

ALEXIAD

(AΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

Recently I read a very interesting book called *Spider Boy*, by Ralph Fletcher. Its young protagonist kept a spider as a pet. Not long after I read this book I discovered that a spider had busily spun a web around our mailbox. Before I read *Spider Boy*, I would have killed the spider just in case it was poisonous. I would have done it reluctantly but I would have done it. But because the book had given me a different perspective on spiders I decided that I would try to find out its species before I killed it. I got as good a look as I could at the spider. It was very shy and terrified of me but I did manage to see it. I saw it was clearly not a black widow, one of two dangerous species, the other being the brown recluse.

It took me some time but I did eventually find a good photograph of a brown recluse. It is surprisingly hard to find a good photograph of a brown recluse. Photographs of black widows abound, probably because they are very striking spiders. When I did find a good photograph of a brown recluse, it was very noticeably different from the spider I had seen. The mailbox spider is charcoal-colored. A recluse is a light brown.

I decided the mailbox spider was more likely a harmless house spider and that I would not kill it, especially as it seemed more afraid of me than I was of it. I was surprised to learn that some species of tarantulas, such as the Chilean rose, make good pets. I don't think I would want a tarantula in my house. I'm not sure any wild animal should be kept as a pet, but clearly a tarantula is not in the same category as people keeping tigers and crocodiles in their apartments, especially if the tarantula in question is not especially venomous.

— Lisa

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The Breeder's Cup World Thoroughbred Championships are **October 30, 2004** at Lone Star Park in Dallas, Texas.

Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2004**.

The Fast of Christmas begins on **November 15, 2004**.

Our Eighth Anniversary is **November 22, 2004**.

Bob Tucker's **NINETIETH BIRTHDAY** will be **November 23, 2004!** Smooooooth! The Dawn Patrol will slip away from Chambanac on November 27 to throw him a party.

Printed on October 5, 2004

Deadline is **December 1, 2004**

Reviewer's Notes

by Joseph T Major

In the past few weeks I happened to watch two different shows about intervening in someone's dreams to find out something about him: *The Cell* and the episode "A., B., and C." of *The Prisoner*.

In thirty-five years, the high tech Dr. Deane (Jennifer Lopez) used to slip into Carl Stargher's (Vincent D'Onofrio) dreams will look just as quaint as the taped simulations that No. 2 (Colin Gordon) and No. 14 (Sheila Allen) use to probe into the dream of No. 6, preferably known as P (Patrick McGoohan). Presumably, being there "live" would enable whatever number Dr. Deane would be given to flub just as badly as No. 14 did when P asked one of their sims questions that they didn't know the answers to. It would be fun, though, to watch Patrick McGoohan flirt with J. Lo at that party. . .

The technology in *The Cell* is presented as essentially benevolent — strange, we've been told that things have only gotten worse since 1967. It's only fair to add that the two patients Dr. Deane is probing are not freedom-seeking resigned ex-agents but an autistic boy and a secretive serial killer. This can say something about the application or misapplication of technology. "William Tenn" wrote a story about this: "Party of the Two Parts".

The decline and fall continues. Right before deadline, the Del Rey *DRIN* e-mail newsletter arrived, announcing the release of eight books. Two by Terry Brooks, two manga novelizations, the three *Star Wars*TM novelizations in one volume, an Arthurian novel (by Alice Borchardt), and two space operas (by Elizabeth Moon and Rosemary Kirstein). Lester and Judy-Lynn have a lot to answer for.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



In the review of Max Wallace's *The American Axis* in Volume 2 #6, I said that Arthur "John Roy Carlson" Derounian had made certain claims about ties between the SS and the America First Committee. But when I checked his books, evidently he hadn't. I think now that where I read this claim was in *Total Espionage* by Curt Reiss — but I can't find that book!

(Reiss, incidentally, was one of the people responsible for propagating the "little watchmaker of Scapa Flow" story about the alleged High Seas Fleet captain who changed his name, moved to Scotland, and helped spy out Scapa Flow for Gunther Prien's attack. This is one of the spy legends of World War II that "Nigel West" debunks in *Unreliable Witness/A Thread of Deceit*.)

This comes to mind, you see, because of *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth (and doesn't that sound misleading).

Sheryl Birkhead sent us the Order of the Beanie, U.S. Division; a gold propellor beanie on a little plaque. Thanks.

Looking at *uchronia.com*, I noticed the listing for Jack Dann's *The Rebel* (William Morrow, 2004, \$24.95), wherein James Dean does not get killed in that auto wreck. Instead, he gets mixed in with the Kennedys (a fate worse than death). Although Dann does acknowledge some of Dean's sexual issues, it doesn't seem clear whether he brings in the others (he was not only homosexual, he was a homosexual masochist, who liked to have the other boys put out their cigarettes on their chest, which collection of scars temporarily bewildered the doctor doing the postmortem).

I think this is the equivalent of the Waldrop story "Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me" where the nine angels of comedy stars (five of whom were still alive at the time) try to save Buddy Holly from crashing in that Boeing 747 (from the number of people who "just missed" flying with him, it had to have been one). That's mostly making up one's Ideal Singer and calling him Holly, not to mention the habit of assuming that all the people you like like each other. Or as much for James "Jimmy" Dean.

Oh yes, Dann has Dean called, post-accident, "Jimmy". Jimmy Dean is a guy who

sells breakfast sausage.

Ave! Those two classics of literature, *Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus* et *Lingua Latina Multo Pluribus Occasionibus* (or, in the barbarian, *Latin for All Occasions* and *Latin for Even More Occasions*), have been combined and augmented. The Newly Revised and Updated Papyrus-Back Edition of *Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus* (or, in the barbarian, *Latin for All Occasions*) Henricius Barbatus scripsit, is now available (Gotham Books (Penguin); 2004; ISBN 1-592-40080-9; \$12.50) for the convenience of the cultured and the edification of the educatee. Where else can you find Nigerian CDXIX spam? Henry Beard (to use the barbarian translation) has rendered a service to all civilized men. *Salve*.

I got *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* by Ignatius Donnelly (Wesleyan Press; 1890, 2003; ISBN 1-8195-6666-7; \$30) at the WorldCon. It's the typical utopian novel, of the "We shall attain the New Jerusalem once we forbid interest on loans" mode so popular in the late nineteenth century. With, of course, a dystopian bulk of the text, as Gabriel Weltstein reverses the course of the utopian novel by traveling to an interest-slaved America, run by the J*ws. (The editor stanchly disavows any anti-Semitic content to the work, it's just a mere coincidence that all the villains are Jewish.) Anyhow, the worldwide and completely secure Conspiracy happens to have access to the Internet. Really. Well not the Internet as we know it (somehow I think Gabriel's search for the biography of the girl he fell for would be just a bit draggy if he had to first eliminate 183 messages for breast enlargement, Herbal Viagra, barely legal XXX chicks, and ardent if agrammatical bank clerks in Russia needing a foreign account to transfer \$12,000,000 (inflation, you know) out of the country) but close enough. Hearing Caesar, the leader of the conspiracy, curse is d—d interesting, and his number two decamps for the Levant with all the cash, to set up a new Judea. At the time Alfred Dreyfus was in good repute and Theodor Herzl was no one in particular.

A. J. Jacobs is not red-headed. I mention this because he is the author of *The Know-It-All: One Man's Humble Quest to Become the Smartest Person In the World* (Simon & Schuster; 2004; ISBN 0743250605; \$25.00), the story of his reading the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. All the way through. It took him fifteen months. Never once in the book does he mention "The Red-Headed League". Come to think of it, does he live very far from a bank?

Bert Rutan's Space Ship One has won the \$10,000,000 Anasari X Prize®, making its qualifying flight on **October 4, 2004**. See:

<http://www.xprize.org>

The organizers are hoping to have an annual X Prize® competition. It seems like NASCAR with rockets, and if you remember that Tom

Wolfe wrote about NASCAR racing hero Junior Johnson before he wrote *The Right Stuff* . . .

"But on that glorious day in May 1963, Gordo Cooper went higher, farther, and faster than any other American — 22 complete orbits around the world; he was the last American ever to go into space alone. And for a brief moment, Gordo Cooper became the greatest pilot anyone had ever seen."

If you want to know where Richard McKenna, author of "Casey Agonistes" (1958) and many other worthwhile stories, as well as the mundane novel *The Sand Pebbles* (1962), was coming from, the Naval Institute Press, with its Bluejacket Books program of reissuing noteworthy books of naval history, has provided help with the republication of Kemp Tolley's *Yangtze Patrol: The U.S. Navy in China* (1971, 2000; ISBN 1-55750-883-6; \$29.95). Tolley, like McKenna a veteran of the gunboats and rivers, tells the story of the little boats that sailed under the Flowery Flag up and down the great rivers of the Middle Kingdom. He even mentions the cruise of the *Lanikai*, FDR's final attempt to reconnoiter the Japanese fleet; the Asiatic Fleet knew something was brewing, even if the commanders to the eastwards didn't.

OBITS

Ophelia Angela Thomas Ellis
June 20, 1899 — July 30, 2004

Miss Ophelia, my oldest living relative, died right before Joe took the last *Alexiad* to the printer, only a few days before the Thomas-Bridges reunion. I had not sorted through my thoughts and emotions. If you are in your early forties and you make friends with someone a year older than your grandfather would be, the odds are that someday in the not too-distant future someone is going to call you and tell you that your friend has died. She was very alert the last time we saw her. At the reunion her daughter, whom we met on our last visit, told us she had died peacefully in her sleep. There are worse things than dying in your sleep at age 105. Still, I was not prepared for it to hurt the way it does, even knowing she had a very long, full life. She radiated a calm, wise strength born of her long life. My world is decidedly poorer now.

— Lisa

MONARCHIST NEWS

On October 2, 2004, Karol Wojtyła, Bishop and Patriarch of Rome (called "Pope" in the West) beatified **Kaiser und König Karl I & IV, Austrian Emperor and King of Hungary**.

<http://www.beatificationemperorcharles.info>

Among those present were Dr. Otto von Habsburg, the Emperor and King's son and heir, his son and heir Archduke Karl, a number of other archdukes, and other related royals.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

Some notes by Joseph T Major
on Melissa Scott's

A CHOICE OF DESTINIES

(Baen; 1986; ISBN 0-671-65563-9; \$2.95)

Ετα 200 π.Χ.

[“In 200 B.C.”]

«Αλέξανδρος Φιλίππου και οι Έλληνες
πλην Λακεδαιμονίων —»
“Alexander, son of Philip, and the Hellenes,
except the Lakedaimonians —”

We can very well imagine that they were utterly indifferent in Sparta to this inscription. “Except the Lakedaimonians”, but naturally. The Spartans were not to be led and ordered about as precious servants. Besides a panhellenic campaign without a Spartan king as a leader would not have appeared very important. O, of course “except the Lakedaimonians.”

This too is a stand. Understandable.

Thus, except the Lakedaimonians at Granikos; and then at Issos; and in the final battle, where the formidable army was swept away that the Persians had massed at Arbela; which had set out from Arbela for victory, and was swept away.

And out of the remarkable panhellenic campaign, victorious, brilliant, celebrated, glorious as no other had ever been glorified, the incomparable: we emerged; a great new Greek world.

We; the Alexandrians, the Antiocheans, the Seleucians, and the numerous rest of the Greeks of Egypt and Syria, and of Media, and Persia, and the many others. With our extensive territories, with the varied action of thoughtful adaptations. And the Common Greek Language we carried to the heart of Bactria, to the Indians.

As if we were to talk of Lakedaimonians now!

— Constantine P. Cavafy

After the Battle of the Granikos (Granicus), Alexander ordered three hundred panoplies of captured Persian armor to be displayed in the Forum at Athens with the dedication:

ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ
ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΈΛΛΗΝΕΣ
ΠΛΗΝ ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ
ΑΠΟ ΤΩΝ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΩΝ
ΤΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΣΙΑΝ ΚΑΤΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΩΝ

Alexander, son of Philip,
and the Hellenes,
except the Lakedaimonians,
from the barbarians
who live in Asia.

Churchill once quoted a comment to the intent of “when a new book comes out, read an old one” and added that as an author himself, he found this a less than desirable idea. Though if people were to respond to the publication of *The Second World War* by reading *The World Crisis* . . . Well, since a new book on an alternative Alexander has come out, I decided to do an old one.

Alexander the Great what-ifs are not all that common. [Evidently, the ideal, best-selling what-if would be one where Nazi time-travelers help the Confederacy win the Civil War in return for help winning their conflict.] The Uchronia web site (<http://www.uchronia.com>) lists a dozen, including a manga titled *The Golden Vine*, some where the Alexandrian content is minimal, and this one. On the other hand, two are by Arnold Toynbee, another one is by L. Sprague de Camp (“Alexander and the Gun”), and yet another one is the very first Alternate History ever.

Before discussing the book in question, a note on sources is in order. There is a dearth of what might be called “primary sources” on the life and career of Alexander. All the contemporary recollections have vanished, and what we have in their place are works written four and five hundred years later:

Arrian Flavius Arrianus Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Alexander*, second century A.D. (reign of Hadrian)

Curtius Rufus *The History of Alexander the Great of Macedon*, first century A.D. (reign of Claudius)

Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History*, first century B.C.

Pompeius Trogus *Philippic Histories*, first century A.D., but only exists in third century A.D. epitome by **Justin** (M. Junianus Justinus)

Plutarch Plutarkhos of Khaironea (ΠΑΥΤΑΡΧΟΣ), *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, Lives of Alexander and Eumenes; *Moralia*, “On the Virtue of Alexander”

Arrian was a general and provincial governor of Cappadocia, as well as archon of Athens and Consul. He was a Romanized Bythinian Greek from the province of Asia. Curtius Rufus was probably Q. Curtius Rufus, governor of Germania Superior and Africa, and perforce a consul as well, but also the son of a gladiator. Justin and Pompeius Trogus are little-known. Plutarch was known as a philosophical writer, or moralistic anyhow.

