

# *Ribbons*

*A Journal By and For the Readers of C. J. Cherryh  
Volume One, Number Three / September 2007*



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**Art credits:** Neco Nightwraith (cover, "Burn"), Asicho (p. 5, "Stsho," colored pencil; p. 11, atevi; p. 16, baji-naji), Bellatrys (p. 13, "Shower's Free!" [Banichi in a towel], digital illustration). There's more, but it'll have to wait for the next issue. Special plea: The Editor would be very pleased to receive art representing other worlds than those contained in this issue, so please consider sending some soon! Hani would be most welcome, as would, oh, maybe a majat or two...or a caliban...or ship schematics...

**About the cover:** "Burn" is by THExNECOxCHAN (aka Neco), done in MSPaint and Jasc Paint Shop Pro. Neco says of the piece, "I recently read the Nighthorse novel Rider at the Gate, and couldn't resist drawing a Nighthorse. They are my favorite animal characters so far." Artistic history: "I really started getting into art in the fourth grade, and have built myself up from there. I recently have taken on a more manga style of drawing. My favorite artist is Kubo Tite. He writes 'Bleach' and has been a real influence on my style lately."

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**Next editorial deadline: Jan. 10th, 2008.**

## ***The Ships of Alliance, Union and Compact Space: A Cherryhlist Symposium***

*This article was generated by a recent lively discussion on Cherryhlist about ships, crews, and what might have happened to the Fleet. To retain at least some privacy, commenters are identified by their screen names (mine would be tropicsf) or their list names (such as x11tech). Mining mailing lists for articles is nothing new in the fanzine world, where I got my start in general fandom, so readers who post to Cherryhlist, be advised: you may be next. <insert large grin here> But I'll ask permisison first. Conventional proofreading changes have been made to the original posts for ease of reading.[ ] indicates editor's additions for clarity.*

As a starting point, "agingcow2345" has a Web site for a Cherryh ship design at:

<http://members.aceweb.com/gregg1/CJ/cherryh-ship.html> .

He wrote, "I'm still stuck on what to do with the front end, and the engines need more detail, but the description at the end of how the ships would dock and undock is (IMHO) how they'd have to do it given the info in the books. One item CJ left out completely that would be required is a counter-rotating mass to cancel the torque of the habitat cylinder. The counter-rotating part would have to meet one of these conditions:

1) Same mass, same speed. Fairly easy, split the cylinder into two sections and spin opposite directions but it'd put a bottleneck in the middle of the ship.

2) Heavier mass, lower speed. Put one at each end of the habitat cylinder, running on bearings on the outside of the central access tubes or on bearings on the outside of the

counter-rotating parts. They could be used for cargo or tankage and use variable speed to adjust for the load.

3) Lower mass, higher speed. This one's a non-starter. No room for it, unless it's going to be mounted around the middle of the ship like a big doughnut. Gyroscopic precession would also be a major problem due to the diameter. Then there's the docking mountings, engines and all sorts of other ship fittings that need space on the outside of the ship. Number 2 is the best solution."

As I recall, that site has been around for some time, and ships have been discussed on Cherryhlist before. But something seemed to spark a longer examination in the summer of 2007. Things were already rattling along in early June...

**x11tech** (June 6, 2007): CJC alludes to Tully being Mazianni indirectly several times...

**mysterion\_2000** (June 18, 2007): Are the the Chanur books in the same contunuity/universe as the Alliance work (i.e Downbelow Station (DS), et. al.)?

**meyeronno** (July 6, 2007): I strongly believe that A/U and Chanur are placed in the same universe (Foreigner is not ...). But I do not believe that Tully is a Mazianni.

**tropicsf** (July 13, 2007): Neither do I, for the same reasons Onno lists.

**meyeronno**: Tully says he's from Earth. As of DS, Earth and the Mazianni were separated. He also says that Earth is in a conflict with two other human powers, each larger than Earth - those would be the Alliance and Union. He does not mention a fourth power.

Would rank-and-file Mazianni think of themselves as "Earth" or "Fleet"? RR suggests "Fleet".

**tropicsf:** Mazianni being a somewhat mutable term, in my view, I'd specify its meaning when I used it. One definition might be all personnel assigned or conscripted to Fleet ships. Another might be any Fleet ship's crew member who follows Mazian with little or no question. The latter, given the "cult of personality" Mazian fosters among his captains as well as his crew, makes more sense to me. Those characters covered under the latter definition would certainly call themselves Fleet. Tully, on the other hand, never seemed to me to be a Fleet crewmember, but certainly a ship's crewmember (evidenced by his willingness to work for passage while on the *Pride*).

**meyeronno:** I haven't re-read Rimrunners (RR) in a while, but I got the impression that new recruits were either broken and brainwashed into the Fleet cult or broken and discarded. That was *Africa*, of course.

Looking at the events in DS, it seems that the personal loyalty of the crews to the respective captains is very strong, just like the unit cohesion of the different crews. The cohesion of the Fleet as a whole is a different matter -- troops were willing to shoot each other.

That being said, I see cultural rifts between these groups: 1) family merchanters, either Union or what becomes Alliance (that they are a single group is shown by Merchant's Luck (ML) and *Dublin's* willingness to cross the line); 2) planetside/ stationside Unioners and their military (societies with scores of azi); 3) non-Union stationers (cf Bet's musings about Nan and Ely (sp?)); 4) Earthers; 5) the former Earth Company (EC) Fleet. Even a non-fanatic Mazianni is a Mazianni. Bet contemplated surrender to Keu, only NG's probable fate stopped her.

After DS, Mazian lacked the capability to build a new fleet like the one seen in Chanur's Homecoming (CH). If he could have done so, that new fleet would have appeared in the history of the Company Wars. That goes with the caution that Compact ships appear really small compared to Human ones. We do not know if Mazian had 50 smallish merchanters to spare even if he did not have 50 carriers.

**tropicsf:** One wonders how Kif hunters would compare to human carrier-class ships; the Hani characters seemed to think those hunters were rather large, if memory serves.

**meyeronno:** They certainly have big crews and room for a brig and an audience chamber, but that MIGHT just be different design priorities. Everything for the hakkiktun, where Hani ships have private cabins for most of the crew.

The introduction of Cyteen states that Earth and Mazian remained hostile until the Mazianni faded away into deep space. Of course that was from a Union POV, and there may have been covert Earth support for Mazian that did not make it into Union history books -- at least the published ones.

**tropicsf:** Very good point, and I would love to find evidence for this. :)

**meyeronno:** We're actually told in DS that Earth tries to buy time for the construction of a new Fleet. That Fleet secured Earth independence, but what else did it do? Cyteen tells us it found aliens. I'd call that as solid as it ever gets in a Cherryh novel.

**tropicsf:** ::light bulb switches on:: Huh! I hadn't thought of it that way. But depending on the timelines, the aliens found in Cyteen could also be the new species a Gehennan is sent out

for at the end of Forty Thousand in Gehenna (40KiG), I'd say. I'll have to dig out that timeline...

**meyeronno:** 40kiG ends much later. The recontact is a major issue in Cyteen, and that is in the middle of 40kiG.

What we see of human operations from the Compact POV is not very reminiscent of DS-era carrier operations. We know that the Mazianni and Union relied on carriers while the Alliance had one, backed by militarized merchanters. We don't know anything about the composition of the new Earth force, so it could be rider-less, cf. the state of the Earthside rider program in Hellburner (HB).

One big question mark is the reliability of our POV characters. The Hani would not look for riders, so would they be able to tell them from FTL ships? Perhaps the human fleet as described in the Chanur books is consistent with half a dozen carriers, a full complement of two dozen riders and ten small merchanters -- about what Mazian might have left.

**tropicsf:** The human fleet that the Hani first meets doesn't contain crew that act like Mazian's forces. I believe, as you stated, that this fleet is a new one from Earth, and further, that Earth had some reason to reinstate the riders on carrier-class ships. The humans who meet the Hani for the first time aren't, in my view, Mazian's forces (i.e. Mazianni, as my def. above).

**vote4joe:** Onno writes, "We don't know anything about the composition of the new Earth force, so it could be rider-less." I can't remember later descriptions but the ship Tully arrived on reminded me of the descriptions of the Union "dartships," i.e. relatively small, fully contained ships, no riders, no massive holds. Just the "payload" of the people and sensing equipment. Going completely into conjecture mode, if Earth built another fleet, odds are that it would build one much like the ones in

current use. (Generals usually fight the last war.) Once open hostilities were off, it may have repurposed some of them for science exploration. Having lost the near stars, the only way they could become a space power was to find more stars. Perhaps Tully's ship was, in fact, a converted Earth dart-class ship.

**meyeronno:** We're working with really little data, so you should take my musings with a grain of salt. But here they come: 1) As of Heavy Time (HT)/HB, Earth had tried to build a fleet without Merchanter input and failed. In HB, Mazian was riding rough-shod over Earth in an effort to build the Earth Company Fleet. As of DS, he was completely beyond Earth control.

