



Peregrine

Nations

6.2

July 2006



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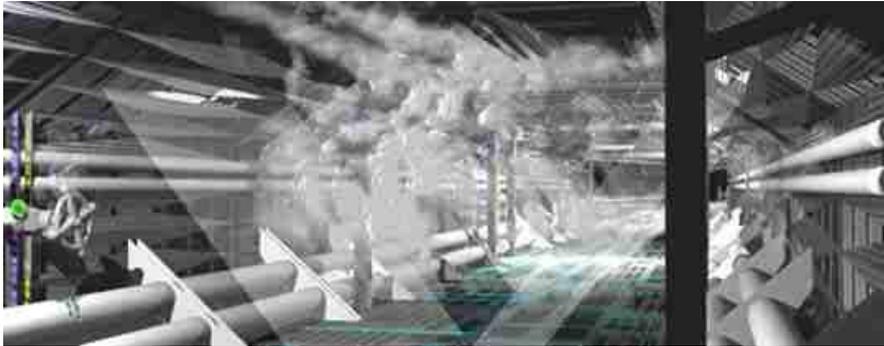
Additional art: Alan White (cover, masthead)

This issue is dedicated to my loccers – those who write often and those who write seldom. You're all appreciated in equal measure.

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 Letters of Comment

Cuyler W. “Ned” Brooks Jr.
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720
July 15, 2006

Thanks for the *Peregrine Nations* – nice cover!

As to **Sheryl Birkhead**’s post-apocalyptic storage, matches may have a better shelf life than disposable lighters – or may not. Assuming both are kept sealed airtight and cool, they would have different problems. The match heads might slowly undergo chemical changes that would make them useless, while the seals in the lighters might fail, allowing the propane to escape. The older metal flint and lighter fluid models might be more]durable.

My German dictionary says *stahl*= steel, but doesn’t have an entry for *stihl*. Stihl is a prominent maker of power garden tools however, chain saws, hedge clippers, etc. I think if there was a German word *stihl* – it may well be a surname – it would *sound* like the English word “steel.”

I wonder if Reykjavik banned dogs because of the extremely long, cold winters – if every owner took their dogs out every day, accumulated doggie doo would freeze and then all thaw at once when the surface of the ground got above freezing in the summer. [*That assumes that the dog owners didn’t pick up after their dogs, though.*]

The deer I see here occasionally are quite large and dangerous to speeding cars. [*Dangerous to cars maintaining the legal speed limit too, I’d warrant; they’re big enough to put a dent in a car when the car’s going*

30 mph.] The only wildlife dangerous to humans [here] seems to be the occasional bear. I’ve never seen one, but several have been removed from local malls this year. [*Possibly some of these were from Chicago?*]

I was amazed and delighted the first time I heard “*Carmina burana*” and still enjoy it. The other day on the radio I heard a later Karl Orff piece, “*The Triumph of Aphrodite*,” and have ordered the CD. [*Ah, more Orff! Do let me know who recorded the CD and whether you like it still on subsequent listenings.*]

✉ ✉ ✉

Paul Di Filippo

That was a meaty issue of PN! Thanks!

My mother-in-law, sadly deceased now, loved the doings of royals. Eventually we twigged to a UK zine titled *Royalty Monthly* and got her a subscription.

Glad to hear you dig Respighi. He’s one of my faves too! [*Then you should like “Carmina burana” as well, since it has some of the same musical character, though certainly a different style, as the Respighi piece I heard.*]

✉ ✉ ✉

E. B. Frohvet
July 20, 2006

In further response to **Helen Spiral**, who said that military cemeteries creep her out, [there is] the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in eastern Belgium, which contains the graves of 7,992 Americans, most killed in the “*Battle of the Bulge*,” the Ardennes counteroffensive of early 1945. The facility is meticulously cared for by the American Battle Monuments Commission with the cooperation of the Belgian government, and a program in which local citizens can “adopt” the grave of an American soldier, tending the site, putting out flowers, and corresponding with family of the deceased in the U.S.

On the same subject, Today’s Word is *stratonic*: of or pertaining to an army military. The corresponding noun is *stratocracy*, government by soldiers, military dictatorship. This is distinguished from martial law, which is supposed to be a temporary emergency measure in a society otherwise governed.

One thing fandom really needs is a good American newszine. [So what's File 770, chopped liver? The only problem I have, and you've mentioned this also, with File 770 is its infrequency. I have only one ish from this year, for May. It's still the best American newszine in fandom, but one could wish for a more frequent pubbing schedule than once or twice a year, even given the arrival of a daughter in the Glycer household.] Another thing I miss is a good, abrasive, willing-to-express-an-opinion zine review column. You do a little of it; Bob Sabella does a little; *Alexiad* and *Knarley Knews* and *Opuntia* do what amounts to a listing. *Banana Wings* doesn't do that sort of thing at all. [But Peter Sullivan does, in *David Burton's* ezine *Pixel*; so does John Purcell, in his ezine *In A Prior Lifetime*; Keith Walker does it in his paper fanzine, *Fanzine Fanatique*. If you want to see those ezines, I can print out and send you copies of the recent ishes, for examples.]

