



Peregrine Nations

6.3

October

2006

"...she's come undone..."



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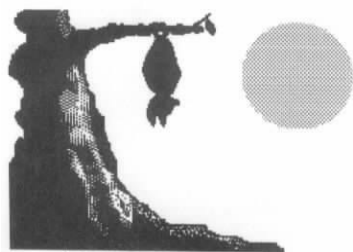
Additional art: Alan White (masthead), Brad Foster (cover), Paul Gadzikowski (14)

This issue is dedicated to **Susan Butcher**, Alaskan, dog musher, four-time winner of the Iditarod, who lost her battle with cancer (acute myelogenous lymphoma, polycythemia vera, and leukemia) on Aug. 5 after a recent stem-cell transplant. She was 51. What a welcome she'll have at the Rainbow Bridge.

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

Sheryl Birkhead / July 27, 2006

I like the long layout but would like to see the main illo on the right and anything like a ToC appearing on the left -- yeah, easy for me to say, I'm just on the outside looking in! Unfortunately I see things I would do differently on the color print, but I never noticed it on my monitor -- sigh.

Another load of thanks to your benefactor -- love to see those issues continuing to come along! [*Take a bow, Peter.*]

Re: why not disposable lighters, I was thinking this would be (ideally) a long-term waiting project and I am not at all certain what the quality control is for the lighters and what happens if the fluid sits there for a **long** time. The other part of this is that the matches are totally combustible and do not produce "traditional" residue. As an aside, I was tempted to get the long-handled butane lighters for the wood stove insert, but re-thought it with animals and so on. I also did not want to buy refills (see note about consumable!). In actuality, I will probably get both and try to remember to cycle the wooden matches.

In general, there are three dog breeds that come under the label pit bull: the Staffordshire, the American Pit Bull, and the Pit Bull Terrier (at least, that is what I found the time I looked some years ago). Interestingly, a lot of what we today call pit bulls used to be called terriers and were common family pets -- not until relatively recently have they been intensively bred for doing damage. From what I have experienced of the wolf hybrids, they are more like pack dogs (i.e. similar to huskies) and have a totally different attack mentality. It was interesting to note that, as in the pit bull, people consider having a hybrid to be a status thing -- despite (at least in Maryland) state law against owning them.

I enjoyed my exposure to the N3F (even won the Kaymar award) and made all my earliest fan contacts either through it directly or by suggestions made by Neffers. Either way, I had a ghod time with the organization. It sounds as if I missed out on the financial misadventures mentioned, so I cannot comment on them. [*Heck, feel free, other people who weren't members at the time have certainly done so; yes, I'm being sarcastic.*]

Jason K. Burnett: If you have Internet access, you can see *Challenger* online. I do not pay attention to things cyber so, if the site is down, guess that won't help. [*It was fine when I looked at it a few weeks ago.*] Around here, if you do not have home access there is always the library (and at least in Maryland, your one hour a day is free; I heard from CA fan that they charge at the library there). Good luck in the employment search -- I can hope it is already a faint memory!

In the latest *Ethel the Aardvark* (Aussie clubzine), they talk about SF(ish) TV shows down under. I don't have the ish at hand, but one of the programs was (I think) a mini-series and they liken it to beyond CSI; and one stars **Patrick Stewart**. Personally, I enjoy mysteries and when I can find a crossover enjoy it even more [*See Lyn McConchie's recommendations in that area in thish.*].

Trinlay Khadro: At least the sale is over. Hmmm, a vitamin for **Megumi** -- not a very commonly prescribed necessity in cats eating *cat* food (as opposed to people food under the table). I bought the waterfall for my cats and, while interested in moving water, they *still* want their moving water from the tap. So much for that idea. [*So you can't just not allow them access to tap water until they get thirsty enough to drink from the waterfall? I wouldn't call that unnecessary cruelty, I'd call that training. It works on dogs. And cats can be taught to fetch -- I've done it.*]

I really love **Lyn McConchie's** work -- a note about outside cats. While not for sure, it would appear that felines may prove to be a bridging species for the bird flu, since cats in several locations have been diagnosed as having the virus (some cats found dead, some ill). The question remains whether the virus is capable of going from felines to humans. Wild-bird migratory patterns have long been traced and with those in mind, the bird flu could conceivably arrive (or has) in North America via the wild bird population by mid-summer, if all these items are true. For the immediate moment they remain findings. In those areas where cats have become infected, people are told to keep the cats inside and away from the viral source.

Chagrin: didn't even realize Herbie has his own day -- bhad fan...bhad fan...For previous contests I kinda even thought I had an idea of the right answer, but for this one (and, ironically, the most fannish one I've seen), I have absolutely *no* idea. [*Don't worry, you weren't alone.*]

[*And again...*] Aug. 29, 2006

My sister lives in Utah and there is no way she will **ever** drive

anything other than a Subaru. She and her daughter were driving in the mountains and had a true run-in with a deer (I believe she said the deer didn't make it). The car went over the edge of the road and rolled several times. Both of them, once out of their seatbelts, walked away from the twisted mass of a totaled station wagon. I can understand her loyalty to the car maker.

About the fan artist Hugo and nominations: I still cannot understand why **Alan White** has not been nominated. I think **Teddy Harvia** did not do any new pieces this year -- so I must assume it speaks of name recognition rather than actual observation. Still and all -- meets the letter of the law and it's fine with me. However, in the past it has only taken about 20-30 nominations to make the ballot. Okay -- each member gets 5 blanks (I think) to fill in for each category. Let's presume Phan Artiste has her art in, say, 20 zines in a year. Let us also say that the average zine has a circulation of 50 %. Now I've painted myself into a corner statistically but let's say this boils down to 300 unique individuals. The next is a pure guess: maybe the number of Worldcon members is, say, 30% of the readership. That makes it 90 people who could nominate, and to get on a ballot it would take less than 1/3 of them to write Phan's name on their ballot. Somehow that does not seem like a whole lot. Yeah, this breaks down if it takes more nominations to make the ballot, but I wonder what the actual percentage is of zine readers who are also Worldcon members. Please note that this all falls apart if readers are not Worldcon members and/or all the nominations are being generated solely by convention attendees (so if Phan does not display or sell artwork at cons, she is at a distinct disadvantage.)

I tend to think (probably incorrectly) that quite a few zine readers also join the Worldcons -- but I have never seen the numbers to prove or disprove that. Of course if I was really energetic, I'd see if I could get a membership list (or just look through the listings in the PRs) and check off those names that are familiar to me as readers -- and that should give an artificially low number since I only recognize names from the lettercols. Each year I try to take a look at the final statistics for the nominations. Until this year, it has been obvious that it would only take a very small number of nominations in any of the fan categories to make the ballot -- I'll see if the trend continues.

Agh -- sorry for the tangent. It irks me every year when people complain about winners in such-and-such a category. Then, when asked, they never bothered to join/nominate/vote -- sound familiar?

I doubt many people disagree that it is man who has made the

"dangerous breeds" -- but that still means we have to deal with the animals that are simply doing what they were bred to do and now we don't like it. The key to handling those breeds is training and waiting for a disaster is way too late. Personally, I think that breeding those dogs is also a big mistake, but those are usually the ones that are bred! Breeding to change the temperament back to something manageable is, obviously, do-able, but will take many generations of breeding the desired characteristics back in, presuming enough people can agree that a more friendly temperament is desirable. I think this discussion is best left alone -- we are not all going to agree.

\$50 for a breakfast ... as a vegetarian, I think I might be a bit pressed to get anywhere near that. There would go my whole food budget for a con!

File 770 is a ghreat newszine -- but it simply is not pubbed often enough. I have copies of *Locus* waaaaay back to when it was a frequent twill-tone zine; in fact, I even have a copy of #1, chosen from a list of promotional items.

When I was channel surfing a week or so ago I came across a program (for the summer they are, apparently, running snippets of the best of) with the best of the animal segments, part of one was a snapping turtle. Those suckers can get to be verrrrrry big and those jaws demand respect -- or your arm -- whichever comes first. They actually showed this big fella chomping down on a substantial tree branch--nothing like a little toothpick. You could hear the intake of breath from the audience. I'm not sure why people seem to think snappers are these cute little turtles that just ... um ... snap (please not that this is **not** the same as SNAP). I remember, as a kid swimming in the back stream in the pools created where the stream widened enough to make them, continuously worrying about leeches (which we ran across every now and then) and snappers (which we never saw).

Lloyd Penney's mention of a petting zoo reminds me that I have heard they have them in New York City which include pigs and cattle because those are fairly exotic species to kids who live in the concrete jungle.

