

Peregrine Nations

Volume 6, Number 1

April 2006



Non-Monarchist

News!

Loads o' LoCs!

Cats!

Look inside...



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This issue is dedicated to two women. **Octavia E. Butler**, 58, champion of freedom, Hugo and Nebula Award winner, taken from us in February 2006 – what dreams might have been committed to paper from her agile brain, we'll now never know. **Maggie Dixon**, head coach at West Point, who led the 2005-06 Army women's basketball team to a 20-11 record and their first conference title in years, taken from us in April 2006 – a true warrior. *Both gone far, far too soon – they carry the hearts and minds of thousands with them.*

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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Official Eastlake Village Turtle Rescue Member



Silent eLOCutions

[editorial comments like this]

Sheryl Birkhead / April 21, 2006

Ned Brooks is right, I probably never will be able to learn how to make matches. I may have to settle for buying the big boxes [*Why not disposable lighters, as at least one reader advised?*] and hoarding them along with waterproof containers. I have vague recollections of actually eating match heads as a kid; and I can even recall the taste. At the time, my mother presumed there must have been something missing in my diet, but I doubt it. On the other hand, I have absolutely NO idea why...

Yes, there is a tax incentive for employers who hire the disabled, but I don't know if they (the employers) take it the length it needs to go and actually tailor the work to the employee. With

my own chronic pain, just HAVING to be nice to people all day would drive me nuts; stress-increased pain, no thank you.

Cheryl Morgan's zine was nominated in two categories – [semi-pro] zine and Web site. I dropped a note to the concomm asking if this was not two shots at the brass ring; if it's a Web site is it NOT a zine...nah, that logic is not going to work. Just an observation. [*Worldcon concomm have allowed people to be nominated in more than one category, both fan and professional, but allowing the same item to be nominated in two categories is, I agree, questionable.*] Can't believe that **Alan White** did not make the fan artist Hugo short list again this year. He does do good work – pretty cover – pretty birdie!

Really like **Trinlay Khadro's** ferret illo. You do manage to run a lot of nice illos. Nice piece by Jim Sullivan. [*We all thank you!*]

For the UC on any meds for control purposes? [*Yes, I take Asacol as a maintenance drug; the Prednisone is the steroid and is not a long-term use drug, as you probably know. I'm off the latter again, thankfully,*

and my gut doc has not said to restart it with the current mild flare-up. Prednisone makes me eat like a horse, and I certainly don't need to gain weight now.]

Thank you, Peter Sullivan – you have done a kind service to Jan and to fandom -- our gratitude to you.

Ned Brooks

Thanks for *Peregrine Nations* V.5#4. which came in today in the remnants of an envelope -- but the zine is fine. The same happened with the last SFPA mailing, the envelope was shredded and several members told the OE that we needed to go back to Tyvek mailers.

The word “trriage” is French and would be pronounced “tree-AHJE.” As you might guess from the “tri...” it has to do with the number three. Casualties arriving at a military hospital were divided into three groups at once – those who would probably survive with the First Aid they had already received; those who would not survive no matter what was done; and those who would benefit from immediate attention. Of course the boundaries of these divisions are fuzzy and have shifted a lot with advances in medical technology. The word is much older than the Vietnam war — the OED traces it to 1727 as referring to a scheme of sorting by quality, and to 1930 in the specific military medicine sense.

John Hertz may have consigned Stahl (the discoverer of phlogiston) to “rust” rather than “dust” because “Stahl” is German for “steel.” A serious karmic debt is incurred by the perpetrators of bilingual puns. [*But what about Stihl? (see the Hertz loc thish).*]

I haven't seen the statistics — is the wolf/dog hybrid any worse than the pit-bull? Locally a pit-bull thought to be gentle jumped a 5-foot wall and injured two small children severely and four other people trying to rescue them. The only one I know of in this neighborhood is white and deaf -- I have talked to the guy walking it on a leash. It seems as placid as a turtle but of course it knows it's on a leash. [*I would be interested to learn the results of the necropsy done on that “pit bull” that reportedly attacked those children, if a necropsy was done. If your local laws don't require one, they should; there could have been an organic cause for the dog to have done as you report. The dog breed commonly called “pit bull” is the American Staffordshire Terrier. “Pit bull” has become a popular shorthand for media reports on dangerous dogs. I often wonder how many other dog-attack incidents are unreported just because the dog involved is not a “pit bull.” I am a believer in the phrase “There are no bad dogs, just*

bad owners,” with the proviso that there is always a chance that a dog can have an organic cause for humanly-unacceptable behavior. If more people treated dogs like dogs and not like human children, regardless of breed, I think there would be fewer incidents like the one you reference.]

An institution like the N3F is not only different from year to year but from member to member. [This is the point I have tried and failed to get across to some who still see a purpose in denigrating the club for what members dead and gone did 20, 30 or 50 years ago.] I am not much of an organization man, but found myself a Director of it [I seriously doubt this is the case; you were nominated and elected, most likely, which is how one becomes a Director for N3F.] for a few years during (and probably because of) the benevolent dictatorship of the late lamented Janie Lamb. I don't regret it, though it's unlikely I would ever do such a thing again. There were no notable scandals while I was a member — I joined after Janie rescued the organization from the people who absquatulated with the treasury. [And the N3F is not the only fan organization that's had this kind of problem – do I need to say TAFF? No, it wasn't the EXACT same problem, but it was similar, just to forestall any arguments.]

Jason K. Burnett <http://www.livejournal.com/~brithistorian>
4903 Camden Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55430
e-zine available upon request

I'm going to be writing this as I get spare minutes here and there, so I apologize in advance if this LOC turns out to have a rather patchwork appearance. I'm glad to hear you're feeling better, though it would have been better still to have had you not get sick at all. Still, I suppose one can't have everything.

I'm currently at what is hopefully the tail end of a long job search, Angel and I having lost our previous employment in mid-April. If all goes well, I will have a new job by the time I finish this LOC. I'm also in the process of finishing up my first and (for the time being) final semester of library school -- while I still think I would enjoy being a librarian, and think I would do quite good at it, I have found library school to be intolerable, so I'm trying to finish out this semester with decent grades (so as not to burn any bridges behind me) and leaving school. {cue Frankie singing "Library School Dropout"}

Re: **Lyn McConchie's** comments on wolf-dogs: I had no idea that these were illegal in New Zealand. Though given some of the horror stories I've heard about them, it's probably not a bad idea. I think modern

life, especially modern urban life, is really not well-suited to people keeping dogs. [Done properly, with the needs of both the human and the dog in mind, “modern urban life” can be quite suitable for them. The problems come when people who don't know how to interact with dogs get one and then expect it to be like a human child and learn things in a human way and behave as a human behaves. I'd like to see state requirements for all dog owners that include a training class before a dog can be acquired and license requirements heavily enforced as a result. Every community should have an SPCA squad charged with investigating not only animal abuse claims but license maintenance. Of course, these laws and units would benefit the dogs more than the humans, so they'll probably not get passed in my lifetime. What's that old saying about how you can tell how advanced a society is by how it treats its elderly and its animals?] In Bobby Fischer Goes to War, which I'm currently about halfway through, I picked up the interesting tidbit that at the time of the Fischer-Spassky match (1972), it was illegal to own a dog in Reykjavik. I'm not sure if this is still the case, but it seems to me like a not entirely bad idea. [Maybe for the people in Reykjavik; me, I can't imagine my life without a companion animal, dog or cat.]

Upon reading the list of Hugo nominees for this year, I was rather amused that I was more familiar with the fanzine and fan writer categories than any of the pro categories (having read exactly zero of the nominees from the Best Novel, Novella, Novelette, or Short Story categories). At the risk of stirring up some controversy (not something I'm generally prone to do), I'm going to voice a couple of my opinions here: 1. I think *Banana Wings* should win, with *Chunga* a close second. 2. I think the qualifications requirements for Best Fanzine are too lenient. If the Hugos are truly to represent the fans' assessment of the best the genre has to offer, I don't think requiring a fanzine to pub two issues in the calendar year prior to nomination is excessive.

I realize this is likely to be an unpopular position in some quarters, as it would permanently bar from eligibility some very fine zines (*Argentus* immediately comes to mind) and would have disqualified at least one of this year's nominees (*Plokta* only pubbed once in 2005, and I believe *Challenger* only pubbed once, but I can't check that as I don't receive *Challenger* [and am increasingly unlikely to now that finances have forced Guy to limit distribution] and the *Challenger* website is currently down). I don't think I'm being unreasonable here. I'm not demanding weekly or monthly or even quarterly publication. I just think that more than one ish a

year is necessary in order to be recognized as "Best Fanzine" (for whatever value of "Best" you choose to use).

I particularly enjoyed **Lyn McConchie's** article on genre crossovers. It was particularly pertinent to me because of one of the books I'm currently reading: *Warprize* by Elizabeth Vaughan, which is a crossover of swords & sorcery (more swords than sorcery) with romance. Tor classified it as romance, but my local library shelved it with fantasy, so apparently no one's really sure what to do with this mixture. But much to my surprise, it actually works. It may not be to everyone's taste, but I'm quite thoroughly enjoying it.

I also enjoyed Chris Garcia's "Geeks on a Plane" story. A very charming little fannish slice of life.