I must respectfully disagree with you about dogs. Some breeds are usually gentle and sociable (golden retrievers), but some breeds are inherently vicious and can't be trained out of it (Dobermanns). [How many Doberman Pinschers have you actually met? The first one I ever knew belonged to a neighbor, and that dog was scary because his owner beat him and shouted at him all the time. My most recent Dobie acquaintance is Kika, at a local printers shop. All she wants is someone to play ball with, and when I go there, which is very infrequently these days, she reacts by wagging her stumped tail as hard as she can and whining a bit. She is a dear. We can lay this argument to rest, of course, but I must respectfully reiterate: there are no bad dogs except for those with organically caused, congenital defects in the brain that cause severe personality problems. The vast majority of dogs become "bad" due to their owners' mishandling and mistreating and, often, abuse.]

There are more reports recently of American Staffordshire Terriers (erroneously called pit bulls by layfolk and legal systems because they're ignorant of the correct terminology, I believe) breaking out of their yards and attacking small children or other, smaller animals in other people's yards. This is worrisome, because this leads me to think that there are a lot of Staffie owners who don't know their dogs well at all, nor are they aware of the breed's history and how to counteract the behavior triggers that were bred into these dogs when they were used for fighting. The entire Staffie breed is being tarred with the "dangerous dog" brush as a result, and it's entirely the fault of humans. I'll have to do some research on the *Presa Canario*, but I suspect the same thing is happening to that breed. Dogs and cats are animals, and we humans can never forget that.

We must learn to communicate with them in their language, since they can't speak ours, and those of us who live with non-human companions have an obligation to learn as much as we can about them, to safeguard both them and other animals (human or otherwise).]

Jason Burnett: I would like to agree with you about the Lost Causes (nee the two Fan Hugos and the Langford Award). But the fanzine rule requiring one issue per year is of long standing; and I can see where changing the rules now is "moving the goalposts." Of course, some who do one issue should be ashamed of accepting a nomination, but he's not the Crown Prince of Shameless for no cause... [sic] [Not sure what you mean by this.] If I were voting, which I'm not for reasons well know, I would vote *Challenger*, *Banana Wings*, and No Award in that order. [And as long as you followed the voting rules, it would certainly be your right to do so, though many would likely disagree with that order for a variety of reasons.]

Trinlay Khadro: We have very similar fauna here. Few pigeons, but doves are common. Why would anyone be freaked over deer? Just watch your line of fire carefully, and presto, venison for Thanksgiving dinner! [A la Ted Nugent, n'est-ce pas?] As I have no rifle, I would probably have to find a hunter who'd sell me a haunch. I have not seen peregrines in full hunt, but twice I have seen them pause in the maple tree right in front of my door!

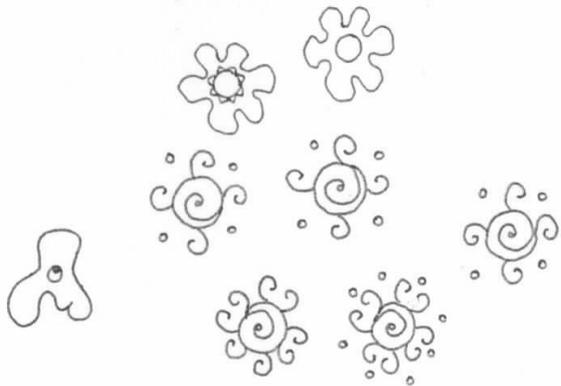
Erika Maria Lacey: I've generally gotten along better with Cherryh's SF than with her fantasy. Personal taste.

Joseph Major: No, I don't [know who translated *Bambi* into English]. Am I correct in supposing that *Bambi* was originally written in German?

Lyn McConchie: Interesting speculation about the casting of LotR. I doubt that you watch "Friends," though it may be syndicated even in NZ. At the beginning, Courteney Cox was asked to read for the part of Rachel, and refused: "I'm much more Monica." Jennifer Aniston had been asked to read for the part of Monica, and said that, no, she was much more Rachel! Some times the actors know better than the directors.

Joy V. Smith: The public image of Saint Bernard dogs (yes, banded after Saint Bernard of Aosta) is amiable goofs. In fact, they are very large, strong, and patient. Fee free to take up my offer – peel back those sloppy jowls and have a good look at their jaws. Do not fool with a Saint Bernard or His People.

Jim Sullivan: J.S. Bach's "Air with Thirty Variations" usually called the "Goldberg Variations," was written for Bach's student



Theophilus Goldberg to play for his patron, the Baron von Kayserling, who suffered from insomnia and melancholy. Being a patron is an ancient and honored tradition in the arts.

Non-Monarchist News:

Hate to point it out, but the Queen is “Her Majesty,” not “Her Royal Highness.” Everyone else in the British royal family is HRH, though I’m not certain about the Countess of Exeter. The tale of the ladies in tiaras is charming.