Joy Smith: Yes, that is an Egyptian falcon. I had been listening to the Amelia Peabody series on tape (set, primarily, in Egypt) and went to look and see what the falcon-headed god looked like. Then I pulled out some books on hieroglyphs and...

Sue Bursztynski: You can always use a *deus ex machina* and make your Conan a John Carter -- but it means you kinda have to go

beyond your neighborhood borders to do so!

Ah, **Lyn McConchie** mentions the James White "Sector General" series; I have to check, but I think I managed to collect them all. I even ran into at least one other SF author who used a similar concept and tried to get all of those I could (and no, I do not remember who it is). Is my memory playing tricks? -- wasn't there at least talk of doing a series based on the White books? I specifically remember hoping that it would happen, that perhaps special effects had matured far enough to actually make it feasible. But, to be fair, as many effects as they would need would probably put it out of the budget range. [*Maybe not; there are, after all, the Final Fantasy movies, entirely CGI.*]

Thank you for the date of Herbiemas! My other choice would have been to look in **Harry Warner's** books. [*I got it from Dick & Leah Smith's Old Fan's 2000 Almanac.*] I would imagine **Elst Weinstein** would have been a good reference, but I have not seen much fannish activity from him in quite a few years. [*I guess I should be asking different questions? <g>*]

Some people get offended by hoax bids. We call them *easy targets*.
-- Hollister in 2008 hoax bidcomm

Ned Brooks

Thanks for the zine, which turned up today via Switzerland. You say it's a short issue -- it would have been even shorter if **Joseph Major's** LoC didn't appear twice (p.3 & p.6)! :-) [*Thanks for noting that, and the online version has been changed, as noted in this's editorial.*]

Bambi was by an Austrian, Felix Salten ([for those with online access,] see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bambi%2C_A_Life_in_the_Woods). The fact that it was translated into English by Whittaker Chambers (of Alger Hiss case fame) should make a nice trivia question!

Nice **Alan White** cover! The style reminds me of someone else....
Stu Schiffman, maybe.



Jason K. Burnett / brithistorian at aol dot com / Oct 21, 2006

I hope this letter finds you well. I was going through the pile of

papers that, despite my best efforts, tends to accumulate beside my computer when I realized I had neglected to loc PN 6.2. Fortunately, I seem to have made it in just under the wire!

Joseph Major: re grudges: I'm sure you're probably right. I just like people too much to be able to hold a grudge for any length of time. Organizations, on the other hand, I can begrudge forever: This December 31 will mark 14 years since I last shopped at Sears, after they laid me off on New Year's Eve.

E. B. Frohvet: re fanzine Hugos: Just because a rule is of long standing doesn't mean that it should be kept. If this represents "moving the goalposts," it's only because (IMO) the goalposts were placed too close to begin with. It would be interesting, if one had the information available and the time to compile it, to see a listing of the fanzine Hugo winners with number of issues pubbed in the year for which they won the prize and (optimally) number of *pages* pubbed that year. It could be that I'm expecting too much of a "Best Fanzine," or it could be that we are dwarves standing on the shoulders of Giants.

That was indeed a very good LOC from **Joseph Major**; I don't think I could have resisted the temptation to print it twice either! [*Funny, that's what Joe said, too ... naw, just kiddin', folks. It was too good a target to resist shooting at, Jason, no worries about intent.*]

Thanks to **Lloyd Penney** for the good wishes on the job search. It finally ended successfully, but not as well as one might have hoped: After a couple of months of sending out 40-50 resumes a week, which resulted in an average of one interview per week, I finally bit the bullet and went back to medical transcription. It's still not the career I would choose, but it pays the bills, and you can't beat the commute. (I work in my basement.) In the meantime, I'm going back and brushing up my math skills in order to start studying for the actuarial exams.

Greatly enjoyed **Sue Bursztynski's** article on Conan. I appreciated her point on *some* fanfic -- the fanfic writer is attempting only to create more of the product they enjoyed, whereas the pro playing in another writer's universe [*When doing so without permission, is what I hope you meant but did not write*] is always going to be tempted to try to call attention to themselves and use this as a springboard to be able to create their own independent projects. It makes me appreciate authors like Keith R.A. Dicandido, who are able to "play well with others" all the more. I used to be quite the snob about media tie-in novels, but now I'm quite appreciative of them, in their place: They're fun to read when I don't necessarily want to think too hard, and they let an author get down to telling a

story without having to reinvent the universe. [*Which is where I finally landed, myself, in terms of opinion, depending on the subject matter; I imagine current "Battlestar Galactica" novels are more complex than some other media tie-ins, but I haven't read that many media tie-in novels, so I should put down this hat I'm talking into.*]

And yet another glowing review of Heinlein's Children! [*Where was the first one? Or did you consider Frohvet's review to be "glowing"? <grin>*] I must get around to getting a copy of this when finances permit. Perhaps it will provide me with the impetus I need to read more of the the Heinleins I haven't gotten around to yet.

Also enjoyed the review of Moon of Three Rings. Believe it or not, I've never (barring the odd short story) read anything by Andre Norton. Yet another of those things to be done Real Soon Now. [*Your local library can be your friend.*]



Cy Chauvin / chauvin at cam-online dot com
14248 Wilfred, Detroit, MI 48213-1517 / Aug. 19, 2006

Thank you for the three issues of *Peregrine Nations* that you sent. I must admit I was puzzled by the British postmark and stamp on the envelope, and thought it must have been something from the BSFA. But now it tickles my funny bone to see that a fanzine from another fan in Michigan arrives via England!

Sheryl Birkhead's cover is like a beautiful jewel. I've seen Sheryl's artwork in fanzines for years (and I remember sending her some artwork on stiff translucent paper, which gave it an effect that never really reproduced), but this is my first experience of it in color! It makes her work seem entirely new. I now want to color in all her old black and white drawings, and fined out what they might look like in color. [*A Sheryl Birkhead coloring book! I want one!*] It also makes me think of the old Calvin & Hobbes cartoon where Calvin asks his father why all the old movies were in black and white. "That's because the world was black and white," he said, "it didn't become colorized until the 1950s."

I really enjoyed **Jim Sullivan's** article, "One-Stop Service," about the monks running a gas station, and even showed it to some church members I know who I thought would enjoy it. It's really well written enough to be a Sunday newspaper supplement type of feature. [*As I recall from his cover letters, Jim has already been published in several magazines outside of fandom, such as Grit, Cooking Light, and others.*] At

first, I was expecting that it might take a twist and be a send-up, but I didn't think that when I finished the article, particularly because of his conclusion. But I now see in your July issue that others doubt the sincerity of the article, and I'm not sure what to think. Perhaps Jim was attempting to leave us in A Case of Conscience type of quandry?

I've always enjoyed **Lyn McConchie's** articles.

I've never been to the Interlochen Arts Academy, although I've driven by the sign pointing to Interlochen many times on my way to my brother's house. [*Does he live in Traverse City, or further north?*]

There certainly is a philosophical issue whether dogs bred for vicious behavior are truly responsible for their behavior, or if the humans who train and expect them to act this way are responsible (and maybe it's debatable whether the trait can be bred -- except what about wolverines and mink?). I knew a family who got a puppy whom they loved and adored, and it had Doberman Pinscher in its mix. They loved this dog to pieces. **But they never let it outside.** [*That, of course, was their first mistake.*] They had no fenced yard (and had been refused a dog from the humane society for that reason), and never took the dog for a walk. The woman was older, her son mentally ill (but could walk well, and was certainly adept at going to the mall for shopping). Suddenly, they had to call the dog pound to get rid of the half-grown dog because it tried to "maul her." I usually try to be sympathetic and tactful with them because this family does have real problems, but I couldn't help speaking my mind then. The poor dog just needed to be let out and walked! [*Might have served the dog and the people better if you'd mentioned something about walks before their situation reached this point; perhaps they had no idea dogs should be walked or at least allowed outside regularly. This kind of thing happens to people who don't have problems, too.*]

Alan White's cover on your July issue is really good too (although the scanning could be better, perhaps). [*That was taken directly from Alan's Web site, and I did blow it up a bit to fit the cover, so it's not as sharp as it might have been in a smaller size, bit for a line illo, I thot it came out rather well, considering my lack of skill.*] It's one of those covers you keep looking at to see all the details: I feel rather like the fan at the top of the door in the drawing who is peering in. Now if only I could read the book titles on the book shelf, I bet there's some interesting stuff there. Collected bound copies of *Peregrine Nations*? [*"Not bloody likely, mate," she said, channeling Russell Crowe.*]

I read Moon of Three Rings by Andre Norton: I remember exactly where it was in the old Roseville Public Library, and I remember the

beautiful cover on the special library cloth binding. It was one of the first SF novels I read, and I can't remember a thing about it. *[I can recall how the school library looked where I found the copy I first read, but I don't remember what the book jacket looked like. Turns out I was extremely fortunate in the schools I went to in Maryland; they were all relatively new {except for the elementary school I attended in 4th grade}, and the libraries were well-stocked with SF at both the junior high and high school levels.]* I'm fond of re-reading favorite old novels; it's amazing what you forget and what you find, although sometimes your memories seem of a different book completely. I know I was terribly disappointed when I re-read The Enemy Stars by Poul Anderson (not nearly as tragic or emotion-filled as it seemed [to me] as a teenager) and Rebirth by John Wyndham (the setting seemed terribly s-f routine, and the telepathic children not as wonderful; and yet I read that book three or four times as a child). I have Heinlein's Tunnel in the Sky which my sister and I read and re-read, but I don't think I'm going to re-read it now and be disappointed. But other writers have not been disappointing. *[It was a relief to re-read Moon and find that it was just as good as I'd remembered it.]* There is one Norton book I tried to find again: a group of travelers pass through a star gate onto another planet or dimension, and I remember it being terribly enjoyable, but I never found it again. Now, it's not the obvious book (she had one called Stargate, I believe), but it does date from the 1960s.