I perfectly understand your reasoning behind "defriending" (to use a bit of LiveJournal slang) the un-named individual in Las Vegas. (Who I will continue to un-name even though I know who it was without having to look it up.) When I first encountered this individual, I asked him about the amount of dislike for the N3F that he and a number of individuals that he associates with display. I was stunned and horrified to discover that it all went back to events of 40 years ago! Humph. How are we supposed to look to the future if we won't let go of grudges from the past? [*My point exactly.*]

Since my potential future employers apparently don't believe in doing anything related to the hiring process in any sort of a hurry, I still don't know for certain whether or not I have a job, and if so for how much money, even though it has now been five hours since I started this LOC. Harrumph. [*Hope the news has changed by the time you read this.*]

Paul Di Filippo

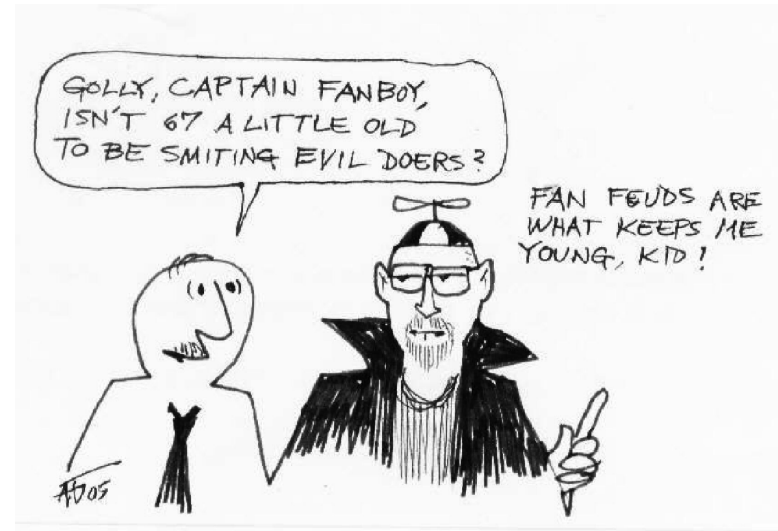
Thanx for the latest ish. Glad to hear your medical issues are under control and responding to treatment. Also nice to learn the identity of your fannish patron. All good karma to him! Fandom is indeed family, in the best sense.

*E. B. Frohvet / 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr., #506
Ellicott City, MD 21042 / April 21, 2006*

It's really nice to see PN back on track again.

One is of course acquainted with the name of Peter Sullivan; we may have exchanged a remark in the lettercol of *Banana Wings*. However,

I have no personal familiarity with the gentleman. I reiterate the offer: if there's anything I can do for Peter from the sketchy realms of American fandom, name it and I'll try.



Ah yes, welcome to the subtle joys of fannish feud. Without speculating about names, let me observe that certain factions in fandom not only feel free to spearfish anyone outside their group, but have in common with President Bush the inability to admit to an error. For my part I have no interest in N3F but am content to let them go their own way. My own feud in fandom is inactive at the present. The other one is, so far as I know, over: I apologized, admitted my error, period.

(Slight pause to put the orange tree on the patio. No, that's not a figure of speech.)

Lloyd Penney: Perhaps "quiz" is a debasement of *quid est*, what is it?, through the connected element of the truth not being instantly evident?

I can think of at least two SFnal examples of a library which was filed vertically in a narrow tower-type structure; but in both instances used static horizontal shelving. Melissa Scott, *Silence in Solitude*; Elizabeth Waters, *Changing Fate*. No doubt one could come up with others on research, but the topic seems too narrow to support an article.

Ahnold punching the camel may have been borrowed from "Mongol" (Alex Karras) punching out the horse in Mel Brooks' "Blazing Saddles," and Brooks probably borrowed the sight gag from someone else.

[Completely forgot about "Blazing Saddles," and you're probably right about that.]

John Hertz: I thought the actor who played Boromir in the film actually captured him rather well.

Eric Mayer: "If an editor feels he or she is part of fandom...that's enough." I am reminded of Adlai Stevenson's line: "It hurts too much to laugh, and I'm too old to cry." There are still a lot of excellent SF books being published. From your distaste for "literary" SF, you probably wouldn't care for Wolfe. What did you like when you did read SF? We might be able to suggest some things. Amusing tale about the fan catching balls. He might have failed at a low level of professional baseball and was eager to make a point.

Brad W. Foster: To be honest, I never thought of "Lawrence of Arabia." Human history is full of instances of massacres of prisoners or non-combatants: the infamous Katyn Forest massacre, which for decades the Red Army (the actual villains) successfully blamed on the Nazis.

Joy Smith: I can imagine where a civilian would have some problem with The Faded Sun books. If you ever get the chance, visit Arlington National Cemetery. (Should you be that far north, and care to drop by, lunch is on me.)

Yes, you should read the original Norton books The Beast Master and Lord of Thunder for a better view of **Lyn McConchie's** books, of which there are now three in that series.

Mystery/SF crossovers: Asimov, The Caves of Steel, The Naked Sky, many years later The Robots of Dawn. Lee Killough did a few but I don't recall the titles. Richard Bowker, Marlborough Street, if you want to call that SF. Lois Bujold's Komarr is a police-procedural set in the Vorkosigan series. Hal Clement, Iceworld. You could make a case of sorts for Heinlein's Have Space Suit Will Travel. (What does the Mother Thing do for a living? Check it out.)

John Hertz

Thanks for Perry 5/4. So that's who's been mailing from the U.K.

"Rust" was one of my jokes. Stihl – phlogiston – see? [*I do now.*]

The parts I wish Garcia had explored were the old-time Japanese writers, the learning to cook Japanese style, and the blonde's thoughts about *Niekas*. In my own fanzine *Vanamonde* I try to write about what appeals to my sense of wonder, and may interest readers; some is expressly sf; sf is the thread through all the beads.

Trinlay Khadro

April 6, 2006

Are those shrikes/butcher birds on the cover?

We've been very busy since Uncle passed away, packing up & moving the things we had stored at his home. How did I ever accumulate so much stuff? My apartment looks a bit like a warehouse with all the boxes, though Megumi is enjoying the climbing & stalking. She hasn't been too keen on the squads of friends coming by to help.

Joseph Major: I think I've lived above & next door to Hi Fi Harry & his sister at various times. Rubbermaid tubs are very good for storing stuff in basements, even if there's no flood they generally keep mice & bugs out. Re: "Frodo Baggins," we are really enjoying this! More, more!

Just a few roads over & across the park from us is a pretty pricey neighborhood/burb. Riverhills is mostly wooded with big lots for homes where just the space for a home and a bit of landscaping has been cleared. People move out there & are either thrilled to have wildlife so nearby or are completely freaked out by the deer eating the shrubbery and the raccoons trying to get into the trash. Uh, hello: moving to the country means wildlife acts like wildlife and not just scenery. I find myself happily surprised to see so many deer, fox, raccoons, etc. in my neighborhood which is much more built up & lawnified. Being near a creek, we also spot an occasional turtle or frog. We rarely see pigeons, even in Milwaukee. The city has been well settled by peregrine falcons and the burbs with red-tailed hawks. [*Here in Eastlake, the fauna is quite varied. I had to laugh at myself the first time I saw a standard-sized whitetail deer here, after over a decade of living with Key deer – "regular" deer look monstrous in comparison. Frequently spotted in the area: possum, raccoon, rabbits, skunk (most recently a family of six ambling across the back entrance road to my village), gulls, hawks, turkey vultures, squirrels, chipmunks, turtles, wild turkeys, swans, Canada geese, mallard ducks, muskrats and, I think, either weasels or mink.*]

Lloyd Penney: I often notice how much the world is built for people taller than me.

Helen Spiral: Thanks for the egoboo!

Peter Sullivan: I think an early comment was, "Everybody reads the lettercol FIRST anyway."

E.B. Frohvet: Not only do we enjoy characters & cultures, but also watching how they go through transformative experiences in the course of a story.

Dave Szurek: With very few exceptions, it seems like the characters in horror movies aren't familiar with horror movies <grin>.

Jim Sullivan: Sweet story, we enjoyed it. Uncle would have liked it too.

And again, via e-mail:

Joseph Major: Re: "Linus Torwalds, Reanimator" by W.H. Gates, and H.P. Lovecraft perhaps including, "The Server@thegates.com" <grin>.

Re: cmt on Cherryh, I'm reminded of the British term "gone native". As in: William Adams landed in Japan, and almost promptly "went native." Thanks for the recommendation of Lord of the Golden Fan, IMHO it's better than Shogun. I finally found a copy.

Re: **Lyn & Jan's cmt:** Yep, Mike Lowery is a regular part of Milwaukee fandom. We see him at least once a month at the Milwapa collation, and often at other fannish stuff. He's quite visible even far afield at cons, since he tends to dress in Blaze Orange.

Animals, that might ordinarily take a while to get used to people, like you... they know you love and admire them. At least in my teens and early 20's I know I had a particular "talent" with dogs the owners knew to be "not particularly friendly" or even "hates everyone"... they'd greet me as an old friend and accept ear scratches, often covering me in slobbery kisses. I don't know if I still have that blessing, as everyone I know with dogs has friendly ones. Then again, I thought Megumi "wary of strangers" but today she was following the cable guy around and watching him work.

TK / June 7, 2006

I still haven't quite recovered from the estate sale. [*Hope it went well.*] My living room still looks something like a warehouse: boxes of things I had stored at Uncle's house, inherited treasures from not only Uncle but also my grandmother, who passed away many years ago but also lived in the same house. I also have some unsold items from the sale that will eventually be up on eBay, including Depression glass and porcelain from occupied Japan.

Thank you for the condolences. Miss Megumi is also missing Uncle, as we'd semi-regularly take her to visit him. This week included a trip to the vet and she cried the whole way in the car. She's checked out fine and managed not to tear up the vet too much in the process of shots

and blood specimen taking. I **do** have to start her on a vitamin, which she isn't happy with. She loves her waterfall water dish though – it keeps the water appealing so she drinks enough. [*Oooh, that sounds great for dogs too – where did you get it?*] Local fannish activity has been a great support for my mental health. As long as I'm getting out and getting social a couple times a week, I can resist the family tendency to agoraphobia.

KT and I have been reading Terry Pratchett a lot lately. Recently we've devoured The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents, Wee Free Men and Hatful of Sky. Before that, it was Going Postal, which has been lent to a friend, a retired postal worker. She's reading it aloud to her husband, also retired from the Postal Service. They weren't previously fannish...we'll see what happens.

[*Trin's envelope arrived with a very nifty stamp, advertising the peregrine falcon as the fastest bird, which title it certainly owns. A peregrine in full stoop can reach 200 mph. I faunch for the day when I can actually watch a peregrine hunt and score a kill; that would be such a joy. I know, it sounds weird, but that's me.*]

Erika Maria Lacey

[*Welcome back, traveler...*]

Downloaded the past three issues available, and decided to drop you a line.