“Gloriantes”: When you go to a concert, you pay to hear a sound, professional performance. You can’t pay for magic, it either happens or it doesn’t. One of the few SF/fantasy works to incorporate this problem is Emma Bull’s War for the Oaks, which I heartily recommend. [*Yet another recommendation for this novel – gotta track down a copy!*]



John Hertz
July 17, 2006

I must have written Stahl. I like to think I have *Stihlgetuhl* but of this Stihl I know not. There is, however, Thurber’s “Remarkable Case of Mr. Bruhl.”

About Heinlein, I like the Heinlein Double Surprise: something strange happens, then something *really* strange happens. When he’s good, he’s very, very good. [*And when he’s bad, he’s depressing.*]

[*And via poetsacr...*]
27 July 2006

By a note from Ned Brooks, I am reminded there is a huge white-on-red sign, “Stihl Chain Saws,” across from the LASFS Clubhouse. So I

apologize: I do know something about Stihl. [*No apology needed. And may I say it’s nice to get a note signed, “Your fan.” Thanks!*]



Joseph T. Major
1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040
jtmajor@iglou.com
July 10, 2006

Silent eLOCutions:

Sheryl Birkhead: Match heads have phosphorous, which I seem to recall is a minor nutrient, and sulfur, which isn’t. As Grant McCormick once said, illnesses come from a lack of trace elements. Did you get your Recommended Daily Allowance of brass today?

Does Alan White exhibit at cons? More of the nominators and voters go to those than get fanzines.

Ned Brooks: “There are no bad dogs, just bad owners.” What does

that make Presa Canarios? For those who have been mercifully unexposed to them (unlike the woman in San Francisco who was set upon and killed by two of her neighbor’s) imagine a pit bull the size of a Great Dane, and mean in ratio (remember the square-cube law). As I said lastish. [*Please see my comments to E. B. Frohvet in this column.*]

Jason K. Burnett: Forty-year-old grudges? This is Fandom! We’re time-binders! A forty-year-old grudge is like yesterday! When Fandom is reduced to two oldsters in nursing homes, they won’t be talking to each other because of an *eighty*-year-old grudge. Think ahead!

Trinlay Khadro: There was the time I lived above the two Dominicans (students from the Dominican Republic, not friars) who played classical music loud to get back at the thumping of weights. It was the guy across the hall, but I suffered all the same.

One of them got a call directed to the pay phone in the hall. So at nine in the morning of a lazy Saturday I hear the manager rapping on their door and shouting “Long distance call from New York for Jesus!”

The manager, who was also the owner, died and left a million dollars to the university.

Yes, Lord of the Golden Fan is better than Shogun. For one thing, it uses the real names. Though Shogun is part of Clavell’s multi-generation historical saga of the West in the Far East, King Rat and Noble House are also part of it.

Reply to me: Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumfoord, was the guy who disproved the phlogiston theory.

Eric Mayer: "Where's the line between a techno thriller and SF?" Well, after going over the equipment lists in several of Jules Verne's novels, I'm not sure there ever was one.

Lloyd Penney: Now you know why I try not to eat at the hotel restaurant. \$50 (U.S.? Or Canadian?) for a breakfast is out of this world. Hotel restaurants are priced for the expense-account crowd.

Jim Sullivan: And Leibnitz composed a genealogy for the Elector of Hanover which proved he was descended from a close personal friend of Attila the Hun. As Herman used to sing on *The Munsters*: "I fell in love with Attila the Hun/Attila the Hun, Attila the Hun/He'd pillage the village and kill everyone/Yet I loved Attila the Hun." Note: Considering Herman's composition, we can't say for sure that his heart, say, wasn't from a woman . . .

Non-Monarchist News: And April 21, 2006 was also the eighty-eighth anniversary of Manfred von Richthofen's death.

"And So Do Cats": Hm, good points. I was thinking of that in the search for Sarang's WMD (Weapons of Mouse Destruction — we had to clip his claws when they dug into one of us just once too often).



Eric Mayer

I have just noted the actual publication date of the new *Peregrine Nations* and I see I am even tardier in loccing than I'd imagined.

My wife and I (kind of as HRH is wont to put it) would like to express our appreciation for your article about tiaras. Frankly, I've sometimes wondered, doesn't the Queen feel a bit of an idiot wearing a crown in public? Most of us would. It's the sort of thing kids dress up with for Halloween. But, of course, being the Queen, she's one of the few people for whom a crown is normal. To her, it's probably like wearing jeans for me. Actually, I like the Queen (well, not that I know her personally); she seems to have conducted herself well, which is saying something these days.

Jim Sullivan's bit about service station monks made me laugh. Good thing he went on about their senior hockey team or I might've believed him. Truth is, even monks need to make a living. Around here they make cheese. That's more monkish than running a gas station.