I don't think we know what Earth knew about space combat in the post-DS era ... it might have been armed merchanters, darts, carrier/rider teams or riderless cruisers. That being said, my guess is a balanced force of carriers and darts. 30 years is enough time for the know-how to filter back.

Assuming there was such a new Earth fleet, the next question is which ships go out seeking aliens and which ones



stay close to home, to keep Alliance and Union from getting frisky. There I'm not so sure. On the one hand, carrier/rider teams are the heavy combat forces -- they'd stay to secure the home base while darts go scouting. On the other hand, a swarm of darts in the Compact would be little ships far from home. Just what is their effective endurance? They could have kept cheap, mass-produced dartships close to home (think "PT boats") and sent the long-range carriers out on expeditions. (The Faded Sun books give us a partial inside look on such an expedition, albeit much later.) Or darts and freighters went out, with the added benefit that you can send an unarmed freighter in for docking and keep the warships in the background.

We didn't hear much about Tully's ships, but the feeling I get says they were smaller than carriers. One survivor out of five or ten is a lot more reasonable than just one survivor out of 3,000 or more.

The ship that brings the human delegation, on the third hand, feels at least one step up from a dart. But was it a carrier or something the size of *Le Cygne*? (From ML; call it 100 crew on a militarized version.)

Last but not least, Hani ships feel relatively small. No families and no room for kids. That could be an effect of the small crews. (We get impressive container counts in Chanur's Legacy (CL) and a minimum estimate of the container size from Tully's Trojan Container. Mahen ships carry hundreds and Kif ships carry thousands, but I don't get the impression that they're much larger than Hani ships. Perhaps it is the fact that they were warships and that low-status Kif get little personal space. If the human ships that came within sensor range were considerably larger than Compact ships, that should have been mentioned. With competent observers, absence of evidence comes close to evidence of absence. (I recall Py pointing out drop tanks on Kif ships to Hilfy. Wouldn't she have wondered about visible riders?)

When all is said and done, I don't get the impression that Compact military forces are very capable. Kif are great warriors but lousy soldiers, the mahen hunters are competent but too few in number and the Hani are simply a few amateurs. A force of 50 carriers with 200+ riders and 100,000 marines in powered armor (remember RR?) could have wiped all of them from space or the station decks. The fact that the humans pulled back instead could mean they were cool and level-headed, that they were really scared of the knnn, or that they DIDN'T have this best-case force after all.

**x11tech:** [meyeronno wrote] "I don't think we know what Earth knew about space combat in the post-DS era... it might have been armed merchanters, darts, carrier/rider teams or riderless cruisers. That being said, my guess is a balanced force of carriers and darts. 30 years are enough time for the know-how to filter back."

In HB, the EC Fleet is already experimenting with Tape Learning, which came out of Union, to train Paul Dekker and the other crew of the riderships being developed.

I'm sure it's safe to say that if Earth used those tapes on the first Fleet (Mazian and his Captains), they wouldn't have thrown them away (or lost them all, if Mazian had tried to destroy the training material left behind). And I find the scenario of Mazian trying to destroy all records left behind at Earth far-fetched. We do know that Earth did support the EC Fleet (Mazian's fleet) for a time.

So Earth knew all sorts of theory about space combat, but had no veterans to train their second Fleet. On the other hand, they acquired military training material from repatriated Mazianni. Alternately they did have an impressive espionage division and no doubt could have acquired strategies, etc. from Union or Alliance (meaning Mallory and *Norway*).

[meyeronno wrote] "We didn't hear much about Tully's

ships, but the feeling I get says they were smaller than carriers. One survivor out of five or ten is a lot more reasonable than just one survivor out of 3,000 or more." After your review of the known facts and well-thought-out supposition, I would have to concur with you on this point. In order for the Kif to collect survivors, they would either have to face a small scout that they could overtake and board, or they would have had to cripple (maybe even nearly destroy) a ship and collect those who were left.

Since Tully was one of 3 survivors, being caught and boarded seems more likely of the two, and if the ship that Tully had been on was a carrier, you would think that he would have made a point of alluding to it while he was still in shock (just after boarding Pyanfar's merchanter in Pride of Chanur.)

[meyeronno wrote] "The ship that brings the human delegation, on the third hand, feels at least one step up from a dart. But was it a carrier or something the size of *Le Cygne*? ... A force of 50 carriers with 200+ riders and 100,000 marines in powered armor could have wiped all of them from space or the station decks. The fact that the humans pulled back instead could mean they were cool and level-headed, that they were really scared of the knnn, or that they DIDN'T have this best-case force after all." I concur with the premise that the 50 ships were not all carriers, or even mostly carriers. I find it odd that Earth would develop any kind of fleet intended to hold its borders against Alliance or Union incursion that did not possess riderships. The Mazian-Union fight had been in progress for more than 50 years before Alliance was founded and the three-way Treaty was signed.

Yes, if Earth had that kind of firepower, it's possible they could have taken more aggressive and destructive actions. On the other hand, they were also brought there by the Knnn. How far they had to travel on their own, and how far they travelled with the assistance of the Knnn, and whether they knew how to

return home on their own, would all play in to their decisions to be aggressive. Humans can be violent, but they are rarely suicidal in groups. (I admit there are exceptions that "prove the rule.") Either way, all 3 theories are plausible in my mind.

[meyeronno wrote] "I recall Py pointing out drop tanks on Kif ships to Hilfy. Wouldn't she have wondered about visible riders?" Disagree. Cognitive dissonance would have played a part, I think. If the Hani could not conceive of riders, they would have not thought to look for them. And recall during the Compact Space series (aka Chanur saga), the Hani learned that Kif could operate while in a Jump, and that the Mahendo'sat could make short Jumps using computer automation. This was one of the key points in book 3 or 4, which led to Pyanfar making a realization about human behavior that led to the final confrontation in book 4.

At best, Pyanfar would have wondered at the shape of the ship, but since the entire ship was alien to the Hani, any wonder expressed at the shape of the ships would have had little or no meaning in the context of the story. It might have been meaningful to have commented upon it, had Cherryh wished to give evidence that her Hani were observant, and then later have the riders detach. So while your theory is valid, it is equally valid to say that the Hani merely had no conception of a pure warship (they hardly had any themselves, having been lifted into space flight by the Mahendo'sat as political leverage against the rest of the Compact) and that the concept of rider ships is as foreign to their way of thinking as being active during a Jump, or possessing the kind of computerized automation required to perform a short Jump like Human or Mahen ships.

In short, the absense of evidence does not concretely disprove its existence. While your theory is sound, the counter theory is equally plausible.

As you pointed out above, dart ships might have too short a range, and carriers might be too valuable to go hairing

off on the back end of Alliance-Union space. It would make more sense for a fleet of Earth ships to be accompanied by freighters whose sole purpose would be to carry fuel to extend the range of the entire fleet. As such, they would almost certainly not have the kind of pure combat firepower that an all military fleet would possess.

(The counter argument is that the Knnn brought the Human fleet out to Hani space, and therefore little or no fuel was required by the Earth fleet to reach its final destination, in which case, the entire fleet could have been carriers. And it would also explain why the Earth fleet never launched its riders, for fear of what the Knnn would do in response.)

**agingcow2345:** [x11tech wrote] "In HB, the EC Fleet is already experimenting with Tape Learning, which came out of Union, to train Paul Dekker and the other crew of the riderships being developed."

Porey was in charge of that training facility. Question is, was anything left behind when the Fleet left or was the entire training establishment taken off with the Fleet when it left to fight?

**meyeronno:** I recall that being a sore point in the meetings, but I don't have the books with me :-(.

**x11tech:** Mazian was too busy keeping the Earth politicians and corporate directors busy so that Porey could keep the project on track. I always thought of Mazian as the brains and personality, and Porey is the strong right hand. Mazian (and his followers) really believed that if Union wasn't stopped, they would eventually come back for Earth. And what Union represents to Earth's way of thinking is truly alien. For example, Earthers were afraid that Tape Learning imparted personality, not just skills.

A lot of the thinking was discussed in Chapter 16 of HB. Specifically the conversation between Saito and Graff (I have my books today) [where Graff says]:

"But it *is* the EC's war. Do any of us doubt it's the EC's war? The EC's cursed emigration restrictions created the mess, *they* motivated the dissidents to come out, *they* insisted on micro-managing at lights distance. Every stupid decision they ever compromised their way into created this war, but the fact is something very foreign is coming *here*, that's the point. They're worried about tape-training off a rab model because the *rab* movement is foreign? The rab isn't azi. The rab isn't designed personalities. The rab isn't an expansion into space so remote we don't know what may come out of it or what in hell they're going to provoke ... *Belters* are foreign? They should worry about me, Com. *I'm* foreign. *I'm* more alien than anything they've ever met!

