



Peregrine Nations

Vol. 5 No. 4

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Volume 5 Number 4 January 2006

This Time Round We Have:

Silent eLOCutions / art by Sheryl Birkhead / 3
Stinson on ...Short Film: "The Chick Magnet" / 12
A Little Girl and Her Dog by E.B. Frohvet / 13
A Feast of Jackals: Book Reviews / 14
Crossroads: Where Genres Meet by Lyn McConchie / 15
Flying High in Fandom by Christopher J. Garcia / 17
Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? / mascot art by Brad Foster / 20
The Free Book Deal / art by Amy Harlib / 21

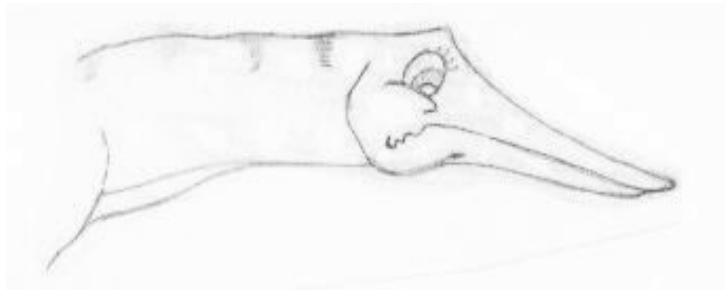
Additional Art: Jose Sanchez (cover), Trinlay Khadro (15), Alexis Gilliland (19)

This ish is dedicated to my parents. Because.

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 (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: May 15, 2006 (don't worry, I'll get caught up).**



Silent eLOCutions

[editorial comments like this]

Ned Brooks /Feb. 21, 2006

Thanks for the *Peregrine Nations!* [5.2] The cover makes me want to sneeze, just as well it wasn't in color...

I would not count on keeping any part of a basement floor dry if the basement floods, unless you had raised part of the floor above the flood level. My basement is a walk-in, and so is not likely to flood very deep, as the water would run out the downhill side. I have everything there that might be harmed by water on old shipping pallets, which are rough oak and have gotten wet but didn't stay wet for long and so should last indefinitely. The disadvantage of course is that they provide a home for vermin, possibly even dangerous spiders. *[Um, isn't that what spring cleaning and long hoses on vacuum cleaners are for, in part? I meant the spiders, of course, though it's also an interesting way to catch vermin as long as they're not too large.]*

Supposedly we have dog/coyote hybrids in my area now.

You should be able to find out what those revolving shelving systems in medical offices cost -- my guess is that they are not practical for home use in general. *[Agreed, but perhaps a library system could afford them.]* Unless all the shelves are filled to the same weight, the thing would have to be motorized to get it to turn. *[The ones I've seen were all motorized.]*

I should have remembered the ponies in the Shire - Tolkien

makes a point of telling us about Bandobras Took...

I hope Lyn McConchie's books were sent to New Zealand by M-bag, which is about \$1.00/lb. at 10 lbs and less (per lb.) as the weight in the bag goes up. Some clerks will pretend not to have heard of this service, but it's in their computers.

The "questions words" in Latin that start with "qu" came over into English and finally wound up being spelled "wh" (in the case of "how" the "w" got lost). In the 14th century before spelling was standardized, "when" was sometimes spelt "quhen," and so on. The story about "quiz" having been invented as a joke seems likely enough to me; on the other hand, it could be an eccentric plural of "qui," that is, a collection of questions. The only "proof" would be to find older cites where the sense was clear from context.

I'm pretty sure that when Tolkien spoke of "the race of Men," he simply meant the human race as different from the other sentient beings in Middle Earth -- the Elves, the Dwarves, the Istari (all male and indefinitely long-lived), the Ents, etc. Of course matters were complicated by the possibility of human-elf intermarriage; and the Ents were all male and long-lived -- the mystery of the missing Ent-wives is left unexplained.

[Ned again, on PN 5.3] March 24, 2006

Thanks for the *Peregrine Nations* - I was properly amazed to get it in a brown bag from the UK, mailed in Tyneside with a Liz II stamp! *[See my editorial thish.]*

I'm surprised to hear that pulped books and magazines are used as road foundations in Britain -- I would not have thought the material was strong enough or stable enough. There have been experiments here with the vast waste-stream of worn-out tires. *[When we lived in the Keys, we met a man at the Big Pine flea market who sold tree swings in the shape of horses that he made from auto tires.]*



Sue Bursztynski

Many thanks for PN 5.3. What a beautiful cover! If it helps, I'm happy to download PN from the Net, if you let me know when the next one is out. That way, I can just read it on computer screen, saving some trees and some postage or, if necessary, I can print it out on recycled paper. [I'll add your name to the e-mail notice list.]

Christopher Garcia: I have a copy of "Ringers," a DVD history of Tolkien fandom, and one scene shows the young Leonard Nimoy singing about Bilbo Baggins, with people in psychedelic clothing dancing around him. Fancy that, I never knew, and I have been a Trek fan most of my life!

Joseph Major: The story of Juan Pujol Garcia sounds as if it would have fitted in very nicely with the over-the-top tales I was telling in my little book on spies. Next time I'll consult you. :-)

Lloyd Penney: If you re-read the first few pages of Lord of the Rings, you'll find that hobbits tend to be between two and four feet in height. Bullroarer Took, a giant among hobbits, was four feet five inches high. Only Merry and Pippin topped him and that was because they drank the Ent draught.

Eight hundred at a con would be huge in Australia - our last Worldcon only had about 1500 attendees (I remember politely asking a US attendee if she was enjoying the con and being subjected to a long, angry rant about how tiny this stupid con was!). [How rude of her -- good thing I wasn't there; I'm a dead shot with a wet noodle.]

Years ago, I read the Conan books edited by De Camp and Carter. There was only one Conan novel, Hour Of The Dragon, which was published as Conan The Conqueror. The rest were all short stories. There has been a lot of dissatisfaction with these editions in recent years and a new series of volumes, re-edited, are coming out at the moment. I have the first volume. It's a beautiful book. I love Harry Turtledove's own fiction, but if Robert E. Howard didn't write a Conan tale, I don't want to read it. Sorry! [Then you're missing a fine tale.]

I know some of the contributors to PN are/have been Trek

fans, so thought I'd mention the sad news that **Diane Marchant**, one of the co-founders of the Star Trek Welcommittee, passed away on April 5. Diane was well-known in Australian fandom, but also in the US, in her time, and a personal friend of the Roddenberrys.



E. B. Frohvet / Feb. 26, 2006

Someone in the UK (there was no name or return address on envelope) sent me a paper copy of PN 5.2 July 2005 issue. It appeared to be a "new" copy, i.e., not one with thumbprints and creases all over from having been read multiple times. [See my editorial this; the return label may have fallen off, and when I got my copy it had been opened. If I recall right, my "A.B." said British customs requires an easily openable and resealable envelope these days.]

The numerous people who came up with technological solutions for shelving books have overlooked the cost problem. Static horizontal shelving is cheap, stable, and does the job. (See Asimov's argument in Caves of Steel for the flexibility of the relatively simple, humanoid robot, rather than a separate robot for each function.) Footnote to **Jason Burnett** : in most libraries, the children's section is separated from the adult section for multiple reasons, including noise.

Music: I had to disassemble and move my stereo for technical reasons having to do with drywall and plumbing repairs, and have felt little inclination to set it up again. Generally, I either listened to music, or did something else, not both at the same time. At the dentist's office, I have asked for background music to be turned off; they report that many patients find it relaxing, I just find it irritating. [Would you find it more palatable if it were music you liked?]

Apparently I did miss the "humor" in the piece about Mr. Icke. [And it's a dour man you are, my friend...]

The correct Latin plural of "exit" is "exeunt."

Helen Spiral does not mind civilian cemeteries but finds military cemeteries creep her out. I feel the exact opposite. There are American, Canadian, and British cemeteries scattered across

France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. For the most part they are carefully and respectfully tended by the host nations.