I enjoyed **Lyn McConchie's** article about cats. Except for a few years when I lived in apartments where pets were prohibited I've always had cats around, though I've never sought them out. More than one showed up at the door. Our current cat, Sabrina, showed up in a litter in a neighbor's garage almost 17 years ago. I'm not sure what we get out of bowing to our cats' wills. It's easy to describe how they inconvenience us — litter boxes to clean, food to be bought, hair everywhere. They'll steal your pork chops off the kitchen counter if you're not watching. I know it for a fact. But we humans are such complicated, tormented, impossible to satisfy creatures — maybe it gives us pleasure being able to fulfill the needs of simpler beings. If we can never quite get exactly what we want out of life, at least we can buy a cat a tin of Fancy Feast and put a furry commode cover in the space on the shelf where the cat likes to sleep.

As for turtles...last week I was visiting my brother, sitting on the deck from where you can see the small "pond" they have for runoff. It's maybe 20 feet across and packed with frogs. This time of year they carry on day and night. I was listening to them making their usual ruckus when I glanced away from the pond to the hillock in the lawn. What do you suppose is making its way slowly across the hillock, in the direction of the pond? An enormous, prehistoric-looking snapping turtle. The frogs were still singing away merrily, like a bunch of teenagers partying while the axe murderer lurks in the bushes outside. I went in for a few minutes and when I came back the snapper was gone. The frogs were still making noise. Little did he know. The ravenous turtle was in there with them! If I were making a horror movie out of it I'd call it "Croak!" By the way, don't try picking up a snapping turtle if you value your fingers.

Looking at the LoCs, Sheryl **Birkhead** has it wrong. It isn't the match heads that are tasty, but the strip you strike them on. Used to lick that

(carefully) while a tot. Wonder if that's what's wrong with my brain?

About people not understanding dogs...I once spoke to someone from the SPCA for a newspaper article and I was told that they'd found, investigating mistreatment complaints, that people who kept dogs chained outside often did so in the belief that the cold did not affect dogs, since they were just animals. [*Which bolsters my point that many people who have dogs don't know how to treat them properly. This kind of story makes me want to hunt down the ignorant human involved, whup 'em upside the head and say, "What were you thinking?!?" Sadly, it appears this one wasn't thinking at all. Probably didn't pay any attention in science classes, either. It makes me despair, I tell ya.*]

E.B. Frohvet wonders what I read when I read sf. Well, I was allowed into the sf room of the local library in the late fifties (it was considered too mature for a gradeschooler but my parents intervened) and read everything there, starting with Andre Norton, Lester DelRey and Robert Heinlein, not to forget the massive Adventures in Space and Time collection. My favorite sf book is Bester's The Stars My Destination. Fantasy-wise it's, boringly, Lord of the Rings, but I love Conan, and the work of Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith. I didn't like Zelazny and hated Ellison. I doubt I'd find in anything today what enthused me then. Rather like my taste in rock music it was probably not just the work itself but the meeting of the work and the person I was at the time.

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Lyn McConchie

The latest issue of PN flapped in and I sat down at once to read my way through. Must say first up that the cover is gorgeous! That's a brilliant piece from Sheryl. Oh, and a neat cat from Trinlay illustrating my article too.

And on to comments – re: several people on the dangers of canine breeds other than wolf/dog hybrids. Yes, it's true, but the only specific ban here in New Zealand is wolf dogs. I think that's a lot more to do with a rigid quarantine for wild animals such as wolves, and the thought that crossing them with dogs might allow canine diseases to escape, along with a belief that you endanger the purity of the species and this isn't a good thing, than that the Government expects wolf dogs to run amok slaughtering small children and attacking the elderly.

Several fighting breeds including the American Pit Bull, Staffordshire [*In America, these are the same breed, as I noted earlier in this column; some breeds are called by different names in countries other than the U.S.*], and crosses must be microchipped by law here. That law has also now been expanded from the start of July 2006 to cover all dogs being registered for the first time unless they are dogs kept for the purposes of working livestock. No exceptions made for seeing-eye dogs. As has been pointed out loudly to the Government, if they imagine that this law will prevent dog attacks they are dreaming. The same system will prevail. Those who care about their dogs will obey. Those who don't won't, and these unregistered, unchipped dogs will continue to attack people without the law being able to trace their owners.

And sadly, what **John Hertz** says is usually true. There aren't many bad dogs, just mostly bad owners. In my opinion it isn't the dogs we should be shooting. But there does appear now and again a dog that is born a rogue. I knew of one such case. The animal was well cared for, fed, and housed. It was loved and well-treated and had begun obedience training. But at six months old the owner could not attempt to correct it without risking being attacked. After discussion with the SPCA and Obedience trainers, the dog was destroyed. It may have had some organic problem although nothing was found on prior examination. [*I wonder what the necropsy results were, or would have been if one wasn't performed.*]

Re: **Joy Smith's** addition's to the SF/mystery crossover list, yes, those are all good ones to add. You could also list the books by Denise Vitola, which are set in a futuristic city (in a bleak future similar to “Blade Runner”) where – like the J.D. Robb books – most of the main characters are police officers, one of whom has a form of werewolfism. They were written before the current outpouring of urban werewolf/vampire mysteries that are currently infesting our bookshops – many of which are very poorly written.