I have also just re-read three stories by James Tiptree, Jr., which I actually think I appreciate better now than when I first read them on publication. (I never understood before "The Women Men Don't See.") *[A lot of Tip's work is like that, and intentionally so, from what I've learned. Layers and layers, which is what I like in my SF; density in the way that poetry is dense with meaning, but not to the point where it becomes incomprehensible.]* The urge to re-read these came about because of an exchange of old letters between Tiptree and Ursula K. LeGuin in the September *F & SF*. There are almost 40 pages of letters (with their doodles!) and parts are as deep and moving as any story, and as funny. (Maybe more; after all, it was real.) It covers up to and including the point where Tiptree reveals to LeGuin that "he" is really Alice Sheldon. The letters were published as a teaser for the Julie Phillips biography of Tiptree/Sheldon recently released, James Tiptree Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon, but are not included in it. *[Rats. Now I gotta track down a copy of that ish and buy it. I've already purchased the biography, which has had a very positive buzz.]*

Sue Bursztynski makes an interesting point about Conan not being politically correct, not good husband material, and that other writers who have attempted to get into his head simply don't make it. Of course, being the radical that I am, I would go further: when science fiction and fantasy off all the universe of time and space, and all the characters possible, should you really keep redoing the same old stuff? Now I understand *why* and especially readers do it (they think it's a sure thing -- like re-reading an old classic you've forgotten?!?), but should we. It's like taking that extra hunk of fudge. *[I think it's more like sticking to one group of foods, like my teenage son prefers to eat pizza, mac and cheese, and Chinese food, with occasional forays into the steak and potatoes realm -- it's more in what readers are comfy with, it's known ground. But with Conan, as with some other characters, there is a well-defined mythos available for writers who want to use it and get permission to do so, and just enough wiggle room to explore both Conan's character and his experiences. Harry Turtledove's Conan of Venarium covers Conan's teenage years, before his village was attacked and occupied and before his parents died. Turtledove did, in my opinion, an excellent job with this novel, and I greatly enjoyed reading it. It shed light on the character for me, and that's the purpose of revisiting this kind of iconic figure: it gives writers and readers a chance to look at facets of that character that may not have been seen before.]*

✉ ✉ ✉

Paul Di Filippo / Aug. 13, 2006

The cover of PN 6.2 was so full of life & humor that I studied it for about ten minutes before reading any of the issue. Alan White is one of my new favorite fan artists, a combo of Steve Ditko and Phil Foglio. Long may he reign!

Sue Bursztynski's Conan article made me want to move the big new hardcover from UK publisher Gollancz, The Complete Chronicles of Conan, to the head of my reading queue. May I recommend also the Conan comics which Dark Horse is currently doing? Some adaptations of REH for the purist, and some new stories almost as good. *[You certainly may, nad now have done so.]*

✉ ✉ ✉

E. B. Frohvet / 4716 Dorsey Hall Dr. #506 / Ellicott City, MD 21042
Aug 16, 2006

Well, this is a pleasant surprise. I was not expecting another *Peregrine Nations* quite so soon. However, I would rather receive a smaller fanzine more often, than a big one at distant intervals. [*Same here.*]

On that subject, is there still a *File 770*? [*Last one I got was May 2006.*] I wouldn't know, as the editor does not see fit to send it to me. Despite the fact that I send a letter in response to the last issue I got, which is **my** understanding of "The Usual." In any case, an annual newszine is a contradiction in terms.

Yes, I have personally encountered Dobermans: my experience is that they are generally dangerous. [*This is what I wanted to focus on: a person's opinion of a dog breed will depend to a great extent on any personal experience that person has had with that breed. Since you apparently have not met many sweet-tempered Dobies, your opinion of them is negative. My experience is exactly the opposite.*] I have had a Doberman come out into the public street and attack me. The owners didn't have the balls to come out and restrain their dog, which was running loose less than fifty yards from a school. Amazingly, they were surprised when I came back with the police, and filed a formal complaint with the Animal Control Board [*As was your right, and certainly your civic obligation; had this happened to me, I would have done the same thing. I applaud your courage.*] If one sees that the large majority of attacks on people involve two or three breeds, I don't think it's a stretch to suppose that those breeds are inherently dangerous. [*It may seem logical, but remember that "one sees" is limited; if one relies mostly or only on the attacks reported in the media, one is getting a skewed view of those breeds, and probably not all the information needed to determine whether the humans involved were, in any way, the problem. I've seen several dog-attack articles where it's revealed several paragraphs down that the child attacked was throwing stones at the dog, or that the dog was not properly restrained while in public, or that the dog was later found to have been abused by its owners. I still contend that there are no inherently bad dogs; however, any dog, treated the wrong way, can be dangerous, just as cats can be dangerous, and cats more easily survive being feral than dogs do.*] My experience with Saint Bernards is that they have the size and strength to be dangerous, but are even tempered and will attack a person only under extreme provocation.

Joseph Major: There is a line between techno-thriller and SF; I

agree that it's hard to place. Verne's *The Hunt for the Meteor* is clearly SF as it supposes a technology not only impossible at the time, but still impossible today. (But it is presented as technology, not magic.) Hilbert Schenk's *Steam Bird* is clearly not SF despite the label, as it was predicated on a technology that was a straightforward extrapolation of existing facts. [*And yet I've read definitions of SF that include a phrase like "which extrapolate existing scientific and technological facts into a future setting" and add that some of the tech in SF is dreamed up. That is a fuzzy line indeed.*]

Eric Mayer: Actually, the Queen only wears a crown on state occasions, such as the opening of Parliament each year. On other occasions she may wear a tiara, but then, anyone can wear a tiara. Well, it would look foolish on me, but...

It is possible that you have outgrown a taste for actually reading SF. However, my own reading began with Heinlein and Norton, and I still like SF. You might try John Barnes, Lois McMaster Bujold, C.J. Cherryh, Spider Robinson, perhaps John Varley, Elizabeth Moon, Sharon Lee & Steve Miller -- I could recommend specific titles if you like. If you liked Lovecraft, give Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* a try.

John Purcell: I apologize when it's my mistake. When it's someone else's mistake (and/or gratuitous cruelty), and they don't bother to rectify their mistake, then yes, I hold a grudge.

I supposed that **Jim Sullivan's** tale of the monk-run gas station was a joke. And yet, there was an article on the news the other night about a Cistercian monastery in Wisconsin, that has gone into the printing services business under the brand name Laser Monks. No, really. [*Yes, really: I've heard of them too.*] They're doing quite well. All the profits go to charity.

Thanks for the kind words about my review. We book reviewers seldom get much feedback. Mike Resnick says that only reviews in *Publisher's Weekly* count, all other book reviews are irrelevant. (No, not a misquote: he told me that to my face.) [*Bwana (as he is known by some) has often said things to which I object, and this is another. Perhaps only PW reviews matter to other publishers, but then why do the publishers who send me books ask for copies of reviews that I write and never specify only PW reviews? And I've seen at least one of my reviews quoted on a book jacket, and that review wasn't pubbed by PW. So I have proof that he's wrong.*]

Sue Bursztynski: Aside from its literary inadequacies, often glaring, the problem I have with media fanfic is that people are doing that who ought to be writing their own fiction; or at least trying to. Getting

published is another problem. [*Technically speaking, with the advent of "printers" like Lulu and print-on-demand firms that don't actually edit the books they print, anyone can get published. Whether they ought to is a different question.*] Having said which, by the time I was aware of Conan, I had already outgrown that sort of thing. I dug out seven volumes of Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser stories, which I can clearly remember liking once upon a time, and found them sadly outdated and sexist. Sometimes you just can't go home again.