I will have to look up Glenda Larke and see if any of her books are in print in the U.S. (Moons in alignment, and tides: Heinlein, Farmer in the Sky; "even the land is unstable," Clement, Clost to Critical).

[E. B. again, on PN 5.3] March 25, 2006

To whomever in British fandom generously took it on her/himself to distribute *Peregrine Nations* until Janine could get her system reorganized, thank you. Fandom owes you one. If you need a favor, you know where to find me. [*Address available on request, as always. And thanks, E.B.*]

Chris Garcia: Yes, quite right, I am a minor letterhack. All articles now appearing were submitted last year. I made much the same point about the decline of the sercon fanzine in an article in *Knarley Knews* #110. [*And still there are only Some Fantastic and my struggling efforts at sercon pubbing for us sercon-minded fen; Steam Engine Time has been delayed by my illness and Bruce's need to keep getting and completing paying work. We do intend to pub more SETs, though.*]

Joseph Major: There are more deer in Howard County than the environment can support. There is, however, limited hunting, which is some restraining factor.

Lloyd Penney : Sorry. The introduction th LoTR says of hobbits, "Their height is variable, ranging between two and four feet of our measure. They seldom now reach three feet; but they have dwindled, they say, and in ancient days they were taller ... Bandobras Took ... was four foot five ..." Pippin and Merry were taller, but that resulted from a chemical infusion; and as they were younger than Frodo, one may suppose their bones had not yet ossified at the time. (Human growth hormones will not make an adult taller; the ability of the bones to expand ceases at maturity.)

I should probably point out, for the benefit of readers, that I

wrote and sent to Jan the Faded Sun article in two parts, trusting to her editorial judgment to combine them, which she did excellent well. Therefore, I ought not object to the witty typo (kel Duncan must make an effort to show his face to the admiral, not his "lace." It does, however, lend an interesting touch of humor to the piece [*Groan ... another one I missed...*], similar to a piece in *Lan's Lantern* years ago, in which I wrote "eminent" and George transcribed as "immanent" ... Alas, I still miss him.

A wonderful tale by Jim Sullivan, all the better because it is true. Pity the military were not treated with that courtest in my time. [*Damn straight.*]

I fear the Conan stories never interested me. On seeing the movie (the first one), I burst into laughter at Ahnold's first line and never recovered enough to treat the thing seriously, even by pulp standards. [*Never mistake the movie for the book; Howard was a much better writer than whoever wrote that screenplay. My favorite scene is when Ahnold punches the camel; it tickles my Three Stooges funny-bone.*]

On the question of a soldier who "makes a decision and acts on it," one of the news magazines cited the case of a Navy surgeon who volunteered for duty in Iraq, and was assigned as a trauma surgeon in a Marine unit. In his first combat situation, he was faced with six or seven casualties. He examined the first man, saw he was likely to die anyway -- and walked away to deal with the patients he could help. Surely a horrible decision for any physician, especially a military one, but a **right** decision. (Aee the similar case of euthanasia in Norton's Star Guard). [*As some may not know, in the medical community it's called triage, and is a method developed, I believe, initially in Vietnam. The TV show "MASH" showed how this was done to good effect, despite the fact that "their" war was in Korea (cast members have been quoted as noting that the show was set in Korea but was really "about" Vietnam in many ways). When a doctor is presented with several wounded personnel, a decision as to who can be saved has to be made, based on patient conditon as well as on available equipment, personnel and materials.*]



John Hertz

Perry 5.3 arrived...it seems to have come from Britain. But I hope I am polite enough not to pry into your methods. [*See my editorial this.*] When I say "forget" I mean what some call the literary present tense. The other day I asked a woman, "Remember phlogiston?" Neither of us was alive in its heyday, and Stahl (1660-1734) who proposed it has long been rust. [*Yes, dear readers, he did write "rust" and not "dust." Ask him why, not me.*]

In the Art Show at Lunacon XLIX (New York area, March 2006) I saw a fine Boromir by Donato Giancola -- quite independent of the recent films, I should add. It showed the man's physical strength, his tragic weakness, his inclination to follow sympathy rather than judgment.

Trying to use science fiction, or fantasy, or any art, as a disguise for something, is an old failing. It can succeed, perhaps despite the disguiser; I should (with Nabokov) call Dickens' novel Bleak House a weak social satire, a powerful poem. Good art, I propose, will sustain a sermon, while a sermon however gratifying will not sustain bad art. [*Dear readers, I have achieved another faned goal: I have printed a LOC from John Hertz. Hal yawm!*]



Eric Mayer

My first, tardy note on *Peregrine Nations* (A long time ago I tried to send an email but I think it was gray listed or somesuch into oblivion). Your health woes are truly horrifying. I had read some of what you'd wrote about the problem but it sounds far worse than I'd imagined. I hope it is indeed controllable. [*So far, it is.*]

I'm one of those "sf" fans who doesn't read sf so reviews and such are lost on me. I grew up on a steady diet of sf, from grade school on into my first years of college. I was still reading the magazines in the early seventies and discovered fandom via the zine reviews in *Fantastic*. But I was put off by the literary turn the genre seemed intent on taking (and me an English Lit major) so weirdly

enough I left off reading sf just as I was getting involved in fandom. But it is clear to me that the spectrum of fanzines runs from those that don't mention sf to those that mention practically nothing but. I don't think it serves fandom (however you define it) very well to try to categorize fanzines so to exclude them. If an editor feels he or she is part of fandom then, as far as I'm concerned, that's enough. How many people in this world even know about sf fandom, whose history Harry Warner and others wrote about, let alone want to belong to it? And since fandom has its origins in sercon zines, I don't see how anyone can argue against them. Having said that, of course, I can't talk about books I haven't read! [*So send me some reviews of books you have read; I'll take mystery reviews.*]

I can relate to **Jim Sullivan's** special breakfast though. I'm not much for a heavy meal in the morning -- more like three cups of coffee -- but I do recall my best breakfast. It started when Mary and I went to a minor league ball game. Between innings they ran all sorts of promotions and one involved a fan, chosen by drawing, trying to catch 3 popups. Well, I certainly wouldn't have put my name in the drawing. What they did was haul out the batting practice machine and point it straight up into the sky. It shot the baseballs up into the stratosphere, right out of sight. I never saw popups during the game like that. So on this day it was windy to boot and during the game the professionals were having to do a lot moving around the flyballs as it was and having a tough time. I would've been scared to be in the area where one of those popups was coming down.

Now the the deal was that the "lucky" contestant would be stationed in the outfield and have three shots at catching one of these cold meteors. If he managed it, then anyone at the ballpark (and I'd guess there were maybe 10,000 there) could present their ticket stub at a Perkins Pancake House for a part of a breakfast. Mind you, if the fellow could catch all three everyone would win a whole free breakfast -- anything on the menu. But it wouldn't have been a good bet for any of the pros to manage that.

They call out the ticket number of the "lucky" fan and the guy trots onto the field. He looks more like a ball player than the ball players. Out to the outfield he goes and adopts a perfect stance.

It's just obvious he's played a ball, a *lot*. First popup goes up and he ambles under it nonchalantly and snatches it out of the air, looking about as nervous as Willie Mays. The crowd really gets into it. Not that there's much drama. Two popups later and it's free breakfast for everyone. The ballpark is rocking.

I wonder where the fellow played ball. High school certainly. College? I wonder if he ever won a big game? Or maybe, that was the one time he stood out there on the baseball field with thousands of people cheering. He was the hero of the game. [*Perhaps he was a stray ghost extra from "Field of Dreams."*]

The next morning Mary and I went to Perkins and that was the only time I had steak and eggs for breakfast.



Amy Harlib

I read the July PN and am glad you printed my Glenda Larke interview which I think gives folks a lot of interesting information. You spelled Glenda's surname wrong in your Table of Contents but thankfully got it right on the Interview page. [*Whoops. Sorry!*]

I loved the Wiscon report and the pseudo-Shakespearean version of a scene from LOTR - LOL. The flowery cover was nifty too.