Sheryl Birkhead's comment in 5.2 about being prepared and getting goodies amused me. It's not very often that land-bound people think of anything such as disaster happening, probably because it doesn't occur all that often. Just recently there was a cyclone which struck northern Queensland which took a fair few people aback and which destroyed most of the banana crops; nothing one can really do about that. It's not a comfortable thing, living in the northern reaches of Australia during the summer, cyclone-prone months.

As for waterproofing a house, depends upon what it is made of. Brick, stone, those sorts of things would stand up to water better than plasterboard or wooden houses. One of the houses I used to live in was plasterboard, and what a nasty, cold place it was to live in during winter! (Although it doesn't get too cold in SE Queensland during winter, it was always a few degrees colder inside, and in summer a few degrees hotter.)

When I went to Perth last year for SwanCon, I had opportunity to talk to Glenda Larke on a number of occasions. Such an interesting person to talk to, with a variety of life experiences. I didn't get to talk to her too

long during one particularly interesting evening, alas, as a scary fan was staring down my chest most of the time and I skedaddled out of there.

Joseph Major's "Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" -- classic. How much time went into that! Liked it very much.

When I went to university the shortest way there involved walking through a graveyard from the train station to the ferry terminal. Didn't bother me at all; it was a long disused place, and most of the tombstones were starting to show signs of wear. The only creepy thing about that whole place was that the park adjacent to it used to have all sorts of weirdos, like the guy who flashed himself at all and sundry one particularly memorable day, and for whom I stationed myself as a don't-go-that-way person at the start of a forked path to save people the unfortunate memory.

An old flame was a hard-core C.J. Cherryh fan; she made me read just about every one of her works, and while sometimes they were harder reads than I wanted at the time, I never regretted it for an instant. "Cherryh makes the aliens truly alien," she said, and I couldn't agree more with either her or **Frohvet**. It was that very alienness which made my head work harder, for it's not often that you come across such.

Sue Bursztynski's comment in 5.4 about 800 being a huge con in Australia is completely right; last year Continuum (a con in Melbourne) had 500 people and that was considered ginormous! (Only because so many goths appeared because of Neil Gaiman, I warrant.)

"Dog Whisperer"? I'm not a very nervous person around dogs – not once they come up to you and sniff at your hand or wag their tails, anyway, but a few hints on how to behave around dogs and how to treat them wouldn't be amiss. Now that's one show I wouldn't mind owning a television for! It's easier to see and understand things like that on telly than it is to get from the print medium. I hadn't even ever realised that there were such things as wolfdogs, which is rather naive of me.

Garcia's little article on finding himself next to a fanzine fan was quite heartwarming. Every so often I find myself hoping I have found another fan! ... but no, someone who tells me that they like science fiction goes on to talk about Asimov, at which point I normally find myself yawning. No fan to be found here, and I continue on, for that's about the only thing they've ever read (pretty much to a point) and look at you blankly if you mention anyone at all more modern. Even people of my own age!

I am very sorry to hear of your health problems, and hope that you get better. Peter Sullivan is a champ for helping you out with your issues,

and so is anyone else who may be giving you aid. [*Thanks muchly. Peter, take a bow.*]

Joseph T. Major

1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

jtmajor@iglou.com / April 11, 2006

Silent eLOCutions: Ned Brooks: I'm surprised that they make shipping pallets out of oak. Presumably these are the ones with alternating upper and lower slats, so a vacuum hose could reach in between them. Otherwise, I would still go with Rubbermaid tubs.

Sue Bursztynski: I remember that Nimoy song about Bilbo Baggins when it came out. (Hint of age here.)

There's always the signing-off message Herman Giskes sent the SOE terminating the *Englandspiel*. And what Giskes did after the war — he became an officer in the new German intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*.

While you are refreshingly purist, all too many people wanted more Conan and they wanted it now. Then, once de Camp & Co. had filled their expectations, they began denouncing de Camp for giving them what they had asked for, but not as they wanted it. (So they instead preferred, for example, "Robert Jordan", who to my mind did a far worse job.) [*Too right; Turtledove's take on the young Conan is much better by far, and, to me, closer to the spirit of the character than anyone other than R.E. Howard has gotten.*]

E. B. Frohvet: At least they hunt deer in your part of the world. Do you know, by the way, who translated Bambi into English?

John Hertz: Yes, I remember phlogiston. Next time you see Graf Rumfoord, say "'Allo." Do you remember Lemuria? [*Dave Locke does, dimly.*]

Eric Mayer: I tend to read niche mysteries, and more for the character than the mystery. For example, I have just discovered Ron Goulart's Groucho Marx mysteries. If you want to read my review, let me know and I will send you the issue of *Alexiad* that has them.

Me: I have been stepping down on the steroids, and hope to be off them soon. That and the half-hour walks Lisa and I have been taking should help get my weight down.

Lyn McConchie: The best-known example of real-live incidents becoming fiction was carried out by Ian Fleming. Now that it is known, as they say, it's amusing to look over the James Bond novels and note where



this and that came from real life. (The story of Bond, er Dusko Popov slapping down \$50,000 to shut up a better in an Estoril casino, for example.)

If you think wolf dogs are bad, stay away from Presa Canarios. Think of pit bulls the size of Great Danes and meaner in proportion.

Lloyd Penney: Hope you can buy any food after commuting to Corflu! [Huh?]

John Purcell: Did the panel mention Darrell Schweitzer's theory that Robert E. Howard faked his suicide and became L. Ron Hubbard? I quickly note that it was a Frivolous Literary Theory, not to be taken seriously, I hope. Now I will clam up about this.

Joy Smith: I think I would prefer a "Draughtmaster" to a "Droughtmaster", though during some rainy springs I have my doubts.

"Flying High In Fandom": **Chris Garcia,** you sit on a plane and the woman next to you is not only an Animé fan, she's open to learning about fanzine fandom. Some guys have all the luck! (Well, there *was* how I met Lisa . . .)

"Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up": "Restarting your colitis medicine." You mean like the time I had to take the CT scan and the doctor told me not to take metformin for a couple of days unless I didn't

mind losing those kidneys. The machine could have been used in a remake of "Metropolis."

Many years ago I looked at the N3F's genzine *Tightbeam* and was pleasantly surprised to note how fannish it was; lots of give-and-take, fans all over contributing all over the place. Then the money ran short . . . [That happens to the best of us, sadly. The current clubzine is a combo of the OO and *Tightbeam*, and usually runs to 32 pages with locs, reviews, bureau reports and artwork.]]

Eric Mayer / May 22, 2006

I thought that the article by **Lyn McConchie** might be of interest to some of the folks who read my blog so I kind of diverted my Loc to my blog, I fear.

What I said, a couple days ago:

"Those of you who read/write both sf and mysteries might be interested in the newest issue of Jan Stinson's zine, *Peregrine Nations*, in which sf writer Lyn McConchie ([Witchworld Chronicles](#), with Andre Norton) talks about crossovers between SF/F and whodunnits, particularly Donna Andrews' detective, Artificial Intelligence Personality, Turing Hopper, and J.D. Robb's series featuring police detectives Eve Dallas and Roarke.

"Lyn decides that Andrews' series would best be classified as SF while Robb's, although it takes place in the 2050s, is basically a mystery. She prefers the latter, in part because it strikes her as being more clearly positioned within its genre. Lyn estimates that the Turing Hopper books are about 60/40 SF and feels such a close split tends not to work: '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.' "

"It's an interesting idea. I'm not sure whether I agree or not. I suppose Mary and I do try to make sure that the history in our Byzantine period books doesn't overwhelm the mystery. They are clearly whodunnits and not historical sagas.

"There's no chance of us stumbling over into SF, although we do enjoy flirting with the fantastic on occasion. The soothsayer, Ahaseurus, for instance, apparently performed some remarkable feats in the first and fifth book of the series. Since people in the sixth century firmly believed in magic, demons and the like, it seems to us historically accurate to allow for a supernatural explanation for some things. Nothing happens that a twentieth century skeptic couldn't explain away, but we don't go out of our way to knock down the possibilities with arguments no one would've used during John's era.

"If we wrote, say, techno thrillers, we'd face bigger problems. Where's the line between a techno thriller and SF? Is there one?"

"It's true, we used automatons in one book. Was it a Byzantine techno thriller?"

Actually I find myself unable to write reviews. I could probably write you a short article about how, although my wife and I write mysteries, they are in many ways approached by us as if they were sf/fantasy. I certainly keep dragging almost fantastic elements into the stories, as in much sf/f the setting is a major protagonist, we follow the Heinleinian method (we hope) of immersing the reader rather than using the big blocks of explication many historicals use. We even had one book based on automatons. Which was sf in a sense since we don't know the Byzantines had them in 538. They had them a few hundred years later and the concept had been laid out hundreds of years before, so we extrapolated that they could've had them.

I want to comment on your editorial there at the end. Probably I shouldn't. It's occurred to me that considering I've been dabbling in sf fandom for fun, I've been writing an awful lot of negative things. But I'm beginning to realize the irritant is mostly one source. You know, the one you don't mention by name, that arrives in big email attachments. So, I gather you wisely don't want to continue on about the matter, but I wanted to commiserate.

Luckily I have webmail with my dialup so when I get large attachments I didn't ask for I just delete them off the server without having to download anything. If I couldn't do that I'd have to ask people to refrain from unannounced attachments of any size. Sometimes, in the course of my work, I have to go back and forth via email with a client -- and I would not care to find myself stalled from replying for minutes on end while I waited for the latest words of wisdom about what all right-minded fen think and which organizations they are required to mock. *[I also have a webmail capability so I can delete stuff I'd rather not download. And how is it a*

fannish thing to keep sending someone something when they've already asked not to receive it? :::shakes head:::]

I'm glad I'm not the only one who's been totally put off by these attitudes. This whole "me and my buddies are better than everyone else so bow down to us" routine -- which is all the blather really boils down to -- is tiresome and juvenile. One of the letterhacks tried to bait me a couple weeks ago, quoting something someone else said about something I said for Ghu's sake! Why I have no idea. Twenty years ago, I would've replied. But I guess I've learned something. Not nearly enough, but something. So just deleting addresses and forgetting the whole matter is probably the best solution. I'm just reading zines I enjoy. Some people are obviously never going to change so it is no use arguing with them.