Lyn McConchie: If I spent time pointing out problems in Joseph Major's Heinlein's Children, well, that's what book reviewers do. [*Some of them, at any rate; there are times when I wonder why the hell a reviewer bothered to write a review on a book if all the critical comments are in two sentences. I understand that some reviewers feel obligated to always provide a plot summary, but to make that the bulk of the review, as Don D'Amassa does in Chronicle, seems more of a shill than a review. I figure if I'm gonna review something, it better be worth spending time writing about it, which means it better be an above-average read or so bad that people need to be warned about it.*] I still do think it's a very worthwhile contribution to SF criticism, and well worth having. I also expect to continue exchanging opinions on particular points with Joseph.

Janine: Moon of Three Rings is not my absolute favorite Norton book (that would probably be The Stars Are Ours), but it's an excellent one, and stands up to time quite well. I must get around to re-reading it one of these years. There was a sequel, Exiles of the Stars (1971), which was good but not as evocative as Moon; and a third in the same general sequence, Flight in Yiktor (1986), unfortunately not one of Norton's better efforts.

✉ ✉ ✉

Christopher J. Garcia

You know, if there was a Hugo for Best LetterCol, you'd win it hands-down. There's no question that the level of response that you get and quality of writer who mails in is higher than any other zine I can think of. It's really annoying to those of us who are lucky to get two LoCs an ish!

[*Thanks, Chris, for that rather effusive praise. I think there are other lettercols as good or better than mine, most notably in Alexiad and Pixel.*]

Sue Bursztynski's article on Conan purism is an interesting take on the goings on of the Howard character. I recently picked up a long run of Amras and started reading. I've never read any Conan book, but I really

got into the way people were talking about the character, the setting, and especially about Howard himself. I loved the movies, the way he controlled and communicated with all the animals. Wait, that was "Beastmaster." Then I loved the way he rode that Green Tiger and yelled I have the Power! Wait, that was "He-Man." Which one was Conan again? [*Hee-hee!*]

Glad to hear that we can expect a new ish of *Steam Engine Time* RSN. Good little ish. [*Thanks. And as you know, Bob, SET is available at The Best Little Fanzine Site In The World.*]

✉ ✉ ✉

Alexis Gilliland / 4030 8th St. S / Arlington, VA 22204
Aug. 5, 2006

Thank you for PN, which arrived at an awkward time for me. I have hosted WSFA, usually on the first Friday, continually since the first Friday in November, 1967. On July 21st, in a surprise move, the club voted to move to a new venue. To move the meeting place in Virginia at a meeting in Maryland, with no advance notice and minimum debate, is sharp practice. Finding the [club] president's legal authority to order such a move in the letter of the constitution does not change the fact that such an application of that authority is totally unprecedented in club history. [*Given that this is a science fiction club and not a court of law, precedent doesn't hold much water. As you said, the club's constitution provides for the option, and club members chose to exercise it.*]

At last night's meeting, it was suggested that the club give me a plaque honoring my years of service. I said that in view of the previous meeting, such a plaque would be inappropriate. As would have been the denunciation of a decision which was not going to be changed. So we chose not to make a fight we would surely lose and left halfway through the meeting. [*Regardless of the reason other club members chose to change their meeting place, and in view of their offering to recognize all the years you'd made your house available to the club for meetings, might it not have also been possible to accept both changes with grace and thereby obviate the possibility for any fight at all?*]

✉ ✉ ✉

More letters...



next page...

Sue Jones / Flat 5 / 32-33 Castle Street / SHREWSBURY UK SY1 2BQ
www dot tortoiseloft dot com (Web site)

Thanks for your reminder about PN6.2 being online. I had received it through the post, but not responded. I'd put it aside to read when I had time to enjoy it properly, and not got around to it. So yesterday I sought it out and buried my nose in it and here I am.

The cover's great fun -- I'm still not sure exactly how many people are in the picture -- I keep spotting more hands and heads. I particularly like the dragon poster on the wall.

I've never been interested in Conan, but enjoyed Sue Bursztynski's article. When someone other than the original author writes about a favourite character, it's rare that the 'feel' of the character is quite right, however carefully and sensitively done. However, I find it natural that series of books and the characters in them, should come to an end, and the idea of wanting fan 'writing to get "more Trek/Conan/whatever" ' doesn't grab me. I feel the same about story-series stretched beyond their natural limit. I'd rather have one or two really good books that I can re-read than endless repeats of the same thing in different guises, the writer's world becoming gradually leached of all novelty and interest.

Along with the bad owners of dogs, you can add the very unscrupulous providers of them: like the dog's-home lady who persuaded my frail and elderly parents that a rescued German-Shepherd-cross bitch was going to make them a sedate household pet! Six months later, they finally realised that they were not providing her with the stimulation and exercise that she needed, nor were they able to stop her neurotic barking or break her habit of nipping people when they left the house -- friends as well as strangers. A beautiful and devoted dog, but certainly not the right dog for my mum and dad. This summer, after a lot of heart-wrenching, Katy went off to the well-regulated local NCDL kennels, where we hope they will find her a more suitable owner.

Thanks again for your fine zine, and apologies for my continued delay in producing *Tortoise* 23 -- it won't be out before the end of October, at the earliest. Life has got in the way of my plans, as usual, and I'm off to Australia for three weeks on Monday. [*Hope you got back safely, and had fun on the trip.*]



Joseph T. Major
1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040
jtmajor at iglou dot com / August 14, 2006

Silent eLOCutions:

Ned Brooks: You do remember Stahlstadt, the giant foundry town, in Verne's Les cinq cents millions de la Begum (The Begum's Millions)? Verne took rather different approaches towards the British and the Germans in that one than he had done in De le terre a la lune (From the Earth to the Moon), but then the Franco-Prussian War had intervened.

E. B. Frohvet: Lisa will, at the drop of a hat, or even if the hat stays undropped, recount the story of Digger, the neighbors' Doberman, who was thoroughly patient and good-tempered. Children would ride on him. As for Presa Canarios, they are inclined to temper. Diane Whipple, the woman in San Francisco, was attacked by two dogs about her size.

Bambi was translated into English by Whittaker Chambers.

Reply to me: Read Red Zone by Aphrodite Jones for some information about Presa Canarios. Like I said above, they run about 110-120 pounds full grown.

Eric Mayer: Of course you knew the snapper was there. Turtle recall. [*Groan.*]

Lyn McConchie: "Purity of the species?" I thought dogs and wolves were the same species. [*Not quite. Dogs are Canus familiaris, wolves are Canus lupus. Maybe those are two different subspecies; it's been a long time since I took biology classes.*]

John Purcell: You do know that every dog that played Lassie was in fact male? Easier to train or something. (Just what they say about husbands, too.)

"Why I'm a Conan Purist": Robert E. Howard had Conan abandon being war chief of a tribe to take a woman to her family, even though she wanted to be his (current) mate, because she was isolated among the tribe and so her "yes" was not entirely free. By the time "Robert Jordan" got through with him, he dragged a naked woman from a well where she was hanging head-down and proceeded to take her. Oh, he said she could say "no" so by Jordan's standards that didn't count. [*Yet another reason why I don't read Jordan any more.*]



Eric Mayer

The heatwave broke here a few days ago and probably not coincidentally I've been writing a few LoCs. I shouldn't complain. We had three days of only 93 degrees. Last year it was three days of upper nineties in a row on at least one occasion and 30 days of 90 or higher which for the northeast was a record.

Although I enjoyed Sue Bursztynski's essay on Conan, I must point out that publishing fan fiction violates copyright laws and, probably more importantly, it doesn't seem quite right to me for people to think they can use other writers' inventions for their own ends without permission. I don't even like the idea of the estate giving such permission after the actual creator is gone. [*And since this has been done at least once by a living author, there will probably always be fans who think it's okay to do so with any writer's works. This kind of thing is rather hard to halt entirely, especially since so many people seem to be into slash these days.*]

As for a more modern Conan...how about Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer? Mike's violent and politically incorrect also. His world is pretty much a jungle, filled with savages (yeah, he's racist) and he also employs a bit of cunning to go with brute force. I can see a team up between Hammer and Conan, or else Conan could find himself in a time warp and end up as a P.I. (Title - Me, Barbarian or My Sword Is Quick) Maybe the two could trade places, with Conan tracking down Commies in New York and Mike Hammer gunning for an evil wizard in some exotic ancient kingdom. OK. Tell me it's already been done. It must have been done. [*Maybe not; doesn't ring any bells with me. You could always change the names and write it anyway. Sounds like fun!*]

Of course, I just got done saying I didn't like to see writers' creations being used by others without permission, and Spillane and Howard are both gone now. Then again, how many times have both those characters appeared under other names? I've got it. Ronan the Barbarian Meets Mike Axe. [*And there you go. I expect pages by December. If Mary's interested, she can pick up where you leave off, right?*]

✉ ✉ ✉

Lyn McConchie

With a mild comment on NZ not allowing wolf-dogs I seem to have started an ongoing discussion and that can only be good. The breed Joseph mentioned, the Presa Canario, is listed here as one of the dangerous

breeds that must be muzzled in public. I had no sooner received the latest PN talking about them, than our paper carried a report from Florida of the owner of one who decided that it needed a bath. The Presa Canario didn't want a bath, wasn't having a bath -- and to ensure that, it ripped the owner's throat out. I think I'm sticking to cats who -- even when annoyed -- usually do a bit less damage.