Joseph Major

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March 14, 2006

Silent eLOCutions:

Brad W. Foster: We are getting into that era in life when so many of life's burdens fall upon us. It is not only our friends who are passing away, but those in our families whom we love as well. Even our loved pets have long and painful illnesses.

Christopher Garcia: I think the big problem with *EmCit* is that it does not have a letter column. Note that Editor Stinson has made the wise and righteous decision to place the letter column in the point of honour. <g>

Would you like to get *Alexiad*? [*You neally should, Chris.*]

Lloyd Penney: It's rather disappointing, all the same, to have one's comments drop into the Void (as in Vandals of the Void, the Jack Vance book about space taggers), never to be seen by mortal fan. How can you tell if what you said made any difference; and after going to such trouble to write them?

Helen Spiral: "The newer computers might start reanimating the older ones!" Oh great, that's all we need: Linus Torvalds, Reanimator by W. H. Gates & H. P. Lovecraft. [*Hee!*]

Peter Sullivan: Given that I've seen miniature horses that are nine hands high at the withers, I can imagine that the Periannath would also have miniature cows.

"Cherryh's The Faded Sun: An Appreciation": Frohvet is to be commended for avoiding the facile "Lawrence of Arabia" parallel, of taking up another society. Not that Lawrence — who had a variety of surnames, and could just as well have been called Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw — is all that reliable anyhow. Reading more about desert travel makes him out to be rather a marginal figure. A lot of people really love Peter O'Toole and call him "Lawrence". [*I call him "Orrence," actually; and my editor at the Florida Keys Keynoter just hated for anyone to call him that (he goes by Larry).*]

The parallel to disposing of the mri seems to be the massacre scene in "The Outlaw Josey Wales", where after the Confederate guerillas surrender, the Union troops processing their paroles kill all of them except Josey Wales (who didn't come in), who rescues one dying comrade.

"Everything I Need to Know I Learned from 1980s Horror Movies": One can add to such lists:

"When your car has broken down in the middle of the night, in the middle of the storm, and the only place to find shelter is in the deserted old house where all the murders took place years ago,

don't go skinny-dipping alone."

"If you are female, *don't* have premarital sex, or you will die."

Among the small towns in Maine to avoid is Cabot Cove, particularly if you are an old friend of Jessica Fletcher. I imagined a "Murder, She Wrote" episode written by Stephen King . . .

"Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?": I note that so far you have avoided steroids. I was put on steroids a little over a year ago and gained thirty pounds, not to mention having other problems made worse thereby. Then there is the tiredness, which crops up at many inconvenient times. *[Actually, I just forgot to mention them. I've been on them more than once now, and am currently on a step-down schedule to get off of them again. I do have weight gain while on them, but I found out early that steroids can cause an appetite increase, so I choose my food with care and try not to gorge. The tiredness I didn't know about; thanks for the tip. I learned recently that steroids can also cause acne. Blech.]*



Lyn McConchie

Another excellent issue, loved the cover, interesting book reviews, great article from E.B. and several hooks for comments in the letters. *[Such nice, complimentary readers I have...]*

RYC on Wiscon & **Brad Foster**: I've come all the way from New Zealand to attend Wiscon twice now. I was initially attracted by the description of it as being "a feminist con" but didn't find it so much that as a con that seemed to provide more panels of interest to women. I noticed that Worldcon in Australia in 1999 seemed to have a good selection of those as well and enjoyed that con too. Yes, there were more women than men at Wiscon, more female authors, and more women-oriented panels, but I didn't see the con as being over-feminist and the men that I saw there seemed to be having a great time too. You could do worse than to combine visits. Stay with a local friend, have a one- or two-day membership at the con and see. *[Mike Lowery seemed to be having a good time.]*

RYC on spies & **Joseph Major**: I used to commute to work with a woman who'd worked throughout WWII at that place in

Scotland that sent out the SOE agents. I think she had access to a lot of stuff going on at the time both there and in Bletchley. She mentioned once that a number of people had subsequently used real-life adventures as fiction, she'd recognized some of them from classified papers she'd read at the time although she never named names or events to me. And then there was "Manning Coles." The author was actually a male/female team, the male (Cyril Coles) having been in the Secret Service during WW1. He was the youngest officer in British Intelligence but retired from them after the war. He lived and worked in Australia for some time after that but returned to England in 1939, rejoined Intelligence and worked for them again until 1958. After the war he moved to live in a small English village where his next door neighbour was a woman (Adelaide Manning) who wanted to write fiction but found that, while she was a very good writer, she didn't have the imagination to think up original plots. They became friends and he told her some of his adventures as a spy in Germany during WW1, and sparked a collaboration on the Tommy Hambleton books (which I strongly recommend), which appeared from 1940 to the 1960s. The two very interesting things to my mind in this are that it was never any secret that Coles had worked for British Intelligence in WW1, and they never seem to have minded that the plots of many of the books were actually his own adventures with the serial numbers erased. Almost all the time he and Adelaide were writing this series, he was still actually IN the service.

RYC on wolves & **Lloyd Penney**, yes, they are beautiful animals. The highlight of my last year's trip to the USA/UK was staying with a friend in Georgia who had two wolf-dogs. I was warned that I should not approach or touch the female as she could be touchy with strangers. But I'd been there only an hour before she approached me, decided that I was harmless and was very happy to be openly friendly and affectionate for the rest of my stay. I was flattered and delighted and happy in turn to spend a lot of my time petting her and her mate. Back in 1991 I met Signy, Marion Zimmer Bradley's wolf dog, when I spent a day with Marion. Signy too was beautiful but very timid. Wolfdogs are illegal in New Zealand so both times it was great to meet their breed in America and be able to

admire them. *[I used to think having a wolf/dog hybrid would be cool, until I read too many horror stories about people who appeared to be irresponsible in their care of them and in letting strangers near them. I now think that a person ought to have a wild-animal rehabilitator/caregiver license of some sort, and be trained in how these animals, beautiful though they are, should be cared for and handled. Even canines can be dangerous. Cesar Millan, who hosts the "Dog Whisperer" show on the National Geographic Channel here, is always reminding the people he visits that dogs are animals and not little humans, and that humans have to always remember that. After watching several episodes of this show, I think he knows what he's talking about, and I've adapted some of his techniques for use with my own dogs and found that they work very well. Some day I may get to wlf country somewhere in the U.S. and be lucky enough to hear them howl; that's ll I really want. But I may not have to leave the state, as I've read recentl that grey wolves may have migrated back into lower Mighican (we have two sections, the Upper and Lower Peninsulas). Wow.]*

RYC on the Great Spaghetti Hoax & **Helen Spiral**: I grinned at that. It's an old tradition here, so much so that I have a compilation VHS tape made by our National TV of hoaxes that have been done as "TV news items" over the years. There was "the Turkeys in Gumboots," the "Radio-controlled Dog" and "Caring for Sheep," and then there was the article in a major paper about the Department of Conservation's decision to introduce man-eating Australian crocodiles to a local lake for the carpet trade. It seems to be more of a British tradition than an American one, but the last time here was an entire one-hour TV program on an apparent "forgotten genius" in New Zealand. After it had aired and there'd been a lot of comment and interest, it was revealed that the entire program had been a carefully crafted hoax. That generated even more interest, comment - and some outrage. So much so that it was re-run for those who'd missed it. That was about ten years ago now, and the item is still talked about today.

And I'm appalled to hear about all your illnesses. As you know, I'm a bit like the old grey mare myself so I can sympathise. Knowing you'd got behind with *PN* was why I offered a couple of

articles and am doing you a nice long LoC too. Which may hopefully still make the 20th deadline although it's going two days later. I know you usually have a few days in hand and I also know it's a lot harder to find the material for two back-to-back issues. *[Thanks for the material; I've been extraordinarily fortunate in nearly always having enough material besides locs to not have to write much for PN myself. Of course, I'd still love to get whatever anyone wants to send me, no guarantee I'll use it right away (and some get turned away for not fitting my journeys and sercon SF discussion themes), but I'll at least read it.]* And whoever the "unknown benefactor" is (English I suspect since my hardcopy of *PN* came from England) I'm very grateful to them too. I don't usually have e-mail problems, but I frequently have trouble accessing websites so prefer to get *PN* in print.