What I'd really like to see now is **Richard Bergeron** come back and put out an N3F newsletter that wins a Hugo. Then the whole lot would probably keel over from the sheer horror of it all. *[:::giggling:::]*

The only trouble is, airing one's grievances can be kind of satisfying!

I enjoyed **Chris Garcia's** bit too. He has just laid out a whole series of article for you, ranging from why he's afraid to fly now and of course the history of fanzines he touches on! *[Now who's going to talk him into writing them, huh?]*

Lyn McConchie

The January PN arrived April 19th courtesy of kind Mr. Sullivan -- may multiple and manifold blessings shower upon his head. And it seems that they'll be showering on me too shortly. Many thanks for the transferred prize of a book in the last competition. I'll be waiting for it. But to comments ---

To **Ned Brooks**, yes, heh heh, my books all certainly were sent m-bag. That was my fourth time in America and, since during the first 1991 trip I stayed with a friend in LA who knew all about the system and made sure I did, every trip since has seen me being firm with the Post Office.

To **Sue Bursztynski**, I'm astounded at that US attendee; in my experience -- yes, they do turn up at our Natcons every so often -- Americans usually adore the smaller conventions. Harlan said that it so reminded him of US cons in the 50s, and other US writers/GoHs/ attendees have loved our cons for similar reasons. And ours are even smaller. Usually about the 200 mark, and more like an extended family gathering. Misty Lackey and Larry loved us a few years back because there was no sense of threat and everyone was friendly and sensible. That sensible bit of

course, is logical. If you have only one nutter/idiot per hundred, in a larger US con you may find a clump of 20-30 of them. Here you find 1-2 and everyone else will know them anyway and jump on them the minute they open their mouths. We have a VERY strong tradition of hospitality too, and it is not at all the done thing to hassle visitors.

To **John Hertz**, I watched LoTR films as they appeared on video and while I liked Sean Bean's portrayal of Boromir, I actually felt that Peter [Jackson] had got his actors the wrong way around. I believe that it would have been better to have had Mortenson as Boromir and Bean as Aragorn. To me that just felt as if it would have been more 'right' for both actors.

To **Joseph Major** and rhc to Peter [Sullivan], yes, I'd think the Periannath would have had miniature cows, and there really are a couple of breeds of them these days too. They're terminally cute at about waist-high. And in Janet Kagan's Mirabile, they appear in a tiny toe-endangering stampede that makes me giggle whenever I reread the book.

Re: your review on Beast Master's Ark. Many thanks for your kind words. And you were right to wonder about writing styles and collaboration. The books -- both Witch World and Beast Master Universe ones -- are marketed as a collaboration between [Andre Norton and me]. In fact this is based on her having created them, not on a genuine collaboration. In the first two Beast Master books (Ark and Circus) we did sit down while I was staying at her place in 1995 and work out a brief plot outline for both. When I wrote Ark I stuck fairly closely to that, but in Circus I strayed a bit. However, Andre loved both books which she saw before they were offered for publication.

The Key of the Keplian, which was the first of anything in her worlds that I wrote, was never originally intended for publication. Andre had not been well for some months in 1993 or thereabouts, she was rather depressed about a cataract operation that she feared may not have worked, and the book booby-trapped me too. I started writing a fantasy, found, three chapters in, that it was set in the WW and reared back in horror. You can't DO that sort of thing! However as I say, at the time Andre was miserable, (and I'd known her for years,) so to cheer her up I made a funny story of how my subconscious had sneaked up and sandbagged me, and sent her the first couple of chapters, saying that she should know what her world was doing behind her back. She really liked the first bit and asked for more. I'd planned to finish the book as it was (since I'd fallen in love with the characters, and I intended to rewrite it with a different setting once I was done,) so I'd continued to work on it.

I sent another couple of chapters, she asked for more again, and in the end -- over 8-9 months -- I completed the book and sent her all of it. Which -- completely unbeknownst to me -- she parceled up and sent to her then agent, Russell Galen, and told him she thought it was publishable and she would be happy if that was so. Warner books grabbed it when offered, and the first I knew of it was a 2 a.m. phone call. Andre subsequently (while I was staying with her in 1995) told me I had free rein to write in both worlds as she felt she'd written all in them that she wanted to write.

So far in the Beast Master Universe I've had Ark and Circus with Beast Master's Quest coming out in June. In the Witch World I've had The Key of the Keplian, Ciara's Song, The Duke's Ballad (a direct sequel to Song) and Silver May Tarnish, a standalone novel set in the Dales. However, due to litigation over her estate, any further books are on hold. If that is ever resolved and the winner is happy with me continuing, then I will.

Basically the system was that I wrote a book using one of her background/settings. I then sent her a copy and if she was okay with that it went on to our agent. Apart from Ark and Circus she had no actual input into the books as they were being done. That suited Andre, who trusted that I would not distort the worlds she created and would remain true to them. I did, and, if I am so fortunate as to be able to continue, I will keep on doing so. I loved her work as a reader at sixteen and don't want it altered any more than any other reader now I'm sixty.

Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2 / April 20, 2006

Many thanks for *Peregrine Nations* WN20, I believe. Congrats on 20 issues! I have a little extra time, so here's an unexpectedly early loc.

So many fellow loccers are concerned about my lack of knowledge about how tall hobbits should be. I do know the hobbit height references in LotR, but when most of your friends tower above you at 5'8" and more, you're a hobbit, whether you like it or not, or whether you meet the usual height.

I do not understand why many Worldcon attendees go elsewhere in the world, and expect to find exactly what they left behind at home. Instead of complaining about how small the convention is, they don't seem able to appreciate their new surroundings. I ran into a lot of this when we were at the Worldcon in the Netherlands in 1990. The food's different, the TV's in mostly foreign languages, the money looks funny, the stores don't have

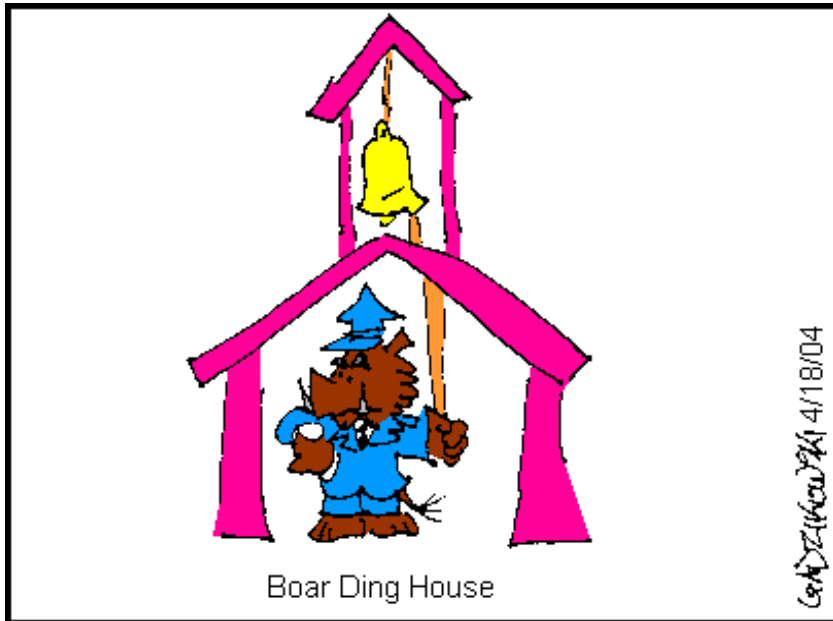
much selection, etc., etc. Of course things are different, you're not at home! They don't realize how foolish they looked.

I don't think Yvonne and I worked with Diane Marchant, but the name is familiar. Shame about her passing; few people even remember the good works of the Welcomittee.

Mention of M*A*S*H and any mobile army hospitals reminds me that the very last MASH until was recently decommissioned in February, and signed over to the Pakistani government. The idea of the MASH is just over sixty years old, and variants of it exist in other places and countries.

Perhaps my own most memorable breakfast took place in 2000 in Chicago at the Worldcon there. When we're at the Worldcon, Yvonne and I have a policy to have one really good meal, so we decided that given that we were to get ready to hold three massive end-of-bid parties at the convention, we'd better nourish ourselves properly. At the hotel restaurant, we ordered off-menu, and we enjoyed breakfast steaks, eggs, home fries, fresh fruit, juice and milk. Delicious...and then came the bill for \$50+. Not only delicious and most memorable, but also the most expensive breakfast I've ever had. But, given that we didn't have time that day for lunch or dinner, it was well worth it.

I don't mind it if some of my letters go unpublished. Perhaps some of them weren't that illuminating, others fairly rushed, and possibly not



printable in the faned's eyes. In the long run, when I send letters to publications that do not publish them, like *Ansible* or *Emerald City* or Arthur Hlavaty's *Nice Distinctions*, the letter becomes part of a conversation, especially with Cheryl Morgan. Making your opinions known, even if they are not printed, is not a waste of time, and if they are, I wish those faneds would tell me to not bother.

Hey, **Chris**, didn't know us Canajans had such interestin' speech patterns, and using all them there furrin' words like please and thank you and excuse me...There's just more proof that in the long run, we didn't invent zines, or conventions or any of the fannish details that make us think that we're unique, we just put our own spin on it, and lots of other groups do the very same thing.

I have no experience with the N3F itself, outside of some of its members, and its history may have made it look like a group of outsiders within fandom itself, but I am looking forward to what **President Garcia** will do with it to bring it out into the fannish spotlight.

John Purcell

Many thanks for the latest version of *Peregrine Nations* [5.4]. A very enjoyable read. I have been trying to figure out what exactly the person on the cover is looking at or out of. It's either a window on a space ship or some other kind of vessel, and then I thought this person might be in a prison cell and is staring out at a vast open space, yearning to be free. But if that was the case, there would be more bars on the window. Still, interesting picture.