✉ ✉ ✉

Lloyd Penney

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

July 24, 2006

I've had to have my computer rebuilt, so there's now two hard drives instead of one, and lots of broken connections yet to link back together. The learning curve just got steep again. So, I'm going to stick with what does work, and that means Adobe Reader and Word, and writing locs.

Sheryl Birkhead is right, there's a number of artists who never seem to make the Hugo ballot. There's Alan White, Marc Schirmeister, Paul Gadzikowski and Sheryl Birkhead, just to name some.

Good luck to **Jason Burnett** on the job hunt. Mine has been relatively fruitless, but at least I have a little employment in the evenings. As soon as we get back from the Worldcon, both of us are going to kick the job hunt into a higher gear.

So many speak about the size of conventions. I like them all. The Worldcons offer so many opportunities to meet new people and do and see and buy interesting things. A small convention allows you to be a visible

part of things, while some conventions I've attended, like the Toronto Corflu, are so small, staying in one place allows you to see everyone.

Some old neighbours of ours had two Yorkshire terriers, and of course, Yorkies are the soul of bravery, if not the embodiment. When they'd see us from a distance, they'd run up to us as fast as their legs could carry us, BARK! at us, and run away just as fast. Brave for a split second.

To **Peter Sullivan**: I haven't much time these days to listen to BBC Radio 2 or any other radio service through the Web, but given the fact that

I am slowly but surely catching up to most things, I may have the time to get up early, have a good breakfast and listen to Jeremy Vine and Steve Wright. If I wanted to listen to Terry Wogan, I might as well not go to bed, given the 5-hour difference between Toronto and London.

I am conducting an experiment and archiving all my locs in a LiveJournal account. Check out lloydpenney.livejournal.com to see how busy I've been since the beginning of the month. [*I must confess I don't see the point of doing this. Perhaps you'd explain?*]

✉ ✉ ✉

John Purcell

As I write this, my latest issue of *In A Prior Lifetime* has just been posted over at efanzines.com. Since you're caught up on locking my zine at least, here's the heads up on avoiding falling behind. Not only that, but your latest issue is reviewed therein. Ain't egoboo grand?

Joseph T. Major: Your comment to me about the REH panel at AggieCon 37 was well taken and elicited a chuckle. No, the Schweitzer Theory was never mentioned. But it IS funny!

Re your comments to my loc: Truth be told, we don't tease Pulcinella that much at all. He's getting a bit on in age, something like 9 nine years old now. Timmy's our oldest (12) and he's the miniature collie. We really had to name a male miniature collie that looked like a small version of Lassie "Timmy." I mean, how could we resist? Fossey is the border collie, which is my all-time favorite type of dog. They are so smart, quick and beautiful. I may have to send some pictures to you sometime of the Purcell Petting Zoo. It's quite the collection. [*Please do.*]

I've been reading *The Chronicles of Brother Cadfael* recently, and almost done with it. My plan is to do a brief write-up about it and ship it your way. No promises on when, but you'll have it, that I can promise.

Also, you ask if I was in your place, how would I have reacted to the commentary directed your way? My margin notes say that at first, I probably would be offended. But past experience has taught me not to react to first impressions, just wait a bit and cool off before setting ideas down on paper (or ether, in this case). I am not one to carry a grudge; don't like them, and feel they're more destructive to all parties concerned. I've become the kind of guy to apologize, try to learn from my mistake, and forge ahead. I refuse to live in the past. If it wasn't fun before, why stay there? End of that mess. No more. Let's sashay onward, shall we?

Helen Spiral hits the nail on the head in her comment to **Peter Sullivan**. Man, when I got *Banana Wings #25* in the mail a few months ago I was completely in retro-fannish-nirvana. That was the first real fanzine in trade that I had received in over 17 years! Since then assorted other zines have been plopping into the mailbox, and each time it's a refreshing blast of fresh air. Like **Helen** said, being a part of fandom puts you in a network that has been nattering away for nearly 80 years. I'm glad she didn't delete her last paragraph; the truth of it stands alone.

Peter Sullivan: Both Nimoy's and Shatner's "recordings" were bad, but it is my belief that Shatner was deliberately slaughtering the songs. You have to admit that Shatner's version of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" was downright hilarious. Remember: you can't enjoy a slaughter without laughter.

Now that the loccol is done, onward to the rest of your wonderful issue. I really enjoyed your story of how you helped set things right in celebration of the Queen's 80th birthday. Thank you for sharing this with us.

Is **Jim Sullivan** telling the truth about this all-monk full-service gas station in Indiana? If so, this croggles me beyond all get out. And only \$19.97 for a full tank that was down on empty? What were they charging per gallon? I am sitting here stunned, not knowing what to say. Astonishing.

Lyn McConchie's article is delightfully, totally true and fun. Our seven cats practice their stealth constantly. My wife and I have been completely trained by them.

I have never been a real Heinlein fan, but I appreciate **E.B. Frohvet**'s review of [Heinlein's Children](#). This was a good review. I am no Heinlein expert, but when I'm in the mood, I do enjoy his work. Some excellent points made herein and a bit beyond my knowledge of RAH's work.