Useful modern books on Alexander (well, at least the ones I have and used) include:

Alexander the Great, Robin Lane Fox (1974) — a good general history, written while the author was on an expedition to transit the Northwest Passage in an umiak (Inuit [“Eskimo”] large skin boat).

Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the

Macedonian Army, Donald W. Engels (1978) — *the* book with the key to understanding the campaigns.

Alexander the Great's Campaigns: A Guide to Ancient Political and Military Wargaming, Phil Barker (1979) — of all things a wargaming reference book, but wargamers tend to ask questions like what did the soldiers wear, what kinds of weapons did they carry, how were they organized, and so on.

Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars, Duncan Head (1982) — Another such book, focusing more on the battlefield.

The Generalship of Alexander the Great, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller (1960) — a general's comment on a general's wars.

The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History, Colin McEvedy (1967, 2002) — Maps of the period and the bordering areas and eras.

Who Was Who in the Greek World, Diana Bowder (1982) — Names and biographies.

It should be noted that Scott uses the Latinizations of the names. This makes them more familiar to the ordinary reader. In contrast, she uses the Macedonian calendar, though she does provide the reader with a table of equivalents in the front of the book. She has a BA in history *magna cum laude* from Harvard/Radcliffe (class of 1981). I think we can assume she knows how to research.

The bulk of this article, therefore, will be notes on the book. I thoroughly enjoyed it and advise you to read it; search your local used book store, hunt on Abebooks or eBay, beg Baen to put it on their Free Library, whatever. There were some boobos, which I also note. Rejoice! (*Khaire!* [ΧΑΙΡΕ!])

Prologue: Alexandria Eschate, winter, (Peritios) 1855 imperial (A.D. 1499; AUC 2252)

The book begins with this prologue, where in effect the concept of alternative history is put down for the reader and the characters. A garrison of Greeks on the border of the Asian steppes and the Asian mountains are seen grousing in the barracks on the topic of “Why are we here?” To which one of the soldiers asks “what if the Alexander had gone east?”

Page 1 **Alexander III and I** Alexandros (ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ) Philippou, Alexandros Magnos, Alexander, son of Philip, Alexander the Great, whatever you call him. We can see here an indication of the history. Alexander the Great was the third king of Macedon of that name, the first being Alexandros Philhellene, the one who played a shifting role in the Persian war, as Herodotus recounts.

Page 2 **Flavius Arrianus** Perhaps the Flavius Arrianus Xenophon of our world, second-century historian and general in the Roman army, described above. Arrian was a living example of Hadrian's Hellenizing policies. His *Anabasis Alexandri* is one of the few surviving histories we

have, and though partisan is considered more useful than other surviving histories due to his use of original sources. Now if the author of the *History of Alexander III & I* the man is reading had been one Curtius Rufus . . .

Chapter 1: Bactra, winter (Perititos), 29 imperial (328 B.C., AUC 426)

This is where the choice recounted by the grumbling soldiers nearly two thousand years later comes to pass. In our history, Alexander had to suppress the Conspiracy of the Pages, an attempt to murder him by his attendants on the grounds that he was becoming arrogant and un-Hellenic. Scott here has had the response to the conspiracy made a touch more energetic by a mystical warning, delivered by a seeress. There are also other hints that history has already departed from the course in our world.

We have here a portrayal of the campaign on a cusp, so to speak. In fact the characters do say so. In the introduction the weary garrison on the edge of the steppes discussed the results of this choice; in this chapter we have it being made. In addition, the description of the camp is well done; we see an army settling down for the winter in strange territory, after hard fighting, not quite sure what will happen next.

Page 6 **fifteen-foot sarissa** (σαρισσα) The longer spear introduced by Philip for the phalanx. The measurement they would be using would be ten cubits. Values for the cubit differ, but the generally accepted one is 18 inches (46 cm). Greek soldiers (*hoplites* (ὀπλιτη) from their shield, the *hoplon*) of the phalanx had carried a shorter spear of eight cubits; less organized soldiers used even shorter throwing spears.

Page 7 **Craterus son of Alexander** Krateros (ΚΡΑΤΕΡΟΣ) Up to then a *strategos* (στρατηγός; general); at Gaugamela he led the left flank of the phalanx.

Page 7 **brigade commander** *Taxiarch* (ΤΑΞΙΑΡΧ). “Brigade” is used as the translation for *taxis* [ταξις; pl. *taxeis*], a formation with a nominal strength of 2048, consisting of eight *syntagmata* each of sixteen files by sixteen ranks. In the field the numbers in ranks would be less than this, due to disease, death, and desertion.

Page 7 **Foot Companions** *Pezhetairoi* (ΠΕΖΕΤΑΙΡΟΙ) — the phalangites, carrying the ten-cubit sarissa introduced by Philip II. The phalangites were given the title of Foot Companions as a morale boost, to put them on a level with the Companions, the heavy cavalry of Macedonia.

Page 7 **a flute-girl** *Auletris* (ΑΥΛΕΤΡΙΣ [pl. *auletrides* [ΑΥΛΕΤΡΙΔΕΣ]]. A performer at parties. Some would play flutes (*aulos* — hence the name)

and others would dance. They were be naked or wear transparent gowns and would generally be available for after the party. See *Over the Wine-Dark Sea* by “H. N. Turteltaub” (2001) and de Camp’s *The Bronze God of Rhodes* (1960) for these lasses in, er, action. (The standard of costume seems questionable, given that this is in the mountains in winter.)

Coenus Koinos (ΚΟΙΟΣ). A taxiarch.

Perdiccas Perdikkas (ΠΕΡΔΙΚΚΑΣ). Up to then a strategos, ever since Alexander’s accession.

Hephaestion Hephaistion son of Amnytor (ἘΦΑΙΣΤΙΟΝ). Alexander’s closest companion, in several senses of the word, and his reputed lover. He was also addressed by the title *chiliarch* which, while literally “Commander of a Thousand” was a Hellenization of a Persian title for the King of Kings’ bodyguard commander and deputy.

Commander of the Companion Cavalry *Hipparch* (ἸΠΠΑΡΧ), which was a rather broadly-used term meaning “commander of a cavalry unit”. The commanders of the Companion Cavalry used it, so would Lysimakhos as governor of Thrace, and so does Leon of Atrax in de Camp’s *An Elephant for Aristotle* (1958) commanding twenty cavalrymen, several servants, and an elephant.

the Companion Cavalry Hetairoi (ἘΤΑΙΡΟΙ) [s. *Hetairos* (ἘΤΑΙΡΟΣ)] Philip’s and Alexander’s striking arm, as opposed to the Foot Companions, which were the pinning arm. Armored men on unarmored horses, carrying the *xyston* (ξυστόν), the cavalry lance of about six cubits (9’), and attacking in wedge formation. About two hundred made an *ila* and there was an *ila* of 300 commanded by Alexander himself that was known as the *Agema* (ἌΓΕΜΑ).

Aeropos Airopos (ΑΙΡΟΠΟΣ). A soldier.

She said she had to talk to you This is from Aristobolus via Arrian (4.14). Alexander had been partying all night and missed his appointment, and Aristobolus gave the story of the Syrian prophetess to say why.

Peucestas Peukestas (ΠΕΥΚΕΣΤΑΣ), the most Medizing of the Macedonians. Wore Persian clothing, learned to speak Persian, and became Satrap of Persia.

Erigyus Eriguos (ΕΡΙΓΥΙΟΣ). The commander of the Greek allied cavalry. Just before the events described here, Eriguos had killed

the Persian pretender Satibarzanes in single combat.

Laomedon Laomedon (ΛΑΟΜΕΔΟΝ) Eriguos’s brother, also a commander; he spoke Persian. **The rest of the Friends** *Hetairoi*, but with a different connotation; the personal associates — commanders, ministers, and social intimates — of the king.

Ptolemy Ptolemaios (ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΣ). One of Alexander’s fellow students of Aristotle, and a long-time associate in peace and war. So far just a taxiarch, but destined for bigger things in both this world and ours.

by polite reckoning and official recognition the son of Lagus The story of Ptolemaios’s being the son of Philip II, not of Lagos, while not implausible, is recounted mainly in later Ptolemaic records.

Cleander Kleandros (ΚΛΑΝΔΡΟΣ). A servant of Ptolemaios’s.

Thaïs (ΘΑΙΣ) An Athenian courtesan (an hetaira), mistress of Ptolemaios. Famous in connection with the burning of Persepolis (*Parsa*). John Dryden’s “Alexander’s Feast” has fixed an image of the burning in historical consciousness (“Thaïs led the way, to light him to his prey, / And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.”)

the Sogdians were placated by Alexander’s recent marriage to one of their princesses The marriage to the Sogdian chief’s daughter Roxane (Roxane (ΡΩΞΑΝΗ)) however seems to have been a genuine love-match at least on Alexander’s part.

Eurylochos Eurulokhos (ΕΥΡΥΛΟΧΟΣ). A soldier.

rear-rank man *Ouragos* (οὐραγός), the second in command of a file of pikemen. Eurylochos is a junior non-commissioned officer, so to speak.

Demophon Demophon (ΔΕΜΟΦΩΝ) A chiliarch.

battalion *Chiliarchia* (χιλιαρχία); nominally “thousand” but with a theoretical strength of 1024 (deployed in four 16x16 blocks), two to a *taxis*.

Menedemus Menedemos (ΜΕΝΕΔΕΜΟΣ). Ptolemaios’s bodyguard commander.

Meleager Meleagros (ΜΕΛΕΑΓΡΟΣ). A taxiarch.

Epimenes Epimenes (ΕΠΙΜΕΝΗΣ) A royal page.

Epimenes is my beloved The idea was that a sexual relation would improve morale and facilitate instruction; the term is “eromenos”

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Page 14 [ΕΡΟΜΕΥΟΣ]. **the other pages on his watch had persuaded him to join them in killing the king** So far the course of events has been straight out of Aristobolos.

Page 15 **Hermolaus** Hermolaos (ΕΡΜΟΛΑΟΣ). Royal page and leader of the conspiracy.

Page 15 **because of Cleitus** The killing of Cleitus (Kleitos (ΚΛΕΙΤΟΣ)) at a party was taken as a sign that Alexander had become a Persianized tyrant. They were both drunk.

Page 20 **The Royal Pages** The personal servants of the king. Aged about fifteen, which was not that far from fighting age then.

Page 20 **Sostratus** Sostratos (ΣΩΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ) A Royal page.

Page 20 **Antipater** Antipatros (ΑΝΤΙΠΑΤΡΟΣ) A Royal page; not to be confused with the general, of whom more later

Page 20 **Anticles** Antikles (ΑΝΤΙΚΛΗΣ) A Royal page.

Page 20 **Philotas** Philotas (ΦΙΛΩΤΑΣ) A Royal page.

Page 21 **Theocritus** Theokritos (ΘΕΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ) A *chiliarch* of the *hypaspists*.

Page 21 **hypaspists** The royal foot bodyguard. Broadly mission-capable, as we would put it now. They covered the flanks of the phalanx, stormed fortified places, and other special tasks. The excavation of the royal tomb at Vergina has indicated that the hypaspists (ΥΠΑΣΠΙΣΤ) wore body armor and carried shorter spears than the Foot Companions. They may have carried the eight-cubit spear of the hoplite, four-cubit javelins, or both. In the wars of the Successors the unit was rearmed with sarissas. Organized in three *chiliarchia* of a thousand each.

Page 22 **Chares** Khares (ΧΑΡΗΣ) A royal usher, not the Rhodian sculptor who built the Colossus (see de Camp's *The Bronze God of Rhodes* for a story about that one).

Page 22 **Menidas** Menidas (ΜΕΝΙΔΑΣ) A Greek cavalry commander.

Page 23 **Callisthenes** Kallisthenes (ΚΑΛΛΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ). Student of Aristotle, historian of the early phases of the campaign.

Page 24 **the royal secretary** A later equivalent might be Chief of Staff. He was responsible for the surveyors, as said, and for gathering supplies and issuing orders.

Page 24 **Eumenes** Eumenes of Kardia (ΕΥΜΕΝΗΣ), secretary to Philip and to Alexander. Kardia was an Hellenic polis on the Bosphorus, and Eumenes was therefore at a disadvantage among his fellow-

commanders. In the wars of the Successors he became one of the more prominent early commanders but was distrusted by the Macedonians.

Page 24 **Philip** Philippos (ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ), "Horselover" a very common name in horse-loving Macedonia.

Page 26 **Stagyr** A Greek city, but a part of the Macedonian kingdom, not (as said) the Hellenic League. Oops!

Page 26 **Aristotle** Aristoteles (ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΣ) With Plato, the preeminent Greek philosopher. Tutor of Alexander and his Friends.



Page 26 **Put him under close arrest.** This was all the same regarded as a monstrous crime against free thought. Never annoy scholars without good cause.

Page 28 **Philip Alexander** Philippos Alexandros (ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ), the first sign of a change in history.

Page 28 **Antipater** Antipatros (ΑΝΤΙΠΑΤΡΟΣ). A commanding figure in Macedonian history.

Page 28 **regent under Philip a dozen times before** And at the current time in charge of affairs in Hellas as well.

Page 29 **Bagoas** Bagoas (ΒΑΓΩΑΣ) The Persian eunuch who was body-servant and lover of Darius and Alexander. Mary Renault's *The Persian Boy* (1972) is a fascinating picture of his place in the court.

Chapter 2: Bactra, winter (Peritios) 29 imperial (328 B.C., AUC 426)

The Conspiracy of the Pages is still troubling Alexander when news of a worse disaster reaches him: Greece has risen in rebellion against his hegemony. Antipater has been forced to pull back — and this show of weakness may incite some of their ally-hostages here in Baktra. The reader will note the very real consideration of communications, when the messenger admits that his news is five months old. There are a number of other strains within this multi-national empire becoming apparent, as when a Persian commander offers, characteristically but not too wisely, to help subdue this rebellion. Other signs of the departure from our history began to manifest

themselves in the story.

