conan the Swordsman) tacked on to the end. Two out of four gives this book a 50 percent accuracy rating and we haven't even gotten past the table of contents. The copyright page should be a warning flag to any Conan fan hoping for new and exciting material: don't look here.

While some may find it admirable that the three writers whose works appear in this collection have added to the adventures of Robert E. Howard's most recognizable character (thanks, in part, to Arnold Schwarzenegger's portrayal of Conan in two films, with variable quality) from the scraps of story Howard left behind after his death, quality is certainly in question with what's between these covers. These stories lack the drive and melancholy (what John Clute calls "inner fatalism" [The Encyclopedia of Fantasy, 1997, p. 481]) with which Howard injected all the Conan stories he wrote. That world-weary sense of ennui which is dispelled only by the promise of treasure just doesn't come across in these stories by de Camp, Carter and Nyberg. They come across as merely competent -- where Conan's concerned, that just isn't enough.

There are just so many instances of reading about "mighty thews" and the description of how Our Favorite Barbarian wears his hair one can take. Perhaps there was some legal requirement to include these Character Coupons in each story portion where the writer describes Conan, and if so, it's utter nonsense. Scattered across time and several magazines, such repetition makes more sense; in one volume, it's just irritating. Diehard Conan completists will want a copy despite everything, and luckily for them it's in trade paperback.

Conan of Venarium by Harry Turtledove. Tor, New York: 2003. 269 pages, mmpb, ISBN 0-765-34388-6

I admit I was doubtful of this book. I didn't think the last Turtledove book I read, which was intended for a YA readership

(Gunpowder Empire) was worthy of its intended audience, and receiving what purported to be a novel of Conan's late boyhood period didn't improve my preconceptions. The one thing that caused me to consider my preconceptions as baseless was the author blurb on the inside back cover, which included these words: "He is also a lifelong Conan fan." Anyone who admits that has to be given a chance. I'm glad I did, because this is a great read. Sword-and-sorcery and high fantasy devotees alike should find much to engage their minds in this novel.

Turtledove takes the reader back to the days (shrouded in mist, of course) when Conan was a teenager, living in the Cimmerian village of Duthil and angsty about having to become a blacksmith like his dad while worrying (secretly, of course, as manly men did in those days) about his mother's health. Unbeknownst to the villagers of Duthil (for a little while, at least), a small army of Aquilonians is on the march into Cimmeria, with the usual goals of conquering and annexing more property for themselves at the expense of the Cimmerians.

Although the villagers make a stand against the invaders, they're outnumbered, and young Conan learns what it's like to live in an occupied town and under the thumb of a foreigner. He comes to a grudging truce with one farmer and his family, as he tries to understand why the Aquilonians have invaded, and why his father counsels patience instead of immediate counterattack. But once Count Stercus, leader of the invasion force, sets his eye on a young Cimmerian woman who's softened Conan's heart, the warrior-in-training learns the value of patience as he sets about stalking his enemies as his father had taught him to hunt deer. The cost of Stercus' sexual appetite is high for both sides, and Conan's war skills are tested in true epic fashion.

The amount of notes Robert E. Howard may have left behind concerning Conan's boyhood and young manhood is immaterial here; Turtledove takes the reader to that point in Conan's life and firmly but lovingly spreads it all out, and in the process drawing the reader into the tale. Turtledove's blending of sword-and-sorcery traditions with the needs of a contemporary readership is seamless, and his

devotion to the Barbarian's canon is obvious without being overbearing. For any reader new to Conan's tales, this is a great place to start.

Glass Dragons by Sean McMullen. Tor, New York: 2004. 495 pages, hb, ISBN 0-765-30797-9

This sequel to McMullen's debut fantasy novel Voyage of the Shadowmoon continues the journey of Terikel, Elder of the Metrologans (a sisterhood of sorcerers, one might say), and her efforts to prevent the raising of the "etheric engine" called Dragonwall. In the first book, the use of the weapon Silverdeath destroyed the island of Torea, and the "magical heat" dispersed thereby caused what are called the Torean Storms, which make sea voyages (and, of course, trade) risky enterprises. A small cabal of other sorcerers, determined to calm the Torean Storms, have convinced enough of their colleagues to join them in resurrecting a magical construct called the Dragonwall, which is supposed to sap the Storms' energy and thus make sea voyages safer. But Terikel knows that the Dragonwall will also confer upon the participating sorcerers the kind of power only gods wield -- and without any controls on how that power is used.