(if I recall correctly, Graff was raised on a merchanter ship, so he was from farther out in the deep dark than even the belters were... but Earthers were afraid of how strange Shepards and Belters were, and they just couldn't even comprehend the merchanters and union societies.)

Later, in Chapter 17:

"Let me tell you what this looks like to us. It looks like a do or die proposition, a harebrained go-for-broke damned stupid risk, on your senior captain's perception that the Fleet's losing prestige in Europe and your facility here is shut down! We can't get you another ship to wreck, Lieutenant, we can't continue our support in the face of this



stupid risk of lives and equipment!"

Senior captain? Mazian? ... (both paragraphs directly from the book).

Again, later in Chapter 18, immediately after the successful test of the Hellburner -- Panic over much of Europe, assumption the test was real, public reactions yet uncertain. But Mazian was in front of the cameras in Bonn, with pronouncements of what a Union strike would have meant for Earth ... And a little later in Chapter 19, after Porey arranges for Dekker to walk in to the media after the Hellburner test is successful -- Serious questions whether Porey's timing for noon in Bonn, when Mazian was there, with the peace demonstrators, was anything like coincidence.

**agingcow2345:** There was also Graf's comments (books packed for yet another move) that Porey hated Earth and Earthers. [Hence] my presumption that he may have taken the whole training establishment with the Fleet when it left.

**x11tech:** The Fleet (or Mazianni, depending on your perspective) were more against Union and its alien ideals than they were against Earth. No matter how much Porey hated Earthers, he followed Mazian's lead. If you can presume that Porey wouldn't do anything to betray Mazian, then it follows he would not have stolen the training material or plans or the Hellburner project. No matter how much he hated Earth, they (the Fleet) were still dependent upon Earth. It wasn't until the Fleet lost Earth's support that they started raiding the merchanters for supplies and conscripts.

I suppose it is entirely possible that the Mazianni stole the training material, either immediately or at some later date. I just find it unlikely to have happened as soon as they launched the warships, and I find it less likely that Porey (or anyone else)

could have stolen all of the plans the longer they waited to run off with them. At best, I think Porey might not have ever turned over the best of the training material to Earth Company, not trusting the EC to betray the Fleet. Since the EC was in no position to really judge the quality of the training material that was left in their custody, it could be flawed in some way (sabotaged) or of lower quality. But whether they would do that would depend entirely on how far back Mazian and the other captains decided to go rogue. Whether it was a conscious plan as they built their ships, or whether they just ended up going rogue in degrees. First disobeying orders from the EC, then turning to piracy because the EC started reducing their supplies to try to control the Fleet, later conscription when supplies and replacement personnel became non-existent from Earth.

And yet, even in the end, somewhere, I remember reading that Earth didn't want Fleet to fail, they needed time to build their second fleet. They sacrificed Mazian and his captains to buy Earth that time. (Was it DS?)

Earth and the Mazianni/Fleet needed each other. They were closer in ideals than either of them were to what Union stood for. In the end, Earth's refusal to support the Fleet not only isolated the merchanters further from Earth (i.e., merchanters blamed Earth for the Mazianni and the war with Union), but also created the conditions for Mallory to throw her allegiance in with the newborn Merchanters Alliance.

On a side note, this is what makes Cherryh's work so appealing, the fact that every story was able to subtly include and build on such a rich tapestry of a universe. This work is dependent upon the imagination of its readers, and it grows as we consider and discuss it.

**meyeronno:** I've re-read chapter 17 of HB. According to that, the training facility consisted of four separate components: (1) The 150-year-old simulators using pods on tracks, under

UDC control. This would have stayed in Sol unless Porey wrecked/ sabotaged it before leaving, and I can't see such an overt act at the time. (2) Tape labs to run both skill and deep tape. Provided there are tape labs for other purposes, this is just a question of data and drugs. (3) Simulator computers on each Fleet ship, linked to training consoles or actual bridge consoles, for day-to-day training but presumably without the full realism of the pods (G-forces, etc.).(4) Finally, the actual combat hardware used for training flights.

By definition, (3) and (4) left with the Fleet ...

On the other hand, we are told that 15 out of the 50 carriers came under UDC control. So Earth would have had the full kit at some time after HB. I don't recall any later mention of a UDC/Merchanter split in the Fleet, which suggests that those 15 carriers went with Mazian before the time of DS, but surely they would have given any information to Earth before that. That being said, the Earth legislators were rather hostile to the idea of deep tape and deep tape was an essential part of the program. I see the possibility that Earth deliberately rejected carrier/rider tactics safe in the knowledge that the 50 original carrier crews would do the dirty work for them. Just consider how much technology would have to be re-invented from scratch for a repeat of the Apollo missions (or the casting of a bronze cannon).

By the evidence from HB, DS and the other A/U books, this possibility does not look very likely, deep tape is just too useful. Combined with the apparent lack of riders in the Compact book, the likelihood goes up a notch. Call it the minority report. I don't believe in it, I just can't exclude it :-)

**x11tech:** Yea, that's about where I would sit. Can't rule it out completely, but I wouldn't buy in to it (the Mazianni stealing all of the tech) personally. I would, however, readily buy into the reason that Earth doesn't develop riders of their own is a con-

tinued mistrust of Deep Tape and all other technologies coming out of Union.

**agingcow2345:** Correct me [if I'm wrong], but as I read the passage it was 15 carriers with UDC commanders to which the comment was they were dead the first time they went into combat. Odds are that is what happened and the survivors if any learned the hard way. If Fleet was using the press gang by DBS we are talking a fairly heavy casualty rate, no?

**x11tech:** Fleet was losing, no? I would surmise that even if the carrier's weren't dead on their first combat mission, that they lost their riders. (Either they were destroyed or had to be left behind because their commanders were incompetent strategists/tacticians in space and couldn't recover them.) And since Union had something comparable by the middle-late part of the war, if you didn't have riders, you were so much meat for the grinder.

I think it very likely that the ships were either destroyed in action or retreated to Earth for "re-armament" only to get pulled out of service. Possibly even Earth took the failure of their "best and brightest" (at least of those UDC commands that were raised on Earth) as evidence that the rider-carriers were badly designed and decommissioned any of them that returned to Earth. (Much as EC tried to force crews to leave the early generation ships, or commandeered merchanter ships and populated them with Earth-loyal crews.)

**meyeronno:** The prediction was that they would be dead, made by relatively biased people ... Even the merchanters and beltlers admitted that the UDC had a handful of capable pilots, like Villy. Another thing I noticed on re-reading HB was that Earth had built a class of cruisers, as a full-fledged UDC R&D program, before they built the 50 carriers. So we're talking about at least three ship generations -- armed exploratory

probes turned enforcers, cruisers, carriers.

**agingcow2345:** I don't recall the crusiers. Were they mentioned anywhere else in the Company Wars? IIRC the Mayfair game only had Union cruisers...

**meyeronno:** I don't think so, but DS drops Mazianni ship names which don't fit into the carrier pattern. Clearly carriers made cruisers obsolete.

**agingcow2345:** I thought the names dropped in the book were armed merchanters. *Eagle*, for example.

**meyeronno:** Those in HB are. But I'm not so sure about the names from DS. And two more things I noticed: 1) The United States has a rather low profile. There was a carrier, but otherwise stuff happens in Europe. I never really noticed until the references to Bonn became anachronistic. 2) Graff wasn't born on the ship where he held citizenship (family membership), and that isn't the ship he fought on. (A) Is that a pointer towards custom-built warships, possibly on merchanter hulls? (B) Just how pervasive was the family-ship culture, anyway?

**agingcow2345:** Earth Corp and the government are clearly centered on what is now the EU. Seemed obvious to me. She was showing a future that was a return to the world before 1914 where a cartelized Europe led.

*Corinthian* in *Tripoint* is a non-family merchanter and does not attract undue attention from port authorities for it. So it must be common enough. In RR, Bet was a sign-on on a family ship. NG is offered a chance at the end to sign on with *Finity*. In ML the ship routinely takes hired crew. It's regarded as a bit shady but for more reasons than that.



## The SF Novel as an Alien Art Form: C.J. Cherryh's *Foreigner* Series

by Greg L. Johnson

*[First published in The New York Review of Science Fiction, November, 1997. Minor additions in brackets by editor.]*

C.J. Cherry certainly ranks as one of the most prolific authors working in science fiction. The *Foreigner* series [so far], comprising

Foreigner (1994), Invader (1995), and Inheritor (1996), demonstrates her ability to maintain high-quality writing along with high output. The series tells the story of a young man, Bren Cameron, a lost human colony's only ambassador to the alien race on whose planet they are forced to live. Young and naive at the beginning, Cameron confronts his own fears and prejudices as he struggles to understand the alien intrigue surrounding him. The reader follows Cameron's growth as a character through a series of complicated political maneuvers and adventures.