The presence of the Theban Sacred Band is a clear indication of a departure from our history. Evidently Thebes did not revolt after Alexander's accession; and this will influence later events. Scott is very clear about the nature of the unit and her portrayal of Alexander's attitude to it. It should be noted that Scott, unlike many writers, does not rub in her Point of Divergence, *Sliders*-style, but leads the reader up to it.

Page 33 **Pasithea** Pasithea (ΠΑΣΙΘΕΑ) The Syrian prophet.

Page 33 **The men also call her Alecto** Alekto (ΑΛΕΚΤΟ) was one of the three Furies (*Erinyes*), who as euphemism were called the Kindly Ones (*Eumenides* — the singular is "Eumenes" which likely made some interesting times for the Secretary) who decided mens' fates. The comment about Pasithea cursing a man who died in battle is fitting.

Page 33 **Aristo** Ariston (ΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ) Commander of an ile of Companions.

Page 33 **Socrates** Sokrates (ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ) not of course the teacher of Plato and Xenophon. Commander of an ila.

Page 33 **Metron** Metron (ΜΕΤΡΟΝ) A *lochagos*.

Page 33 **file-leader** *Lochagos* (λοχαγός). Led the file of pikemen both in the sense of command and as first in line.

Page 33 **Nicomachus** Nikomakhos (ΝΙΚΟΜΑΧΟΣ) A *chiliarch* of the phalanx.

Page 33 **Machaon** Makhaon (ΜΑΧΑΟΝ) A messenger.

Page 34 **Heiron** Heiron (ΕΙΡΟΝ) A Royal page.

Page 34 **Adaes** Adaios (ΑΔΑΙΟΣ) A Royal page

Page 34 **the Greek cities are in revolt. . . Sparta, Thebes . . . Athens almost certainly by now, and with her the rest of the League cities** The reference to Thebes is the first hint of an earlier change in history.

Page 36 **Proxenus** Proxenos (ΠΡΟΞΕΝΟΣ) An Eye and Ear of the King (a secret agent).

Page 36 **Polydamus** Poludamos (ΠΟΛΥΔΑΜΟΣ) An Eye and Ear of the King.

Page 38 **not one defeat but two** It sounds as if King Agis (ΑΓΙΣ) of Sparta did not rebel in 26 imperial (331 B.C., AUC 423), to be defeated by Antipater at Megalopolis without the aid of the Athenians and so on.

Page 38 **Mazaeus, the Satrap in Babylon** Mazaaios (ΜΑΞΑΙΟΣ), a Persian lord who surrendered to Alexander after Gaugamela and was rewarded with the satrapy of Mesopotamia.

Page 38 **Antigonos** Antigonos (ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΟΣ) Monophthalmos, Satrap of Phrygia. For his intriguing

- career in our world interesting fictional examinations can be found in de Camp's *An Elephant for Aristotle* and *The Bronze God of Rhodes* and Alfred Duggan's *Besieger of Cities* (1963).
- Page 38 **Seleucus** Seleukos (ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΣ) later styled Nikator ("the Victorious"), commander of Alexander's Bodyguard. Oops! In our world he would become an eastern satrap only later. This could be a butterfly effect, or mere carelessness on the author's part, Seleukos being too junior then to be a satrap.
- Page 41 **That's the Sacred Band** Presumably this was rebuilt after Khaironea in 19 imperial (338 B.C., AUC 416), and even more presumably its city was not destroyed in 22 imperial (335 B.C., AUC 419). An earlier sign of the point of divergence.
- Page 42 **The agenes** The agenes (ΘΕΑΓΕΝΕΣ), Commander of the Sacred Band.
- Page 47 **Thebes has betrayed me; you haven't** The parallel is with the accusation that the doctor Philip of Acarnania was conspiring to poison Alexander. Alexander thought he could be trusted and took the medicine Philip had prescribed for him, while letting Philip read the accusation against him. A truly Alexandrian moment.
- Page 48 **It had been eight years since he had, reluctantly, agreed to the oligarchs' decision to ignore Athens's proddings and obey the terms of their treaty** Hence no sack by Alexander, Peukestes, Ptolemaios, and the rest of the army. Here is one change.
- Page 51 **Exathres was Darius's brother** Oxathres had defected after Gaugamela and after covering the flight of his brother at Ipsus, where Dareios (Darayavaush) had fled in terror. Alexander considered himself the rightful successor of Dareios; e.g., Bessus the usurper and murderer of Dareios was executed in the Persian fashion after trial.
- Chapter 3:** Bactra, winter (Peritios) to Miletos, late summer, (Hyperberetaios), 29 imperial (327 B.C., AUC 426)
- The treason on hand must be dealt with and then the treason at home. Scott described the procedure of a trial by the army, including how sentence was executed. Those who voted for death had to inflict it, too. Alexander also has to make plans for the march home, as it were, and this is covered. Moving such a force was not easy — Engels covers this matter in detail and Scott handles this realistically. This is also in effect a tour of the empire and not without its own interest. As the chapter ends, Alexander has redeployed the army to Miletos in Ionia and is ready to make the last crossing.
- Page 54 **he turned his attention to the imprisoned pages, declaring that they should be tried at once** Still following Aristobolus, (Arrian 4.14, Curtius 6.6-8) and the course of the trial does likewise.
- Page 54 **Agronians and Paeonians and Thracians** Agronians and Paionians are Illyrian peoples from the northwest of Macedonia proper. Thracians are from Thrace, a large area northeast of Macedonia. Thracians were noted for their barbaric nature and were often used for "rough work".
- Page 65 **Harpalus, the crippled treasurer. . . had once been caught stealing from the treasury** Harpalos (ΑΡΠΑΛΟΣ) had in fact fled to Megara, but returned in 25 imperial (331 B.C., AUC 422).
- Page 65 **the hypaspist battalion that would remain as part of the regent's army** Splitting up the hypaspists seems out of keeping with their purpose, unless they are to be considered as more like a modern guard unit. And installing the night-Medizing Peukestas as Strategos or Hegemon of Persia seems a proper parallel and balance to Antipater's authority.
- Page 66 **any son of a Macedonian could be enrolled** See also the setting-up of the *epigoni* (Arrian, 7.12).
- Page 66 **the death of the king's ancient war horse** Βουκεφαλος (ΒΟΥΚΕΦΑΛΟΣ)—"Ox-head"—was presumably only a ceremonial mount by then. Time comes for all horses, whether in India or Susiana.
- Page 67 **Nearchus** Nearkhos (ΝΕΑΡΧΟΣ) the Cretan admiral (*nauarkhos*; ΝΑΥΑΡΧΟΣ) of Alexander's fleet.
- Page 67 **Brauron** A temple site in Attika, on the Gulf of Euboiia south of Marathon and east of Athens, but abandoned as a town several hundred years ago. Oops!
- Page 67 **the king married the elder of Darius's daughters** As best as known, her name was Statiera.
- Page 67 **She, and Alexander's second bride, a Sogdian . . . were installed in separate wings of the royal palace, ceremonially bedded, and forgotten** But Rhoxane had had a miscarriage in the summer of 30 imperial (326 B.C., AUC 427) so apparently she did accompany Alexander and the army, Mary Renault notwithstanding.
- Page 67 **the first, Orestid wife, mother of the heir Philip Alexander, had died in Macedon four years earlier** Aha! "Orestid" refers to a province of Macedonia, more likely, than a family. Scott has conceded that this marriage is *the* Point of Divergence, and that she should have made this clearer.
- Page 68 **trireme . . . quinquereme** The original trireme (*trieres*; τριερες) had three levels ("banks") of rowers, having evolved from the earlier *pentekonter*, a ship with one bank of fifty rowers, twenty-five a side. By this period, a trireme would have about two hundred rowers. Larger ships had been the source of much confused speculation, since more than three banks of oars become mechanically difficult and even impossible. The consensus of opinion is that the higher numbers referred to the banks of rowers but, unlike the earlier triremes, there was more than one rower to an oar. Thus, the quinquereme would have five banks of rowers, but there would be fewer banks of oars; perhaps three banks of oars with two, two, and one rower, or two banks with three and two rowers each. The cataphract ship is completely decked over. See *The Athenian Trireme* by Morrison, Coates, and Rankov (2000) for how this likely worked.
- Interlude:** Trans-Indus Province, summer (Loios), 191 imperial (165 B.C., AUC 588)
- It is a bit of a plot spoiler to describe "future" events, but from the introduction we know that the Empire has survived Alexander. Scott gives in these chapters snapshots from the future of the story, how after Alexander's ascent to Olympos his successors dealt with events. In this brief chapter, we see a disgusted Imperial garrison in the Trans-Indus province. Fox describes how Alexander was on the verge of a great victory over a shaky Indian empire, and how Chandragupta Maurya picked up on that choice of destiny:
- . . . When asked how he had done it, said the Greeks, Chandragupta would reply: 'I watched Alexander when I was still a young man; Alexander,' he explained, 'had been within an ace of seizing India, because its king was so hated and despised, both for his character and his low birth.'
- If an Indian imitator could do it, so too could his master ten years before. Dhana Nanda's kingdom could have been set against itself and Alexander might yet have walked among Palimbothra's peacocks, improved its fencing and enjoyed the fish-ponds on which the Indian princes had always learnt to sail. But not far from its gates the Ganges spreads into an estuary and glides beneath palm-trees through the banks of the silt-brown fields: it asks to be followed, and Alexander need only have done so for another six hundred

miles, until he saw the sea-shore opening before him and realized that at last he was near to the edge of the world. The Eastern ocean was three months away, and the soldiers had refused it. The explorer's dream was gone, when he knew too well that it could have come true.

— Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great*, Page 372

In *Gunga Din* the Guru evokes that history — oh for the days when popular entertainment dealt with real history! It looks as if the soldiers of this empire will not be as fortunate as Sergeants Cutter, MacChesney, and Ballantine, or Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, Kipling's "Soldiers Three".

Page 75 **when the Mauryan Empire fell nearly seventy years before** Presumably after the death of Ashoka in 124 imperial (232 B.C., AUC 522). Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta Maurya (r. 35-59 imperial (321-297 B.C., AUC 433-437)) took the choice of destiny Alexander had to pass on.

Did the Greeks use their contact with the Hindu culture to adopt their somewhat more convenient positional-value system of numeration, the so-called "Arabic" numbers?

Chapter 4: Brauron, early autumn (Hyperberetaios) to Athens, early winter (Audnaios), 29-30 imperial (327/6 B.C., AUC 426/7)

Alexander brings the army across to Greece proper to fight the Greek rebels. Scott here illuminates the besetting sin, so to speak, of Classical Greek coalitions; the inability to cohere. The Hellenic League army is divided by internal conflict and petty quarrels, much to Alexander's advantage. However, he has to deal with the problems of his own subordinates, also. Scott's grasp of the terrain of Greece is shall we say spotty, but her descriptions of the battle are quite good. It's Khaironea all over again, and the defeated Greeks come to terms. Well, most of them.



This book has many "Alexander moments",

incidents which show Alexander acting in his unique and very individual fashion, with an almost modern and certainly unbound fashion. The one here has to do with the negotiations with Thebes after their surrender; faced with the prospect of sacking the city as punishment (obviously the city did not rebel as it did, when it did, in our history), Alexander listens to the pleas of the loyal Theban commander and puts him in charge.

Page 80 **I've the Scouts' reports** The *Prodromi* (ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΙ) were the only unit of Macedonian light cavalry in Alexander's army. They were unarmored and carried the six-cubit *xyston*, not as some works would have it the ten-cubit *sarissa*.

Page 80 **I want you to command the army that besieges Athens** The Periklean Long Walls, connecting Athens to the ports Piraios and Munychia, had been repaired after their partial demolition to the tune of flutes played by flute-girls in the Peloponnesian War and would make a formidable resistance to any besieger, though not as much as they had been. Just as well that Hephastion is only making a diversion.

Page 81 **Pherae** Pherai (ΦΕΡΑΙ). Iason (ΙΑΣΩΝ) of Pherai, the tyrant of the Thessalian League, had planned to launch a war against Persia, as had Philip. Also like Philip, he was assassinated, in 370 B.C., before he could start. Unlike Philip, he had no heir. Alexander was Hegemon of the Thessalian League, in succession to Philip and Iason.

Page 81 **the Foot Companions are better** They are sixteen-deep against the eight-deep hoplite phalanx and the sarissas have the reach to make a difference.

Page 81 **Thermopylae** Thermopulai (ΘΕΡΜΟΠΥΛΑΙ), the pass by the ocean which was the site of the last stand of the Three Hundred. Due to the rising of the land the appearance of the site these days is deceptive; it was a lot narrower then.

Page 83 **Olympias** Olumpias (ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑΣ) presumably had family reasons for not going home to Epeiros in 25 imperial (331 B.C., AUC 423). She was quite contentious; as Alexander once put it to Hephastion, she was charging a pretty high rent for nine months' lodging.

Page 84 **one of the garrison's better hetairas** Whereas Ptolemaios had left his back in Brauron, Thaïs that is. *Hetaira* (ἑταῖρα) is "companion" again, but different to the three earlier uses of the word. Hetairas were better known for providing intelligent conversation than sexual services. They also cost a great deal more.

Page 89 **heading west and north by easy stages towards Athens** Brauron is east of Athens. Oops! This description would put them down towards Sounion, southeast of Athens, cooped up in the tip of Attika.

Page 92 **Polyperchon** Poluperkhon (ΠΟΛΥΠΕΡΧΩΝ), a taxiarch.

Page 93 **the League troops had stood to arms all night, as afraid of mass desertions as they were of a Macedonian attack** The general problem of the Greeks. The ensuing battle shows it to even greater detail, as the individual contingents have good cohesion, morale, and discipline, resisting bravely, but the army as a whole lacks cohesion, morale, and discipline.