And I see too one of the differences between the USA and NZ. Here 'a staffordshire' invariably refers to the English Staffordshire Bull terrier. Where a 'pit bull' invariably refers to the American Staffordshire. The two dogs (belonging to my best mate's son and his girlfriend who dwell in a housebus on the front corner of my farmlet) are a mix. Slayer is mostly staffy, while his daughter, Gypsy, is a staffy/pitbull cross. Yet both are gentle, affectionate dogs and regularly share the big paddock with new-born lambs and their mums. I have seen one of the ewes chase the dogs from the warmest, most sheltered spot by the hedge so her twins could lie on pre-warmed and best-sheltered ground. This isn't to say that if you toss sticks and Gyp gets over-excited you may not accidentally get nipped, but there's no ill-will involved and no intended attack. And when, just the other month when everyone was on my front lawn moving firewood, Gyp saw Fluffy the barn cat and headed for her, I screamed an order and Gyp stopped at once, looked guilty, and walked meekly away.

And The Free Book Deal. Sigh. I'd heard vaguely of Herbiemas but really know nothing about it and certainly not the date. And, sigh, while I'd love to win Redshift, I don't know the answer to that question either. I suspect it isn't so much that some of us are either really really lazy or don't want the offered volume, so much as we simply don't know the answer. That applies to me mostly anyway. Where I do, I enter. So you can probably gauge what I know by what I reply to in the FBD. [*That's that, then -- I'm gonna make the questions as easy as I can from now on, so more people will enter.*]

It's winter here, which most likely feels very odd to everyone else. We had a brief snow fall the other month and last week we had the usual 'four seasons in one day'. I woke at 7 a.m. -- it was snowing lightly. I rose at 7:30 -- to sleet. By 8 a.m. it was raining, and at 9 it went back to sleet. Thunder kept coming in and out of his cat-door all day complaining to me about the weather. (And when I fed the hens they were all in the big covered yards and had a LOT more to say on it. Mad as a wet hen is not just a saying.) Winter here for me is all haulage and porridge. Hauling hay out to the hay racks for the sheep and my two calves, and hauling firewood inside while cooking a couple of large pans a day of cracked barley

for the two piglets.

But spring is in the air, the geese are laying and extremely belligerent about it and writers friends and acquaintances are starting to turn up at my door to spend an hour or two on their way to cities North or South. I can only wish that -- sigh -- I saw as much of the builders who are still, after three months, not yet finished building the 25-square-meter extension to the house. And whom, judging by their speed to date, may well take another couple of months to complete the work. How fortunate it is that I didn't need the work done before November or so. And just as well I didn't mention that or I suspect they'd be taking even longer.



Lloyd Penney

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

Sept. 11, 2006

Yes, it is that horrible day. I'm watching the Ground Zero Ceremonies on CBC Newsworld because CNN is giving the whole thing a thick layer of melodrama. At least CBC is being factual and objective, which is something of which I think we need much more. Anyway, we must look to the future with some optimism, and in the meantime, here's a loc on *Peregrine Nations*, V6#2, whole number 22.

(As I type, Condi Rice is in Halifax, Nova Scotia for special ceremonies with our Minister for External Affairs, Peter MacKay, not only marking 9/11, but also the fact 6,600 airline passengers were forced to land in Gander, and the local community of 9,000+ helped them in a sudden time of need. A total of over 13,000 passengers in planes were forced to land in Gander, Whitehorse and other outlying Canadian airports.)

Ned Brooks wouldn't want to drive on some roads in the more northerly parts of Canada -- that's where you have to look out for moose. And, if you smack into a moose, odds are you'll be seriously injured. The moose might look around to see what happened.

Joseph Major: That \$50 breakfast was in US funds. In Anaheim, we thought we'd quickly go to the Starbucks in the hotel for some lunch. A coffee, a bottle of cold frappachino, two roast beef sandwiches: US\$30. Ridiculous. Everyone was complaining about overpriced food. We had a cooler in our room, and we had breakfast there every day. Saved a bundle, and gave us more time each day to get to the convention. Friends from

Ottawa took the cooler with them on their way back home by car, and we may get it back when we go to the annual convention in Montreal.

Sheryl Birkhead said some artists don't make the Hugo ballot, but I wanted to say they aren't forgotten. On the ballot (with number of nominations) for this year were Frank Wu (55), Sue Mason (35), Steve Stiles (32), Brad Foster (23) and Teddy Harvia/David Thayer (22). Just off the ballot were Alexis Gilliand (16), Alan White (14), Marc Schirmeister (13), Dan Steffan (11), Taral Wayne (10), Kurt Erichsen (8), Craig Smith (8), Peggy Ranson (7), Stu Shiffman (6), and Ray van Tilburg, Bill Neville, Alan F. Beck and Sheryl Birkhead, all with 5 nominations each.

The reason for my LJ full of locs -- I've had a number of people ask me why others call me a fanwriter while they see so little of what I write. I said I write for many fanzines, and their reply was that I would be the only one to see all that writing because few would get as many fanzines as I do. Still, they wanted to see more of this writing. This all came up in a conversation with Robert Sawyer at a pub night, and off the top of his head, he suggested that the best way to showcase my writing was to gather it in one area, such as a blog. I considered it, read up a little more on blogs, Blogger and LiveJournal, and decided to start at a particular date. July 1 was convenient, seeing it was nearly mid-year anyway. Those people I spoke with now have an idea of how much I write, and who that writing goes to. (One quote from Hope Leibowitz: "I see you as a letterhack, but not as a fanwriter." The LJ is an experiment, and it's a successful one so far.)

I am looking forward to the next *Steam Engine Time*. I'm happy for any paperzine that comes through my mailbox, but zines like SET are special. [*If you're willing to read it onscreen or download and print it, you {and anyone else reading this with online access and the appropriate software} can get it now from efanzines.com .*]

[Re: the Free Book Deal] How on earth does anyone get to be well-read in SF? There's so much of it to read, remember, and unfortunately, forget. [*Too true. I get books for review from one publisher regularly, and from one or two others sporadically, and I'm still behind. Having been ill was really not an excuse.*]



Mark Proskey (postmarked July 31, 2006)

Hope to see fanzine reviews return with addresses. [*I can hardly ignore a request like this, accompanied as it was by two bucks for the next*

PN. Thank you, Mark! Am glad to see you getting a bit more involved, shall we say, with fanzines. No, I'm not being facetious.]



John Purcell

See? I corrected your name in my address book. Sorry about the error. Abbot: I'm a bad boy...

Anyway, once again you've produced a wonderful issue. [*Thank you. I am practicing taking compliments gracefully.*] I really can't believe that I missed on Orff's first name; I should have known better, since I do enjoy classical music. One upon a time, I was a music major in college; started off as that, but when there weren't classes offered in composition -- which is what I really wanted to do (still do, in fact) -- I switched majors, eventually transferring to another college. [*How interesting; I did the same thing, but not for the same reasons. I was going for a voice major, was able to take music theory classes at the community college level, and was rattling right along when one day I realized that I hadn't had enough vocal experience or range to pursue a voice major, and the only instrument I played was guitar, and I was self-taught on that. So I dumped that idea and went for the BA in English with a minor in journalism that I eventually got in 1979.*] But, I really should have remembered Carl Orff, not Paul Orff. My bad. Slap my wrist with a soggy baton and send me to the corner to practice mixyloidian scales. [*No big deal, I'd never even heard of Carl Orff before I found out about the "Carmina burana."*]

Eric Mayer: Don't be too sure about those monks not having a senior hockey team. Down here deep in the heart of SouthCentralEastern Texas where summer never ends, the new ice arena in town (one year old now!) has hockey leagues for all ages, including mine (50+). I have been sorely tempted to join, too. Truth is, I've been ice-skating again over at Wolf Pen Ice Arena a couple times now, and I am quite surprised that I actually haven't fallen at all -- yet. Imagine my surprise at still being able to skate backwards! I guess ice-skating is like bike riding: once you've done it, you never forget. Heck, I am no Gordie Howe, but I might give the league a shot next time around if I can get my stamina back up to snuff.