But the novels themselves suggest that we look at them from another point of view. Foreigner is subtitled "A Novel of First Contact." Whether this is the author's own choice or a marketing decision, the subtitle provokes the question: First contact for whom? If the humans in this series are part of Cherryh's long-standing Alliance/Union/Merchanter universe, and most of her science fiction is, then the humans have already had contact with alien races. It is the alien *atevi* for whom the Foreigner Series is a story of first contact, and to understand the story as the *atevi* do, we must understand three *atevi* terms which are central to the narrative: *paidhi*, *machimi*, and *man'chi*.

*Paidhi*: Human beings have lived on the island of Mospheira for two hundred years before the story begins. After the disastrous War of the Landing, humans were granted a safe place to live in exchange for their technology. The *paidhi* is the human ambassador and the only human being allowed to live in *atevi* society. The position of *paidhi* is a political one, but the office is won through scholarly competition. The *paidhi* is not only the ambassador but also the foremost expert on *atevi* language and culture. The *paidhi* in effect controls the speed at which human technology is made available to the *atevi*. Known to his or her colleagues as the "field officer", the *paidhi* is the foremost source for information on the *atevi*, and is responsible for interpreting all matters involving the Treaty to both sides. In Foreigner we view the *atevi* through the eyes of Bren Cameron, the newly appointed *paidhi*. All we know of *atevi* society, including the *machimi*

plays, is either from an observation made by the *paidhi*, or a statement made in his presence.

*Machimi*: *Machimi* is the most popular form of entertainment in the *atevi* culture. It was traditionally a live theatrical presentation, but since the arrival of humans it thrives as television drama. *Machimi* combines tragedy and humor, and has some elements in common with human westerns, space operas, and spy adventures. Classic *machimi* featured "...the mad dash of riders across the landscape" (Inheritor 387). More modern *machimi* might have plots involving "human guerillas supported by egomaniacs secretly concealing their base aboard the (space) station" (Foreigner 224). Humans "swooping down with death rays" (Invader 38) are often the villains in television *machimi*. *Machimi* is so prevalent that when tourists visiting an historic castle hear gunshots, they assume it is some kind of historical re-enactment being put on for their benefit. "There were children in that crowd...They though it was a *machimi*." (Foreigner 217).

While the action in *machimi* plays resembles human adventure dramas, the interest for *atevi* in a *machimi* is not in discovering a character's true motives, or watching a character grow in self-awareness, or even in learning a character's true love. The essence of *machimi* for the *atevi* is the determination of *man'chi*, the most basic, most important concept in *atevi* culture. Again, all we know is from observations made by the *paidhi*.

*Man'chi*: *Man'chi* is "loyalty in the *atevi* definition: a gut-level emotional compulsion" (Invader 37). *Man'chi* is the "central association, the one association that defined a specific individual" (Foreigner 89). As such, it is the basis for all *atevi* political associations. Negative definitions are also offered. "Loyalty wasn't *man'chi*, *man'chi* wasn't loyalty" (Inheritor 49). It is 'that word something like loyalty, that meant nothing to do with hire, or birth (ibid. 2) *Man'chi* "didn't mean duty. That was the textbook definition" (Foreigner 354). *Man'chi* is what determines that *atevi* belong to "the same heirarchical loyalty" (Invader 84). *Man'chi*, then, for the *atevi* is an emotional compulsion to respond to or follow a leader. This leader

is not necessarily a person. There are servants working in an historical mansion whose man'chi is described as "belonging to Malguri itself (Foreigner 304). It is hierarchical: "man'chi went upward to the leader, but not down from him" (Inheritor 51). One of the defining characteristics of an atevi aiji (lord) is that, when it comes to man'chi, "aijiin of highest rank had and felt none," and were "not a follower of anyone, but attracted man'chi" (ibid. 62).

Here, then, is the atevi point of view. The Foreigner series is a machimi play in which the man'chi of the paidhi and several other characters is constantly put to the test. It is this process of discovering true loyalty, an intensely personal matter for the atevi, that lies at the heart of machimi. The potential for tragedy to the atevi lies not in the hero's fatal flaw, but in the character's inability to understand man'chi, and thus themselves. The action-filled plots force the characters to confront the question of their own man'chi. In the end, the characters, through a series of intricate political maneuvers and adventures, discover where true loyalties and associations lie.

Bren Cameron, the paidhi, is the central character of the Foreigner series. The events of all three novels are seen almost exclusively through his eyes. Clearly, then, if Foreigner is machimi, the man'chi of the paidhi must be in question. As a human, Cameron theoretically has no man'chi, and is out side of the atevi power structure.

At the beginning of Foreigner, Cameron is a member of the household of Tabini, the highest ranking aiji of the Western Association. An assassination attempt compels Tabini to send Cameron to Malguri, the ancient stronghold controlled by Ilisidi, Tabini's grandmother and his chief political opponent. Unbeknownst to Cameron, there are unsettling events occurring of which he knows nothing, but of which Ilisidi suspects he knows very much. Ilisidi and her allies believe that the paidhi has no man'chi, and will change sides in the struggle with very little persuasion. Foreigner, then, is concerned with the basic question of whether or not the paidhi has man'chi.

The crucial scene comes as Cameron is being interrogated by

Cenedi, the chief servant and bodyguard of Ilisidi, the aiji-dowager. Cenedi threatens Cameron with torture, at one point stating, "Please don't delude yourself, this is *not* machimi, and no one keeps secrets from professionals," (Foreigner 275, emphasis added). When one of the "professionals" urges Cameron to betray Tabini in favor of Ilisidi, he refuses. After the interrogation, Ilisidi asks him "What good is man'chi to a human?" (ibid. 295). She has been forced to recognize the paidhi's man'chi. The point is driven home when she and Cenedi watch as the paidhi is again tortured and questioned. The paidhi keeps his secrets, even from the professionals, and the action ends with a hail of gunfire and swooping airplanes.

Secrets kept under torture, mad dashes across an exotic landscape, and the determination of the main character's man'chi – the characteristic elements of machimi – are all present in Foreigner. Even if Cenedi does not believe it, there is no doubt that Foreigner is machimi.

Invaser picks up the story almost from the instant of Foreigner's ending. Some secrets are revealed, and the paidhi learns some of what was behind the surface of the events in Foreigner. His understanding of himself grows with his understanding of the atevi, even as he plunges into a new series of schemes and adventures, the standard stuff of



modern mainstream science fiction.

But closer examination of Invader reveals that the novel is, like Foreigner, machimi. This time, though, the question is not whether or not the paidhi has man'chi, the question is where does the paidhi's man'chi lie?

There are early indications that the paidhi has earned a change in status. At the end of a press conference he is addressed as *paidhi-ma*, the *-ma* suffix indicating both affection and respect due one who has the position of a lord. Remember that an atevi aiji's man'chi is to him or herself. Reacting to a changing political situation, Cameron is forced to take actions and set policies on his own. Unable to communicate with or consult the human government, he takes it upon himself to act as intermediary with the atevi and a human ship that has appeared in orbit. Mistrusted by his own government and many atevi, Cameron at one point reflects on the nature of man'chi:

That biological something that intervened in the machimi plays, and diverted some poor damn fool from the man'chi he thought he had, to the man'chi he really had, and the poor damn fool in question stood center stage and agonized over the shattering of his mistaken life and mistaken relationships – before he went on to wreak havoc on everything and everyone that remotely seemed to matter to him. (Invader 235)

This fairly well describes Cameron's situation in Invader. He delivers information to Ilisidi that causes her to question her associations with other atevi aiji and the paidhi. He makes political decisions that result in his family and friends being threatened. His fiancée deserts him, forcing him to re-examine all his closest relationships. In the end, it is Tabini who poses the question “Where is man'chi, paidhi-ji?” (ibid. 391). As machimi, it is the most important question in Invader. It is a question that only an aiji may ask, but it is the paidhi who must find the answer.

Inheritor, the third novel in the series, moves on to concern itself with the political struggles and man'chi of the aijiin of the Western Association. Who killed Lord Saigimi, and why? Where does Lord Geigi's man'chi now lie? What are Lady Direiso and Deana Hanks up to? The lords of Dur were granted their land when the humans took over Mospheira, who are they loyal to now? While it is true that the highest ranking aijiin have man'chi only to themselves, lesser lords have man'chi to higher ones, and man'chi can change. And there are always associations.

Association is the other word that Atevi use to describe their interpersonal relationships. It is broader and looser than man'chi, and covers relationships based on business, hobbies and all other dealings between atevi that do not involve man'chi. But the most important distinction between association and man'chi is that association is public, and man'chi is private. One of the paidhi's greatest insights into atevi culture comes when he realizes that in an atevi city, the colors of the tiled roofs and the shape of the walls proclaim the associations of the inhabitants. “Atevi had never hidden these most intimate secrets from humans. But humans had looked right at this view for decades and never grasped what they were seeing.” (Inheritor 133). Atevi had always considered their associations to be matters of public record. When humans made relationships across lines of association, the atevi assumed such actions must be deliberate. Instead, human actions based on ignorance, and atevi misunderstanding of that ignorance, had hindered human-atevi relations from the beginning.