Anyhow, take care, must go and see what's happening out in the kitchen. I just heard a thud, a scampering of feline feet, and a guilty silence. *[Aha!]*



Lloyd Penney

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March 22, 2006

I hope this loc is in time -- I saw your message on Trufen.net, so here is a requested quick loc on Volume 5, No. 3 (whole number 19, I think) of *Peregrine Nations*.

Another great **Alan White** cover; saw this year's Hugo nominations, and why he isn't there, I dont know.

Chris Garcia is convinced that there's a new movement of letterhacks in the fanzines. Who am I to disabuse him of the notion? I'm just waiting for him to name it, and I want the t-shirt, too, Chris.

I enjoy *Emerald City*, too, and it's on that Hugo ballot. I send Cheryl regular locs, and while she doesn't print them, she does respond to them, so it's become a monthly e-mail conversation.

My loc: After a lot of thought-bashing, Yvonne and I have come to the decision to retire from con-running. It's been 25

years, and both of us want to devote more time to other activities, or just put more time towards making a living. Nothing's getting cheaper We'll fulfil our commitments for this year, ending with our Canadian agency for LAcon IV, and then, we're done. I will be at Corflu, and will be commuting back and forth. I hope I'll have some money for dinner.

I am waiting for **Chris Garcia** to write about the haunted computer museum, and how one fateful evening, one of the dead computers REBOOTED! Evil HAHAAHAHAH!

Hello, **Helen Spiral**: because of the five-hour difference between Eastern time where I am, and Greenwich time where you are, I'd have to get up exceptionally early or stay up awfully late to catch Terry Wogan's morning show. A T.O.G. (Terrys Old Geezers) I am not. However, when I do listen to the Beeb, I catch Jeremy Vine, Steve Wright and Johnny Walker, who I believe has retired from his weekly show, and will now have a special show on Sundays.

What we need is for **Joseph Major** to Shakespeare-ify the whole of LotR, and have it staged somewhere to see if there's enough public appeal. Not sure anyone will take the dancing Nazgul seriously, though. [*Oh dear...dancing Nazgul...*]

When I started to build a science fiction library, C.J. Cherryh's Faded Sun trilogy was among the first additions to it. I found it a little difficult to identify with the heroine, mostly because she seemed so distant and mysterious, and unwilling to share her inner turmoils with her aide. Oh, well, this was among her first writings, and she certainly wrote better as time went on. [*Melein, being the leader of her people as well as a priestess, ought to be distant and mysterious; the mri do not show their spiritual face to tsi-mri (not mri), so she does not do so even with Duncan or Niun, though he is her brother. Once she ascended to the leadership position after Intel's death, she knew she could no longer treat Niun as her brother, but only as a member of the Kel (and later the kel'anth of a very diminished house). I still find the Faded Sun books among her best works; try them again some time.*]

I received the Buffy book you sent to me just yesterday, and thank you kindly. Now, I never watched Buffy, except for the musical

episode, so there might not be much there for me, but we're thinking of who this book would make a good present for, and we have a few candidates in mind. [*Joyu Smith was rather faunching for it...<g>*]



John Purcell

I just read through your zine on efanazines.com, and I have to admit, this is a fine zine. Absolutely loved the cover art; **Alan White** just seems to be getting better with each passing year. Also, I followed the instructions you gave on the contents page and I am very glad you are feeling better. Just reading the tale of your medical woes was enough to make me shudder and be grateful for my health. Life is definitely a journey - as the definition states - and sometimes it can be a frightening journey, at that. Here's to your health and many, many more fine issues of *PN*. [*Much appreciated!*]

While I enjoyed reading *PN*, there are really very few things that sparked my loccing synapses. **Peter Sullivan's** comments about making distinctions between fanzine fandom zines and sf fandom zines made my eyebrows perk up a bit because I tend to agree with him. I also enjoy reading historical-type fannish writing, faan fiction, and sf & f book and movie reviews, kind of like an omnivorous literatus fanzinitus. Something like that. Zines like *Emerald City* are good and serve a purpose, but I have a distinct preference for knowing about what's going on in our little corner of the universe, so I enjoy more of the fannishly oriented zines. It's fun. Plus with fanzine fandom zines, there is a distinct dialogue going on, which I really get into, and is more in line with what fandom was like back in the 1930's and 40's when fanzines were the primary, and in some cases the only, link between fans. Communication and contact: those are the cornerstones of fanzines, and both fannish and sercon zines can't function without them.

E. B. Frohvet: I really enjoy C.J. Cherryh's writing, but it's been many years since I've read any of the Faded Sun books. More reading material to put on the bedside table. (You should see the stack that's there now!)

I could only shake my head in wonderment while reading that "Tragedie of Frodo Baggins." Good gravy, but writing this must take some serious time to do! As a college English teacher, I am really impressed by this effort. Are there plans to present any of these episodes at some point in time? Egads, what a project! Methinks **Joseph Major** has way too much time on his hands. [*I think he actually has two brains, and plugs them in alternation so he can do all that cogitating. Joseph, we are not worthy!*]

Thank you, **David Speakman**, for the Halloween suggestions. A bit out of season, but it's always good to plan ahead. [*If I'd gotten that ish of PN pubbed on time, they woul dhave been in season because that was the October ish.*]

I have long enjoyed the Conan saga, and it's neat to see that new additions keep cropping up to augment the reprints of the classic, original novels and stories. This being the centennial of REH's birth, Aggiecon 37 just past had a panel discussion of Howard and his work, and there was a wealth of Howardania on sale in the huckster room. Plus, I know there's a Howard-related or themed convention coming up Real Soon Now this year.

Well! I wrote more than I thought I would. Here's hoping you're enjoying my zine in e-trade. Let's hear it for Bill Burns and his wonderful, amazing flying website. [*I certainly am enjoying your fanzines, and hurrah to Bill Burns for all his fannish feats!*]



Joy Smith

On PN 5.2:

I was so happy to see an issue of *Peregrine Nations*! I had read that you were ill, and I thought -- Yes! She's feeling better!! I see, though, that this is from July, so I hope that you're feeling much better now. [*In deed, I am, and thanks for the well wishes.*]

Lovely **cover**. I love flowers, and these make a beautiful display. I enjoyed the LOCs, and I'd love to visit Wiscon some day. Thanks to **Trinlay Khadro** for her con report! And speaking of **Lyn McConchie**, whom a lot of lucky people got to meet, my interview

with her (via e-mail) was in the July 2005 issue of *Expressions*. (It's not archived, but I posted it in my blog for people to read for the Preditors & Editors poll.)

Helen Spiral: We explored cemeteries too when we were kids, and still do. We were at a Civil War veterans ceremony recently because a number of Confederate soldiers are buried in a church cemetery near us. (I have photos of beautiful and interesting old headstones. I'm sorry to see the modern cemeteries with almost no markers.)

I really enjoyed the interview with fantasy author Glenda Larke. The Droughtmaster sounds like an intriguing concept.

[*And again, from Joy, on PN 5.3:*]

What a beautiful cover by **Alan White**! Among other things in the LOCs, I enjoyed **Lloyd Penney's** account of his visit with Spider Robinson at Astronomicon 9. I thought it was very interesting that Robinson has Beatles sing-alongs in con suites. And now I know how David Icke pronounces his last name.

Joseph Major's continuing "Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" is impressive! And I also enjoyed **E.B. Frohvet's** article on Cherryh's *The Faded Sun*. That was the first of Cherryh's work that I read, as I recall (possibly I got it from the SFBC). I just couldn't get into it, but I loved the Chanur series. I wish I'd had this article at hand then!