Pages 93-4 **the Foot Companions shifted ponderously from column to obliquely angled phalanx:** Alexander is throwing the oblique order of the Boiotian leader Pelopidas back at them. But then, Philip was guest or hostage at Thebes, and having learned their ways was in a position to pass them on to his son.

Page 94 **the Sacred Band on the right flank leading the way** Have they been issued with the sarissa or are they still using their hoplite equipment?

Page 95 **the Athenian cavalry shattered** There wasn't much to it. Xenophon had proposed armoring the horses but they seem not to have listened to the gods-detested Medeizer.

Page 96 **The battle itself took less than two hours, but the pursuit lasted until sundown** Scott realizes the tempo of real-life battles. They just don't end with the few survivors of the winning side standing amid piles of enemy dead higher than their heads.

Page 97 **Xenocles** Xenoklides (ΞΕΝΟΚΛΙΔΗΣ). A Theban leader.

Page 100 **Lysias son of Philoneus, Nichomachus son of Antiphon, and Asteius son of Phrynion** Lusias (ΛΥΣΙΑΣ), Nikhomakhos (ΝΙΚΟΜΑΧΟΣ), and Asteios (ΑΣΤΕΙΟΣ) The three Athenian envoys.

Page 102 **It's Demosthenes you want** The Athenian orator Demosthenes (ΔΗΜΟΣΘΕΝΗΣ) son of Demosthenes had opposed the Macedonians, both Philip and Alexander, ever since 4 imperial (352 B.C., AUC 402). He had engineered the alliance with Thebes that led to the battle of Khaironea and had fled the field. His actions as described seem quite in character.

Page 103 **Demosthenes has gone to Syracuse** Surakusa (ΣΥΡΑΚΥΣΑ) had been

the target of the great expedition of the Peloponnesian War proposed by Alkibaldes and led to disaster by Nikias and Demosthenes son of Alkisthenes in 413 B.C., AUC 341.

The homeland is secure now, but new threats loom from eastward. The old threat from Persia has been dealt with, but newer ones from rising civilizations are coming. Alexander is not quite going "To sail beyond the sunset/And all the baths of the western stars" ("Ulysses", Alfred, Lord Tennyson) but there is some work of noble note to be done there when this epic is:

(To be continued)



IMPERIAL EARTH

by Sir Arthur C. Clarke (1975)
Commentary by Lisa Major

Since *Alexiad* is an SF fanzine I decided it was time to do a commentary on an SF book. *Imperial Earth* is my favorite Arthur C. Clarke book. I first read it many years ago when I first began reading sf and fantasy. It remains one of my favorite books even now.

It opens when ten-year-old Duncan Makenzie keys in the wrong number while trying to call his grandmother. He gets an audio only with no picture, realizes his mistake and is about to close the connection when he hears the strange sound. He recognizes it after a few seconds.

In his ten years of life, the impressions of many worlds had been imprinted on his mind, and no one who had heard this most evocative of sounds could ever forget it. He was listening to the voice of the wind, as it sighed and whispered across the lifeless landscape a hundred meters above his head. . . He . . . tried to project himself into the unknown, hostile world from which he was protected by all the safety devices that three hundred years of space technology could contrive. Someday, when he had passed his survival tests, he would go up into that world and see with his own eyes the lakes and chasms and low-lying orange clouds, lit by the thin cold rays of the distant sun.

He begins recording the sound but at first only gets silence.

Then, out of that silence, came something new. It was faint and distant, yet conveyed the impression of overwhelming power. First there was a thin scream that mounted second by second in intensity, but somehow never came any closer. The screams rose swiftly to a demonic shriek, with undertones of thunder-then dwindled away as quickly as it had appeared. . . Then there was only the sighing of the wind, even lonelier than before.

Duncan promptly calls his older cousin Karl Helmer, whom he idolizes, and plays the sound for him. Karl teases him and then identifies the sound as "a ram-tanker making a scoop." Duncan is at first disappointed that it is not something more exotic and wishes he had not given Karl the chance to ruin his little fantasy of something really exotic.

But like all healthy ten-year-olds, Duncan was resilient. The magic had not been destroyed. Though the first ship had lifted from Earth three centuries before he was born, the wonders of space had not yet been exhausted. There was romance enough in that shriek from the edge of the atmosphere, as the orbiting tanker collected hydrogen to power the commerce of the Solar System.

We learn that Duncan is more knowledgeable than most youths his age and that he lives on Titan, where his family is important and there is the first mention of his powerful grandfather Malcolm.

So Duncan continued to listen to the recording after Karl had switched off. Over and over again he played back that triumphant cry of power. . . For years it would haunt his dreams; he would wake in the night, convinced that he had heard it again through the roof of rock that protected Oasis from the hostile wilderness above.

And when at last he fell back into sleep, he would always dream of Earth.

The book then skips back to Duncan's grandfather Malcolm who starts his career as a space engineer. He comes up with a plan to use Titan for refueling spaceships, gets backing and ends up as head of state on Titan. He marries Ellen Killmer and they have a daughter named Anitra. Unfortunately she is born severely brain-damaged and dies before her sixth birthday. It turns out that Malcolm's genes are irreparably damaged. Malcolm has himself cloned and names the child Colin. Ellen refuses to accept Colin but does accept Duncan after he is cloned from Colin. She comes to fill the role of both grandmother and mother.

The book then skips forward to the mature

Duncan some twenty years later. He has been given an all expense paid trip to Earth for two months. His cousin Karl has also matured and is an unpredictable genius.

There follows background on Titan and we learn of rivalry between the Makenzies and Karl's family. Karl and Duncan had been inseparable friends, despite this rivalry, until twelve years before Duncan gets invited to Earth, Karl had a nervous breakdown which sealed his rift with Duncan.

AND OUT OF THE MIST, THE
DREADED PUNCTUATION
PIRATES APPEARED!



Abou

Duncan begins training for Earth gravity. He visits his grandmother one last time. She gives him a souvenir, a game, of his childhood and he has a flashback to that childhood. The game is a find-the-patterns somewhat like Rubik's Cube. He remembers being told of two possible solutions and spending several days before giving up and calling Karl. Karl calls him back in the middle of working on the problem and tells him "there are over a quadrillion arrangements to be checked." Duncan thinks Karl has given up but Karl vehemently denies he is quitting.

The next day, Duncan had one of the biggest surprises of his young life. A bleary-eyed Karl, who had clearly not slept since their last conversation, appeared on his screen.

He has solved the problem. He shows Duncan the solutions and switches off for some much-needed sleep.

For a long time, a much chastened Duncan sat staring at the screen. He did not yet understand what had happened. He only knew that Karl had won against all reasonable expectations. It was not that Duncan really minded; he loved Karl too much to resent his little victory, and indeed was capable of rejoicing in his friend's triumphs even when they were at his own expense. But there was something strange here, something almost magical."

For the first time Duncan has seen the power of genius for himself. He comes out of the flashback and realizes this is not the original set of his childhood. This one has a piece of a very valuable gemstone called Titanite. He cannot find words to thank her and stammers out attempts to thank her.

He put his arms around Grandma's thin shoulders — and found, to his distress, that they were shaking uncontrollably. He held her gently until the shaking stopped, knowing that there were no words for such moments, and realizing as never before that he was the last love of her empty life, and that he was leaving her to her memories.

Time passes quickly after that. We learn that Duncan plans to have himself cloned during his year on Earth. He says farewell to people, except for Karl who is working on a survey ship.

He remembers a visit of young Earth people when he was sixteen. Five hundred students are on a grand tour of the solar system. There have been the usual problems dealing with five hundred intelligent and independent-minded students, as well as mention of a machine called an Emotion Amplifier, which is a very addictive habit. There is a dispute between Earth and Titan which temporarily strands the youths and is for Titan something of a "Ransom of Red Chief" situation. Duncan's clone father hosts one of the youths, a girl named Calindy. She is beautiful and mysterious. Duncan naturally falls in love with her but she chooses Karl, who even at twenty-two, "seemed to possess the secret of power without clumsiness." We are told that Karl has "hair like the sun . . . Karl Helmer was one of those men upon whom, for their own amusement, the Gods have bestowed the fatal gift of beauty."

We next learn that Karl and Duncan were lovers but separated after Calindy's departure. She gives Duncan a stereo picture of herself but Karl will not tell Duncan what she gave him.

Finally time comes for Duncan to leave. He boards the ship and travels to Earth. The journey is interesting reading but does not really advance the plot. He arrives on Earth and Washington D.C. where he is the guest of George Washington, who is brown-skinned. It is at this point that we learn Duncan is black and with a truly dark skin, which Washington envies.

At this point Clarke introduces us to a machine called a Monastic, which is basically a Palm Pilot, not really a science fictional machine now but was in 1976, when *Imperial Earth* was first published.

Duncan meets a horse, a huge Percheron, and naturally finds the animal overwhelming. He tastes honey and finds it strangely familiar, though he cannot recall encountering it before. Several pages later he remembers that "honey tasted like Calando." He manages to find her in the planetwide directory and calls her on the videophone. The years of Earth gravity have dramatically changed her. She arranges a meeting and it turns out she is working for a company called Enigma. Enigma serves people bored and looking for something new. Duncan gets two days of their services as Calindy's guest. He boards an antique airplane and in the course of the two days sees the Empire State Building and two dire wolves, resurrected from extinction. He rides a miniphant, a genetically shrunk elephant. The finale is the sight of the

Titanic, finally in New York although way, way overdue. *Imperial Earth*, after all, was written ten years before Ballard discovered the ship had indeed broken in two that tragic April night. He finally gets to see Calando but finds her evasive and not willing to commit to another meeting. He gives up and goes on to arranging the cloning. The geneticist who had cloned Duncan is no longer doing cloning and hangs up on him. He then goes to a party where he meets a gem collector named Mandel'stahn. Mandel'stahn has sought Duncan out specifically to discuss titanite. Mandel'stahn has been offered a chance to buy titanite in a surprising quantity. Titanite occurs only on Titan and another moon which only has traces. As a Titan official, Duncan has the power to investigate smuggling. He promises to begin inquiries and leaves to get some needed rest. George Washington tells him Mandel'stahn's position requires utter reliability. He sends the inquiries to Colin the next morning and then looks for another geneticist. He finds the younger now estranged partner of the first geneticist and who is now practicing in Zanzibar.

Colin's reply is sent in two codes and tells Duncan the titanite is illegal. He has informed Karl's father and the investigation has begun. Duncan comes to the conclusion Karl is responsible and also that Calando is involved. He is deeply hurt and concerned but Zanzibar comes first. At Zanzibar he finds the geneticist is gone for an emergency surgery. He begins to have doubts about cloning himself.

He gets another message from Colin that Karl has a great deal of money in his account. He goes back to Mandel'stahn and advises him to discreetly investigate Calando. Mandel'stahn does this and returns with news that Karl was on Earth and staying with Calando. He calls Calando and learns Karl is no longer there. She claims not to know where he is. Again Duncan turns to Mandel'stahn and again Mandel'stahn comes through. Karl is working on Project Cyclops, a grand radio astronomy project whose main object is the finding of other intelligent life.

Duncan goes to personally confront Karl. He finds Karl at the top of a tower and must climb up to his cousin. It is not easy for Duncan and not without risk. Many of the safety rails are badly rusted and decidedly unsafe. He is shocked to see how Karl has aged. After initial pleasantries he brings up the subject of the money in Karl's account. Karl starts to tell him something about Titan but then stops himself. Duncan gets hot from the sun and suggests moving to the shadows. Karl agrees. He is nervous and agitated and then comes to a decision. He approaches Duncan pleadingly with hands outstretched. But Duncan does not know that there were security officers assigned to guard him from Karl. The guards mistake Karl's approach for a violent one and temporarily blind him. Blind, Karl stumbles against the guard rail. It breaks and he dies in the fall. There is an inquiry and at the end Duncan is given Karl's Monastic and his sketchbook. In the sketchbook he finds a drawing of a sea urchin with the word Argus.

He visits Calando in her apartment and learns that she and Karl used an Emotion Amplifier. Karl used it at full power and that use had caused his breakdown. He was permanently imprinted on loving Calando. Duncan does not tell Calando of what he was beginning to discover in Karl's notebooks and in the Monastic. Karl was on the verge of a brand-new science, a science which could do incredible things for the outer colonies such as Titan.

Duncan returns to Zanzibar for the cloning. He receives custody of the baby boy and then it is time to go home.

He arrives back home and stands irresolute for a few seconds before finding the courage to face his family. They are all there to welcome him home. Shocked, he sees that his grandmother is there.

As she saw Duncan's astonished gaze, she gave a barely perceptible smile. It was more than a greeting, it was a signal of reassurance. *She already knows*, thought Duncan. She knows and approves. When the full fury of the Makenzies breaks . . . I can rely on her. . . The Moment of Truth. Well, here it was --- They all crowded eagerly around him as he drew back the shawl. For an instant only, he felt regret; perhaps he should have given them some warning. No, it was better this way. Now they would learn that he was his own man at last, no longer a pawn of others — however much he might owe to them, however much he might be *part* of them.

The child was still sleeping, but normally now, not in the electronic trance that had protected it on the long voyage from Earth. Suddenly it threw out a chubby arm, and tiny fingers gripped Duncan's hand with surprising strength. They looked like the pale white tentacles of a sea anemone against the dark brown of Duncan's skin.

The little head was still empty even of dreams, and the face was void and formless as that of any month-old baby. But already the smooth, pink scalp bore an unmistakable trace of hair — the golden hair that would soon bring back to Titan the lost glories of the distant sun.

BLOOD AND GUTS IS GOING NUTS

Review by Joseph T Major of Bill Yenne's
A DAMNED FINE WAR
(Berkley; 2004; ISBN 0-425-18450-1; \$7.99)

Blood and Guts Is Going Nuts (1976; and the copy I have is, ironically, from Berkley Books) by Christopher Leopold is a book about General George S. Patton trying to start a war with the Soviet Union in Occupied Germany. It presumably takes off from the scene in the movie *Patton: A Salute to a Rebel* (1970) where the title character is shown on the telephone to his commander saying that he could provoke

sufficient incidents with the Soviets to have a war in three weeks.