To inquire about man'chi, though, was “extremely embarrassing ... it wasn't something polite people ever asked each other” (Invader 381). Atevi had never expected humans to understand man'chi because the atevi did not always understand man'chi.

That is why machimi is so important in atevi culture. On a world where a wrongly-phrased inquiry can result in the offended party filing Intent with the Guild of Assassins, social taboos such as the prohibition against discussing a person's man'chi are rigidly adhered to. Machimi gives the audience a chance to indulge their curiosity

about man'chi in the lives of important and powerful people, something they could never do in real life. And since such curiosity is forbidden, dangerous, and important, machimi is immensely popular.

Ilisidi's man'chi and associations are the main concern of the characters in *Inheritor*. Again, the paidhi's insights furnish a capsule description of the situation: "That too was in the machimi plays. The catastrophic event, the overturning of a life's understandings. But always toward the truth, as he saw it. Always toward what man'chi should have been." (*Foreigner* 195)

Ilisidi emerges in *Inheritor* as the most fascinating character in the series. Sly, witty, playful, and dangerous, she is a dominant personality and a powerful figure in atevi society. The paidhi is forced to gamble on his assessment of her associations and desires, and the series reaches its final climax as the paidhi and the reader learn of the hidden associations underlying many of the series' convoluted plot lines. At the final confrontation, when relationships between human and atevi hang in the balance, Ilisidi must confront her own desires, and reach an understanding of "what man'chi should have been."

There is one other element of atevi life that supports reading the *Foreigner* series from an atevi viewpoint. An individual atevi is, on the average, much more mathematically gifted than the typical human. This fact is woven into the language, in which concepts borrowed from numerology have resulted in certain combinations of numbers being deemed "felicitous" or "infelicitous." The speaker of Ragi, the complicated atevi language, must be constantly aware of the numbers of the combination of words and ideas that are contained in the sentences being spoken. The number of people involved in the conversation must also be taken into account. Infelicitous numbers in a conversation with the wrong person are insulting and invite a visit from an assassin. To present someone with two alternatives, for example, is insulting because the number two is infelicitous.

Examination of the text reveals several instances in which the paidhi is careful to phrase his arguments felicitously. Presenting an explanation of human motives to an atevi audience, he states the

human disagreements in terms of a three-sided argument. He urges the atevi to a compromise based on a triangular power structure because "one was never without awareness of the all-important numbers" (*Invader* 97). Arguing with a fellow human being, he is accused of becoming atevi, and when he continues arguing he is told, somewhat sarcastically, "one understands my options to be balanced by a felicitous fifth choice" (*Inheritor* 80). The paidhi later prides himself that in a crucial conversation with Ilisidi, he presents her with a two-sided argument that invites her to add a third point, thus complimenting her by allowing her to make infelicitous numbers felicitous.

*Foreigner* and its sequels are, by any standards, fine examples of science fiction. Appreciating and understanding the atevi viewpoint allows even deeper entry into an alien world of machimi, institutionalized assassins, and man'chi than does reading the books as conventional sf adventure. It furnishes greater insight into the character's motivations, especially the atevi. Not that there isn't plenty to interest fans of Cherryh's SF here. Intrigue within intrigue, imaginative world-building, and intense characterizations are Cherryh's stock in trade. But reading these novels as machimi forces the reader to a greater understanding of the difficulties faced by the paidhi, Bren Cameron, as he struggles to understand the byzantine associations of the atevi it is his duty to live among. The reader is thus wholly engaged as the paidhi survives desperate adventures and achieves insights into his own character, motivations, and, yes, true love.

C.J. Cherryh is not the first writer to attempt this sort of thing. Many writers have tried to write from an alien perspective. What distinguishes the *Foreigner* series is the ability to be two things at once. While there are clues from the beginning, it is not until early in the third novel that Cherryh makes it explicit that the series is not only a good conventional SF story but also meant to be read as machimi, an art form of the alien culture described in the books. The literary craft that Cherryh brings to her work is the third quality that insures reading the *Foreigner* series to be a felicitous experience, indeed.





## "We Fine" by Moira

(Anyone who has read the Chanur books will remember a very touching scene concerning Tully rescued and reunited, which this poem is about. The discerning reader will please keep in mind that in order to achieve Tully's heart-breaking earnestness, "We *fine*" is pronounced as three syllables.)

we *fine*  
 Reunion.  
 Rescue from the kifish chambers.  
 we fine.  
 we The Pride.  
 we Got friend.  
 we Make win.  
 we Keep Jik.  
 we Smart trick.  
 we New move.  
 we ### soon.

[Biographical note: Moira, who shamelessly adores Gwendolyn Brooks and C.J. Cherryh, lives in San Diego, California (a lovely city which would make a great place for a future Shejicon.)]

## Where the tea is always safe: A history of Shejidan.com

by Sharon Reynolds

[Note: To protect member privacy, Shejidan.com screen names are used here except where other names were allowed. The online community formed originally at Shejidan.com is herein called Shejidan, and the two entities are titled thus to make each distinct from the other.]

### Chapter 1: The Founding and the Feline

*Shejidan*: a "city of the Ragi Association", according to the glossary in C.J. Cherryh's Foreigner: A Novel of First Contact. Yes -- but Shejidan is so much more. Editor Edward Carmien explains in The Cherryh Odyssey (2004): "...Cherryh devotees form a semi-secret minority who happily meet and discuss her work...online at venues such as *Shejidan*."

Cherryh readers have long found creative means to share their passion. Before Shejidan.com there was Shon'ai. This committed group was based on Cherryh's Faded Sun series and averaged 25 members. Originally named Cherryh's Khemeis, the fangroup published a (mostly) quarterly fanzine, *Shon'ai*. Sandra Morresse, currently the Science Fiction Writers of America's (SFWA) ad director, served as *Shon'ai*'s last editor. Jane Fancher, C.J. Cherryh's closest friend and business partner, was the cover artist for the tenth anniversary issue, November 1991. The final issue was published in January 1996. By that time, the Internet had burst forth to become a true Force of Nature -- which may have been one factor in *Shon'ai*'s demise.

Shejidan.com was founded (auspiciously) on October 31, 1999 by CKTC, then a 26-year-old, frustrated first-year medical resident. Originally intended as a diversion from a career mismatch and an outlet for artistic yearnings, Shejidan.com has flourished over the past (felicitous) 8 years. In July 2003 [CK](#)



[marveled:](#)

“...Shejidan is one of the few really good things that came as a result of my medical years. When I first started it, there were about 5 regulars, one of which (sic) was my housemate. I never dreamed this board would become what it is today!”

Members (aka Associates, in true [Foreigner](#) fashion) have collaboratively molded an intellectually stimulating, lively, and spirited community. Shejidan.com not only embraces Cherryh's work, it operates as a thriving international sub-culture. Like all Internet sites, members have come and gone... and often returned. Close, lasting friendships formed; Associates regularly turned to each other in times of joy, anger, and grief. After detailing employment woes, a member lamented in 1996:

“I'm rather embarrassed to have blurted this out in public here...I sort of feel like I've done something vile in public...”

And was comforted:

“This isn't public, this is your living room with your closest associates in attendance.”

One month after founding, “Cherryh Pit Aiji” CKTC made post #1000 (2 Dec 1999). The Internet Archive [Wayback Machine](#) offers a glimpse at Shejidan's first incarnation: February 2001, the [earliest known archived page](#). Proclaiming “Science Fiction to soothe your soul”, an initial page promised, “Where guests are always welcome, and the tea is always safe”. Tradition was set: newcomers continue to be warmly

greeted, and reassured tongue-in-cheek about alkaloid-free beverages.

Utilizing an alter ego in 2000, CK explained several [original forum titles](#). Site layout was revised several times as CK's programming proficiency grew: one experiment included ["snowing" atevi](#). New artwork -- often by CK -- succeeded old, and forum subtitles shifted to reflect a ["frenetic crescendo"](#) of anticipation over impending Cherryh releases.

Shejidan.com continued as an important creative, emotional, and intellectual outlet for many, including its founder. CKTC notes in the [Members' Bios](#) (March 2002):

“...By some lucky twist of fate, I've had a lot of cool people show up (and stay!) here, for which I'm forever thankful. The conversations (and the nonsense threads too) have kept me sane through first medschool and now residency. At first I created it as an escape, but now, I couldn't leave if I tried....”

In October 2002, Shejidan boasted 500 members. By April 2003, the site was [nearing 1,000,000 board visits](#). CK completed residency in July 2003, but elected to leave medicine and enter a graduate art program in California. CK marveled [ ["Where the Hell have you been, CK?](#) (2 July 2003)]:

"Or, an alternative title to this thread: After 7 long years, I'm finally free!!!! ... (T) his past weekend, I graduated from my residency program after 3 long years.