I enjoyed David Speakman's guide to horror movies. Important warnings... Btw, the best instance I've ever seen of a woman running and falling down -- and losing her slacks -- is in "Tremors." I've never been a Conan fan, but Turtledove's book, Conan of Venarium, sounds interesting. Your Glass Dragons review made me want to read the book. And maybe "Budget Cuts." That's an e-book? (I've never read an e-book. When I read, I want to close down the computer and relax.) [*"Budget Cuts" is actually a short story, and is probably still available at the noted site.*]

I hope you're much better very soon. Thanks for persevering and putting out this ish! I admire you for that because I know 11 you have lots of other things to do and cope with. [*Keeping up with*

pubbing PN helps keeps my mind off of my health problems; it's actually very relaxing, which is good because I'm not supposed to be getting stressed. I've recently reorganized my time and activities so as to get more paying writing done, and it seems to be working.]

WAHF: Dave Szurek , Paul Di Filippo ("My favorite piece was Speakman's Guide to Safer Living Through Media Instruction!"), Jim Sullivan ("I duly noted the letters concerning my library article ... Thanks!"), Trinlay Khadro ("Tickled to see my photo of Uncle's Black-Eyed Susans on the cover..."), and Alexis Gilliland [*The "new" return address was for some faneds who were still using my Florida address, which is nearly three years old not; apologies about the interior art, I'm doing what I can, and I think you'll find it's improved in PN 5.3]*

Stinson on....Short Films

"The Chick Magnet"

Starring: Jon Chapman (Ben), Kate Kelton (Betty), Rissy Smith (Dawn), Christopher Garcia (The Street Mime)

Directed by: Steve Sprinkles

Produced by: Redfoot Productions

Running Time: 9 mins. 48 secs.

Available from: Christopher Garcia

Back when Chris "The Many-Armed" Garcia first appeared on fannish radar screens with his fanzines *The Drink Tank* and *Claims Department* (and other stuff too numerous to mention), he mentioned a short film he and some friends had shot and made available on DVD. So I asked him to send me a copy. I did intend to review it before last year's Hugo nominations were finalized, but You Know What Happens When You Make Plans. Chris, I am very, very sorry I haven't gotten this review done and published before now. You deserve better.

Short films with a fannish or SFnal (or, Ghu forbid, both) flavor have been con staples for years. Most of them, as I recall, are related to either the Star Trek or Star Wars worlds-of-if, as these are the two most well-known (nearly instant ID factor) among those who don't claim to read SF or be "a sci-fi fan." (No letters on terminology, please, we've all beaten that horse too many times.) Living on the Left Coast, Chris Garcia has a leg up on the film festivals available in that area of the country, which may get his work more notice than fen who don't live there. I think there should be some kind of network for SF independent ("amateur" has pooppy connotations which don't apply to Chris) filmmakers so they can trade info and get their work in front of the public more easily. There may even be such a network in place on the Web. I sure hope so, because if even a tenth of the SF independent films are as good as "The Chick Magnet," we need to see more of them so we can have something to watch that actually engages our brains instead of the perpetual rehashings that are Current Hollyweird Extruded SF Product. Watch it, you don't wanna step in that...

The film opens with piano-heavy background music (original score by Steve Sprinkles, and nicely done) as Ben gets bumped and shoved while crossing the street on his way to work at a research facility. Female co-worker Betty is further ahead of him on job duties than he'll admit, and his attempts at hitting on her fall flatter than pancakes. He fantasizes her doing a striptease just for him -- but only her lab coat comes off as she leaves the room. Distracted, he reaches for what he thinks is a bottle of water -- but it actually contains some of the formula they've been testing. As he passes a lab mouse's cage, it zooms across the cage like iron filings drawn to a magnet. Guess who the magnet is.

Ben rushes outside to find Betty talking to someone on her cellphone about how lousy her job makes her feel. While she's chatting, she slides across the floor to stick to him like glue. If you've ever seen any playing time on the video game "Katamari Damasi," you can imagine the ensuing action -- and it's **still** funny. The climax comes when Ben, who's been trying to get the last name and phone number of a young woman he met on the street before

becoming "The Chick Magnet" (and who later *doesn't* get stuck to him), chooses to ask her something else. It's a perfect way to cap the action.

Sprinkles cheats just a bit by not showing the audience how Ben gets back up after falling down with three women stuck to him, the first time. The second time it happens, we get to see how it could be accomplished.

The films seems to have been shot in and around San Francisco, a location that most TV and film aficionados will surely recognize, and that's a perfect foil for the film's SFnal premise (one might call it Better Living Through Chemistry, tongue in cheek), which has a rich comic-book superheroes atmosphere that only enriches the film.

Feminist film, comedy, comic-book inspired, SFnal premise, "The Chick Magnet" also has good acting & production values. This ought to be shown at WisCon. Really.

Stuff that's Way Cool: dance party mice; smooth character intros and *no* throwaways; clever camera tricks; a plot that makes complete sense; pop-culture references; and the street mime. <g>

A Little Girl and Her Dog

by E.B. Frohvet

Long ago, when I was in college, I was part of a group. Nothing so formal as a club, and nothing to do with SF or fandom. It started out as a study group, and evolved into a social group. Peripherals came and went, a friend of this one, or someone the other was dating; but the core group was nine. Four guys, three girls, one married couple. And Holly; and Dog.

At the center of the group, the nucleus around which it formed, were Mike and Lorraine. All the rest of us were of an age, 19 or 20. Mike was 25 and Lorraine was 24, they were married and had a baby daughter. Mike was going to school on the GI Bill and Lorraine attended classes part time. They lived in an apartment off

campus, and all of us were regular visitors.

They also had a dog. I don't honestly recall his actual name at this late date, so we'll call him Dog, after the character in Clifford Simak's They Walked Like Men. Dog was a Saint Bernard. Now you probably think of Saint Bernards as clumsy, amiable, absent-minded goofs, as in the "Beethoven" movies. And all that is true -- up to a point.

If you ever have the opportunity (I would recommend you try this only with a Saint Bernard with whom you are on friendly terms), peel back those floppy jowls and have a look at the teeth and jaw muscles. Trust me, you do NOT want a Saint Bernard angry at you.

Anyone who hung out at Mike and Lorraine's place was well aware of House Rule Number One: "Do not make any sudden moves around the baby, the dog is trained to protect her." I saw that rule violated once, by a harmless casual visitor — and Lorraine, who was a small woman, bodily threw herself on Dog, grabbed his collar with both hands, and hastily explained that it was just a misunderstanding.

Not to say that Dog was hostile or aggressive. We all played with Holly, read her stories, took turns babysitting. If Holly climbed up on me of her own accord, or Mike picked the baby up and sat her on my lap, that was fine. Anything that was okay with His People was okay with Dog. Holly would sit on him, or curl up on the floor and use him for a pillow; Dog didn't mind.

When I babysat with Holly, I would normally study, or read, or watch television. Dog would keep me company in a friendly enough manner. If I went to the kitchen to make myself a sandwich, or got up to use the bathroom, Dog would look up to confirm what I was doing, and then put his head down again. If I went to check on Holly, however, he would get up and come with me. It was not hostile, more businesslike: "Nothing personal, buddy, just doing my job." We would both assure ourselves that she was sleeping peacefully, and return to the living room together. I'm sure Dog trusted me -- up to a point. But in retrospect, I imagine Dog figured that when His People were out, he was in charge. Nor would I argue with him over that.

13

After graduation, we all went off our separate ways. Within a

year or two I had lost touch with the group. (Except for one, for a while years later, but that's another story for another time.) I still miss them in a distant sort of way. Perhaps you know the song "Bob Dylan's Dream" in which the songwriter laments the loss of youthful friendships. Like that. It was more than twenty years ago, Holly is a grown woman, Dog is surely long dead by now. I might not recognize any of the group if I passed them on the street. We might not have anything in common beyond nostalgia, if we did meet.

But I still miss them, after a fashion. I even miss Dog. He was okay company.