Unlike **Sue Bursztynski**, I am no Conan purist, not even sort of. However, once in a great while I do get the urge to read some good, old-fashioned sword and sorcery type fiction, and REH is a good source for such a tale. The man was a wonderful storyteller in the classic sense. He had great pacing, vivid description, and a flair for the dramatic. It's great

stuff when you're in the mood for that kind of writing. It has been many years since I've read any of the Conan saga, but this may change. Every once in a while I get on a particular reading jag on a certain author or type of story. Lately it's been mysteries and old sf novels. Fun stuff to relax with when I'm done grading papers or working on lesson plans.

A short zine, but that's okay. In any event, I am glad to hear that you're feeling better and I look forward to your next issue. [*Much appreciated.*] Here in Texas the weather may drop below the 90-degree mark by the end of September, and that's being generous. Like I said earlier, summer never ends here. Locals tell me that the last time it snowed in the Brazos Valley was something like six years ago; about half an inch covered the ground over night one day in early February, and it melted by 10 a.m. or something like that. Crazy.

Take care, and enjoy the cool, crisp air of Michigan in the fall. Minnesota was gorgeous then -- so is Wisconsin -- and I really miss the changing of the seasons. It sure beats out the green to brown to green of down here. It's beastly hot! [*Three of the reasons I left Florida and returned to Michigan. The trees are turning color now, and if I can get one sunny day where I don't have a lot to do and remember to load the Canon with film, I might get some photos soon.*]



Joy V. Smith

Intriguing cover! Btw, is the cat playing with a ball of yarn or coughing up a hair ball?

Joseph Major: "Hotel restaurants are priced for the expense-account crowd." That explains a lot!

Eric Mayer: We get a snapping turtle at our natural pond now and then. I wish they'd take out the bullfrogs! And I think it's so great that your parents got you admitted to the sf room of your local library.

Lloyd Penney: Good idea about archiving your LOCs online; I used to save mine, but eventually gave up because they took up too much room. Also, now and then I cull stuff because I think about those who will have to deal with my accumulated papers after I'm gone, and I can picture them muttering and cursing and tossing.

Jan: Send the issue to the papers! [*Um, why?*]

Interesting article about Conan being dated (not being politically correct today). I think those kind of stories are still being written. I enjoyed Lyn McConchie's review of Heinlein's Children and mentioned it

in the AOL Heinlein (SF Authors) folder. Thank you for your review of Moon of Three Rings, which I now have an urge to read again.

Re: your free book deal. I didn't have a clue about last issue's question and wasn't interested enough in the books offered to track it down. Ditto for #18; I don't want the books enough to take them away from someone who does. But I love the contest idea!

✉ ✉ ✉

Peter Sullivan

Well, depending how strict you're being on the 25th July deadline, this may be too later for 6.2, but in that case at least I should be well in time for 6.3!

I don't think that *Emerald City* being nominated both as best fanzine and best web site is necessarily "double-dipping" as you and Sheryl imply. As well as the fanzine itself, **Cheryl Morgan** runs a very useful weblog, typically updated several times a day. It would be perfectly reasonable to nominate both *Emerald City* the fanzine, and Emerald City the weblog, as two separate entities. I personally probably read the weblog much more than the fanzine, but equally there will have been people who just read the fanzine and ignored the weblog. Of course, all of this is pretty much moot now, given that Cheryl is winding down to a fold in the autumn.

On **Ned Brooks'** comments about triage, I think he's right to say that the boundaries have shifted a lot with advances in medical technology. When the National Health Service was set up over here after the war, it was genuinely believed by policy planners that the large initial costs would, over time, reduce. The idea was that, by dealing with health problems at source, the general health of the population would improve to such an extent that long term only a minimal service would be required. In practice, of course, what has happened is that people are no longer dying of their first disease, and hence are living on to suffer lots of further diseases, driving costs up over time rather than down. For instance, I suspect that a significant proportion of the people I was in hospital with earlier this year would have been, 60 years ago, already dead. Certainly true in my case.

I agree with **Jason Burnett's** predicted one-two for the Best Fanzine Hugo (*Banana Wings* and *Chunga*) -- or rather, I agree that this is the order that they **should** be in, as Hugo voters often seem to inhabit some

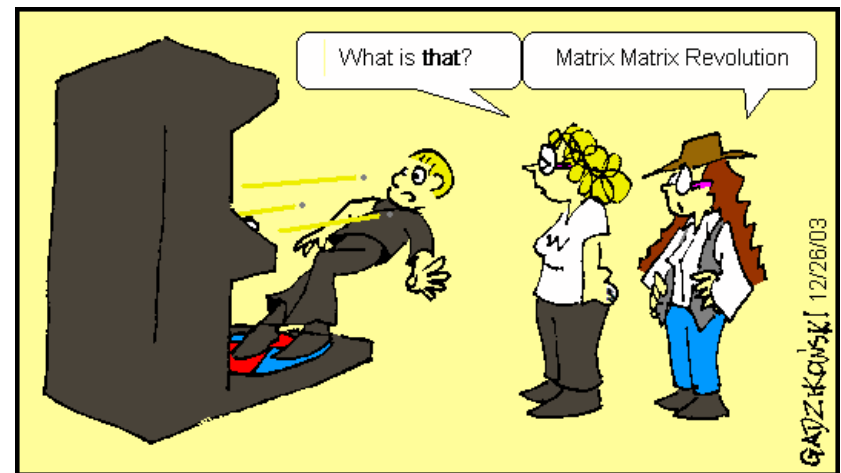
kind of parallel universe when it comes to the fan awards. Must admit I tend to find the FAAn Awards tend to reflect my own fannish preferences rather better.

I'm not sure whether requiring two issues to be published in the year is necessary -- as Jason points out, it discriminates against fanzines that are actually intended to be annual. Fanzines that are meant to be more frequent, but aren't, are unlikely to make it on to the ballot, and unlikely to win if they do. It'll be interesting, for instance, to see how *Plokta* fares this year. In fact, has a fanzine ever actually won the Best Fanzine Hugo with only one issue in the year of qualification? If not, it would imply that Hugo voters already apply "Jason's rule" informally, so less need to actually have it written into the WSFS Constitution.

On **E.B. Frohvet's** letter, I never assumed that "putting the orange tree on the patio" meant anything other than what it said. Of course, British comedy has a long tradition of using any phrase at all as a double entendre, and my mind is now racing with possible filthy interpretations of what he said...

Trinlay Khadro: Although the world may have been built for people taller than you, it's definitely been built for people shorter than me. On balance, I'd probably prefer to remain tall rather than short, but whenever I hit my head on a light fitting, I do wonder.

WAHF: Alexander Slate (who reminds me his address has changed to one on NE Loop 410; if you don't have it and need it, contact me).





Personal Liberty

by Lyn McConchie

[I thought the following article brought up some pretty scary possibilities, and that's why it's in this, the October "let's remember Hallween" ish.]

Over the last few years there has been a lot

of debate in New Zea-land about child prostitution. Not that we have it here legally or even in a major illegal league. But a number of New Zealand citizens can go on so-called sex tours in Asian countries for the purposes of finding and using small children more or less legally since, in some of these countries, there is no law against it. Either because small children are the property of their parents who can rent them out if they wish, or because while that country's laws may be against it in principle, in practise nothing is ever done.

This has sent many of our Politicians and Christians waxing hysterical. Unfortunately the solution they appear to have developed, may be -- in my opinion -- worse than the disease. A few years ago they enacted a law which says that New Zealand citizens visiting another country and engaging in the hiring of small children for the purposes of sex, can be charged with criminal acts WHEN THEY RETURN TO NEW ZEALAND.

There has been no outcry over this despite at least one conviction on these terms, so I can only imagine that those who are normally vigilant on civil liberties were asleep at the switch. It is probably because every right-thinking person condemns the use of small terrorized children in forced, paid, or indeed any other kind of sex. But a wide-sweeping law like that has other implications.

In the Netherlands it is legal as well as socially acceptable for locals and visitors to use 'soft drugs'. These are on sale at moderate prices in a number of shops to any who wish to purchase and indulge. But in many other countries the use, purchase, or possession of such products is a criminal offense. If this law is stretched a little it means that any member of the New Zealand Police on holiday in the Netherlands who sees you

enter such a shop and use and/or buy such drugs may lay charges against you on your return. And it doesn't have to be Police. Any citizen may lay charges if they see illegal acts being carried out.