"...My plans now? Hmm. Well, I'm going to grad school in the fall. Kinda crazy, I know, but the truth is, I never really felt that medicine was the right job

for me. I've been told I'm good at it and I really like my patients, but I don't love medicine...it doesn't make me happy. I like helping people, but I don't find my job fulfilling in anyway. In fact, I'm usually just relieved a day is over, and I look forward to going home and escaping on-line so that I don't have to think about it....

"...I'm going to do something that suits me better... I'm really excited about grad school. This is something I've wanted for a very long time, and I feel like my life is finally going the way I want it to. I feel like I've finally finished my obligations to everyone else, and I can finally do what I myself want."

In retrospect, CK's departure from medicine was a critical turning point for *Shejidan*: CK no longer needed the outlet and began to drift away. Later posts reflect guilt and ambivalence [ [Boards die without the admin](#). (Dec. 22, 2003)]:

"...And I don't want that to happen to this board, so I'm really going to try to post more often. I worked too hard on this site to let it die out by me being a lazy bum and not showing up.

"I really don't know why I haven't been in the mood to post online much in the last year or so. I'm busy, but not really that much busier than I was a few years ago. (Grad school is time consuming, but not as bad as residency was!) And I'm not depressed or anything. Life is going really well..."

"...I've missed everyone here. After all, I've known many of you for years now, and for the internet, that's a long time!"

Early in 2005, after making over 14,000 posts, CK relinquished control of the site to Mule. There are few, if any, posts about this momentous change: they may have been lost in the infamous May 2005 EZBoard hacking debacle. After stepping down as Cherryh Pit Aiji, CK visited rarely; all posts were concealed within the password-protected moderators' forum, the Assassins Guild. Unknown is if CK lurked more frequently. Mule exchanged occasional emails with CK, who continued to financially support Shejidan.com. Mule, as Paidhi-aiji, subsidized the EZ Board message site — but CKTC retained control over certain functions and site configuration, including passwords that allowed birthday calendar and annual Babbling Books list updates. Due to an EZBoard quirk, only CK could submit the required fees to keep the message board advertisement-free and maintain other perks available only to sites with "Gold" (paid) status, including Shejidan.com's custom emoticons.

By 2006, associates were expressing concern, publicly and privately, about losing "the community, the site, (which) have become a treasure..." (June 2006, personal communication, starexplorer to Felicitous Sk8er). That CK was no longer active, yet could potentially withdraw support arbitrarily, fueled rising unease:

"...CK originally paid for the hosting. Mule now does. *Shejidan.com* went down for a few days ~February: the unique emoticons were disabled & *Shejidan's* home page & all of the art & other content was 404'd. Mule sent an urgent email to CK: apparently the hosting fees were due & that

was why the site went down. Mule was able to contact CK within a few days & the fees were paid & all ended well. There should be old threads on this, quite possibly in Perplexed in the Pit archives. (Associates) offered to chip in towards the hosting fees, but Mule refused...advising (them) the expense was not a hardship for him.

"You can see where this is going: *EZBored* was hacked. *Shejidan*'s hosting fees caused an issue. This is all within the past 10 months. You've already raised the issue about preserving *Shejidan* for the ages. Right now it depends not only on the care & concern of its members, but the integrity & financial stability of profit-driven hosting services. I can write lots more on this, but we may wish to continue this discussion publicly on the already-established thread as I think community discussion & awareness of the issues are so critical for this topic...as well as conjoint plans in case of catastrophic failure." (June 2006, personal communication from Felicitous Sk8er to starexplorer)

The die was cast: *Shejidan* needed drastic action to protect first itself as a community and second, its rich and precious past. Safeguarding *Shejidan* as a community, and archiving its richness, occupied lengthy discussions during the latter half of 2006. The Assassins Guild (moderators) invested considerable time and energy in exploring alternatives. After "test-driving" several message board sites, all associates had the opportunity to vote. Polling was decisive: move *Shejidan* to InvisionFree's hosting service. This officially occurred on January 1, 2007. The historical texts (past posts) continue to

be laboriously hand-copied to "*Shejidan > The Archives*" from EZBoard's "*Shejidan: A Cherryh Pit*."

*Future issues of Ribbons will continue the history of Shejidan. Stay tuned!*

## Meeting CJ: MileHiCon 19, Oct.23-25, 1987 by Bret Grandrath

It was twenty years ago this October that I first met C.J. Cherryh. I had seen in the September 1987 issue of *Locus* Magazine's "Convention Listing" section that she was going to be Guest of Honor in at MileHiCon in Aurora, Colorado in October. I couldn't pass up this chance to see my favorite author, so I made plans to fly to Denver for the con.

I had been to a few conventions but I was still a newbie. I studied the program book so I could attend all of CJ's panels. I don't remember any details from the panels, but at a reading she read from *The Paladin*. Months later, when I read it, I still had her voice in my head.

After one panel I tagged along as a group of fans followed her into the lobby. One fan asked if he could video tape a short interview and she agreed. He rushed off to get his camera but never came back. CJ stayed for at least an hour signing books and answering questions.

At her Guest of Honor speech I was stuck by how she could hold a crowd in the palm of her hand. She has a way of making each audience member feel she is talking directly to them.

In the twenty years since MileHiCon, there have been many conventions where I have met CJ. She has signed dozens of books for me; she got me into the Hugo Loser's Party at LoneStarCon; I have sat with her in Guest of Honor seats at masquerades; and I have been to a Bar-B-Que at her house. She considers me a friend, but I will always be that nervous fanboy from twenty years ago.

## *ShejiCon 1: The Con Goes to the GoH*

by Some Associates



*Lady S created the utterly perfect ShejiCon 1 clip-on badges for herself and BGrandrath, the better to not have Intent Filed on themselves. The buttons are available at the Merchants Guild shop at CafePress. (photo by Sk8er)*

*[Editor's note: I stole shamelessly from the ShejiCon 1 thread at Shejidan.com for this report, but I did get permission from those whose posts and photos are included here. For any SF convention, it's good to get more than one perspective, and, as Herself's fiction is so often centered on that very idea, more than one "reporter" seemed fitting.]*

hrhspence begins:

ShejiCon was (for me) one of the best vacations I have ever

had. Kudos to Sk8er for hosting it sooo well.

Day one, we had the Dinner Cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene. It was a beautiful night, clear and cloudless. We were on the top deck and had the breeze, the sound of the water and the beautiful houses on the shore. We were serenaded by a guitar player (who was also shamelessly hawking his own CD.) I think Sidjei-Aiji bought one. It was nice music. The food was great.

We had driven to Sidjei-Aiji and her Janeness'

house, ogled the Fish Tank and chatted for a bit. I presented the Happy Shellfish Cylinder to the Aiji. It contained everything I have on the Hani, Kif and Stsho languages and culture. She seemed pleased. I put the cylinder back in sk8ter's car so she could send it on.

Xheralt, my daughter Nyssa of Traaken, the Mrs. and I had ridden with Sk8er in her car. The 5 of us were jam-packed in the blazing summer heat of Spokane ("spoke ann"). We tried a few different variations on seating arrangements in that car over the Con before we came up with the obvious -- *put the Horde in the back!* -- and we were much more comfortable!

Sk8er took Xheralt and Nyssa to the Cruise while Sidjei-aiji and Her Janeness took the Mrs. and me. We had such a warm and personable conversation with them. Nyssa and Xheralt rode back with them while the Mrs. and I rode with Sk8er who is 19 times funnier in



*Sailing and dining are a fine combination, as these folks would tell you --(back row from left) Xheralt, Ms. Cherryh, Sk8er, Nyssa of Traaken, Griffin-ji; (front row from left) hrhspence, "Mrs. Spence," Ms. Fancher. (photo by hrhspence)*

real life than over the internet!

When we got back to Ms. Cherryh's house, we found that the Glorious Tank had a major problem. None of the Fish were hurt, but the water downstairs had escaped the tank and flooded half the basement! What a mess.

Day 2: My 50th birthday. It started with a present from my wife, and a silly hat.

I kinda feel that a birthday is a day for others to show their appreciation for the birthday boy (in my case) so I didn't say much at all. But I felt very appreciated by the comments of those in sk8er's house and in the birthday thread. Thanks again.

Xeralt made me happy when he simply said "Happy Birthday, Spence," and then posted to you that he'd said that. I felt it included all of you in my day. Later I was told that I didn't look a day over 50!

We then went to the River park and fed the ducks. It was a kinda silly activity, but it was fun. And that was what the Con was all about. This is where I met Griffin-moon, a very knowledgeable person with a gift of gab to match! She was staying at the hotel near the park and had been sitting under a tree until we got there. We then rode the carousel and Xheralt and I had a competition to get the most rings from a bar that swung over the walk-way. He won one more than me. But then the Mrs handed me hers and it looked much better for my side!