Jim Sullivan's special breakfast article certainly sparked some interesting comments in your lettercolumn. **Eric Mayer's** loc is a neat bit of baseball nostalgia that finished with a steak and eggs breakfast the following morning. And I most certainly agree with **E.B. Frohvet** about our military not getting the type of respect they used to receive. Whether or not we agree with the Powers That Be, those who choose to put themselves in harm's way should receive our respect. I certainly don't agree with our current President's decisions and actions, but I'm not going to take it out on our men and women in the military. They deserve much better treatment than that.

So that's what "The Chick Magnet" is all about. **Chris Garcia** has mentioned it so many times that I've been curious to see it. Interesting little write-up, and I see what you mean about it having stfnal-feminist-comic-book elements. Sounds like fun.

We have a small dog -- a chihuahua/maltese mix -- that is extremely protective of my wife. [*My late husband would have said, "That's not a dog, that's a long-haired rat."*] Of our three dogs, Pulcinella is the smallest and thinks, of course, that he runs the house. (Marmalade, our 20-pound red and white, short-haired domestic cat has this honor.) He even growls at our kids and me when we pretend we're going to "attack" or "touch" his mommy. It's kind of funny, and sometimes we do these things just to make his little butt twitch and hear him growl so menacingly, then he spews out a sharp, high-pitched "YIP!" that destroys the dog's "me so bad" stance. A cute and fun way to kill some time. [*Also a good way to build a psychotic dog, if you're not careful; I'd advise finding less psychologically confusing games to play.*]

Lyn McConchie's article is interesting reading. I have always enjoyed crossbred genres, and mysteries + science fiction is a fine combination. Adding in Romance is a novel twist. (You don't have a pun tax for your zine, do you, Jan?) [*No, but after reading over the locs thish, I'm seriously considering one.*]

My personal favorites are mysteries set in historical times, such as the Brother Caedfal books by Ellis Peters, which can best be described as medieval murder mysteries. I've acquired a batch of these from e-Bay, plus made-for-tv movies (BBC products) starring Derek Jacobi as Brother Caedfal. I recommend both: the books are fun, and the videos are likewise highly enjoyable. [*I've seen some of the BBC eps and they're quite good, but haven't read any of the novels.*] If you liked *The Name of the Rose* starring Sean Connery (great book by Umberto Eco), you'll enjoy the Brother Caedfal series. [*Read the Eco book, also saw the film, liked both.*] Hmm... Maybe this summer I'll write up a proper book/movie review of one of these, *One Corpse Too Many*. I am sure you'd be interested in running it. [*Soitnly!*]

Unlike **Chris Garcia**, I am not scared of flying. Absolutely love it, in fact. The only time I've ever really been freaked out while on a plane was when I was flying into Salt Lake City for my dad's funeral back in early December of 1988. The entire basin seemed to be covered in the thickest fog bank I've ever seen as the plane crossed over the mountains, then tipped sideways to spiral down through the gray towards the airport. And like an idiot, I was sitting in a wing window seat. Spinning sideways through solid nothingness and descending rapidly is not my idea of a good time. When the plane finally came out underneath the cloud bank, I found myself staring at water that seemed so close I thought that the wing tip

could touch the surface. With a swift twist and a lift, the plane righted itself and zoomed head-first toward the runway that began just beyond the water's edge. My knuckles were hurting from gripping the armrests so tightly, but the plane touched down perfectly and all was right in the world. To this day, I haven't flown into Salt Lake City again. I would, too, but this is only because there's no reason to do so. If we go there on vacation to visit my relatives in American Fork, Utah (where my parents are buried), my family drives and uses some of the most beautiful campgrounds we've ever seen. We love camping. [*My family were big on camping when my brother and sister and I were younguns. Made the field exercises in the Army look like reruns, except my family had a Ted Williams pop-up trailer camper; the Army made us erect huge tents that could sleep 20 people with a wood stove included.*]

Reading your editorial was enlightening. To an extent I think you're making a big to-do about nothing, but at least you've aired your side of things, which I believe is good. Like you, I have no interest in starting a fan feud, but it's sad that a lot of people have a dim view of the N3F, even if the jests were made in mild joke mode (which is how I took them). I know that the person you refer to at one point served as an N3F officer. In fact, this person has expressed the hope that the new N3F president (**Mr. Garcia**) can bring the organization back out to a position of vitality in sf fandom.

[*I know all this. I read the column that the Certain Person wrote. In fact, I read it more than once, just to make sure I wasn't seeing things. Tell me something: were it you, in my place, can you honestly say you'd not have reacted negatively to that kind of commentary?*] I am looking forward to seeing how *Chris's* infectious energy and humor invigorate the organization. I personally think he's a great choice for the position, and wish him the best of luck. Who knows? I might even join some day. This is doubtful, but I still think that better days for the N3F lie ahead. [*You'd certainly be welcome.*]

Alexander R. Slate

Sorry it has taken me so long to respond. I am way behind on my correspondence.

I thought that the cover for this issue [5.3] was absolutely astounding.

Another good issue, but there are two articles that particularly stand out. One is **JT Major's** take of *Lord of the Rings* redone in the

style of Shakespeare. Alas, that this too, too poor spirit desires but to hear what said is not. Perchance some day we will see the rest. The second is **EB Frohvet's** "Cherryh's The Faded Sun: An Appreciation." Like E.B. and you, I have a great liking for Carolyn Cherryh's writing. I think that her science fiction is better than her fantasy overall, though the Morgaine series is quite good (though whether to categorize that as sf or fantasy can be debated). [*Science fantasy, then.*] The particular series discussed really is very good and was the author's best work to that date. However, in terms of capturing the psychology of an alien race, I would rate the Chanur series a little higher, and the 2 3-book Foreigner series (serieses - ok, the books in the Foreigner universe) were better still. [*Which just goes to show that everyone has an opinion.*]

Joy V. Smith

Thanks to **Lyn McConchie** for the background on Manning Coles; while I never was a fan of Tommy Hambleton, one of my favorite books (a keeper) is Coles' Without Lawful Authority, in which Hambleton is a minor character. Btw, what does RYC mean? [*In reference to your comment.*]

Good review of "The Chick Magnet"; I hope it shows up at cons. (I've seen a lot of fun films at Oasis, an SF literary con.) I enjoyed **E.B. Frohvet's** "A Little Girl and Her Dog"; I never thought of a St. Bernard as a guardian. I also enjoyed the book reviews; I'll keep my eyes open for the Turing Hopper and Aunt Dimity series.

Re: your editorial. I am so glad you're doing better and can move on... And thanks to the person who sent out the PN issues.

Re: N3F, I'll just say that there's no point in being obsessive and not letting go. I'm glad you took a stand. I will never cease to be amazed at people who attack and wonder why someone was offended.

Thanks much to **Christopher Garcia** for sharing "Flying High in Fandom." Isn't it amazing how connections can be made when sharing what you enjoy!

Helen Spiral

The Department of Better Late than Never brings you a brief LoC on PN 5-4 (edited to add: make that a LoC on the first half of PN 5-4, with more later perhaps).

E.B. Frohvet can, if he pleases, comfort himself with the fact that, even face to face, many people mistake my straight-faced humour for earnestness.

John Hertz mentioned phlogiston which I've always wished appeared in more fantasy/alternative history steampunk novels. I'm sure it has tremendous plot possibilities.

I enjoyed **Eric Mayer's** baseball breakfast anecdote.

Joseph Major's movie "Linus Torvalds, Reanimator" by W. H. Gates & H. P. Lovecraft sounds like a winner to me (with an appropriately careful disclaimer about the fictional nature of the characters).

I applaud **Peter Sullivan's** efforts on behalf of *Peregrine Nations*. I was standing in the kitchen one morning ready to trek to the post office and holding a parcel I was sending to a fellow fan, who lives on the other side of the world and whom I've never met, when our postman Chris arrived with a dead-tree copy of PN and I experienced one of those synchronous moments of fandom-love, spiced with my consciousness of continuing fan-history, which gave me a wonderful feeling of being part of this network of people through both space and time. I'm embarrassed now but I shall refrain from deleting that last paragraph because it's true, :-)

Jim Sullivan

803 Woodcliff Dr., South Bend IN 46615 / April 24, 2006

How kind of you to send me a copy of your publication (Jan. '06) with nice comments from your readers on my "Breakfast" piece. You've made my day and then some! Thank you.

I just finished a book on the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. His patron was the Elector of Hanover (part of Germany). Your patron, **Peter Sullivan** (no relation but I like the sound of his last name and possibly the cut of his jib), follows nicely in the pantheon of those who nourish the arts. Hoorah for Sully! [*Gee, I always wanted a patron, and now I have one!*]

Peter Sullivan

I suspect it would have been untenable to keep me as an "Anonymous Benefactor" for much longer. **Ned Brooks** in particular seems to have noticed the postmark, and has had enough post off me directly to potentially make the connection.

I believe that the Leonard Nimoy song "The Ballad of Bilbo Baggins" that **Sue Bursztynski** refers to is genuine, and originally dates back to the late 1960s, when he was trying to launch a singing career on the

back of his Star Trek fame. (I think William Shatner's awful "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds" was much the same idea.) The Nimoy video has been floating about the internet for several years now, I gather.

I agree with **Joseph Major** that hobbits might well have had smaller cows – but I'm not sure it would have been necessary. Normal sized cows would have produced more milk per cow, and the milk-accessing parts of even a normal cow are nicely at hobbit-height. Or is he trying to pull the udder one? [:::groaning:::]

Lyn McConchie mentions that "an entire one-hour TV programme" was shown in New Zealand about a hoax. For some reason, this reminded me of Orson Welles' very last film, "F for Fake". At the start of the film, he promises that everything one will see in the next hour is absolutely true. At the end, he pops up again to point out that this hour expired 15 minutes ago.

Lloyd Penney might like to note that Terry Wogan's show now has a weekly highlights package for download off the BBC website, so there's no need for him to get up in the middle of the night to hear him. This is, of course, not a podcast but a TOG-cast.