A Feast of Jackals

book reviews by J. G. Stinson

Beast Master's Ark by Andre Norton and Lyn McConchie.
Tor, New York: 2002. 318 pages, pb, ISBN 0-765-34009-7

New Zealand writer Lyn McConchie adds her name to the list of Andre Norton collaborators with this latest (when I read it; there's another out now) addition to the Beast Master series (not related to the TV series, thank Ghu!). I read this book without having read any of the previous Beast Master novels, so there's probably a chunk of backstory I missed while reading it, but I didn't feel lost -- a compliment to Norton and McConchie.

The central character of the series, Hosteen Storm, is on the colony planet Arzor, his second home since Earth was destroyed by the alien Xik. While Storm is trying to maintain good relations with the other settlers on the planet, a new menace called "Death-Which-Comes-in-the-Night" is reported by both planetary natives and settlers. It starts killing animals, then progresses to humans, and both the planet's original occupants and the newcomers become suspicious of each other. Then a Beast Master Ark ship arrives, with the potential to both help and complicate the situation. The Ark and its crew of Beast Masters and scientists is attempting to spread the gene pools of various Beast Master companion animals around the human-

populated worlds (in the most ecologically sound manner in each case), and they've arrived at Arzor with this mission. Tani, one of the Ark's Beast Masters, lost her parents to the Xik depredations and had decidedly opposite views on how one's companion animals should be "used" for human needs -- her mother blamed the Terran government for how her husband died, and Tani was greatly influenced by her mother's opinions. Storm, on the other hand, has fought with his companions often, and when the two meet, they get off to a decidedly shaky start in what develops into a solid relationship later in the story.

Of course, those are just a few of the plot threads woven through this novel. McConchie's writing style is quite evident here, which makes me wonder how much of the writing Norton contributed; I'm not familiar with the mechanics of how these collaborations are done (the ones with a "name" writer and a "new" writer, i.e. Clarke and others). Maybe some day I'll ask Ms. McConchie. <g>

McConchie's style is very forthright and active, a plus in a story where there's more than physical action going on; the relationships in the story aren't static as a result. Setting descriptions are vivid and believable, as are the character motivations presented, and the results of the characters' interactions with each other and the settings. It's a very readable book, and the best compliment I can give it is that it's made me want to look for previous Beast Master novels, and for future ones in this series as well

The Crystal City by Orson Scott Card. Tor, New York: 2003
(first mm edition Aug. 2004). 340 pages. pb, ISBN 0-812-56462-6

The Tales of Alvin Maker novel series comprises one of Card's most popular and original fantasy worlds, focusing on what the United States might have become had magic been part of the settling of the American continent and somewhat better relations between the European newcomers and the American Indian tribes who were already there. Its central character, Alvin Maker, continues to live out his destiny in this novel, where he seeks to make his

vision of the Crystal City -- a place where all can live in peace -- become a reality. But there are dark forces arrayed against him, both magical and mundane, and as readers of this series well know, Alvin and his family and friends won't be able to achieve their goals without paying a price.

Alvin's wife, Peggy, a powerful seer, has foreseen a vicious war and sends Alvin to Nueva Barcelona (the title the Spanish occupiers have given New Orleans) because she knows he needs to be there -- and that's all she knows for sure. Alvin is even less sure why he's there, but he trusts his wife's visions.

I started reading in this series because I found its central premise intriguing, and so far I haven't been disappointed in any of the books I've read which feature Alvin Maker. This novel also doesn't disappoint. Card's ability with dialogue, regional dialect and character development are all highly evident here, as are his skills with theme, story structure and pacing. The story moves right along and the physical action and mental cogitation necessary for characters to make decisions is clearly described without being overdone. It's an absorbing read.



Crossroads: Where Genres Meet

A Look at Two Novel Series

by Lyn McConchie

Increasingly we are seeing series that are crossovers between SF/F and whodunnits (aka mysteries). This may be because more writers of one type are finding it financially beneficial to write in the other genre and allow some of their own previous genre to bleed into their new area of writing. It's been so with the romance areas as well, and I note that in the catalogs from my mail-order bookshop, they have now split the romance books on offer into quite a few sub-genres.

Originally romances were split pretty much into historical, contemporary, and Regency. But of late I am also offered romantica, erotica, fantasy, futuristic, time-travel, or paranormal as well as the usual trio. Now they wander over every other genre, popping in and out of them as backgrounds and causing some confusion.

For those who like a whodunnit with just a spice (about 10 %) of romance, there are the MIRA books. I dislike what I call the gush and slush of most romances. They require the women to behave like mindless idiots. But the MIRA line is excellent. They usually have good solid plots and backgrounds of the whodunnit variety, and the romance is believable and not obtrusive.

A few years ago a new series began that featured a character who would become a PI, Turing Hopper. Nothing unusual about that, except for one thing: Hopper is an Artificial Intelligence Personality (AIP). I found the first book quite readable, but the series tailed off badly after that (I found book three quite unreadable) and I think it may have sold more for the novelty than because of the writing. It was unable to sustain my interest, but reading the series and discussing it with friends brought up a question of genre. When is an SF series not an SF series? In other words, is this series whodunnit or SF?

Our discussion rambled into the J.D. Robb (aka Nora Roberts) series featuring police detectives Eve Dallas and Roarke, which is set in the future and could possibly be considered as a three-genre crossover - romance/SF/police procedural. So I sat down to consider these two series and what they may be.

In the Hopper series, she emerges as a real personality as do some of her AIP friends. Her creator emerges as a real swine who refuses to accept she's a personality and who would be quite happy to see her terminated if it would get him off the hook. But the background is very heavily into computers -- as it would have to be. Hopper has her own limitations; although able to process/find information at an incredible rate, to be a PI she must also accept the aid of human friends to do her legwork -- literally.

Hopper's story begins with her creator's disappearance and strange things going on in the workplace where her computer

resides. She sets out to find him and unravel events only to find that some humans can be more unpleasant and untrustworthy than even she had believed. In the end she becomes involved both in her original company with her AIP friends, now run by a figurehead, and as a PI. It is with her as a PI that the series continues.

This is another series in which the main character is constantly under attack and I have to admit that I'm not crazy about them. I prefer to read a mystery series in which the protagonist solves mysteries, not where s/he is constantly fending off very personal and terrifying assaults on her/himself. (I went off Patricia Cornwall, and the last couple of books in the Honor Harrington series, for the same reason.)

But is this Hopper series mystery or SF? I went back and read it again and came to the conclusion that it was SF, because the main character could not exist without science. The background of most of the books is futuristic computer science, many of the characters are AIPs too, and the whole ambiance is far more SF than whodunnit.

There is considerable crossover, but on balance I would estimate this series to be 60% SF and 40% whodunnit, therefore I believe it would be classified -- if it had to be listed as one or the other -- as SF. That is the weakness of the series. It is SF at the expense of the whodunnit portion rather than enhanced by it. I found the few attempts at humor both unamusing and weak. A pity, as the author's Meg Langslow mystery series is hilarious and I grab each book in that series as it appears. It was why I bought the first three in this one -- and was disappointed.

That problem is something other authors venturing into crossover writing should beware of. As with the MIRA books, a proportion of 80/20 or 90/10 works, one of 60/40 is not so good.

The brilliant Ann Maxwell wrote a series of SF books in the late 1970s/early 1980s, very solidly SF but with romance. She managed to write an excellent SF book, with very genuine problems for the characters, but also with an often very poignant romance as well and in an 80/20 proportion. I was very annoyed when she stopped writing SF and a bookshop-owning friend of mine said that

Ann had gone into writing plain romances under another name. She had found that it paid much better.

As someone once said, keep things in proportion, and that really seems to apply to crossover books. If the proportion of crossover is right, it's a very good read, if not, then it tends to sag badly in the book, and more so in a series. From what I've seen and read over the years, if you cross two genres, it should be on a high/low percentage, not on something closer

to equal. On the other hand if you cross three genres fairly equally you can get an very workable book or series. Nancy Atherton's Aunt Dimity series crosses supernatural with whodunnit and romance in almost equal thirds and is one example of this triple-genre effort.