The characters in this novel are very engaging, by turns humorous, somber and valiant when the situation calls for it. All are connected to each other in ways which McMullen cleverly unfolds as the story moves along. He has a fine touch with pacing and dialogue, which is very funny and also very touching in all the right places. Velandar is the most interesting "undead" character I've ever come across, and Andry is a most endearingly heroic soldier who wants to become noble and doesn't realize how far down that road he's already gone.

The sense of place evoked throughout the book is palpable and enduring, regardless of the setting of any given scene or event. From the docks in the seaport to the ferry girl's route across the underworld, McMullen imbues each portion of his world with immediacy and texture.

Magic takes its toll on users and recipients alike in this world, and this fact is clearly evidenced in the titular glass dragons themselves, once fully human sorcerers whose extensive use of magic has precipitated a unique metamorphosis. But the apparent trap of the glass dragons turns out to be the salvation of one character, who might otherwise have perished. The attention to details paid in the story is to be applauded; so many other fantasy novels take little or no notice of the effects of magic on the physical world, and McMullen's careful delineation of them is quite commendable.

Glass Dragons is also that rare sequel which can be read by itself and not need the preceding novel as a crutch. That's a fine feat, and more than enough reason to recommend this novel to any fantasy fan.

"Budget Cuts" by Jennifer St. Clair. Jintsu Electronic Texts  
ISBN 1-932207-25-2 <http://www.eggplant-productions.com>

Editor/publisher Raechel Henderson Moon has continued to release novella-length and novel-length fiction through her Jintsu Electronic Texts imprint since the demise of her Internet-based horror magazine Dark Matter Chronicles a few years ago. "Budget Cuts" continues the tradition of fine fantasy fiction published by Jintsu--it's engaging, funny and grounded in reality as well as in the world of fantasy.

Assistant Director Karen Montgomery is frustrated at the latest round of library budget cuts and the fact that she has to fire more employees while her boss the Director, well, directs. One of the people to be laid off is Ivy Bedinghaus, a night clerk at the Beth-Hill branch. Montgomery gets no real information from the Director's secretary on Bedinghaus or the Beth-Hill branch, and ventures out the next night to meet the Night Clerk. Since Bedinghaus is the only night clerk in the whole library system, astute readers will deduce at this point that Bedinghaus and the Beth-Hill branch are the nexus for everything that will happen in the story. They'd be right, too.

Montgomery has to reassess everything she thinks she knows about reality and complete a transaction started decades ago by an



ancestor she never knew existed. St. Clair's use of the Wild Hunt is a refreshing change from the umbling-human-in-Faerie style of tale seen so often in other stories, and she makes the Hunt's members look and sound like real people (so to speak) who are more than just methods of conveyance to another world.

Readers who enjoy the contemporary fantasies of Diane Duane and Mercedes Lackey and her co-writers will likely find this story just as attractive. I look forward to reading more of St. Clair's work.

## Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?

If I can stay well for the next few months, I might actually get back on schedule with my fanac...

As several PN readers already know, I developed ulcerative colitis in late June of 2005. It has been a long, long slog of a recovery, but I'm doing much better now. The problem is, now that I have UC, it seems I'll also



be prey to many of those wonderful microscopic critters which cause what are known as opportunistic infections. It has something to do with UC being one of several forms (or results) of immune-system dysfunction, wherein the body starts attacking itself because part of it thinks it's being invaded by foreigners. How human. So, of course, once I got to feeling better after the UC flare-up, on New Year's Eve I was in the ER again with some strange eye problem in my right eye. Turns out it goes by many names and the eye doc who treated me later chose to call it iridocyclitis. It's a condition common to people who have UC. The eye problem put me behind another 2-3 weeks in everything.