This is presumably the interpretation of Francis Ford Coppola, one of the screenplay writers; an apocalypse now so to speak. The comment in Patton's own *War as I Knew It* (1947) is that he could have attacked the Soviets and perhaps ought to have done so; a personal opinion, not a policy. Leopold, like Coppola, uses the power of fiction to make that a policy.

In Yenne's book, the Soviets conveniently provide the incidents, inexplicably launching aggression into the allied occupation zones three weeks after the surrender of Germany, and only a week after the strange disappearance of a Manhattan Project scientist named Klaus Emil Julius Fuchs. (Rather reminiscent of Ronald W. Clarke's *The Bomb that Failed* (1969), which also involved Fuchs — and a failed atom bomb test.) With demobilization in full swing, transfers to the Pacific in order, and the new order of world peace and harmony by the United Nations, the great democracies of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China trembling on the verge of accomplishment, this can't happen. But it does.

The issue is further complicated when General Eisenhower is killed in a plane crash. The Russians are driving Montgomery into the North Sea for a second Dunkirk, France may rise in a second Paris Commune at any moment, and Soviet rockets are targeting the East Coast. What to do . . .

The triumphant conclusion to the war (all right, I'll spoil the book for you) is well-informed by recent events in the relevant area; Yenne refers knowledgeably (perhaps anachronistically so) to the many minorities that were repressed by the Soviet monolith, the groups whose resurgent quarrels have made news today. And then there is the Saddam Husayn-esque finale for Stalin!

He presents tactical combat, the bits where the bullets meet the flesh, very well. Yenne is the author of *Aces: True Stories of Victory and Valor in the Skies of World War II* (2000), a book that tries to cover all sides. Incidentally, the effectiveness of the Douglas A-26 Invader against Soviet troops is frequently displayed. Yenne has also written about ground combat.

He also handles politics in a believable fashion. The scene where Patton and his driver, Sergeant Nate McKinley show off for the Kabardian people in the Caucasus, for example. That illustrates the diversity of native peoples in the Soviet Union, or former Soviet Union; there is no New Soviet Man or Unified Commie Horde here, but the diverse peoples of all the Russias. (Of course, some people, Eugene Lyons for example, knew that back then.)

It's in between that he falls down. For example, throughout the book Yenne writes about redeploying armies as if it were no more involved than moving counters across a board. This seems a rather high level of abstraction. (Also, much is made of having to move said armies; checking Shelby Stanton's *World War Two Order of Battle U.S. Army* (1984) reveals that no division reached the U.S. until the end of

June, though presumably all units in Germany would be very much drawn down.)

Technical matters are a bit abstracted, too. The Soviets capture a number of V-2 rockets, then fit them with the A-10 second stage and start bombarding New York. Sergei P. Korolev was a genius, not a miracle worker — the A-10, like so many "Axis Super-Weapons", was a design proposal, not a prototype. And when a character from Montana proudly recounts the glorious naval victory in which the battleship USS *Montana* (BB67) sank HIJMS *Yamato* — if this is the case the point of departure has to be before the stated one of May 21, 1945, since the *Montana* was never even laid down.

Also, there should be mention of the deployment of the British Centurion tank and Gloster Meteor jet fighter. As opposed to, say, British war-weariness.

It's also jarring that he gets American weapons wrong: "Cautiously, a man with captain's bars on his helmet approached the jeep, accompanied by two who had M14 rifles . . ." [Page 67] Eep! The —14 wasn't introduced until the fifties, not to mention that "captain's bars on the helmet" is a recipe for "dead captain." (Captain Miller (Tom Hanks) would never be *Saving Private Ryan*, that is to say.)

In fact, aside from Poland there is no mention of Eastern European politics; nothing about the Balkans, about Greece. It's not quite as Alien Space Bat as Himmler surrendering Greece and Norway to the Soviets in *Fox on the Rhine* (2000), but they should still have been considered. Or to take another example, the Germans just drop off the screen.

The book begins with a New Mexico state trooper investigating a man killed in an auto accident. (The trooper is named "Larry Zamora" — anyone remember Lonnie Zamora of Socorro NM and the flying saucer?) Why would Klaus Fuchs (Agent CHARLZ') be carrying papers in *Russian*? And of course back at the Manhattan Project (ENORMOZ) ranch there were also Ted Hall (MLAD), David Greenglass (KALIBR), and PERS and VEKSEL to consider. Moreover, Yenne describes Soviet scheming at the San Francisco conference and never quite mentions who was presiding (Hint: Alger Hiss (Agent ALES)).

There are hints as the book comes to an end that some people, having read *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* a little too avidly, are afraid that Patton will pull a Pournellesque March on Washington after conquering Russia. Yennie does a good character study of the man, including his denial of any political ambition. Now such fears are hinted at in *Blood and Guts Is Going Nuts* and Frederick Nolan's *The Algonquin Project* (1974) which last changed the names, but they were restored for *Brass Target* (1979), its movie adaptation, which as a bonus added Sophia Loren. (Who turned 70 on September 20. *Dio mio*, what a depressing state of affairs! [And Brigitte Bardot followed on the 28th. *Nom d'un nom!*]) Here, they have some very subtle results.

In short, this is a fine adventure novel, but it falls apart in some of the picky details. If you

are the sort of person who gets exercised when a writer says the M4A2E8 had eight bolts per track wheel when it actually had nine, you won't like it; if you're not sure if General Roosevelt or Colonel Jackson won the Civil War (or to be honest, know a lot more), it'll be instructional and interesting.

THE LONG WAY BACK

Review by Joseph T Major of

FREEDOM'S GATE

by Naomi Kritzer

(Bantam Spectra; 2004;

ISBN 0-553-58673-4; \$6.99)

"Book One of The Dead Rivers Trilogy"

In Search of Wonder is a collection of reviews of books from the fifties, yet the comments Damon Knight made on those books remain still valid today, if not more so. In his chapter on "Pitfalls and Dead Ends", Knight discusses an example of a talent wasted.

The Long Way Back (1954, 1955), by Margot Bennett, is about a rather dull and repetitive exploration to a devastated post-nuclear destruction land. What annoyed Knight, and he describes his annoyance in full detail, is that Bennett set up a fascinating, complex, brilliantly done African society for her explorers to be from — and then they left it, for a boring reiterative journey to nuked Britain.

Lauria is the messenger and reporter for Kyros, the local official of the Greek Empire in this province on the edge of the Asian steppes. The Greek Empire fragmented after Alexander ascended to Olympus at the end of a long life (Point of Departure, anyone?) until the sorceresses of the Baktrian Hellenistic kingdoms found out how to enchant aerika, the local magical spirits.

This could be very interesting. How does one blend Hellenistic culture with real (and not particularly Hellenic) magic? What all did the Alexandros do during his extended life; build the thousand ships larger than triremes, conquer Carthage, circumnavigate Arabia, or whatever choice of destiny came his way? Women are the sources of power here, being the ones who enchant aerika. How does that clash with the lower status of women in Hellenic and Hellenistic society? On a more local scale, Lauria is an Eye and Ear of the King (though the author doesn't seem to know of that office or title); she observes and reports to Kyros. How does being a woman and of mixed ancestry too hamper that task?

What Kritzer does is to write a "Spy Who Came In From the Cold" scenario; Lauria has to leave this intriguing setup and venture out into the steppes. A tribe is reported to be on the rise, preparing to fight the Greek Empire. Why the usual measures of buying them off, supporting a rival chief, or preventing them from trading don't work doesn't seem to have been mentioned. Moreover, Lauria will have to pretend to be an escaped slave, getting through bandits, thirst (the Greeks used their aerika to dam the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, thus creating a desert as a barrier to such incursions), and the like; not to mention that she can only

take what an escaped slave might have.

Once she goes off on the mission it gets worse, as her ostensible master rapes her as part of her legend, a real slave clings to her and hampers the escape, they don't have enough water, and they run into Greek bandits.

Then when they do get to the tribe, it turns out to be a women's empowerment group. Yes. The leader puts Lauria through a complex set of psychological tests, rewarding her with beads when she gets a test right. Such as when she says "Fix me some tea," and penalizes Lauria when she does so. You see, she didn't say "Please"; this group isn't a hierarchy but a community of equals (what is this, a game of "Sophia Says"?).

May I suggest that this is a level of social sophistication rather beyond all tribes and even civilized peoples of that era? Kritzer wanted to impose her model on the circumstances, I suppose. It would need an amount of justification far beyond the existing text to explain why their reaction isn't more like "You People? No? Then you slave!"

It's a pity, this could have been an interesting work. Lauria is certainly a resolute, admirable, and likeable person. A story of her investigations in the Greek Empire [and Baktrian Greek, at that] could be a fascinating tale, well out of the tired conventional generic-feudal-European setting. But it looks like this series is going to be just another one of those weary empowerment fantasies that clog used bookstores, the ones with endorsements by some combination of Bradley, McCaffrey, and/or Norton as the greatest work of the era.

of point-of-view characters, from President Featherston himself all the way down to front-line ordinary people. This is advantageous but problematic. The reader is provided with a broad perspective on what is going on, but by having so many viewpoint shifts within a chapter, it is often hard to connect with someone.

Not that connecting with someone is always a good idea. This is not as bad as (say) George R. R. Martin's current series, but point of view characters do suffer and even (*SPOILER ALERT*) die. It looks like it'll only get worse.

Speaking of dying . . . One of Featherston's little projects has to do with defusing the population bomb. About the kindest way to put it is that the Confederate internment camps have graduated from *Einsatzgruppen* to gas vans. How long before they discover the "disinfectant" properties of Cyclone-B?

It's been noted that the focus of the racism from the Freedom Party has had an unusual backlash; by concentrating all the hatred on one group, members of other groups find that they are by contrast not disfavored. (See Fred Pohl's *The Day the Martians Came* (1988) for another example.) Not only is anti-Semitism a non-starter in Featherston's Confederacy, but the Freedom Party encourages Hispanic culture in the Hispanic-majority states. One wonders how that might go over in, say, Texas . . .

Turtledove is to be noted for recognizing a connection to the outside world. A suspension-of-disbelief-damaging feature of Donald Sobel's *For Want of a Nail* was that until the mid-twentieth century the world outside the two nations of North America did not exist, in effect. Here there are effects from the world war that strike home (i.e., British naval raids on the USA's East Coast).

After the successful Confederate strike into Ohio, matters have settled down, and one suspects that there may be a search for a solution in the West. Oh yes, the Saints have begun another rebellion in Utah. A long grinding war is in prospect. Featherston's casual rejection of some wild-assed scheme for tube alloys may not be typical of the alliance, and there's no indication the U.S. is or isn't working on something of the sort. For example.

This is, in spite of the bloodshed and destruction, an example of a road not taken. That is, we have neither a hyper-technological utopia nor a ruined devastation, but a world with problems and advantages.

The pattern in these works has been of a grim overall conclusion, with some personal happinesses (e.g., the couple in the *Worldwar* series), but we'll have to see *How Few Remain* to enjoy whatever joy there may be left in this divided, harsh world when this series is . . . [To Be Continued]

PODKAYNE OF THE ESCHATON

Review by Joseph T Major of

IRON SUNRISE

by Charles Stross

(Ace; 2004; ISBN 0-441-01159-4; \$23.95)

This is not a direct sequel to *Singularity Sky*,

but is set in the same universe. It's also an old fashioned space opera done with cyberpunk technology and procedures.

To explain the spreading of humanity across the spatial spheres, Stross creates a . . . being, outside of space and time (weird), styled the Eschaton, that one day picked up 90% of humanity and scattered them to the stars. Much confusion ensued.

Confusion becomes even more confounded when the far-flung humans develop space travel. Unfortunately, this Eschaton did not bring about an end of conflict. The iron sunrise of the title, for example, is one of those cute little weapon systems that have been developed. It's all very simple, just dump iron into your enemy's star, with a result straight out of "Inconstant Moon" (Larry Niven, 1971).

As a result, we have a chase story. One expects to see short fat bald Englishmen in Black here and there, as investigator Rachel Mansour and fleeing Woman Who Knows Too Much Wednesday Shadowmist navigate through a starscape of mind control, interstellar intrigue, smart technology, and dumb luck.

Perhaps from there being all that mechanical intelligence around, there is a refreshing lack of dumb behavior among the authorities. Yes, this book is in some ways a thriller novel of its era — but it's a science fictional era. John W. Campbell would have been pleased. (And not a conventional thriller, where the authorities are impotent but the lone scorned hero wins the day, either.)

The finale is marked by cruelty, treachery, and valor, not to mention bureaucratic backstabbing. Stross is redeeming the honor of science fiction, as opposed to fantasy with rayguns and spaceships.

A GIFT FROM 4E — Part Three

Review by Joseph T Major of

FORREST JACKERMAN'S WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION

by Forrest J Ackerman

(Aurum Press; 1998;

ISBN 1-85410-573-6; £20.00) and

WORLDS OF TOMORROW:

The Amazing Universe of Science Fiction Art

by Forrest J Ackerman and Brad Linaweaver

(Collectors Press; 2004;

ISBN 1-888054-93-X; \$39.95)

I suppose we have to buy a coffee table now to put these two coffee table books on.

Forrest J Ackerman's World of Science Fiction would be a good book to give to someone who wants to know what this is all about. Particularly if they can identify every character in 2500 anime but have no idea that anything of the sort was done before long ago in like 1984?

Ackerman writes, often from personal experience, of the founders of science fiction and the significant names of its past. And that experience has not always been pleasant, as when he reports, almost sadly, that Harlan Ellison® wishes that he (4SJ) were dead.