On **John Purcell's** point, I think that what matters about fanzines is not so much what divides them (as any classification of "sercon" or "fannish" has a tendency to lead to) but what they have in common. But then I just enjoy fanzines – this is one of the reasons that I'm including such comparative esoterica as postal games fanzines in my reviews in *Pixel*. John is spot on that communication and contact are the cornerstones of any fanzine culture, whether it be sercon, fannish, postal games, fan fiction (including "slash fiction"), or furry fandom.

I know what you mean when you say that keeping up with PN is a way of keeping your mind off health problems. This was part of my rationale behind doing *FAFIA*, four issues of a mini-zine, whilst working my way through heart problems earlier this year.

Non-Monarchist News

by J.G. Stinson

Lisa and Joe Major run "The Monarchist News" in their fanzine *Alexiad*, allowing fandom (at least the people who read *Alexiad*) to keep up to date on the doings of royalty around the world (as much as gets reported, anyway). It's easier than surfing the Web for the same info, so I appreciate their efforts in compiling the items.

April 21, 2006 was HRH Queen Elizabeth II's 80th birthday; I wouldn't have known that if I hadn't walked into the Manistee jewelry store to have a pair of rings appraised. (Manistee is "downtown" to everyone living within 5 miles of the city, and that includes us villagers in Eastlake). The ladies who work in the shop, all three of them, were wearing sparkling tiaras (rhinestones are good for that), and practiced their royal handwavings when I mentioned how stunning they looked.

Only two of the ladies were in the shop when I first arrived, but the third came in a few minutes later to report an insult. She'd been wearing her tiara as she went about her errands downtown (where the jewelry store is located), and when she went into the Hallmark Gold Crown store (of all places), one of the clerks there (someone she knows well) said she looked stupid in the tiara, and that no one else would be stupid enough to walk around town wearing a tiara no matter the occasion. "Booshwah," I said, "she's stupid for not appreciating the occasion. And she's probably jealous. I don't think you look stupid at all. In fact, I'd go over there and tell her that there's certainly more than one woman who'd wear a tiara in public on the Queen's birthday."

You should have seen the shark smiles, children.

Despite the fact that I was not dressed for the occasion (I had a scarf on my head, for pete's sake!), I was gifted with the temporary use of a sparkly tiara. I traipsed across the street with two of the jewelry shop ladies, and we three accosted the insulter in the Hallmark store. She and her colleagues were suitably impressed (they all got a good laugh out of it). We had them practicing their royal handwaving by the time we departed. Then my parents showed up (they were coming out of the shoe store, next door to the jewelry shop), so I had to explain why I was traipsing around the streets of Manistee with a tiara on my head. My father asked, "What have you been drinking?" I merely laughed.

Thank Ghu there were no cameras handy, I looked a fright.

One-Stop Service

by Jim Sullivan

While driving down central Indiana's Rural Route 32 last Sunday, I found myself running low on gas. Luckily, before the gauge registered empty, I came across an open Service station. Seeing such an establishment, or any other business for that matter, open on the Sabbath in middle-Indiana is a rarity.

Pulling up to the Five Star Oil Company's only pump, I started to exit my vehicle when from out of the station burst four monks. I assumed they were that because of their uniforms: sandals and dark brown, woolen robes with huge hoods. The monks' middles were each cinched with a rope from which dangled large rosary beads. They jangled as the monks approached.

The monks darted to various parts of my car. The biggest monk came right up to my side window and made an unmistakable motion with his hand that I should roll the glass down, which I immediately did.

"How much gas would you like, sir?"

"Fill her up!" Though startled and unsure of how I should address this religious figure, I tried to look like I'd done this before. He may have smiled or smirked. I couldn't tell because his hood hid his face.

Another monk, without asking my permission, opened the hood on my car and checked vital fluids. They must have been all right because he slammed my vehicle's hood back down. His own hood quivered in the wind he created. Yet another monk, equipped with a large bucket of sudsy water and a combination brush and squeegee cleaned my windshield and the rest of my car's windows. I had to roll my side window up quickly before he washed me. Lastly, the fourth monk checked my tires' air pressure.

"That'll be \$19.97, sir," said the gas-pumping monk.

Handing him a twenty dollar bill, I said, "Keep the change, father."

"I'm a brother, not a father, sir. And bless you for the business. We truly appreciate it. Now, how about joining us as we hold a brief prayer service at the lube rack?"

Having called him by his incorrect religious title, I felt a little sheepish, so I said, "Okay, brother!"

He beckoned me now to follow him. Getting out of my car, I retraced the monk's gigantic steps. Next thing I know, I was kneeling on the concrete floor next to the lube rack where after saying the rosary and singing the Gregorian Chant, which I managed to only hum, the service ended. Then I was asked if I wanted a lube job.

I said, "Not to.. .today. Maybe next time!"

That's when the big monk, tucking his rosary back into his rope, asked me, "How did you like our service?"

Not sure if he meant the vehicle or the spiritual one, I said, "Oh, they wore great!"

Later that same day when I checked into the motel I was staying at, awaiting an early Monday morning business meeting, I asked the inn's manager about the monks' open-on-Sunday, one-stop Sabbath operation.

"It's all the rage in Hoosierland," he said, "the brothers have been conducting that service for the past year now. The monastery is just a half mile north of their retail place. Both had been going broke. And not enough recruits were coming into their brotherhood. The station, too, was going belly-up. It had been open only during regular business hours, Monday through Friday.

"Those monks are mostly all past retirement age. So they had to do something to sustain themselves. Many come from up North, so they're all great ice skaters, you know. At first, they formed a senior citizens' hockey team. The big monk, Abbott Albert, was the goalie/manager. But most monks hadn't passed a puck on ice between them since NASA landed on the moon. As a consequence, they didn't play the game very well.

"It had been their plan to have exhibition games around the country, take in half the gate receipts, and survive on these funds. Alas, not many other senior citizens care or were able, to play competitive hockey. Scheduling games, then, was difficult.

"On top of that, the monks had another problem. They refused to remove their large, dangling rosaries when they took the ice. Six brothers were hospitalized at one time just from tripping over their prayer beads. Consequently, they dropped that sport and took up at

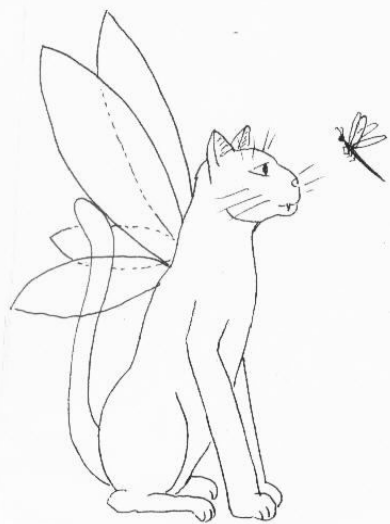
the gas station, which they bought cheaply since it was going out of business anyway.

"Are they pretty good mechanics?" I asked the manager.

"Sure are! Most come from farm backgrounds and from working homes. These men are all quite capable with their hands. And the real beauty is, there's enough jobs and shifts to work at the gas station, because it's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to employ all the monastery's monks. Even the simple-minded monk, Simon, formerly a scholar on Ancient Greece. but seriously injured in a hockey/rosary accident during practice, now has work cleaning the gas station's sole toilet. And he keeps that place spotless. He thinks, of course, it's the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

"This retail business has been a godsend for the monks. They're even recruiting new members into their brotherhood from amongst their gas station customers. By the way, the monks are of the Order of St. Reinhardt, the Brave But Bashful Bavarian, 1st Class, 2nd Hand, 3rd Dimension, SRBBBB for short."

Next time I travel on Indiana Route 32, I'll definitely get lily spirits and car lifted for a lube job (for the vehicle, that is). This time, I'll give the monks a bigger tip, too. I only hope they don't try to get me to join their organization. If I ever did, I'd have a hard time explaining it to my wife and kids.



And So Do Cats

by Lyn McConchie

"Terrorists!" said the chap who came to buy one of my coloured lambs. "Bastards are everywhere these days."

"So are cats," I said thoughtfully, observing Fluffy my barn cat as she drifted by.

I returned to the house to find the inside cats, Tiger and Dancer, were their ubiquitous selves, as they jockeyed for position at the

food bowl -- while assuring me of imminent starvation. Since Fluff currently has two kittens at the scampering stage in the hay barn as well, the illusion that everywhere I walk there is a cat underfoot, is being remarkably well sustained at the moment.

"Terrorists! They infiltrate." A friend commented some days later. "They sneak in when no one's looking."

"So do cats," I muttered, recalling the previous evening. I'd been sitting up in bed, legs stretched out, back propped up against pillows. Reading an engrossing book by one of my favourite authors as I ate dinner one-handed. Somewhere along the line I'd woken up to the fact I seemed to have less dinner than I recalled eating. Strange. I paused in my reading and eating to ponder this. At which time a small regular noise manifested itself. I peered over the edge of the bed. There was Tiger, happily ensconced on the carpet, gnawing his way through one of the two pieces of grilled fish with which I'd started my meal.

Like terrorists too, sometimes my cats just aren't so unobtrusive. Fluffy marches into the kitchen any time I leave both porch doors open for a few seconds. Once there, she leaps on Tiger and Dancer's feed bowls, empties them in great gulps, looks around quickly, sees nothing more edible, and demands the door be opened at once so she may depart again. What am I, a prison warder? Don't I know she has kittens to attend? Meekly I open the door to bow her out. It's probable some terrorists force on their victims that same feeling of helpless cooperation.

Cats infiltrate in other ways as well. Tiger starts by curling up at the end of my bed in the early evening. As I sink deeper into my book after dinner, he shifts. I never see him move, but somehow, when after an hour or two of steady reading, I come back to myself, it's to invariably find that fourteen pounds of spotted Ocicat has oozed his way along the bed to be curled up, ostensibly asleep, in my lap. He isn't asleep of course. If I query his presence he's always awake enough to look up innocently and claim invitation. My lap was empty, wasn't it?

"Terrorists!" snarled my mate next door. "From the media reports it sounds as if we're all in bed with the swine and don't know it."

"Same as cats," I note.