I believe that the Turing Hopper series would have been better if it had either more of the crime element or less of the SF. In the end, the author failed to engage me. I didn't care what happened to her characters, and once the reader feels that way, you've lost them. All the novel ideas won't bring them back, and to my mind that's what this series is: a novel idea that doesn't stand up for more than the original book.

The J.D. Robb series of Eve Dallas and Roarke is set some fifty years into the future, They are, for me, a perfect compromise: good solid detective work and stories (about 75%) along with a thorough SF background (15%) and a romance (about 10%). The new crime-solving tools are very believable, good extrapolations of what is available now along with a few small innovations which have the right feel for the future, and the futuristic background only enhances the books.

Detective Eve Dallas, superb at her job which is solving murders and catching those responsible, has a drive to stand for the dead, developed as an abused child, and does her best to protect others who are abused. She can be really hard-nosed and at the start of the series she is a loner, not quite sure what love and sex are worth to her, but feeling that mostly they aren't worth the trouble.

Then there is Roarke, Irish, intelligent, computer-expert, and a criminal who has worked his way up from the gutters of

Ireland. Now he lives in America, he's rich, clever, and -- so far -- uncatchable. But behind the facade of brilliant crook and stone-faced detective, both are damaged people with abusive backgrounds and it's that vulnerability which draws them together.

In Eve and Roarke, Robb created a couple of characters who catch the reader's attention and liking. I found, by the end of the first book, I genuinely wanted to know what happened to them next. The books are savage in some of the depicted crimes, and still more vicious in Eve's flashbacks to her childhood, but they aren't all grim. The verbal fencing between Roarke's butler, Somerset, who heartily dislikes Eve, and Eve who finds him uptight and obnoxious, is increasingly funny as the series continues. Involving too, as the reader finds out just why Roarke is devoted to the man and the background behind that.

There are other clever and amusing episodes, often triggered by Eve's refusal to take other people's agendas seriously. She's a cop, her work is always more important than what anyone else -- including the rich and pretentious -- may want. Her clashes with them, and her methods of dealing with the importunate can provide genuinely funny episodes, something which I really like.

In this world there are space colonies; some resorts, some laboratories, and in a number of the books Eve and Roarke must visit there. Newly developed plants of a very dangerous kind feature in one book, with genetic splicing, and all the attendant risks.

These books are genuine crossovers. The whole of the late 2050s is realistic. You get the feeling that when you reach 2058/9, you're going to recognise it from the books. Yet Robb has not made the mistake of leaping too far forward in her estimation of what that time may be like nor has she developed the background at the expense of either characters or plots.

If someone insisted I put them into a clear category, it would be as police procedurals or as mysteries/whodunnits. Most of the books could be written without the futuristic elements and would still be excellent books. If you can do that, then I think the series is mystery. The Turing series could not be written that way, particularly as the main character could not exist without futuristic computer

science.

Other series have appeared that are crossovers of whodunnit and SF/F. Dean James' Simon Kirby-Jones series is, like a large number of current series, fantasy/mystery in just the right proportions, and in James' case, with humor too which makes for a good and very amusing series so far. Persevere; sometime, somewhere, you'll find books you like in the right proportions for your taste.



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Flying High in Fandom

by Christopher J. Garcia

Before I became terrified of flying around 1999, I used to take to the skies five or six times a year. TWA sold student packs of tickets which allowed for two round trips anywhere in the country for less than six hundred dollars. These tickets got you the worst seats on the plane, the last row where the seats didn't recline because of the wall to the bathrooms, and they didn't work on Holiday periods. As a partial Christmakah gift, my Mom got me a non-stop

ticket from Boston to San Francisco on United, sitting in the big kid's seats up front.

I'd been in first class a few times, including one very memorable flight from Boston to LA. It's a nice feeling, but the best part is you get two non-shared armrests. I was sitting in the seat closest to the aisle, and as I was the first to board, I had my seat for a good long time before anyone else and enjoyed a refreshing Dewar's on the Rocks. After most of the regular coach surfers had entered, the seat next to me was finally filled. She was a young woman, probably about twenty-four or so, carrying a stuffed backpack that barely fit under the seat in front of her. The stewardess asked her if she wanted her to stow it up top.

"Naw, I'll take care of it myself."

Her voice reminded me of a College Radio DJ. She sat down and the flight attendant brought her a Coke. We sat in silence, waiting for the take-off. Once in the air, I took out the fanzines that my pal Johnny had let me borrow: four issues of the Bower's *Outworld* and a couple of old *Niekas* issues and copies of both the *Wrestling Observer* and *CrashCart*. In my time reading over at Johnny's place, these were about the only ones left I hadn't read. As I set myself up with the fold-over table that first-class passengers were given, I noticed that the young lady had also started to arrange her things.

I hadn't gotten a good look at the stuffed backpack, but when she began setting herself up, I noticed it was covered with puffy stickers of cartoon characters I didn't easily recognize. It wasn't until she had extracted two Rainbow Brite folders stuffed full of papers, an Exact-o knife and a series of photos that I finally realized that they were all Anime characters. She went to work trimming the photos as we flew. She even waved off dinner. I polished off the good stuff and settled in with my reading when I felt a tap on my shoulder.

"Excuse me," she said, her faced lined with a set of parallel purple marks, "can I bore-ow that zine for a second?" Well, at least I knew she was, at some significant point in her speech development, a Canadian.

She had pointed to one of the issues of *CrashCart* and I

handed it to her. She looked it over with great attention.

"How old is this?" she asked.

"Maybe three years." I told her, staring at the arrangement of sliced photos glued on the page on her tray. "It's from a guy in Jersey."

"Cool." She responded, searching it even further.

I noticed that she seemed to be working on a page about Japanese Monster movies, which I knew quite a bit about from being dragged to them since birth by Pops.

"Are you making a Monster Movie zine?"

"No," she said, looking nowhere but the page, "I edit a Japanese culture zine. It's called Gaijin."

Well, that made sense. She certainly qualified as Gaijin: tall (6'3 it turns out), with blonde hair in a 1983 pony tail with 1995 Kool-Aid red tinted tips. She wore those glasses that told you she loved Elvis Costello. I wagered that in her bag was the most recent copy of *Giant Robot*, the first major US magazine dedicated to Asian Culture.

"Really? Is this your first issue?"

"Nah, I'm on number nine. Do you edit a zine?"

I explained that I was just a fanzine reader and had been since birth, give or take.

"Really? There've been fanzines that far back?" she asked, with just a hint of batted eyelash.

I went on to explain the history of zines: the baseball and boxing enthusiasts' magazines of the 1890s, the rise of the SF fanzine and the coining of the term in 1940, the rock zine completely changing music reporting in the early 1960s and the Punk zine completely changing everything else in the late 1970s and early 80s. I wrapped her in as much knowledge as I could, figuring flirting through the passage of knowledge was far better than through cheap pick-up lines. She listened intently, smiling broader and broader every time I went on to another generation.

"Wild." She said. "By the way, you can call me Ai."

I realized we had been talking for so long and I hadn't bothered to introduce myself. I guess I got swept up in the fannish

coincidence.

"I'm Chris."

"Cool." She said. "So, you like science fiction?"

I had never really thought about it. To me, SF was what people read. I had never really known any different. My classes in school used Science Fiction. My dad had hundreds of books around the house that I got into; even when I read other genre books, I always somehow found myself equating them with SF.

"Yeah, I do." I said, mildly surprised. I handed her an issue of *Niekas*. "Read this. It's older, but it sorta gives you an idea."

She read it, obviously not as interested as she had been by the political propaganda stylings of *CrashCart*.

"How'd you get interested in Japanese Culture?" I asked.

"Monster movies on Dialing for Dollars, my Mom marrying an old-time Japanese writer when I was two and learning to cook Japanese-style. I guess you could say I was sorta thrown into it."