To some people this would still appear reasonable but how far can such a law be stretched? And if it is an acceptable law here, how long might it be before other countries enact their own brand of it? And a third question: it's fine to have a law like this on the books, but just how is it going to be enforced when/if ordinary members of the public complain to our Police on their return?... "I saw a man I later found to be Mr. ---- going to a hotel room with a child who can't have been more than ten. I accuse him of being a pedophile and as a citizen I lay charges against him now I'm home." Tough on Mr. ---- if he turns out to be a doctor kindly seeing a child for impoverished parents, or a missionary -- or a man with Asian relatives simply taking his small niece to dinner, or any of several other reasons why his intentions were innocent. But suppose they aren't.

You can't try the person in the original country if whatever it was they did may not have been against that country's laws. They'd have to be tried on return to New Zealand. So -- you have to import the child or children (if they can be found and identified beyond reasonable doubt), any witnesses, interpreters, and even possibly a member of the Police force from that country.

Who pays, can we afford it, and can we be sure the evidence is genuine and not -- as is currently alleged about a certain case involving an Australian male jailed on charges of the rape of small girls in an Asian country -- trumped up to obtain money? But there is another factor to consider.

Once you open doors with a law like this, there is always some country who'll push it further open, or develop twists unexpected by the original lawmakers. It has always been seen as okay for a country to demand its own citizens and visitors obey the laws. But let us take the country of Pushcart. Now in Pushcart butterflies are sacred. To kill or injure one calls for execution. From an extension of our law two other possibilities now spring. That a Pushcart citizen holidaying here may be executed for blasphemy on their return because while in New Zealand they were observed to have inadvertently tread on a butterfly. Or that a New Zealand citizen subsequently holidaying in Pushcart may be seized and executed for spraying their garden HERE (and killing a number of butterflies.)

Unlikely? Keep saying that when other countries enact and follow such a law. When a more repressive country adds this twist. When you are

standing by the gallows waiting for the trap to open under you. Still claiming it could never happen? Very worryingly here in New Zealand we've taken the first step. A law like this could end by disrupting society, trade, tourism, and peace of mind. All because New Zealand didn't like the idea of a very small number of its citizens getting away with breaking OUR laws in some OTHER country which can't be bothered to make the offence illegal -- or to charge those who behave badly when there is an existing law to deal with them.

A country may have laws against such activities. It is just that corruption is so rife they are unable or unwilling to enforce them. But why should we pay for that? Why open Pandora's Box to do the job their own Police are unable or unwilling to do? And if they don't have such laws, then we are in effect saying that they have no right to decide their own laws, that it is up to us to decide them for the other countries -- and what a can of worms that could open.

It could lead to Muslim countries insisting that since it is against their laws to drink alcohol any citizen of any other country visiting Muslim lands can be convicted if it can be shown that they drank not in the Muslim country but in their own. And you'd better not have committed adultery either.

I began this article some years back when the law was first passed here. Since then, unhappily, we have seen similar laws enacted against terrorism. Laws that allow citizens of a number of countries to be seized and imprisoned without trial -- or indeed much evidence either -- simply in many cases because they are of the wrong ethnic extraction. Yes, a percentage are probably involved in terrorism. Yes, a much larger percentage may be sympathetic. But under the law one is supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. I am unhappy that my own country has led the way with a law that to some extent can reverse this. Where you can be charged -- and convicted -- of breaking your own country's laws in another country where the offence is not against the law.

Beware of the possibilities of such a system expanding into areas where it was never intended to be used. And watch out for Pushcart of course, merrily executing any citizen of any country who is accused of once killing a butterfly in their own land. Take heed. Watch out for this application of a law coming to your own country any day soon. And just in case -- don't kill any butterflies.



A Feast of Jackals: Book reviews

by Lyn McConchie

THE GHOST AND MRS MCCLURE by Alice Kimberly.
Berkeley Crime, February 2004. Paperback. First in a series.

This is a happy romp through a bookshop, the murders of a PI and an author, and the amusing story of a bookshop's owner who's thrown caution to the winds and bought the place to run on a shoestring. It is clearly a take-off of the old book and subsequent TV series, (*The Ghost and Mrs Muir*) But it's a good, pleasant, well-written romp none-the-less.

Young widow, Penelope Thornton-McClure and her elderly aunt Sadie are making ends meet by running the store and Penelope is delighted when she manages to persuade a well-known author of detective novels to do a signing at Buy The Book. She isn't nearly so happy when she finds the man is a mannerless pig who terrorizes those about him including his own family.

She's still less pleased when her eminent guest drops dead during the signing and the local police chief declares it to be murder. But fear not, help is at hand. The Ghost, the spirit of a PI who was also murdered in the store in the 1940s, is about to rush to her assistance.

This book is on the cusp: either the next one will be even better as the author gains in experience, or it may fall flat. This one is good if a little light, it stands well enough on its own, but I'll be keen to see how the next one fares. This one recommended for those who like 'lighthearted.' But check the next before spending money.

CROUCHING BUZZARD, LEAPING LOON by Donna Andrews. St Martins Minotaur, paperback, February 2004. Fourth in the 'Meg Langslow' mysteries.

I was just about to sit down and review this book when a friend's latest specialtyzine plus extras hove into the mailbox. I read that first, discovering from amongst the additional bits he always

encloses, that this book is an Agatha Nominee. That did not at all surprise me. The book is witty, clever, and a ripping good read.

Since I saw from the cover info. that the author won - believe it or not - The Agatha, the Barry, AND the Malice Domestic awards for the first in this series, (Murder with Peacocks,) I did expect the book to be well-written. I didn't expect it to be so darned 'laugh out loud even though you're alone funny!'

In quick succession you are introduced to the offices of Mutant Wizards, a company based on a computer game, Lawyers From Hell. The switchboard is currently womaned by Meg, whose brother Rob created the game and owns the company. Keeping her company is George, a buzzard with only one wing, and Spike, her mother-in-law's nine pound canine who bites anything which presents itself. Company peace is not assisted by six therapists who are tenants of a portion of the building, or by the murder of Ted while lying on top of the automatic mail-cart as it makes its rounds.

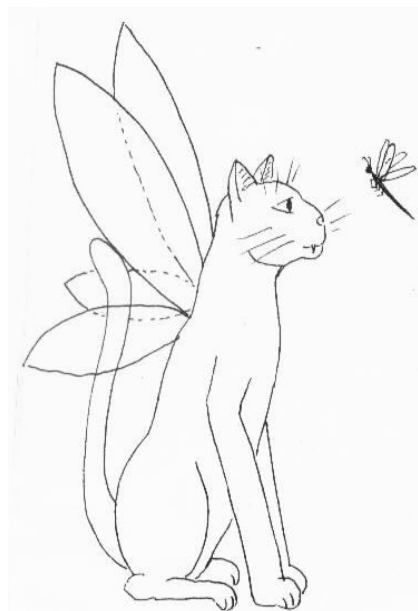
Meg, (whose long-time boyfriend is currently away filming episodes of a tacky fantasy TV series) is helping Rob because he has said he thinks there is something odd happening at the company although he's unable to say what. Since Meg has money invested in Mutant Wizards, she feels that if there really is something peculiar going on, she'd like to know what, hence the job she has accepted there.

Ted's murder is compounded by Meg's discovery that Ted was a blackmailer. And not just over illegal events, but also over small items which some people still don't want revealed, harmless though they may be. Then the local police arrest Rob, and Meg must scramble to exonerate him. That isn't helped by the Police accepting her conclusions and freeing Rob before then arresting another of the company's employees, whom Meg is also certain is innocent.

I won't go into a speech about why this book is so good. Suffice it to say that about halfway through reading it, I reached for the phone, rang my book shop in the big city, and insisted they order the other books in the series. (Murder with Peacocks, Murder with Puffins, Revenge of the Wrought-Iron Flamingos, We'll Always Have Parrots, and Owls Well That Ends Well).

This book is funny, but it also has a believable crime and detection side. It appears that this particular book was so amusing because of the background against which it is set, and that might be so, but the collection of all those awards for 'Peacocks' argues that all of them are very well-written, even if they aren't quite so amusing. But I certainly do recommend this one to those who like humor, animals, touches of fantasy, interesting characters, and a very good mystery. (And having read all in the series so far, I suspect that the author is an SF enthusiast as she knows a bit too much about conventions and gaming to be a mundane.)

Silly Kitty artistic expressions



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Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? editorial

First, some corrections. I I have been remiss in the last few issues in not naming my esteemed publisher, Peter Sullivan. His name is in the colophon for this, and will remain in the colophon until I resume publishing responsibilities. Also, Joseph Major's loc in the lastish

was printed twice and, while many of us get much enjoyment out of Joe's writing, there was no need to repeat that loc, so my apologies for not catching it. Those of you who receive the paper version now have a potential collectors' item. The online version has been revised.