Well, it is with Tiger in particular. Although sooner or later I do usually find out about that. Cold nights annoy him. He dawdles into the bedroom, leaps lightly onto the end of the bed and slinks to where the bed-clothes are wrapped around my shoulders. Patiently he hooks them loose with a cautious paw. Then he lifts a level or two, slides between a couple of blankets, moves down to hip-level, and snuggles in. If he does it well I won't wake, and he's in the warm until morning -- which is a little too late for eviction purposes.

"Terrorists!" someone said in the library when I was there last week. "They try to make us think their way, and they believe we're all stupid."

"Same as cats," I say to my armload of library books.

Cats think humans exist to keep them warmed, fed, cuddled, and loved. Humans exist to open doors, cat food tins, and cartons large enough for a cat to curl up in. Our opinion, that cats exist to keep us company, doesn't begin to describe the relationship of the average cat and their human.

Humans are stupid too, in the estimation of the same average cat. No tail, no whiskers -- no brains. Certainly our language abilities in feline-speak are incredibly limited. We come in useful for some things but it can take so long to get the essential demand across, I think Tiger assumes I'm something of a moron.

"What the anti-terrorist squads need is the sort of training which teaches them to identify targets on sight," complained a lady of my acquaintance. "I came back on the plane from Brisbane recently and they held me up over a bottle-opener in my handbag. What did they think I was going to do with that?"

Since the lady in question is fifty-six and half-crippled with arthritis, I saw her point. She could also be right. People in that line of work do need a terrorist to study. Something to watch, learn all the tricks, and maybe master the ability to pick exactly the right moment to pounce.

So I'd suggest, instead of human tutors, the anti-terrorist squads of various countries should take lessons from cats. Anyone who learns well enough to out-smart a cat could easily beat a terrorist. And besides -- Fluffy has just had kittens again. I'm looking for good homes.

A Feast of Jackals: Book Reviews

Heinlein's Children by Joseph T. Major. Advent: Publishers Inc., Chicago: 2006. Hardbound, \$25.00 postpaid (Advent: Publishers Inc., PO Box A3228, Chicago, IL 60690)

Reviewed by E. B. Frohvet

This is the omnibus edition of Joseph Major's series of articles, most of which appeared (perhaps in slightly different form) in *Fosfax* over the years. The work has a specific focus, which repays careful attention from serious readers of Heinlein. In my case, I had read some of those pieces in *Fosfax*; but having them gathered in one place is highly useful.

My experience was in the general vicinity of that of Alexei Panshin, who wrote the introduction: encountering the Scribners hardcovers of the classic Heinlein "juveniles" in various school and public libraries.

What strikes me first about Heinlein's Children is the assumption of detailed expertise on the part of the reader. Which is probably a fair assumption -- one would be unlikely to buy this work without a working knowledge of Heinlein. Still, in the first chapter, concerning Rocket Ship Galileo, there are by my count references to fourteen other Heinlein fiction works; multiple quotes from his posthumous collection of letters Grumbles from the Grave, in addition to mentions of Boucher, Goddard, von Braun, Bush, deCamp, etc. Few of those references are explained (you're just supposed to know) and a few are gratuitous. Obviously, in a reference work, it's the responsibility of the writer to do the research for the reader. However, the target audience here is SF readers, not academics.

To the extent I had a problem with Heinlein's Children, it's the repetitious pattern of side material. In the second chapter about Space Cadet, a three-page diversion to E.E. Smith as an influence on Heinlein is relevant; but, tossing in names like Beck, Stauffenberg, etc., verges on obscurant showing-off. (Yes, I know who they were,

but I've done extensive reading on the period, which should not be taken for granted.)

Completeness has its virtues, of course. In the third chapter, discussing Red Planet, one was familiar with Jim boy and Frank boy going armed -- it's integral, or at least meaningful, to the plot -- but I had never encountered Doctor Macrae's deleted libertarian rant on the subject of Jim's sister carrying a weapon. Of course it's in character. (Of Joseph's aside, "...In science fiction, in general, aliens arc observed, not point-of-view characters," I have two words for him: Hal Clement.)

The title character of H. Beam Piper's Little Fuzzy did not "take the stand" in the trial in that book, any more than Lummo did in Heinlein's The Star Beast; in neither case were they present until the very last moments of the trial. (The issue of an oath administered to a non-human witness was addressed by Henry Kuttner in one of the "Gallegher" stories. I also wrote a detailed critique of the trial in The Star Beast, which may or may not eventually show up in the much-delayed *Steam Engine Time*. Anyone wants a copy, contact me.)

The comparison of Reserve Captain Urqhardt (Chapter ten, about Time For the Stars) to Captain Queeg (The Caine Mutiny) seems a little farfetched. Queeg was just crazy; Urqhardt is just getting on with the job he signed on to do. I compare it to Joseph's not appreciating the necessities of military discipline, a topic of which he admittedly has no personal experience. You took the oath, you gave your word: someone has to do the crappy work.

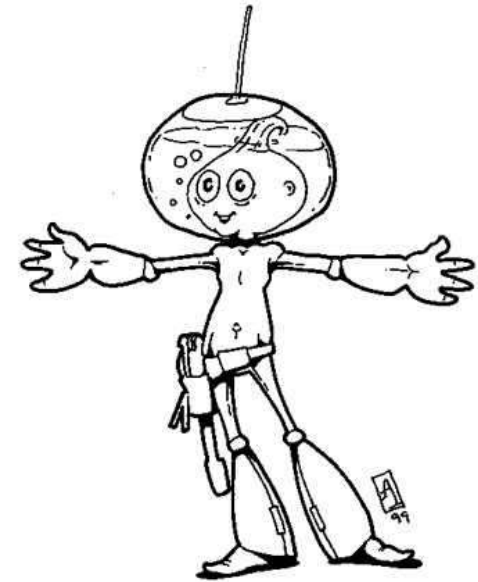
I said once in an article that as Thorby (Chapter eleven, re: Citizen of the Galaxy) and his parents had been missing/presumed dead for nine to fourteen years, it seemed odd that no one (read: Weems) had moved to have them declared dead and pass the estate to the next heir (read: Leda, Weems' stepdaughter), seven years' unexplained absence being the old common law rule. It's a big galaxy -- with that much at stake you have to draw the line somewhere. Curious that Joseph declines to pursue this aspect.

For an update of Heinlein's "Mother Thing" (Have Space Suit Will Travel), see the concept of "nest guardian" in Elizabeth Moon's Remnant Population.

I would probably not have included Starship Troopers among the usual RAH "juveniles." There's some evidence that at least one of Heinlein's motives in writing that book was to produce a piece that he knew Scribners would reject. That said, Joseph's lack of firsthand

knowledge of military matters is again evident in places. Including the noticeably weaker Podkayne makes a valid point. It completes the arc, from the earlier stories confined within the Solar System (Rocket Ship Galileo through The Rolling Stones -- that I had never noticed this pattern says something positive about the completeness of Joseph's research), to the interstellar tales (Starman Jones through Starship Troopers); and then downhill again to Podkayne, as Heinlein's increasing unwillingness to be edited showed its effects.

This volume is certainly more useful to a reader of Heinlein than, say, Edward Carmien's The Cherry Odyssey is to a reader of Cherryh. Its greater focus and the more unified vision resulting from a single author (rather than a collection of essays from different people as in the Carmien book) are obvious factors here. Heinlein's Children could have benefitted from some oversight essays tracing broad patterns through the course of the books discussed. (Much of that material is there, but it's within the individual articles.) however, this is still, a significant contribution to science fiction criticism. You should seriously consider nominating it for "Best Related Work" for next year's Hugos -- if you're nominating.





Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up?

During the 11+ years I lived in the Florida Keys, I got into the habit of stopping for turtles that were on roads and giving them a human-assisted lift in the direction their heads were pointed. Apart from a general altruistic bent and a love of animals, I'm not sure why I kept doing this. But there was, as I think

I've said in another column, a sort of unofficial turtle rescue in operation in the Keys. Whenever I helped a turtle along, at least one person would show their support of my action by honking and waving, giving a smile and a thumbs up, that sort of thing. Once, a man stopped moments after I did and was walking toward the turtle as I got out of my car. I was closer than he was and said, "I'll get 'em!" After I got the turtle across the road, the man and I chatted for a moment or two. "I always stop to try and help them across," he said.

Since I moved to Michigan three years ago, I've had at least one opportunity to help a turtle or tortoise across a road. But on June 14th this year, a turtle visited my yard. I'd just returned from picking up my son in town (that's in Manistee, as the locals see it), and there was a broad, flat hump near the front steps of our house. "Oh my God, Jamie, look, it's a turtle!" I said, setting my keys and wallet down on a step.

"No it's not, Mom, it's a pile of dirt," he said, in his best silly-mom-turtles-don't-come-here voice, he who knows all.

"It is too a turtle, look," I said, and picked the turtle up. Its shell was larger than a dinner plate, broad and gently rounded.

My son was not impressed.

I set the turtle down gently, went inside and got a box,

and drove my shelled companion down to Penny Park, which the village owns and is a nice place to go camping and fishing, though its accommodations are spartan. We're talking Real Camping here. I pulled off to the side of the road leading to the campground, and liberated the turtle in the tall grasses a few feet off the roadway. The turtle did as most turtles do when relocated; it sat there. I imagine it was smelling the air, looking at its new surroundings, checking for predators or that large creature which had just transported it to another part of the world.

Now that I've done turtle "rescues" in two different states, I might as well call myself a member of the Eastlake Village Turtle Rescue. It may be just an organization of one, but one is all it takes.

Sometimes I wonder if the turtle is my totem animal. But I never had the urge to collect tangible representations of turtles, so perhaps it isn't my totem. I used to collect owl figurines, but stopped years ago and then sold my collection before moving to Michigan. It's more likely I don't have a totem animal.

But if I did, I'd be pleased if it was a turtle.



Thanks to Paul Di Filippo for the first and second ishes in the limited series Doc Samson from Marvel Comics, for which he wrote the story. Very nicely done comix they are, too.

What happened with my lungs earlier this year is now being termed a lung inflammation by my lung doc. I'm off the steroids now.