We then rode a sky-rail over the streets and then over the river. The Mrs. is terribly afraid of falling, but she went ahead and trusted that it would be all right. It was fun, except for the heat. It was like sitting in a car with only a small window opened. But, the view was worth it! Even the Mrs. agreed. We walked in a fountain and cooled off. We have some nice shots of feet.

We then headed for a restaurant that is famous in Spokane [spoh can] for its seafood. I had beef kabobs. This son of the desert eats no fish! I was then given a huckleberry slump with one candle and "Happy Birthday" written in chocolate on the plate. Sk8er had called ahead and surprised me with it. This was the first birthday I'd

ever had without a cake. The slump was exquisite. Imagine a pudding with huge huckleberries in it, covered with a sweet dumpling and you'll come close. My birthday was feeling very warm and personable to me.

We then went to the famous Ice Rink. The Mrs. decided that with her lack of balance, she'd rather cross stitch a bib for Erin Rielle. Xheralt was not feeling up to snuff, and with a sore ankle he decided he'd rather catch some much needed rest than risk the ice. Griffin and I both strapped on our boots and bravely circled the ice by holding onto the edges. Then I discovered that my blade was rusty and was a hindrance to my attempt. I changed boots, chatted with the Mrs. and watched as Sidjei-Aiji and Her Janeness came in, and began a lesson with their petite coach.

I braved the ice again and was beginning to be a bit proficient at circling without holding on the wall when Griffin whizzed past me. She had learned while I was strapping on my 2nd set of boots.

But, the star of the show was my Nyssa. She learned from Sidjei-Aiji herself how to skate backwards. Nyssa was soon as grace-ful forward as well as backward, while Griffie and I were happy to not fall anymore.

We took some pix with the Writers and then left for Sk8er's. We had some much-needed downtime and a late-night barbecue



*A brave Associate, hrhspence (center) joins Sk8er (left) and Her Janeness on the ice. One wonders who wore the oops pillows that day... (photo credit not available)*



cooked by Mr Sk8er himself. What a cool guy he is and what a great cook.

Sk8er adds:

ShejiCon 1 ended with a bang: a squirt gun fight during the "Space Opera" BBQ. Carolyn started the gun fight -- in the house! This was after she stabbed the "Space Shuttle" pinata with her broadsword. Once the pinata was broken open, Herself then triumphantly raised the sword over her head like Morgaine on Gate of Ivrel's cover.



*Um, is that a real broadsword or a letter opener? CJC with a large cutting and thrusting device; might its name be...Changeling? (photo by Sk8er)*

ShejiCon 1 was the first but it will not be the last. Carolyn & Jane have specifically requested we hold a ShejiCon 2. Just not when it's so hot!

Xheralt adds:

The "Space Opera" BBQ went wonderfully. I got to show off a DVD of some of the exhibits I've done at my job. There was a great

deal of congenial conversation while Mr. Sk8er grilled the burgers and hot dogs, people oohing and aahing over the aquarium, and such.

Sk8er's decorations were charmingly appropriate, including the space-shuttle pinata. After we had dined ourselves to "elegant sufficiency" (i.e. stuffed ourselves like pigs ), we settled into the living room for more conversation, and watching of videos (but Griffinmoon had to head out). Then ... we remembered the pinata. Lacking a suitable broomstick to do the job, CJ got out her sword, and attempted to stab it. After a couple of tries, she successfully stuck it (good thing she doesn't have a landlord to answer to ) but it didn't open. After a few more swings, she invited us to try. I stepped forward, and after a few more hacks (that shuttle was TOUGH!) got it opened enough to spill the goodies.

We were starting to wind down, and Sk8er wanted us to each pick up one of the little squirtguns she'd included in the decorations (think the "chirping cricket" from "Men in Black") and pose for a picture. Well, CJ just had to load hers up and start a water fight. But we eventually did take the picture. D, a skating friend of CJ & Sk8er, showed up in the middle of this, and wondered what madhouse she'd wandered into.

Gent adds:

As the departure date neared for our sojourn into the land of the Southerners, I became more and more excited. The renovations around our home were mostly complete, and there was (mercifully) a little money left over to do this trip in grand style.

I typically work Monday to Thursday, and staffing levels meant that I could not manage to get the Thursday free in time to attend the early activities on the agenda. I did manage to avoid working on the following Monday (today). This was fortuitous, as it meant that I could remain at the BBQ until quite late on Sunday.

Thursday night after work, we attended to some reno-related activities. I then went down to the car to make it presentable for the trip. Mrs. Gent advised me that I was insane before retiring to the bedroom. Perhaps I was insane, but if we were going to arrive

rumpled and sweaty, I wanted the chariot to *gleam!*

Circa 2 a.m., I crawled back into the apartment, had a shower and set the alarm for 5 a.m.. I wanted to get to the U.S.-Canada border before it got crowded. It turn out that one can hit the "snooze" button a remarkable 8 times before both the alarm and one's wife becomes frustrated with you.

At 7 a.m., I finally got out of bed and printed up the emails and sundry maps required for the vacation. We packed and set off towards the border.

Fueled with diesel and a triple grande caramel macchiato, the vehicle and I were a little too enthusiastic passing through an area South of Bellingham. I acquired a speeding ticket for going 90 mph in a 70 mph zone. Apparently the local constabulary uses infernal airplanes in the pursuit of wrongdoers. It's a good thing we were going uphill and the guy in the SUV wouldn't get out of my way. I think the trooper would have shot me if he saw me going at the car's top speed!



*Mrs. Gent captures her Gent in Exhausted Mode at their delightfully appointed hotel room, pre-con. One hopes the tea revived him later.*

The rest of the drive passed uneventfully. I was dismayed to see that we had eliminated about half of Washington state's bug problem when we finally reached Spokane.

The Davenport Hotel is a beautiful edifice. We were favorably impressed with the "accommodations"! Mrs. Gent took a photo of our room: ignore the lump in the bed...

I immediately called Sk8er and advised that although we were exhausted that evening,

*The brave canoe-trip complement, before The Great Disaster. (photo by hrhspence's camera, courtesy of a Taiben guide)*



we would be delighted to attend the canoe trip in the following morning. We made arrangements for Breakfast to be delivered the next morning, then met up with the delightful Griffin-ji for a drive out to the river.

We arrived a smidge early, but eventually most of us arrived and we were ferried by the van to the "take out" point. Nand Sk8er was very concerned about the missing Aijiin; however they arrived in a plume of dust as Jane-aiji demonstrated the remarkable gravel-handling abilities of her vehicle. We were given a quick overview of how the canoes worked, handed PFDs and then set out for the river bank.

Disaster was almost immediate.

The contingent from the Spencian horde were set upon by an aggressive tree around the first bend. It jumped, clawing at them from the shadows. The youngest was thrown from the canoe as the Spencian Queen grappled with the bleached bones of the monster. His Royal Highness attempted to beat it into submission with his glasses



and hat. The canoe, believing it was at war, attempted to become a U-boat.

I considered filming this event for posterity; however, being so new to the scene, I hesitated and their bravery was not recorded (at least not by myself).

A mixture of self-preservation, current, and fear for the Aijiin who were further ahead swept us past the battle scene. Sadly, we were only able to arrive in time to witness the next attack -- this time involving a water-lurking cousin of the first beast. This one sprang forth and plucked Jane-Aiji from the canoe! The Goddess remained in the canoe, brained the creature with a paddle and calmly waited for Jane-aiji to finish her swim.

Seeing that things were well in hand, we paddled down stream and caught Jane-aiji's hat and sandals. We rounded the next bend and waited for them to appear. When they arrived, we handed over the gear and continued on down stream. There was abundant wildlife on the trip -- we even saw a moose!

The rest of the canoe trip passed uneventfully for Mrs. Gent and myself. There were screams from behind us at several points;



*Out of kindness to the subjects, Ribbons will print only one other photo from The Great Canoe Adventure other than this one. This is the felicitous one. (photo by Sk8er)*

however we were not in a position to do more than wish the screamers

well. That part of the story will have to be told by another.

There was an impressive lunch waiting for us at the "put in" point: a Dutch-oven lasagna, garlic bread and more fruit, juice and water than you could shake a stick at. We compared injuries and battle stories while laughing at ourselves and each other.

Sk8er adds:

Approximately 2/3 through our trip, the Spencian Horde and The Gentses led in their respective crafts. Suddenly, the body of another sea monster reared from the water, this one more menacing than the rest combined! It zealously guarded 2/3 of the channel -- the only breach, a narrow one, requiring Cunning and Finesse.

Our entire procession came to a halt. The Ladies, the epitome of Good Breeding, graciously allowed the Horde & The Gentses to proceed. Then, Xheralt & I, seeing the perfect line, swooped in and expertly shot through the narrow slot, with Herself & Her Janeness close behind. I looked back just in time to see the aijiin's craft crash into the projecting arms of the monster. Her Janeness grabbed at several of its many stout limbs.