It is, as said, on his own level. Thus there is

THE KING OF SANDUSKY, OHIO

Review by Joseph T Major of

SETTLING ACCOUNTS:

RETURN ENGAGEMENT

by Harry Turtledove

(Del Rey; 2004;

ISBN 0-343-45723-4; \$26.95)

Sequel to *How Few Remain*,

American Empire Series,
and *Great War Series*

In his essay "The King of Sandusky, Ohio", P. J. O'Rourke discusses how his grandfather King Barney had defended the kingdom against foes both domestic and foreign, and how he himself had taken up the banner after his father had been mortally wounded at their Buick dealership, fighting the rebels in the White Castle across the street. Reading of how the Confederate barrels had rolled into Sandusky can be as disconcerting as reading the Republican Party Reptile's slightly skewed autobiographical account.

America has come a long way since that order of General Lee's was recovered at the last minute and he was able to pull off a surprise concentration against McClellan. Now, President Jake Featherston (Freedom Party) of the Confederate States of America has led a national revival, and is about to make it international by going for another round of war between the states of North America.

Turtledove uses his customary cross-section

no commentary about slash, Net, infosea, and the like. (There is no entry on William Gibson, for example.) This is a book on the sources, not on the current matter that were obsolete even as the book went to press. (Who today hears of the “Humanists” — the presumed rivals to the “Cyberpunks”?)

One can expect a high level of pictorial information, and as I said, this is not a scholarly book, but a general introduction. For the reader who wants to know what they looked like, and what they were looking at, this is the book, and the author manages to attain a high level of objectivity for all that he was involved.

Worlds of Tomorrow is primarily a collection of covers from SF magazines. Given how *Astounding* has dominated such works, it is expanding to find that there are few covers from there, and many from *Amazing Stories*, *Planet Stories* (Home of the Brass Braed Babe), and other uncommon magazines, not to mention a surprising number of British paperback copies (many by “Vargo Statten”). This was what snagged the young reader, hunky guys and brass braed babes fighting off squirming alien slime!

This is an interesting collection of what was hot (and made fanboys hot) back then.

Our thanks to 4SJ for this kind gift.

THE DECEIVERS

Review by Joseph T Major of

STALIN'S SECRET WAR:

Soviet Counterintelligence Against the Nazis, 1941-1945

by Robert W. Stephan

(University Press of Kansas 2004;

ISBN 0-7006-1279-3; \$35.95)

SMERSH is the official murder organization of the Soviet government. It operates both at home and abroad, and, in 1955, it employed a total of 40,000 men and women. SMERSH is a contraction of ‘Smierť Spionam’, which means ‘Death to Spies’. It is a name used only among its staff and among Soviet officials. No sane member of the public would dream of allowing the word to pass his lips

— *From Russia, With Love*, Ian Fleming, Chapter 4 “The Moguls of Death”

On April 14, 1943, Stalin ordered yet another reorganization of the organs of state security. After the Nazi invasion, the People’s Commissariat of State Security (NKGB) had been subordinated again to the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), under the direction of Comrade Lavrenti P. Beria. Now, the NKGB was established as a separate commissariat again, under the direction still of Comrade Vsevolod N. Merkulov, its director both as the Chief Directorate of State Security and in its former incarnation as a commissariat.

However, the NKVD’s Special Departments, charged with conducting counterespionage and counterintelligence within the Red Army and

Navy, the *Osobye Otdeli* (OO), were also separated from the NKVD and assigned to the People’s Commissariat of Defense (NKO) as its Third Chief Directorate (the GRU, Military Intelligence, was the Fifth), the GUKR (Glavnoe Upravlenie Kontrarazvedki [Chief Directorate of Counterintelligence]). However, this organization was given an additional nickname of sorts that signified its primary task: *Smert’ Shipionam* (Смерть ШПИОНАМ), “Death to Spies”. This was abbreviated, in the way that “Cheka” [the ancestor of the KGB] and “Razvedupr” [the early GRU] were (from *Chrezvychainaia Komissiiia* [“Extraordinary Commission”] and *Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie* [“Reconnaissance Directorate”] respectively), to “Smersh” (СМЕРШ).

Smersh was responsible for the internal security of the military, for (to take one example) arresting artillery officers who in letters referred to the Great Stalin as a “bandit”. Actions against foreign intelligence agents were handled by a unit which at this time was known as the Directorate for Special Tasks. Its director said, “You may think you know me by other names: the Center, the Director, or the Head of SMERSH (the acronym for Death to Spies), names by which I have been misidentified in the West.” [*Special Tasks*, by Pavel A. Sudoplatov and Anatoli P. Sudoplatov with Jerrold L. Schecter and Leona P. Schecter (1995), Page 3]

On May 19, 1946, “Smersh was dissolved and its functions were absorbed by the newly created MGB [Ministry of State Security]” (Page 222) as part of the postwar reorganization. So much for Donovan “Red” Grant, master assassin of SMERSH — but not good enough to beat James Bond, Agent 007, Licensed to Kill!

But whether it be *kontrarazvedki* or counterintelligence, the seeking out and neutralization of hostile agents is a very far-flung matter. For the past thirty years, the stranger-than-truth stories of how allied counterintelligence services put at naught the buffoonish Nazi intelligence services’ efforts at infiltrating spies have been commonplace, from the famous *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939-1945* (1972) to the recent *The Deceivers* (2004). These have shown up the pitiful delusions of the Nazi spymasters as told in, for instance, *Hitler’s Spies and Saboteurs* by Charles Weighton and Günter Peis, based on the diaries of Erwin Lahousen (1958).

But they also worked against the other enemy. *The Labyrinth* by SS-Brigadeführer Walther Schellenberg (1952) describes many actions against the Judeobolshevist Beast, and *My Commando Operations* by SS-Obersturmbannführer und Oberstleutnant der Waffen-SS Otto Skorzeny (1975) adds to these thrilling stories. But how successful were they?

Stephan refers to the Soviet Union under Stalin as a “counterintelligence state”. He cites the startling statistic that the Soviet organs of state security had **22 million** informants (Page 56). As described in this book, over and over again, German agents parachuted into Soviet territory were quickly unmasked and shot or imprisoned. Thus (to take an example outside

the purview of this book), should a U.S. State Department official whom we shall call “ALES” have after the Yalta Conference gone on to Moscow, and there had a meeting with a Soviet personage in a very responsible position, it is virtually impossible that an American agent could have seen him doing so, since far from being overrun with American agents, Moscow was overrun with Soviet informers.

More to the point of this story, Skorzeny and Schellenberg would have been better off knocking back a few in the local *bierstube* mit der boys. The depth of control in that counterintelligence state made it almost pathetically easy to provide the required information, or disinformation, needed to run such a deception.

After describing the nature of the problem and the establishment of the response, Stephan discusses the efforts, telling what those 22 million informants did. All those round-ups of cells of Trotskyist-Bukharinite terrorist wreckers in the pay of foreign intelligence services from the Great Terror turned out to be good practice for when there was a genuine enemy sending agents into Russia. (Cue the *Mission to Moscow* style defense explaining that there was no Russian Fifth Column because of the Great Terror; then read Wilfreid Strik-Strikfeldt’s *Against Stalin and Hitler 1941-1945* (1970) for the consequences thereof.)

Among the special tasks described by Pavel Anatolovich was Operation Monastery. Sudoplatov was responsible for overseeing the operations of a fictitious ring of agents of the *Abwehr*, German intelligence, supposedly operating in the Soviet Union. Stephan describes how the legend of “Max”, the chief of this spurious ring, was built and nurtured in a way similar to the buildup of Juan Pujol García (GARBO to the British, IVAN to the *Abwehr*). Interestingly, one of the people involved in running “Max” was Vil’yam Genrykovich Fisher — William August Fisher, the “Colonel Abel” of fifties fame, who would later run the Rosenbergs and Teddy Hall as a very real secret agent operating in the West.

“Max” also contributed to Operation Berezino. Skorzeny wrote at length about his mighty effort to sustain the brave *Oberstleutnant* Heinrich Scherhorn, commander of a gallant band of Germans trapped behind enemy lines after the Destruction of Army Group Center (which was, it seems, furthered by the misleading information provided by “Max”). Skorzeny movingly describes how brave agents under his command were flown in and parachuted to Scherhorn’s beleaguered remnant.

Essentially, they wanted to believe, and were helped to believe by a good choice of source. Scherhorn was returned to Germany in the late forties; his story did not seem to have surfaced until later.

The Soviets also disrupted, with *agents provocateurs*, a German effort to send even more agents behind their lines. In a fulfillment of their constant fantasies of covert warfare, two Russians were dispatched to the Soviet Union with false identification as Smersh officers, and orders to kill Stalin. Since the real Smersh had

known about their efforts beforehand, the substantial effort the Germans put out on their legend and cover turned out to be in vain.

In a bitter turnabout, the harsh and cruel nature of the Soviet security state's war on its own people turned out to be a deadly effective method of defense against real enemies. The German intelligence effort against the Soviet Union turned out to be as ineffective as that against the Western allies.

Stephan focuses primarily on Soviet sources, which limits the results. For example, for all that he lists Skorzeny's book in his bibliography, he could have done better at comparing the specific agent dispatches Skorzeny cites with the work of the Soviets at tricking and catching them.

Some issues need to be reconsidered in light of the material discussed here. The enlistment of former Foreign Armies East chief Reinhard Gehlen, for example, was justified by his access to intelligence on the Soviets. This work shows how little of that material was worthwhile, or even true. Gehlen had unknowingly written a bad check, which was eagerly accepted. This rewriting of history is far more useful than the paranoid ravings of those who still see Nazis behind every bush.

This work is an addition to the history of the secret war. There may be more of the material that was to be preserved forever to come out of the ex-Soviet archives; there may be things that never come to light. This is a first step.

In response to the Andy Rooney-esque position about the worthlessness of intelligence and counterintelligence, Stephan provides a succinct response:

... Good counterintelligence becomes a force multiplier when used as a strategic weapon, but by itself it does not win wars. **The absence of it, however, can lose them.**

— *Stalin's Secret War*, Page 199
[Emphasis added]

SCOTT'S FORGOTTEN MEN

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE LONGEST WINTER:

The Incredible Survival of Captain Scott's Lost Party

by Katherine Lambert

(Smithsonian Books; 2004;

ISBN 1-58834-195-X; \$24.95)

[Previously *Hell With a Capital H* (2002)]

November 25. *Early morning.* We came in 24 miles with our loads to find the best possible news — Campbell's Party, all well, are at Cape Evans. . .

November 26. *Early morning.* . . All the Northern Party look very fat and fit, and they are most cheerful about the time they have had, and make light of all the anxious days they must have spent and their hard times.

I cannot write all their story . . .

— *The Worst Journey In the World*, Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Page 509

Victor Lindsey Arbuthnot Campbell, "The Wicked Mate", is one of the unsung heroes of Antarctic exploration. Cherry, as you see, gives him only a few lines, and the Owner (Captain Scott) hardly mentions him either. Neither does his other encounter, Captain Amundsen.

Yet his own epic of survival was in its own way as hazardous as any. And he survived, too.

King Edward VII Land, east of the Ross Ice Shelf, was something of a *fata morgana* for British expeditions in the heroic age. Shackleton had intended to base there (hence his infamous postal covers were postmarked "King Edward VII Land" (hence "Rexland")) but the territory was inaccessible, too much ice in the way. Scott's expedition planned to span the Barrier, putting a secondary party there, but again, they couldn't approach for the same reason. The alternative, the newly-formed Bay of Whales, also turned out to have problems.

Thus, the Eastern Party became the Northern Party, and established itself at Cape Adare in Victoria Land, where not so very long ago Carstens Borchgrevink's party had had both the first wintering-over and the first death on the continent. After that wintering-over, on her way south to pick up the first year's returners, the *Terra Nova* brought them southwards, to Evans Coves, about halfway to Ross Island.

That was where the trouble began. The ice was too thick (*Coldest March* anyone?) and the *Terra Nova* could not pick them up on the way back to New Zealand. So Campbell, Dr. Murray Levick the naval surgeon, Raymond Priestley the veteran of Shackleton's expedition, Petty Officer George "Tiny" Abbott, Petty Officer Frank Browning (who owned the cat with the contemporarily offensive name), and Able Seaman Harry Dickason their cook, had to spend a second Antarctic winter under far more improvised conditions.

The only comparison is with Shackleton's party on Elephant Island, and at least Shackleton's men had tools and other material. Campbell had to improvise; they spent the winter in an ice cave that very well could have become their grave.

Campbell, for all that he was a mercantile officer who had been in and out of and in again the Royal Navy, drew the line. Quite literally; the three officers slept on one side of the cave, the three other ranks on the other. But in this separation he introduced a mollifying effect; the officers would take no notice of anything said by the other ranks (and he hoped, vice versa). None of them had any criticism, either. Abbott, Browning, and Dickason all kept diaries, as did Campbell (the only one to be published), Priestley, and Dr. Levick. A well-reported party, to be sure.

With ice too stiff, the Northern Party decided to walk home. And they did, getting all the way to the expedition hut at Cape Evans on Ross Island without loss. Moreover, while they were ill-nourished, scurvy does not seem to have been a problem. They arrived there on November 7, and note Cherry's description of them as "fat and fit"; they recovered from the physical stresses of the wintering quickly.

Lambert reproduces a series of photographs

of the Northern Party; before their departure, at the igloo, and after their return to base. The comparison with the "before and after" pictures of the Worst Journey in the World can be made; but she goes on to say: "The difference between the two sets of photographs and the two kinds of experience is that the one depicts suffering, the other endurance." (Page 209)

The Longest Winter brings to life the story of a grueling and unjustly ignored tale of survival, worthy to stand by *The Worst Journey in the World*, *Endurance* (either Lansing or Alexander), and *Alone* (Byrd).