Then near the end of January, after some weeks of coughing, sneezing and nose-blowing every morning and thinking it was the dust mites (to which I am allergic), I developed a fever. On Jan. 31 I had added a "barking" cough which sounded very scary, so I called my primary care doc. He came to the house (yes, he only does house calls, for which I am much grateful), checked me over and sent me to the local hospital ER for a chest X-ray and blood work. I was admitted that night with what turned out to be pneumonia (this is an update from online notices I've posted; I don't know why the docs weren't clearer on this). The next day, because the local H didn't have a pulmonologist on staff and there were none in my area, I was transported by ambulance (IV in arm, oxy mask on mouth and nose, wrapped in blankets) south to Grand Rapids and Blodgett Campus Hospital, a teaching hospital where (I later found out) my cousin Sally had delivered all her daughters (three). I spent one night in the CCU, then was transferred to a ward, and was released on Feb. 6th to go home complete with a portable oxygen tank. I also received a home oxygen unit that plugs into the wall with some tubing that connects to a nasal cannula to deliver the O2.

I thought I was getting better, but my lungs had other ideas. Around 2/24, I noticed I was having trouble getting enough air, and was coughing up the most disgusting stuff far too often. After trying to go to sleep on 2/28 and finding it impossible to get comfortable while sucking wind, I called 911. Bunches of highly skilled medical people came to my aid, and I spent a week at another hospital being

treated for a similar but more scary set of symptoms than pneumonia. I got home again March 7, and am much, much better but not cured, and my doctor can only get as specific as "interstitial lung disease" for a diagnosis right now. I'm on O2 nights only, 4-6 weeks rest, and the followup doctor visits start next week. What fun.

Otherwise, I'm just dandy. But very, very behind in everything.

With all the medical attention I've needed in the last several months, money has gotten very scarce. I'd thought I'd have to make PN a strictly electronic fanzine, but an Anonymous Benefactor (who may not remain anonymous very long) has offered to print and post all PN ishes until I can take over publisher's duties again. My momma told me to never look a gift horse in the mouth (and I hope my AB will pardon the adage), so I said yes. PN 5.2 is winging its way to those on my mailing list before February is over. A sigh of relief gusted out of the north woods of Michigan. And there was much rejoicing.

However, because I'm so far behind, this ish will appear a lot quicker than some folk might expect. That's the reason for the March 20th deadline. I'm carrying through to the next ish any locs that arrived after March 7th, **but this ish's deadline has to be a solid one -- no wiggle room.** I gotta get back on schedule!

In this ish, we take a journey to an alternate Middle Earth (Joe Major), revisit a classic trilogy (E.B. Frohvet), squeeze in a Hallo-we'en-related piece (David Speakman), and travel back in time with a young Marine (Jim Sullivan). I've tried to choose articles that are in keeping with my stated theme of journeys, and I think this group is the one that's adhered most closely to that theme. I hope you enjoy them. There's very little art here because I had a text backlog. More art will appear in the next ish. 'Til then, stay well.

## The Free Book Deal

Contest 14 asked the question: "The late astronomer and science writer Carl Sagan also wrote an SF novel which was turned into a movie. What's the name of the novel and who was the female

star of the movie? **Both parts of the answer must be provided and both must be correct in order to qualify for the winners' drawing (if there's more than one entry for the contest category, regularmail or online).** "

There were no regular-mail entries, probably because there were no regular-mail copies. Ho, ho. So I've chosen two winners from the online entrants. Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Tales of the Slayer Volume 1 goes to Lloyd Penney. The Jazz goes to Joe Major. Congratulations, and read them in good health. They're in the mail, fellas.

**Contest 15 Is Announced.** What is the name of the anti-gravity device used to propel flying cities through space in James Blish's Cities in Flight? **Deadline is midnight (EST) March 20, 2006.** Good luck, and good hunting.

**Chris Garcia:** *I promise* I'll print my review of "The Chick Magnet" in the next PN, and apologize for not getting it done and printed sooner. I really liked it, so's you know. <grin>