Brad Foster's cover art for this is, according to him, the most involved piece of PhotoShop-assisted art he's ever done. I hope you will agree with me that it is one damfine piece of work. He didn't spend all those years drawing *Goodies* for nothing. Ask and ye shall receive amazing things, y'all.

Those of you with Internet access are strongly advised to surf over to www.jabberwockygraphix.com and slobber over Brad's stunning artwork, much of which is for sale, and a fair portion of it at affordable prices. I never knew that the wonderful metallic butterfly he drew for PN was part of a larger series called Argent Park, and is specifically titled "Phosphorescent Aviator." Now we all know.

In ...and furthermore 16, John Purcell interviewed Chris Garcia on a number of topics. When John asked him who his influences were in pursuing fanzine fanac, Chris mentioned Earl Kemp ... and me. My goodness. What an honor. Now I'm all verklempt. Thanks, Chris, for the props and for being such a Dude. You are American fandom's revenge for James Bacon. And I think he's a Dude, too. Which probably should be defined. Dude: a male

human of exceeding taste and refinement who is not above using a whoopee cushion or a mad hug to endear himself to others.

A reminder to those submitting material other than locs: I've added a more specific guideline to what I'm looking for in the colophon for this. Hope it helps.

The Free Book Deal

"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.)" -- that was Contest 18 speaking there, folks.

The correct answer is Medea: Harlan's World.

The regular-mail prize winner is Jason Burnett, who will receive a book-club edition (hardbound) of the 1946 SF classic Slan by A.E. Van Vogt.

The online prize winner is Joe Major, who will receive a copy of the 2001 all-original anthology Redshift: Extreme Visions of Speculative Fiction edited by Al Sarrantonio.

Congratulations to the winners.

Contest 19 is announced. Let's see if you folks have been paying attention. What's the exact name of the publisher of Joseph Major's Heinlein's Children? **Joe Major, you're not eligible for this contest, sorry.** Spelling and grammar count!

In honor of the season in which this contest is announced, the regular-mail contest winner will receive The Book of Ballads, a collection of Celtic folktales and songs retold by the likes of Neil Gaiman, Sharyn McCrumb, Charles de Lint, Emma Bull, Delia Sherman and Jane Yolen (among others) and lushly illustrated by Charles Vess. Note: This is NOT a book for children. The online contest winner will receive Ramsey Campbell's The Darkest Part of the Woods, a tale of a forest with really, really nasty secrets and many underground scenes which claustrophobic readers might want to skip. Gave me the shivers, it did.

Contest deadline is Dec. 20, 2006. Good luck!



The Pub Crawl

fanzine reviews
by J.G. Stinson

Yeah, it's been a while since I did one of these, but I stopped doing them because it seemed to me as though I was preaching to the choir. Most, if not all, of my readers already knew about the fanzines I was reviewing, and there seemed little point in mentioning fanzines they already were reading. But with the advent of more fanzines on efanzines.com, there's a new crop of fanzines out there to discover, and not everyone is online and thus not able to access them that way. Several of these fanzines also have paper versions. Those are the ones I'll be covering. First, though, there's this thing called *Space Squid* (Matthew Bey, David Chang, Steve Wilson, eds.; Summer 2005, Vol. 1, Issue 1, "published sesquiquarterly" and available for a couple bucks from www.spacesquid.com). I heard about it somewhere online and ordered a copy. It was inspired by that now-notorious Margaret Atwood (she of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Crake*

and *Oryx* fame) quote, "Science fiction is rockets, chemicals, and talking squids in outer space." More fule her. It's not a fanzine, actually, but it certainly is a zine. And a silly, goofy zine it is, too.

Space Squid is an unapologetic, throw-it-at-the-wall-and-see-if-it-sticks publication which includes fiction (Chris Nakashima-Brown, Jessica Reisman, Jay Lake, Chris Roberson), non-fiction (Bruce Sterling, Mike Sacks) and comix (Christopher Hay), as well as illos (Matthew Bey, David Johnston, and others not mentioned). It's well-done, for its bizarre content, and often funny. But it's not for the faint-hearted or conservative reader. If you don't have online access and want to see it, write to me. First asker gets the copy I have. I don't know whether any more ishes are planned (the pubbing schedule is Greek to me).

On the more accessible, fanzine side we have John Purcell's pair o' pubs, *In A Prior Lifetime* and *...and furthermore* (yes, that's the title) (John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA; ask about the usual). John was in fandom before and has recently returned to fanzines, blaming Chris Garcia (more about him later), who's getting /b/l/a/m/e/d/ credited for a lot of things lately (and who blames me and Earl Kemp for getting **him** into fanzines, oi). John's interests are generally fannish, though he does mention SF occasionally. He's become quite the letterhack as well, giving Garcia and Lloyd Penney runs for their money with his growing presence in lettercols across fanzinedom. There are 15 ishes of IAPL and 19 ishes of ...af now, last time I checked (about 5 minutes ago); that's the thing with online fanzines, they get pubbed more often, in several instances, because there's no paper involved.

Some Fantastic (Matthew Appleton, 3762 Sudley Ford Court, Fairfax, VA 22033, [mattapp at gmail dot com](mailto:mattapp@gmail.com), [www dot somefantastic dot us](http://www.somefantastic.com); quarterly "critical eZine"; \$5 or the usual) is a serconzine that covers SF in books, graphic novels, movies, and maybe even music if someone writes an article about it. This is not to say that any old thing gets in here,

because Matthew and Cheryl Appleton make sure those articles that do see print here are readable. This is the kind of serconzine I wanted to find: one that can discuss SF in depth and with no barriers as to medium. On the strength of their reviews here, I rented "MirrorMask" and "Howl's Moving Castle" and regretted neither experience. I like the fact that the book reviews are mostly of books I haven't read, because I'd rather read about those than books I've already read (unless the review is diametrically opposed to my own opinion of the book, in which case I might re-read it to try and see it from the reviewer's perspective). The layout design is clean and precise, there are few typos, and when it arrives I usually drop everything else and read it. Definitely worth more than one look if sercon is your game and you're still reading SF -- which, I admit, may whittle down the potential reader pool from PN to less than a handful, but I have to try, right?

A Visit to Gwen Frostic Prints

My first "meeting" with Gwen Frostic was with her prints, delightfully simple renderings of the natural world as she found it around and near her Benzonia, Michigan home. My mother had gotten me some of Frostic's card for a gift, as I recall, and I hoarded them like gold, sending them out only to special friends. When they were gone, I was living in another state and I'd moved on to other types of stationery and cards.

When I first got Internet access, one of the businesses I looked for was Frostic's, and I found it. Now that I live in Michigan, I can stop up to Benzonia almost any time (it's less than an hour from my house) and visit Presscraft Papers, where Frostic's work is still for sale, and will probably continue to be sold long after her death. She started a home-based business as a single, handicapped woman when doing such a thing was nearly unheard of, and she was successful, so much so that on her death, her estate bequeathed a multi-million dollar fund to Western Michigan University. She was a class act.

For those interested in her diverse paper products, you can write for a catalog to Gwen Frostic Prints, PO Box 300, Benzonia, MI 49616, or visit [www dot gwenfrostic dot com](http://www.dot.gwenfrostic.dot.com) and view more products than can fit into the catalog.

Pretty Things Jewelry

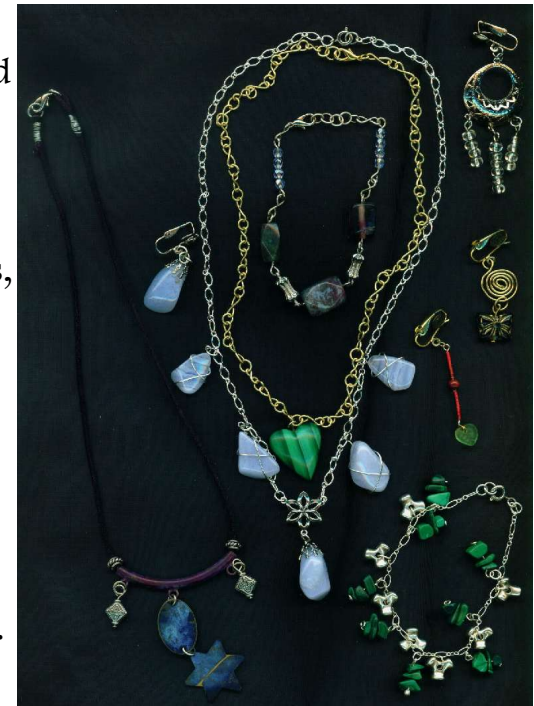
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