AN EXPLORING MAN OF MARS

Review by Joseph T Major of

MARS ON EARTH:

The Adventures of Space Pioneers in the High Arctic

by Robert Zubrin

(Penguin; 2003;

ISBN 1-58542-255-X; \$28.95)

. . . Due to the threat of attacks by the great white Apt, it has been necessary to provide the Jasoomians with escorts of armed Okarians. Three Jasoomians in one of their self-propelled vehicles will require one Okarian warrior with radium rifle to watch out for them. . .

. . . They communicate extensively over the Gridley Wave using a signaling method called "Internet". Parhan Gur has had to be disciplined for providing them with pictures of his sisters, which they copied and sent to Jasoom. . .

. . . Their leader complained of an extortion plot by one of the builders of his base, but was appalled when I offered to challenge the man to a duel over the matter. . .

— "Report on the Jasoomian Expedition to Barsoom" by Vad Varo [Ulysses Paxton, Captain (ret.) U.S. Army, —th Infantry]

The Biosphere Two project rather quickly became an object of derision, satirized by everyone from Scott Adams to Pauly Shore. And perhaps justly so. But some sort of test of a self-contained environment will be necessary before a mission to Mars.

Since Robert Zubrin hasn't yet been able to get his Mars project approved, over the opposition of all the other proposers of other space programs, he is at least trying to test what he can test. *Mars on Earth* recounts the often comic, often annoying story of how the Mars Society built test stations in Mars-like areas of Jasoom, er Earth, and had teams carry out practice Martian explorations.

Perhaps not surprisingly, money was a hard starting point. Zubrin describes working with one Internet entrepreneur who wanted to know if they were, like, serious. If they were, like, serious, they'd get him Buzz Aldrin. Aldrin was indeed available — on one particular day. (He has a very full schedule.) But like, dude, the entrepreneur just couldn't take that like time-heavy stuff? One does not gainsay Buzz. The would-be donor ended up sticking to the original

plan, and provided the seed money that generated the funding for the first base, which was built on Devon Island in the Canadian Arctic. Zubrin cites Dr. Cook's unsupported stay there, which was a real accomplishment, and if only he had stuck to that story. . .

And indeed there are a number of rivalries involved, within NASA, within the space community, and whatnot. Zubrin describes how one key participant gradually became less than supportive, shall we say.

Similarly, the dynamics of sponsorship created problems, as when the sponsorship by the Discovery Channel and by the software firm Flashline.com turned out to be at odds. (A web search reveals that Flashline is still in existence. Amazing.)

Building has its own problems and Zubrin tells a tale of improvisation and filling in worthy of John W. Campbell. Once the station was up and running it still had problems. Like the toilet. Actually the toilet problem was a power problem but that's a different issue. Also there was the problem of "breaking simulation", or why they thought it might not be realistic to have a crew doing a simulated EVA geological mission to exit pursued by a bear. Hence, the armed Inuk escort. It's less interesting than Okarians and Apts, but . . .

Subsequent simulations were set in Utah and Norway, and appeared to have worked exceedingly well. The team members turned out to play well with others and there were no disruptions on the order of, say, the second in command who thought he should have been in charge sabotaging the mission out of spite.

Zubrin has some recommendations regarding the composition of a party. He says that groups from one nation seem to work best, though he admits that one of the most successful teams had a German leading five Americans. He also has some recommendations about sex ratios. The teams will be exceedingly busy, he also notes, and could make reference to the Skylab problems. (What will happen if the wife of one explorer has a child by another while they are on Mars? He doesn't say.)

There are also food concerns, and Zubrin sadly dismisses the possibility of raising their own — volume and mass considerations rule that out. Moreover, while vegetarian diets are a possibility, macrobiotic diets (which they tried once) are definitely out, taking too long to prepare and giving everyone gas.

Someone is actually doing something about it, and we should be relieved. The social dynamics of a long isolated mission should be investigated before the mission begins. One point that these experiments has reinforced is the utility of human observation on the spot.

But it is still possible to consider this as a stunt. Having armed Inuit escorts to keep off polar bears is not a compromise of the simulation, but it became all too easy to "break simulation" for other reasons.

More profoundly, there were enough incidents with other workers to raise the possibility that Zubrin was rubbing people the wrong way. His self-image of being put-on and misused by opportunists does make one wonder.

How is the public perception of space flight going to break the childish image it has? All too often, spaceflight proponents listen only to themselves, convince themselves of the utility of the effort, and consider that conclusive. Except for that lemon on their left, who has an entirely different idea, just as self-concludedly comprehensive.

Zubrin is trying to actually do something, as opposed to endless proposals. If it's not quite what it is meant to be, it does put him ahead of most of them out there.

VICTORY OR DEATH

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE BILLY RUFFIAN:

The Bellerophon and the Downfall of Napoleon: The Biography of a Ship of the Line 1782-1836

by David Cordingly

(Bloomsbury Publishing; 2003;
ISBN 1-58234-193-1; \$25.95)

In Abel Gance's movie *Napoléon* (1927), while the Bonaparte family is fleeing Corsica, a junior officer on a British ship of the line sees the little vessel and wants to stop her. The captain says something on the order of, "No, why bother with such an unimportant craft, Nelson?"

Actually, at that time, Horatio Nelson was post-captain in HMS *Agamemnon*. He was perfectly capable of stopping the ship, inviting Mlle. Pauline to his cabin for a personal interview (remind me sometime to tell you the story of how Pauline Bonaparte was told by her gynecologist that she was wearing out), or whatever, had there been such an encounter.

In reality, Artillery Commander Citizen Bonaparte lobbed a few balls in the direction of this *rosbif* ship during the siege of Toulon. Captain Nelson probably swept the shore with his spyglass, he may have seen the little Froggy next to a cannon, but certainly neither noticed the other (Page 61). It wasn't like the time Nelson went to see the Secretary at War and this soldier from India came in . . .

If writers are going to write novels where combat between faster-than-light spaceships amazingly resembles combat between sailing ships, they ought to read books about actual combat between sailing ships. This way they won't be having such battles ending up with one fleet completely destroyed and the other suffering 90%+ casualties, leaving only the flagship with a few survivors and the admiral wounded, again. For that matter, they ought to read real histories and not novels where the two principal characters engage in "as you know" dialogue fit to warm the heart of T. O'Connor Sloane and Uncle Hugo himself.

Such novels wouldn't have one ship participating in the first great combat of the war, the climatic combat of the war, and receiving the personal surrender of the enemy leader, either. Real life, not having to fit the circumstances of fiction, can and does.

Cordingly, author of *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life among the Pirates* (1996), has turned to writing about less

democratic if less criminal types. The history of HMS *Bellerophon* is in many ways typical of the Royal Navy; it was only the incidents that differed. It seems surprising that there would be such a long lead time for the delivery of the ship, which was laid down in 1782 and not commissioned until 1786, but Cordingly explains all the problems and considerations of naval construction of that era.

The ship was styled a "second-rater" which had nothing to do with her quality and everything to do with her armament. This would be a ship that would fight in the line of battle, sending out broadsides at the enemy. This vessel was rated at seventy-four guns, which meant she had a few more — carronades, shorter-barreled guns for closer range, on the upper deck, to go with the seventy four guns on the gun decks.

Fancy classical names appealed to Admiralty officials, who no doubt really wanted to ride Pegasus. But Jack Nastyface and all the other jolly jack tars found such affectations beyond them, and in the spirit of Andy Capp called their ship "Billy Ruffian" — the first soccer hooligan.

Billy Ruffian's first scuffle was in 1794. During that extraordinary voyage of *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les mers* (oh all right, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*) Captain Nemo could proudly show M. Arronax the wreck of that brave ship from his country, *le Vengeur*, which went down with all hands during the Battle off Ushant, they all shouting gloriously "*Vive le Republique!*", but the other side saw it a little differently. In English this battle is called the Glorious First of June, and Admiral Richard, Earl Howe, tried breaking the French line with his ships, including *Bellerophon*. It was a mixed victory, he smashed the fleet but let the convoy go, but John Paul Jones is thought a great hero for the like.

Then enter a little man with one arm. When the boy stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled, they had fled under the gunfire of the Billy Ruffian; at the Battle of the Nile, *Bellerophon* (74 guns) took on *l'Orient* (120 guns) and saw her foe blow up. Horatio Nelson was finally content.

Then came the climax of Lord Nelson's life. At Trafalgar, the sailors of *Bellerophon* were so confident that some wrote on the guns the defiant proclamation,

VICTORY OR DEATH

(Page 188) and were a lot more successful than William Barrett Travis. (They probably would have admired his spirit, though.) The Billy Ruffian was in the thick of the battle, being completely dismantled, losing 27 killed (including the captain and the Marine commander) and 123 wounded.

There's a case of perfect British understatement involving Lieutenant William Cumby, who took command when Captain Cooke was killed, and the Marine commander:

One of the wounded men was Captain Wemyss, the captain of the *Bellerophon's* marines and a good friend

of Cumby. Wemyss had survived the first onslaught of the musket fire from *L'Aigle* and had remained at his post on deck until he was hit in the arm. He was coming up the quarterdeck ladder with blood streaming from his shattered arm when he met Cumby who was trying to avoid speaking to any friends and messmates who were wounded in case his distress at their plight distracted him from carrying out his duty as commanding officer. However he felt it would be unkind not to speak to his friend.

'Wemyss, my good fellow,' he said, 'I'm sorry you've been wounded but I trust you will do well.'

To which Wemyss replied cheerfully, 'It is a mere scratch and I shall have to apologise to you by and by for having left the deck on so trifling occasion.' He was then entering the cabin to have his arm amputated. He later died of his wound . . .

— *The Billy Ruffian*, Pages 198-199

One of the officers who survived was a midshipman named John Franklin. Mr Midshipman Franklin would not be so lucky later on, halfway around the world and in the northern reaches beyond the Hudson's Bay Company lands, but that's another story.

The post-captain who replaced Cumby, Captain Edward Rotheram, did something interesting. Having time on his hands, evidently, he conducted a survey of the crew of the *Bellerophon* — their origin, their appearance, their previous condition of service [what they did before they joined, one way or another, the Navy] (Pages 209-212). There were thirteen blacks among the 387 sailors. About half of them had been seamen in civilian life. There was a lawyer. One can't assume the Billy Ruffians were too out of the ordinary, either. Now this might be the seed for a "Bermuda Triangle" story . . .

After that, *Bellerophon* continued the blockade of the Johnny Crapauds, and helped keep the Jonathans from becoming uppity. Cordingly points out that the other side has rather a different perspective on the War of 1812 (Page 226). Then there came the Hundred Days and their startling climax.

Cordingly describes in some detail the intricate negotiations that led to Napoleon surrendering to Captain Frederick Maitland of the *Bellerophon*. Once he actually got to England he was evidently quite the celebrity, everyone wanting to see him, so those people snatching the diapers in *The Right Stuff* were certainly not original.

But the end of the *Bellerophon* was not a happy one. She was converted into a convict hulk, and Cordingly has quotes from Dickens to back up the grim facts. Finally, in 1836, the hulk, now bearing the callous but not inappropriate name of *Captivity*, was sold and scrapped.

Cordingly goes on to tell the fates of the captains and commanders of the *Bellerophon* as

well as of her most famous passenger. One wishes he had mentioned the subsequent HMS *Bellerophon* (a battleship that fought at Jutland). In this work he has given a picture of life in another world, one that still influences us in reality and in our creations. **Victory or Death.**

VULNERAT OMNES, ULTIMA NECAT

God, this is Sulla.
He was one of Your lesser servants,
Not much as the human scale of things goes.

He was a lot to me, though.
I always wanted a cat.
Mother (look after her, will You?) pointed them out.

There he was, with the other kittens, looking lively.

I took him and off we went.
There wasn't much for the next few years.
He was there when I was.

Big and yellow — he would take most of the bed.

I wasn't always as kind as he deserved.
Even when I held him in front of me, and screamed

"Claw me, tear me!" he didn't.
We had our differences; he got over it.
Someday I will, too.

Lisa took to him, then he took to her.
He even endured all the newcomers.
Earthy things are mortal, even cats.
He wore out.

Could I have that courage when my body fails?
He fought to the end; he pawed away death, but in vain.

Can someone pet him, now and then? He'd like it.
I may not be there.

L. Cornelius Sulla Felix
1984-October 11, 2001

GLOMMING ON

Con Report on ConGlomeration 4
August 6-8, 2004
by Joseph and Lisa Major

When RiverCon was at what is now the Clarion Hotel, the weekend it was held was splendid; temperatures in the eighties, moderate humidity, and no rain. Those who remember the day the temperature was a record 103° and some guy dying for a smoke stopped under the smoke detector will appreciate this.

But this has been a mild summer. I presume it's the result of global warming. And so it was at ConGlomeration IV.

I took the day off from work, which was probably just as well. After dropping Lisa off at the library I had breakfast and went by Office Depot to get half of the last issue reprinted. The other copies had big blank swathes across the first six pages. Then I went to the doctor's to find out what the latest bad news is, went to pick up the mail and then back to Office Depot where I discovered that they hadn't known whether to print the copies single-sided or double-sided. Eventually I got them.

Finally I went by the library, got Lisa, and we ate a late lunch and got cash before going to the con. After registering we went into the Dealer's Room, handing out copies to **Tim Lane and Elizabeth Garrett, Johnny Carruthers, Rod Smith, Bob Roehm, Leigh Kimmel, and Susan Baugh.**

The new Turtledove novel was out and I put it on our communal stack. I also promised Leigh the manuscript which I had printed out and left in the car, at the far end of the hotel. (The antique cars were in. It made for an enchanting sight but a parking problem.)

There were a lot of other old acquaintances there, including several from the NOTA group (but not **Carol Clarke**). Janie was wearing a breathing mask because of her health problems. Linda Wyatt was planning to go to NorEasCon, though we probably won't run into each other at the AAA office again. And so on.