Finally, I have never heard of that particular Paul Orff [*That's Carl Orff*] composition. Sounds like the TSO did a wonderful job on such a difficult piece. Y'know, sometimes a small town orchestra can do a bang-up job in concert. The Brazos Symphony is quite good, but they get to pull music majors from Texas A&M University and Blinn College since those are both here in town. [*The TSO is also capable of pulling in experienced and talented musicians, since one of the country's premier arts academies, Interlochen, is just down the road from Traverse City.*] When you described the music as if it was "written by a squirrel on meth, and full of Teutonic bombast," I immediately envisioned Brad Foster doing that as an illo. Great image! [*Brad?*]

Thanks for a fine zine, young lady. [*Thanks for the laff. I'm half a century young now, you li'l whippersnapper.*]



Joy V. Smith

I love the cover! The colors are lovely, and that's a cute beanie on the falcon. (That is an Egyptian falcon, right?)

Re: LOCs. Thanks to **Lyn McConchie** for the Andre Norton background. I wasn't aware of the estate litigation. Pity. And thank you, **E.B.**, for the lunch invitation. And thanks to everyone for their letters, which are always a pleasure to read.

I enjoyed your tiara anecdote. That clerk was way out of line. (Hmm--and at a Hallmark Gold Crown store. Tsk, tsk.) I'd take advantage of any opportunity to wear a tiara.

Jim Sullivan's piece on the real service station was interesting. What a great idea! And why aren't more groups doing it --with a car wash on the side, she asked wistfully.

I enjoyed the review of [Heinlein's Children](#), which I haven't read. I see **Joseph Major** has added lots of cross references, as he does in *Alexiad*, which is very educational.

I'm sorry you missed the 30th WisCon, but what a great surprise the WisCon gift box was! Someone was very thoughtful.

I'm glad you treated yourself to the "Carmina burana" production; and what an appreciative audience they had! (I wonder how many in the audience were that prepared?) Btw, have you thought of sending them a copy of this issue of Peregrine Nations? Or your local paper's art editor?

[*I doubt they'd care, seeing as how my readership in northern Michigan consists of me, and the local newspaper doesn't have an arts editor. Besides, I worked for that paper years ago and it hasn't improved much at all, beyond the lucky addition of a few good writers. It could be a great newspaper, but the editor is an idiot. C'est la vie.*]

Re: your free book contest, I want to thank **Lloyd Penney** for the Buffy book he won and then sent on to me because he'd read in PN that I wanted it. What a lovely, unexpected gift that was!! (A fringe benefit of being on the *Peregrine Nations* mailing list. Thank you both!) [*You're welcome.*]

WAHF: Mark Proskey



Why I'm a Conan Purist (sort of)

by Sue Bursztynski

I've read some Conan fiction by other writers. Poul Anderson is one of my all-time favourite writers of SF and fantasy, but I didn't even enjoy his novel. It was a Belit story, as I recall. Yes, we all know Belit the pirate Queen was probably the love of Conan's life, though I think he would have made a decent husband to Zenobia. The trouble was, Anderson's Conan was way too sentimental to be believable as Howard's hero.

Which brings me to my second point. Conan is not a SNAG. He is not politically correct. He was a product of Howard's era, when great-thewed heroes swashbuckled and went off with big-bosomed beauties -- you know, the kind you always see clutching the hero's leg on the book cover? (And many years ago, before he did "Crocodile Dundee," Paul Hogan had a TV series, in one episode of which he played Conan, hauling around the compulsory leg-clutching maiden and leaving her in the hall cupboard when he got home to Mrs Conan, who'd just bought some nice steaks from the Butcher of Nemedra). Don't get me wrong. I'd be quite happy to have Conan as a next-door neighbour, provided he stashed his loot elsewhere. He's

A Feast of Jackals: Book reviews

the sort of man who would occasionally drop in to make sure you were all right. He would pick you up from the railway station if you had to work late. He would “explain” to your persistent ex-boyfriend that no means no and that if said ex didn’t get lost quick smart, he’d get a knuckle sandwich.

I wouldn’t want him as a boyfriend. He’d never remember your birthday, he’d embarrass you at the restaurant, he’d be more likely to use books for lighting fires than reading and if he took you to the movies, it would be to a violent action movie. And if you weren’t interested in being crushed, panting, to his mailed bosom, he’d find someone else who was.

Now, I don’t think you can write this sort of character in the current century. At least, not without a lot of complaint. And that means that what would be written would be a character who, however nicely-drawn, just wouldn’t be Conan. Not for me, anyway.

I have nothing against Carter and De Camp, actually - they mostly handled actual Howard MSS, finishing unfinished tales, using Howard’s notes and re-writing his historical stories as Conan ones. At least they didn’t write entire novels.