Too late!



*Two Writerly Persons receive an unfelicitous river bath. Onlookers are stunned. Film at 11? (photo by Sk8er)*



Their vessel swung sideways, and tipped over, unceremoniously depositing both into the drink. Herself's flotation vest came up, and her straw hat came down, and for a few Dreaded Moments, there was no Herself to be seen! Only a soggy mushroom-like apparition! But, Herself being Herself, she bravely fought back, and untangled Herself.

Knowing our man'chi, Xheralt & I had back-paddled immediately to offer aid, assistance, and comfort. None was needed. I **did** notice a bright orange object several feet under the surface, but being more concerned about the well-being of Herself & Her Janeness, paid little heed.

Her Janeness righted the swamped vessel and both re-embarked in short order. But -- aaggghhh! Their accoutrements were gone --- straight to Davy Jones' locker! These included the orange bag, containing Herself's car keys! Suffice it to say, the bag was eventually loosed from Davy Jones' grasp (no mean feat!) with the able-bodied assistance of Griffinmoon-ji and our intrepid guide, Kirsten. Despite submersion, the electronic car-door opener still worked.

Nadiin, you've seen the "Before" and "After" photos. Here is what came between, what ShejiConnors have never dared to reveal to the outside world...until now! We were worried Intent would be Filed by our own dear associates!

hrhspence adds:

The tree monster you see at the front end of Her Janeness' canoe was in fact a 35 to 40' behemoth. The slot of clear water was scarcely 12' across and had a fierce current guarding it. This current tended to sweep all and sundry into the tree. The Spencean Horde brushed against the branches of this tree; it was our 3rd encounter with the deadly lot. The first was so well documented by Gent, except that the glasses and hat were from the second encounter. Mr. Sk8er had lent me a hat that is now on its way to the Pacific. I feared greatly that I had lost my glasses as well, but they were merely knocked to my forehead and the Mrs was clever enough to point that fact out while I was panicking about them being lost forever.

The current pushed us against this third tree, but our first encounter prepared us for anti-tree tactics and we floated happily down stream. Unfortunately, this delay proved nearly fatal to the Aijiin's craft. They were pushed into the tree without a prior encounter and were disrupted. She informed us that her flip-flops acted like flotation devices and the bottom of the river was never within her reach. Sk8er, Xheralt, Griffin and the Taiben Guide from the rearmost canoe extricated them and their belongings. Gent and I helped them ashore nearly an hour or so later.

Gent adds:

I just want to add that the "nap" people accuse me of taking during parts of the adventure was actually due to me using astral projection to keep people afloat during these battles.

## *More ShejiCon 1 photos...*



*CJC and Princess Nyssa. (photo by Sk8er)*



*The Space Opera BBQ & Cosmic Ray (squirt) gun battle on Sunday were the con's final events, held at CJC & JSF's home. Front: Lady S, Xheralt. Back: Mrs. Gent, BGrandrath, Her Janeness (photo by Sk8er)*



*Herself also signed books. Gent's the lucky Associate. (photo by Sk8er)*

## *More Photos: A Meeting of Associates July 2006*

Nepenti received a visit from Asicho and her sister, and sent in some photos which commemorated the event



*A photo of a banner Nepenti made, written in Ragi script, to welcome Asicho when she came to visit. (photo by Nepenti)*

(above, and top of p. 27).





From the same visit -- they couldn't resist visiting this garage sale! Maybe it was an ancestor of Bren & Toby. (from left) Nepenti, Asicho on the right, and Asicho's sister in the center. (photo credit unknown)

## For the Associates

editorial by Kelanth56

So, why is this editorial at the end here? First, because it's become my habit to place it there in my genzine, and second, because I thought the other content in this publication was more important.

So we all know what the heck I'm talking about when I mention certain words, a brief explanation of terms follows. Please skip ahead if you know this song.

Fanzines (fan magazines), in SF fandom, are amateur publications (not done for profit, so no paid advertising) created to foster communication between fans. Fanac.org provides examples of some of the earliest fanzines. *Shon'ai* was just such a publication, as is my *Peregrine Nations*. Fanzines got started in the earlier half of the

20th century when fans who wrote letters to the SF pulp magazines (a few are left, such as *Analog*, *Asimov's SF*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* [F&SF for short]) saw addresses of other fans (or fen) printed with the letters they read, and some of them decided to cut out the middle man, as it were, and communicate directly.

Fanzines can be done for any reason, on any schedule, as often as the editor and/or publisher wish. Genzines (general fanzines) contain more than just examinations of SF books, worlds or characters. Faanish fanzines are solely concerned with fandom and not the fiction that inspired it, for the most part. Serconzines ("serious and constructive" fanzines) focus on the fiction and feature articles akin to (but not nearly as stuffy as) literary criticism, as well as book reviews and sometimes author interviews. They take SF seriously, and so do their readers. They are few, now; the only ones I know of are Matthew Appleton's *Some Fantastic*, and *Steam Engine Time*, which I co-edit with Bruce Gillespie (long-distance; he lives in Australia).

There are still several paper fanzines, but most are available primarily (or, in some cases, only) as electronic documents online. Probably the premiere fanzine Web site these days is [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com), where new and revived fanzines continue to pop up fairly frequently. The site also hosts electronic copies of paper fanzines no longer available in their original form.

For some fen, fanzines and SF conventions (cons) are the extent of their fanac (fan activities). Others aren't faneds (fanzine editors) or contributors or letterhacks (fen who write letters of comment to fanzines they've read), but they attend cons and are members of local or regional SF clubs (such as NESFA or LASFS) or clubs formed around an aspect of fandom (furry fandom, anime, comics, TV series or movies). Many of the latter fen can be found at the annual fangorgefest known as DragonCon in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). The annual WorldCon is SF fandom's biggest party apart from DragonCon, and this year it's being held in Japan.

Communities centered on the work of a particular writer also

spring up on Web sites, and Shejidan is one such. *Ribbons* started as an outgrowth of Shejidan.com's community boards. CKTC was kind enough to provide space for the first two issues, and while it seemed they were read, contributions were few. Then Life intervened for me, and it took until this year for me to get 'round to considering whether renewing *Ribbons* was a viable prospect.

I owe a big thank-you to Sk8er; being more well known to other Associates than myself, she knew who to ask for art contributions and poetry. To all readers: please consider yourselves invited to send in contributions of any sort (per the guidelines, of course).

*Ribbons* was, and is, a venue for Cherryh fans to celebrate the writer and her worlds. It can range from the academic (Greg L. Johnson's article) to the silly (sections of the ShejiCon 1 report are **very** silly) to the personal (Bret Grandrath's reminiscence of meeting CJC for the first time) to the artistic (and what a talented bunch of artists we have!). Is there more? Of course, as some very crafty folks have shown with photos of Message Cylinders. I'd love photos of them for a photo section in a future ish. Be advised, this editor would be very interested in receiving such a Cylinder, along with instructions on its proper use. You Have Now Been Duly Notified.

Beyond text and art, those who've created and traded Message Cylinders have shown us there's more to expressing our connection to all things Cherryh than words and pictures. What else can we create in celebration of the worlds she's brought to life for us? If you create something, take a photo of it and send it to me. Open your mind and let it play. But keep sending words and art, too -- those are the staples upon which fanzines like this one rely for continued existence.

Shon'ai!

## *Contributor's Guidelines*

*Ribbons* is a journal dedicated to all things Cherryh. Contributions of articles, reviews, essays, and artwork (anything

from line drawings to magazine-cover-style and size) are welcomed.

The format is Landscape orientation, in PDF download at efanazines dot com, and allows onscreen reading as well as printing a paper copy. Contributions should be sent via e-mail to the editor, Jan S., at tropicsf at earthlink.net as follows:

1) Text files as an .rtf attachment, art as .jpg attachment, with "For Ribbons" somewhere in the Subject line.

2) No word limit is required, but around 1,000 words for articles and 75 lines or less for poetry would be appreciated.

3) Please send text that is correctly spelled, employs logic and common sense, and has no bugs.

4) Letters in response to this journal are also welcome and will be printed, but no flames will be tolerated.

5) Humor is encouraged.

6) **Without exception, fiction using C.J. Cherryh's characters will not be accepted for publication.**

7) There is no payment offered in exchange for any contribution, only the egoboo that goes with seeing one's name in print or on the Web.

If you aren't in the editor's email addy book (yet), you'll be offered an Allowed Sender Request form to complete. You may ignore this, or complete it. The editor checks the Suspect Email folder in her email program regularly, which is where all mail from persons not in her addy book is sent. Please allow up to 2 weeks for a response. After that, please send pings (reminder messages).

The intended publication schedule is three times a year, but may be irregular depending on the rate of contributions and/or the editor's health, whichever is worse. <g>

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