I had been there. I knew what having a parent with a passion meant to your childhood development. She had obviously dived into the world hard.

"You like Japanese wrestling?"

"Yeah, Sumo's OK, but I'm not a pro wrestling fan. My Dad is though."

I smiled at her and she smiled back in a pleasant fashion. We chatted a bit more and she started in on anime. She rattled off about twenty minutes of hard anime talk, stuff that I recognized from snippets I'd heard working at an Anime Expo while I was in high school. She was obviously giving back exactly what I had dropped on her lap, more information than I could possibly ever use and simply hoping I'd enjoy the way she was saying it...which I certainly did.

We dug into each other's stashes of zines and sat quietly for a while. I just kept thinking that it was strange that two fans of fairly different sub-cultures (back then there was still some pretty serious tension between SF and anime fandom) would sit next to each other. There was a time, or so my Dad has told me often, where belonging to any form of fandom was something to be hidden, done in private

and never admitted to. There are folks I know who are like that today. We were two people very open with the fact that we were one of those folks they make fun of on "The Simpsons," even if our Venn diagrams of activities barely collided.

We started chatting again and I, in an attempt to make sure that if she needed help pubbing her ish she could call me, gave her my number and got hers in return. Ai, a pseudonym and a good one in my eyes, and I chatted a few times while we were in the Bay Area, I proofed her issues and she helped me with articles. We went to a Sumo Bash-o and she took me to Fanimecon. I took her to Baycon and when we got back to Boston, she started writing for my pal Jay's zine and we all started watching anime. The circles drew a little closer, and all because my Mom decided to buy me a good seat on United.





Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?

editorial

Greetings, and welcome to another slightly delayed ish of PN.

My health continues to hold up well; the lung doc said on 3/28 that my latest chest x-ray looked very good, and gave his okay to my restarting my ulcerative colitis

maintenance medication. I was glad to hear this, as I was beginning to experience some very, very mild abdominal discomfort every now and then, and had been lobbying for just this decision from him. Yay, and alla that.

For those who have been receiving the paper version of PN and wondering why it has had a UK postmark, I have decided to reveal the identity of my Anonymous Benefactor. Peter Sullivan was kind enough to offer to print and mail PN for me, and has said he will continue to do so as long as I need it done (and his money holds out, ar ar). I owe him more than monetary remuneration, so Peter, consider yourself salaam'ed. And thanks again.

A recent dust-up between myself and a certain member of Vegas fandom (who shall remain nameless because it's only fair) has led me to wonder once again how some fen can be so open and welcoming one minute and elitist snobs the next. This person has made negative (okay, let's be blunt, snide is more accurate) comments about the N3F and its members in various venues. I've read these kinds of comments from others as well, and nearly every one of them has been based on the commenter's past history with the

club or what the person heard or read someone else say or write about the N3F. In the cases of past experience, it's been more than a few years since the commenter was an N3F member. Why is it that certain fen think nothing in the N3F can change, and without any evidence to back that up that presumption? At least, when the comments are aired, no evidence is presented that I've seen.

Let me be absolutely clear. I know that past N3F members (also called Neffers) have done some things that others in fandom considered wrong, stupid, dense, elitist, juvenile, etc. See? I admit it. I'm not trying to cover up anything.

But let us be clear about one other thing. I don't consider an article which belabors a point under the guise of trying to be funny as something which I should have to tolerate in silence if I feel offended about what's written, or the tone of the writing as well as the content. If the comments in the article had been just a sentence or two, and less snarky, I might have let it go. As it was, I didn't, and sent an e-mail to the person in question. The person wrote back that they considered the topic harmless and confessed surprise that I would take offense. My remarks to the person, briefly, were that while I understood the intent of the article, I still felt that the person was being too free with the whiffle bat in taking aim at the N3F **yet again** because it was convenient. I never mentioned the fact that the person didn't include a response from the other person mentioned in the article, which would have been the fair thing to do. The person who wrote the editorial also commented that I had no cause to be so "mean" in my reply.

Imagine that.

Well, this person has been excised from my address book and marked as spam by my ISP. This person continued to send me a fanzine as an e-mail attachment when I specifically asked twice for this not to be done. I consider such behavior rude and inconsiderate (and the person had a week at least to read my request and take my e-mail addy out of the person's address book).

Much ado about nothing? Probably, to some. But I don't believe that, just because I'm a member of an organization that's had members who've made mistakes and gaffes in the past, I should

have to sit silent and let others take whacks at that organization's current members when they know little or nothing about them. Dare I say it? Could this be evidence of ... fannish prejudice? Weep wail, indeed.

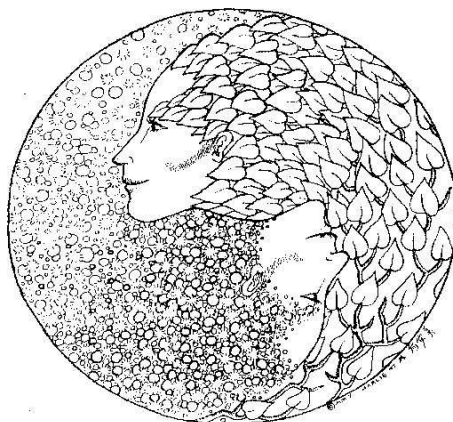
If you're interested in finding out who I'm talking about, it's easy enough to do: efanazines.com is your friend, in this regard. I've written all I'm going to write about this incident, as I have no interest in starting a fan feud. I just wanted my side of things in print.

In this, we have my long-overdue review of "The Chick Magnet," a walk back through time with E. B. Frohvet, Lyn McConchie's examination of two novel series, an article in which Chris Garcia fails to explain why he's now afraid to fly (but perhaps that requires its own article) but not afraid to talk about being fannish, and more book reviews. I hope you enjoy the reading.

The Free Book Deal

Contest 15 whispered in secretive tones: "What is the name of the anti-gravity device used to propel flying cities through space in James Blish's Cities in Flight? The correct answer is the spindizzy. Congratulations to those who entered and got the correct answer, but there can be only two ... winners, of course.

I forgot to announce what the prizes were lastish for this contest. Apologies. I was in a bit of a hurry. Both books are paperbacks this time. The online winner will receive a copy of George R. Stewart's classic SF novel Earth Abides. The regular-mail



winner will receive a copy of a book I found at my local bookstore last year and was glad to find: The Touch, "created" by Steven Elliot Altman. It's a short-story collection based on the premise of a fictitious epidemic called the Depriver Syndrome, and created "to benefit the charities HEAL (Health Education AIDS Liaison) and F.A.C.T. (Foundation for Advancement in Cancer Therapy)." All the authors donated their works.

Now, to the winners...drum roll, please...and the winner of the online contest is...Joseph Major! (applause here) Congratulation, Joe. If you haven't read it already, I'm sure you can take about 30 seconds to do so (that must be how fast you read, right?) And the winner of the regular mail contest is...drum roll again...Lyn McConchie! Yes, I know you didn't actually enter, Lyn, but Ned Brooks did, and said to pass his slot to someone else (well, more or less; he's still trying to find new homes for a whole bunch of books), and your name got picked. You've read all those books from your WisCon 29 trip already, anyway. I think you might like this one. Congratulations to you as well, and thanks to Ned.

Contest 16 Is Announced. For the Cherryh readers out there, which quintet of novels features leonine, humanoid space merchants aboard a ship whose captain's first name is Pyanfar? **Titles of all five books are required for a correct answer.**

The regular-mail prize winner will receive Dark of the Sun by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, in which we find Count Saint-Germain ensconced as a trader in China a short time (as vampires count) before the famous Krakatoa explosion around 535 A.D. It's a good read, and that's from someone who'd gone off the Saint-Germain novels some years ago for being set in historical periods in which I had no interest. Silly me. The online prize winner gets Mike Resnick's novel A Miracle of Rare Design, wherein a man seeks to discover the secrets of an alien culture and is willing to alter his physical appearance to do so.

Contest 16's deadline is midnight eastern daylight time on May 15, 2006. Good luck!