However, if I just wanted “more Conan” I’d prefer fan fiction to professionally commissioned novels. When a pro writer is commissioned to write in someone else’s universe, they often don’t have any background in it, or interest. It’s just a job. If you don’t believe me, have a look at some of the early Star Trek novels. Fans would take the trouble to try, at least, to get it right. Those who didn’t would get plenty of critical LoCs in the next issue of the fanzine. There’s plenty of awful fan fiction, of course, but it’s still written by people who care, and the reason for writing it is exactly to get “more Trek/Conan/whatever.” And with no ongoing secondary characters, there’d be no slash fiction! For me, this is a positive.

Those of you who like your Turtledove or Jordan Conan or whatever, please – enjoy! It’s just not for me.

(Note: I heard Robert Jordan speak at the Melbourne Writers’ Festival a few years ago and he was already sick of Conan. But money was money.)

Heinlein's Children by Joseph Major, Advent Publishers Inc. Chicago 2006. Hardbound.

Reviewed by Lyn McConchie.

I read E.B. Frohvet’s review on this book with great interest and discovered that there were some discrepancies between our views. He was already familiar with much of the work having seen it as a series of articles in FOSFAX. I was completely unfamiliar with them and was slightly daunted by the size of the book. However I had asked E.B. to obtain and send me a copy of the book because I have always liked Heinlein's juveniles, so I placed the book on my bedside shelf and began by reading the chapter on one book per evening.

I was promptly swept up in the work and when after a couple of nights, the weekend arrived, I flung my schedule to the four winds and settled to devour the book, barely pausing to eat or do farm chores. I was flattered by Joseph's assumption that I would have sufficient detailed expertise in the SF field to recognize all his discussions and references. In fact I did much of the time and for the remainder I found the context so well written that I could understand his point even when I did not know the references. E.B's point, that "the target audience for the book is SF readers and not academics" is well made, but while I am certainly no academic, I had no problem.

Joseph's use of the incorrect description of Little Fuzzy and LummoX of The Star Beast as being aliens who took the witness stand is a small flaw, yes (better to have perhaps used Eric Frank Russell's alien character from his short story "The Witness"?). But I believe this still did not detract substantially from the point being made – something that in my opinion applied to other minor flaws or inaccuracies.

My specific delight was in reading Joseph's chapter on Podkayne of Mars. Many years ago I had heard the story that Heinlein had intended the book to end with her death. I thought then, and still do think that despite the author having the right to do that, he

was wrong. Had Podkayne died it would have been a different book, one I would not have kept and continued to reread at intervals as I do. But I had never codified my own reasons, I just felt that was so. Joseph's beautifully reasoned, clear discussion on the book has helped me understand not only why Heinlein wanted that ending, but why I don't.

Over and over again in reading Heinlein's Children I was presented with light on areas I had never considered. This may be because I tend to read books as "the story," not considering what may have been some of the unobtrusive background events. I rarely deeply dissect a book I like, it is usually enough for me that I like the work and will read and reread it. Joseph shed light on Heinlein's wicked ability to show people as they really are. He also showed me continuing themes – on politics in particular – I had never recognized but which are often important in understanding the deeper implications of Heinlein's work.

Nor had I ever considered the scene in The Rolling Stones, where the ship's airlock begins cycling open, Joseph writes that "The Stones only write about space pirates; wanting to encounter them personally is a different matter." I returned to take my copy of that book down from the shelf, reread that section and smile broadly. Heinlein showed me that and I subliminally accepted it as being true, but it took Joseph's writing to made me actually think about the truth of it – and even more; to make me think about my own writing, and how much of the adventures I write I'd be happy to have occur to me. (Truthfully, very few these days, but 35 years ago – yes, almost all of them; much fantasy is wish-fulfillment.)

How to sum up Heinlein's Children? I have one word: Brilliant. It made me think, go back to read portions of the examined books again and see in them things I had always missed. It also made me go and find some of the other authors used in references, to see what they had to say. This book is going onto my shelf, to become another of those I read again every few years and from which I learn more each time. I may admire it so much because this form of work is beyond me, which makes it good that there are authors for whom it is not. Now, Joseph, what about another book considering, say, the

Hospital Station books of James White? I'd pay good money for that too.



Moon of Three Rings by Andre Norton, Ace Books, 1966. Paperback, 294 pages (Fifth printing, 1978).

Reviewed by J. G. Stinson

Last year, I took this book off the shelf and revisited it for the first time in more than 20 years. In fact, I can't remember the last time I read it, but I've had my own copy for at least two decades. With books of this age (and older), there's always the chance that they won't stand the test of time, that their story lines or characters will be stale or so far surpassed by reality as to make their what-if points unbelievable.

Moon doesn't have this problem. Norton was smart enough to set this story of changes – physical, emotional, cultural – in a science fictional universe which contains a planet whose humanoid populations are either caught in or returned to a feudal existence comparable to that which Earth's Europeans once knew. Though she also peppers the novel with convenient devices which avoid technical explanations – mind-lock to prevent spacers from revealing advanced technology, and other psychological barriers to keep those on port call out of trouble, along with "beamers" and a distinct lack of description of shipboard life -- these devices are also now part of the generally accepted canon of science fictional elements. Some folks call them tropes these days, but I have a semantic problem with that word which doesn't require explication here.