After going to the trouble of cutting and pasting nearly all the relevant comments made in a Certain Fanzine concerning the N3F, it occurred to me that I had written in the last ish of PN that I wasn't going to add any more to the discussion. So I deleted all that pasted stuff. On one hand, I'm still offended by the original remarks, but on the other hand, I don't have time to get all torqued up about something that really doesn't matter, in the Great Scheme of Things. There are many more and better things for me to do; pub my ish, for starters.

For unknown reasons, my name has appeared in recent ishes of this Certain Fanzine in the WAHF section. I have not sent any

more letters to the editor of this Certain Fanzine beyond the one printed, as far as I can remember. Why I am WAHFD in this Certain Fanzine is a mystery. I could speculate, but why waste the energy?

It was a real bummer to have to miss the 30th WisCon this year, primarily because the concomm turned it into a big anniversary party and invited all the previous GsoH still living to attend. Health and finances prevented my getting in on all the fun. Thanks to Minneapolis fen Jeanne Mealy and John Stanley, however, I got some goodies from the con anyway. Yesterday (6/23) a box arrived with member packets from nearly two dozen past WisCons, some free books, and flyers and suchlike – and a chocolate wrapped as a silver coin. How nice! I'm not supposed to eat chocolate (it tends not to get all used up in the digestive process, leaving "residue" – and I'll leave it to your imagination from there), but how do I preserve it? Laminate it? Encase it in Lucite? Ideas are welcome. Best one gets a prize – a mystery prize, bwahahahaha!

Gloriantes: Dancin' with Mr. O

by J.G. Stinson

I gave myself my final 50th birthday present by attending the Traverse Symphony Orchestra's production of Carl Orff's "Carmina burana" at Corson Auditorium, on the Interlochen Arts Academy campus in Interlochen, Michigan on April 23, 2006.

I'd first heard a portion of this work while watching a figure-skating competition on TV several years ago. It may have been the U.S. Nationals, I don't recall; I do remember that it was Paul Wylie who was skating, and that I was much more interested in the music than in his performance, though he skated very well.

Later, I learned that the same portion, the "O Fortuna" opening movement, was used in the film "Excalibur" during a battle scene. Memory fails me; I don't know if I saw the movie before I saw the skating program.

Over the years since seeing the skating program, I'd acquired a few versions of the work, but my favorite is the one recorded by

The Saint Louis Symphony in 1992. Warning: Classical Music Neeperly follows!

For the detail oriented, this is the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, under the direction of Leonard Slatkin, with Sylvia McNair (soprano), John Aler (tenor), and Hakan Hagegard (baritone), recorded on the RCA Victor Red Seal label on compact disc.

Fortunately for the inquisitive listener, there's a booklet that comes with the CD, which gives biographical information on Orff, his musical career and the genesis of the work in question. There are also brief bio-sketches of the conductor and the three soloists.

Those interested in Orff's life and other musical writings can research them on their own; space is at a premium here. Very briefly, "Carmina burana" is a work for chorus and orchestra, subtitled "profane songs for singers and chorus, to be sung to the accompaniment of instruments and magical images." Orff claimed that it met his goal of "a total theatrical experience, providing direct spiritual communication and immediate spectacular effect, which he believed had been achieved only in ancient Greek tragedy, or in the earliest Italian operas of the years after 1600" (from the CD booklet notes by Lucy E. Cross).

"Carmina burana" – to be blunt – is based on the writings of a bunch of drunken, heretical German monks/musicians/poets called Goliards who spent most of their time in the 13th century wandering from town to town and singing about how fickle Fortune was, how courtly love was for wankers, and how wonderful Spring, eating good food, and gambling (not to mention a lass or three, despite their vows) all were. Orff used a 13th-century manuscript as his text basis for the choral portions.

The lyrics are cynical, mordant, leering, and very funny in places. They're written in Latin and German. The music is at times lilting, furious, eerie, soaring, paced as if written by a squirrel on meth, and full of Teutonic bombast.

In short, it is a glorious work, and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and Chorus did a slammin' CD of it. I played it quite a lot when I first got it, less so as my hearing loss increased. I often

wonder how Beethoven felt when he realized he was going deaf; it must be the worst affliction in the world for a musician.

Fast forward to January 2006. I'd been looking forward to attending a performance of this work in Interlochen scheduled for this month, but had to remain at home because I was still very sick from ulcerative colitis. A month or two later, I received a flyer from Interlochen in the mail, which detailed the rest of their performance schedule before the summer concert series started. I got very excited when I saw that the Traverse Symphony Orchestra would be performing the Orff with a massed chorus (more than one chorus group) at Interlochen in April. It was very likely that this would be my only chance to hear this work performed live with an orchestra and full chorus. I was determined to get there, and I did.

Anyone who saw me at that concert might have wondered whether I was related to someone performing that night, I was so nervous. But I wasn't, so why the anxiety? It's the perfectionist streak in me. When I hear what I consider to be the perfect version of a piece of music, it's very hard for me to listen to any other without picking it apart. I felt the Saint Louis Symphony recording was untoppable. But I told myself repeatedly as the concert day approached that I had to put that aside, and enjoy the TSO's performance for what it was: that of a regional orchestra not attached to a major urban center.

The TSO opened with Ottorino Respighi's "Church Windows," a work unfamiliar to me but one which I'll search out on CD, I liked it so well. The symphony sounded in fine form, and I was greatly relieved that their musical skills were higher than I'd rather cynically expected. Conductor Kevin Rhodes wielded his baton a la Yul Brynner with a light sabre during the more stirring moments of this piece (he's bald, too).

Being a menopausal woman, of course I had the mother of all hot flashes 10 minutes into the Respighi, so I had to bow and scrape to the couple I stumbled across as I fled to the ladies' room. And I had to pee, too. Argh. It seemed to take forever for the damned hot flash to subside, but it finally did. I loitered outside the seating area until the music got loud enough to cover any noise I made re-entering the hall itself, and sat down in the area provided for latecomers and

those who had to do Other Things. This area is a small mezzanine behind the last row of seats, where some chairs were set out; one waits there until the work being performed is finished, or until intermission, so as not to disturb other concertgoers. I decided to stay there for the rest of the concert, as I had no idea whether another hot flash or Other Urgent Business might send me scurrying back to the ladies' room.

I was impatient for the intermission to be over so the Orff would start, but at the same time I was dreading it. The orchestra was fine, but was the massed choir up to the challenge of this piece? "Carmina burana" has a dizzying amount of tempo changes and even professionals have trouble keeping track of them all. That is entirely separate from the other tricky parts in the choral sections, enough to give any singer a headache.

Finally, the conductor lifted his baton, looked around at the sea of faces in front of him, and vigorously gave the downbeat to "O Fortuna," the opening movement.

I wanted this performance to be wonderful, to amaze me, to knock off my socks. It just about did.

I wanted to be slapped upside the head with that wall of sound that comes with the first two words of this movement, and I was. Tears rolled down my face. Yes, it sounds silly, but that's what happened. I was enthralled, overjoyed, knocked for a loop, and alla dat. Wow.

Fortunately for everyone in the room, the massed choirs were able to keep up. I had some nits to pick with their diction in comparison to the Saint Louis Symphony's version, but I knew I'd been spoiled by the latter and so didn't feel too disappointed. The pacing felt pushed too fast in some places, but that's the conductor's area; if he felt the musicians were flagging or the chorus wasn't keeping up, it was his job to make sure everyone kept up. Kevin Rhodes is a young, energetic conductor, and this being the last performance of the winter season, I'm sure he wanted to get as much of this work right as he could.

The soloists weren't the equals of McNair, Aler and Hagegard, but they did well enough. The tenor in particular was most amusing; during his recitative where the lyrics feature the mourning

of a swan being roasted in a tavern's fire for the patrons' dinner, he conjured a shower of white feathers. Not many people got it, but I did, and had to contain my laughter so as not to scare anyone. A little humor was needed at that point; Orff knew it, and so did Rhodes and the tenor.

After the concert was over, I sought out one person each from the orchestra and the massed chorus, to thank them for performing well one of the most difficult works I've ever heard. Each person was appreciative, and gracious. I hope I wasn't the only one who thanked them that night.

On the drive home, I blasted my Yes mix tape from the car stereo and sang until I was hoarse. That's how good the "Carmina burana" was that night.

The Free Book Deal

Contest 16 wound itself between our legs, emitting loud purring sounds, and asked, "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 correct answer is: Pride of Chanur, Chanur's Venture, The Kif Strike Back, Chanur's Homecoming and Chanur's Legacy.

One person entered in each category. They each got the right answers. Congratulations to **Jason Burnett**, who wins the regular-mail category and picks up Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's Dark of the Sun, a very fine novel of the Count St. Germaine. **Lloyd Penney** picks up another tome with the online prize win, and will get A Miracle of Rare Design by Mike Resnick. Thanks for entering, guys.

If you're sitting on the toilet, or in the bath, or in your easy chair and wondering, "How come I don't get any of these free books?" – oh, never mind, you haven't been paying attention before now, so what could I possibly say to make you change your ways? Very little, I think.

A brief note: Some folks who've entered and won this contest have chosen to recuse themselves for various reasons (and some only temporarily). That's fine. There is no rule to this contest that requires

any winner to do this. **The purpose of the Free Book Deal is to find some books good homes, and to have a little fun doing it.** I really, honestly don't care if anyone wins one or more times, so anyone who's already won can enter again as many times as they like (though one entry per contest IS a rule). We now return you to your regularly scheduled lunacy...

Contest 17 Is Announced: For the fannish spiritualistically inclined among you (and those with a copy of The Old Fan's 2000 Almanac), on what date does Herbiemas fall?

The regular-mail prize winner will receive the fine novel Conan of Venarium by Harry Turtledove, in which is recounted the invasion of Cimmeria that started our mighty-thewed hero on his road to destiny. Highly recommended for Conan fans, and certainly readable by any fantasy fan as well.

The online prize winner will receive Caroline Stevermer's A Scholar of Magics, the sequel to A College of Magics. Both are set in an alternate Victorian era where magic works. I tried to read it but it wasn't my thing; it's well written all the same.

Contest 17's deadline is midnight eastern daylight time on July 25, 2006. Many may enter (I wish!), but two will win. Good luck!