In this novel, there are the Free Traders and the Combines, once at odds and now tolerating each other as they go about their commercial enterprises. On the planet Yiktor, assistant cargomaster Krip Vorlund and a shipmate check out the "beast show" offered by a Thassa woman, a Singer called Maelen. As with all complex (and therefore interesting) characters, Krip and Maelen have their own geas to fulfill, and a joined path which takes them both to unexpected places and events.

Maelen, as a Thassa, is capable of using the Yiktoran moon Sotrath in its sometimes tri-ringed state to draw power down and perform body swaps. The Thassa are also capable of mind-reading and thought transference, but their culture and religion restricts their use of these powers on moral grounds. Vorlund falls into a trap that's part of an off-world plot, and Maelen feels bound to help him because he assisted her in rescuing an animal -- a barsk -- from a cruel beast seller.

The barsk is the closest alien creature to an Earth wolf that I've come across in any novel. It has the same intelligence and general physical attributes as a wolf, but doesn't appear to live or hunt in packs. Norton makes the barsk come alive for the reader in the easiest way possible -- by having Vorlund inhabit its body -- but not as a game. She complicates the story at nearly every turn, and that's what keeps the pages flipping. Any writer just starting out could learn a lot from dissecting this novel; heck, any experienced writer could probably learn from it as well.

This is one of the novels that sucked me into SF when I was in junior-high school, and I'm glad that it's as good now as it was then, and that I can now appreciate it in a different way. When I was a kid, it was a really cool story. Today, I can see the structure and the character development and the plot points as well, and this only enriches my appreciation of the book.



Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? editorial

This is a shorter-than-usual ish of PN by intent; I'm trying to catch up to my intended pubbing schedule and stay caught up. Anyone who's sent me articles within the last 30

days that don't appear here can presume those articles are still under consideration.

Because my health isn't as good as it needs to be for traveling, and because the temperatures here and in Joliet, Illinois were predicted to be over 90 degrees, I missed my brother's wedding last weekend (7/29). It's his first marriage, her second (her first husband died about 5 years ago). I'm looking forward to the still photos and video-on-DVD that family members are supposed to be receiving later on. My brother also got to make two passes down the track at Joliet (he's a drag racer with an El Camino now painted yellow and black), which was fine with him as it gave him more detailed information on what other fine-tuning the car needs. It was a hectic day, I was told, but a joyous and laughter-filled one. It has been fun listening to the stories my parents and my sister have of the events, though, and I'll get photos for my scrapbook to commemorate the event.

Bruce Gillespie and I are currently firming up the contents for *Steam Engine Time 5*; date of release to be determined, but I'm hoping for some time in August, with an electronic-version release concurrent with the paper version.

The current heat wave is predicted to break later this afternoon (8/1) with thunderstorms, a welcome change by all here as the heat and humidity combined were causing no few folk to seek the cool spaces in grocery stores and other shops with air conditioning. I have a new swimsuit, so I may brave the waters of Lake Michigan later today for a while, just to say I did so once again. Must remember the sunscreen...

The Free Book Deal

Contest 17 hopped on its hind legs, tongue lolling, and barked, "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 was Harry Turtledove's Conan of Venarium; the online prize was A College of Magics by Caroline Stevermer.

Folks, you are either really, really lazy or not interested in either of these books. I got one entry, in the online category. Lloyd Penney provided the correct response of Jan 11. Congrats to you, Lloyd, and your next book will be in the mail to you soon. The Conan book will be sent to the used-bookstore pile. Shame, really, it's a great read.

Contest 18 Is Announced. What is the title of the shared-world anthology first published in the U.S. by Phantasia Press in 1985 which was created by the writer to whom the title refers? (Hint: Ten other writers were in on this project.)

The regular-mail prize winner will receive a book-club edition (hardbound) of the 1946 SF classic Slan by A.E. Van Vogt. The online prize winner will receive a copy of the 2001 all-original anthology Redshift: Extreme Visions of Speculative Fiction edited by Al Sarrantonio (hardbound, 544 pages), with short fiction by Dan Simmons, Ursula K. Le Guin, Laura Whitton, Kathe Koja and Barry N. Malzberg, Michael Moorcock, Thomas M. Disch, Joyce Carol Oates, James Patrick Kelly, Harry Turtledove, P. D. Cacaek, Stephen Baxter, Paul Di Filippo, Gregory Benford, Kit Reed, Robert E. Vardeman, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, David Morrell, Elizabeth Hand, Peter Schneider, Rudy Rucker and John Shirley, Catherine Asaro, Joe Haldeman, Jack Dann, Catherine Wells, Larry Niven, Michael Marshall Smith, Al Sarrantonio, Gene Wolfe, Ardath Mayhar, and Neal Barrett Jr. Good luck to all the entrants, may there be many!

Blame Ned Brooks for all this white space; he's the one who e-mailed me to say I'd printed Joe Major's loc twice. Only the e-edition of this has been changed, so everyone who has a paper copy of PN 6.2 now has a collectors' item... of sorts.