We went to dinner at Longhorn Steakhouse, down the road and next to Borders. On the way we saw a real doozy — that is, a real and lovingly restored Dusenbergs. After returning we spent the rest of the night in the Con Suite, talking to among others **Jack & Susan Young**. The only party that evening was Xerps, which I've found a bit rowdy, and so we went home.

On Saturday morning we ate at Shoney's across the street and then found a slightly better parking spot, as the old car drivers were driving over to the Fairgrounds. One dealer had a number of interesting DVDs for sale and I bought Leone's and Eastwood's *Man With No Name* trilogy (*Per un pugno de dollari* [*A Fistful of Dollars*] (1964), *Per qualche dollaro in più* [*For a Few Dollars More*] (1965), and *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo* [*The Good, the Bad, the Ugly*] (1966)) for under \$20 total. Yo, Jimbo!

Leigh seemed fascinated with my manuscript, which she had seen parts of before, for what it's worth. I got tired of "Nazis Win WWII" stories, so decided to squash the Nazis at the post, so to speak.

Grant McCormick had not been able to make it Friday, so I handed issues to him and **Todd Fluhr** Saturday. Todd's life continues its extraordinary progression . . .

One of the amusing incidents was running into Murray Porath in the con suite, in his satyr outfit. What's Yiddish for "satyr"? I commented about a prominent (self-styled?) Kabalaist and he replied that Madonna was so superficial she ought to call herself not "Esther" but "Polyesther".

Because Lisa and I were leaving Sunday, we settled up at Larry Smith's just before closing time. The total for the five of us (Tim, Elizabeth, Grant, Lisa, and I) came to \$285 — after the 15% discount! Actually Lisa and I were only responsible for about a third of it.

Dinner was at the Imperial Palace Mongolian Barbeque Buffet, with Tim & Elizabeth, the Youngs, and Grant. It was quite pleasant.

The Masquerade was nice but small. No doubt the NorEasCon GoH (oh, all right, Terry Pratchett) would be pleased to know that the Best In Show costume was from one of his

books. One of the musical guests did a *Lord of the Rings* rap, and Filk GoH Tom Smith did some of his own songs during the break.

There were more parties that night and we went to **Xanadu**. Dan Caldwell had the good news that it was the same hotel (the Holiday Inn Express Downtown) but they were charging \$10 less a night! Also, the con will be **April 8-10, 2005** because every weekend in May sees some high school event in Nashville.

We were a little discombobulated when the folks at **Hobbit Hole** offered us drinks first in, so popped out quickly and went to **Rivercon Retirement Party**. Leigh and Larry Ullery told us there that they would be going to Dragon*Con this year — with the hotel prices in Boston I can see why and it makes a great case for Columbus in 2007. It was also Linda's birthday and there was cake.

We had a long way to go in the morning and so left early. But that is another story.

— Joe

Joe drove me to work on Friday and picked me up afterwards. We then went to the bank where I cashed my check and after that went to Arby's for a quick lunch; then we proceeded on to the convention. Our first stop was naturally the dealer's room. Larry Smith's was the first we encountered and so we started our traditional Fosfa stack. I bought a Peter Hamilton book; *Ghost Riders* by Sharyn McCrumb, *Neurolink* by M.M. Buckner, and two Will Shetterly books. I found two John Wayne DVDs, *Red River* and *Rio Grande*, as well as *Harvey* and *Candleshoe*. We then attended opening ceremonies.

Went through the art show but didn't see anything I wanted enough to stand in line Saturday night and we weren't going to be there on Sunday. Then I walked past a booth displaying some very pretty knives. I paused to look at them and note their surprisingly low prices and then I realized that here was art I did not have to wait in line for, art that did not require careful placing needed for fragile prints. On impulse I paid eight dollars for a knife with a blue and silver scabbard. The dealer was very careful to make sure I knew the blade I bought had no historic value and was not a real fighting weapon. I had already guessed that from the fancy red tassels attached to the hilt. I can't imagine that fancy red tassels would be much help in a real fight. Now next time I go to Borders I'll have to see about buying a basic book about this collection I have just started. The state fair flea market is coming up and maybe I can find some interesting pieces there. Meijer's was selling an interesting little knife, a Smith and Wesson with a little horse on the blade. I would not mind owning authentic replicas of historical weapons, but I suspect those would be expensive.

Saturday I attended a panel about skills outside writing which influence authors. Panelists were Michael Williams, M. M. Buckner and Tony Ruggiero. I had earlier encountered Buckner selling her two books, *Neurolink* and *Hyperthought*. I bought *Neurolink* but have not had time to read it yet. It

is somewhere in the car. Both her books are stand-alone hard SF.

Saturday night we went to the Imperial Palace. Afterwards Susan Young and I went on a quick run through Big Lots. For those readers not fortunate enough to have encountered one, these stores are a cross between K-Mart and a thrift store. I acquired a tape of *Trog*, a piece of very old and dark cult SF. Ordinarily I don't buy pre-recorded video tapes but this was something I had wanted to see again for a long time and its price was only a buck. Now if I can just find Cornel Wilde's *Gargoyles* for a similar price.

We shared the hotel with a group of magnificent cars. There was actually a Duesenberg in the parking lot. The car fans seemed like nice people. I had the impression, that like us, they are communities within communities.

When payday comes I will go back to Meijer's and see if they still have the little cutting horse knife. I spent some time last night surfing knife websites. I was surprised at how big and extensive knife fandom is.

— Lisa

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ConGlomeration V will be **August 5-7, 2005**.

PLEASE COME TO BOSTON

Con trip report by Joseph and Lisa Major
NorEasCon 4, the 62nd WorldCon
September 2-6, 2004

As you will recall, on September 7, 2003 the following event eventuated:

Oh, there was one other thing I did while Lisa was stacking books in the hall. I called her over, said, "This is the beginning of our trip to Boston," and poured all my change into the jar.

On Sunday August 22, 2004, we counted the change from said jar and got a little over \$267. Having done so, we went and cleaned out the car, finding several empty pop and water bottles, two paper fans from Breyerfest, a Seabiscuit tote bag, and divers other things (for which read, "trash"). There had been a petty eucatastrophic ending to our trip the day before to the Kentucky State Fair. I thought I had lost my checkbook there, and on Sunday morning went to the fairgrounds at 6:30, inquired at the lost and found, waited until the exhibits opened at nine to ask at the booth where I had last been sure I had had it, and then came home to a day of fretting over identity theft after a night of sleeplessness over that. Then Lisa found the checkbook, not far from the jar.

On Monday, Lisa took the coins to the bank and got bills. Wednesday, we did much of our packing. Lisa had wanted to take all of her socks. In the process of sorting out the socks, I

found I had a lot of socks myself. And now, folks, it's sock it to me time.

Thursday I made hotel reservations, called in the prescription that needed doctor's approval, went to the AAA office and got the TripTik® and the travelers' checks (didn't see Linda Wyatt there this time), and did the final loads of laundry.

Friday I picked up my prescriptions after some inconvenience (the pharmacy did not *quite* have all the Pentasa for a month, but it had all I needed) we went to Feeding Frenzy, then gassed up, bought soda for the morning, and did most of the loading.

Saturday, August 28, 2004
Louisville — Youngstown, OH

Trouble sleeping, so I got up early and did most of the final packing. Lisa got her shower and dressed and then we were off.

Not much happened and we got to the Quality Inn in Youngstown without incident; it was right off the interstate. They were hosting a family reunion.

We went into town to look for the Borders' and did some shopping, followed by dinner at Outback Steakhouse and one last look for DVDs at Best Buy. All these were, as it happened, in the Eastwood Center which is, as the respected commentator Dave Barry would say, "big."

Back to the hotel and Lisa called her aunt Delta, with whom we stay when we go to Hopkinsville. She was fine.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 420

Books read: *Dark Age Ahead* by Jane Jacobs

Sunday, August 29, 2004
Youngstown — Middletown, NY

Up and at 'em and after loading the car we happened to glance at the Continental breakfast the Quality Inn offered. More than adequate, and so we set off.

The Hostigi constabulary was not keeping people from leaving the Princedom, or even entering it, so we got in and did some shopping at Dollar General, then walked down towards the river and got a look at Tallestrand Park. We had intended to eat there, so after moving the car we had lunch at Schnitzels Tavern, then Lisa took some pictures in the park while I called Tim and let him know where we were. Dralm eternally bless the cellular telephone. After which, we having a schedule to keep, we left.

Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, of course. Where did you think we were? Or technically, which time-line, the area being (in other time-lines) the location of Hostigos City (see H. Beam Piper's *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*). I thought Bellefonte "felt" rather like Cadiz, Kentucky.

One of the final phases of our trip was not marked by any fear that we would be press-ganged by Mayor Lutz's gangsters, assailed and robbed in the Nixonville, or kicked into orbit by a rising spindizzy field. In fact we went through Scranton (setting of the first few chapters of James Blish's *A Life for the Stars*) without incident.

Got to Middletown, checked in at the Super

8 that in spite of having the lowest rate I could find was still horribly expensive, and went to eat at the American Café across the road and check out the Best Buy nearby.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 402

Books read: *The Iraq War* by Sir John Keegan

Monday, August 30, 2004

Middletown — Goshen, NY — Schenectady, NY

Breakfasted at an almost empty Friendly Ice Cream down the road, then after a short drive arrived at a converted stable across the street from a Masonic Lodge.

Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame

We got to the harness museum a little before it opened. We saw the grave of the great Niatross. In front of the museum there were bricks with the names of horses and people. I was somewhat disappointed at not seeing the names of Greyhound, Rosalind or Ben White. For those who have never read Marguerite Henry's *Born to Trot*, Rosalind is one of two horses featured in the book, the other being legendary sire Rysdyk's Hambletonian. Greyhound was a fabulous gray Standardbred which raced at the same time as Rosalind. In fact, they together set a world record for tandem harness. I did find the name of Stanley Dancer and the name of Rambling Willie, whose grave is to be found at the Horse Park.

A few minutes later it was ten and a young guide opened the doors to admit we two and an older woman and a young boy who had apparently talked her into coming. He reminded me of myself as a child when I sat at the neighbor's knee and we watched the Thoroughbreds run. We went first to see a movie. The movie showed Standardbreds as having speed with something of the elegance of the Saddlebred in their gaits or at least the trotters did.

We then swiftly cruised the gift shop where a playing video made mention of a Standardbred named Cigar. It turned out he had been in the Hambletonian last year. The Hambletonian is the Standardbred version of the Kentucky Derby.

There were many and varied exhibits. We learned that a famed driver named Delvin Miller drove his last race at 83. Moni Maker, a Standardbred filly, has the honor of being the world's leading money-winning female horse.

This museum had the most helpful and enthusiastic staff I ever remember finding at any museum. They were almost frightfully enthusiastic about answering questions and finding information we asked for. Of course, part of it might have been that it was Monday. There was a computer featuring pedigree software called Tesio Power (Tesio bred the great champions Nearco and Ribot).

One fun exhibit allowed visitors to actually climb onto a sulky behind a life-size model of a horse. Another even more fun thing was a simulator where you got a taste of what it was

like to drive in a real harness race.

After seeing all the exhibits we went outside and photographed the stump of the tree under which Messenger, the Thoroughbred stallion to whom all Standardbreds trace back, grazed. There were some horses out on the track and so we got to watch them work out.

We walked along on the shed row and looked at some of the horses in their stalls. Two of them came to the doors in search of attention. I was really tempted to disobey the sign forbidding any petting and feeding of the horses but then I remembered Wild-Eyed and Wicked and decided it would be better not to teach these horses that strangers were their friends.

This museum appears to be one of horsedom's best kept secrets. If you have any interest in all in horses and you are anywhere close to Goshen, this museum is well worth seeing, especially if you have horse-crazy kids.

— Lisa

After lunch in another Friendly's we drove up to Schenectady. Dinner was at a place called Castelo's, which was the other side of a little park from the hotel. After that we walked around and found that there was the Catholic cathedral, the Schenectady Museum, and St. George Greek Orthodox Church nearby.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 139

Books read: *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* by Thomas Cahill
Whippoorwill by Sharon Sala
The Da Vinci Deception by Erwin W. Lutzer
The Stars Dispose by Michaela Roessner

Tuesday, August 31, 2004

Schenectady — Saratoga Springs, NY — Amherst, MA

The continental breakfast at the Days Inn was fine (and the towel racks sturdy), so after a swing by the church (it was not open) we pressed on to Saratoga Springs. We shopped at the Borders downtown and then went to our main destination:

National Museum of Racing

This does have the Racing Hall of Fame. Aside from that, it's about on a par with the International Museum of the Horse in Lexington. The "aside from that" did make it worth going to, and those interested in horses could cross the street and go to Saratoga Racetrack.

Speaking of Saratoga, Lisa wanted to see a Revolutionary War site, and as one might guess, the battlefield of Saratoga is nearby. What it illuminates is that if the British had wanted to win the American Revolutionary War (there was a great deal of dissent there) they would have been better advised to employ Montgomery's methods instead of pulling off those trickly, multiple-column converging-advance strategies such as brought Yamamoto victory at Midway (Right!!!).

After leaving the battlefield we drove down

along the Hudson and then got on the interstate to my first cousin Nancy Clifford's. Nancy and her husband Obie (Orren Benjamin, hence O.B.) welcomed us, and their daughter, Linda, son-in-law, Bill Hadley, and grandchildren Meredith, Matthew, and Andrew. It turns out Bill likes this stuff and we gave him a copy of V. III #4.

We talked until late. It turns out the Cliffords are Red Sox fans.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 170

Wednesday, September 1, 2004

Amherst — Longmeadow, MA

Nancy and Obie insisted that we see Historic Deerfield. A fellow named Henry Flynt had become interested in recreating history, and he bought up the old houses there and had them restored.

In 1704, there had been a notorious raid there by the local Indians with aid from the French; about a hundred survivors had been driven up to Canada and some of those who did not die along the way were adopted into the various tribes. All in all it was an example of the clash of civilizations.

Unfortunately the staff has decided to adopt a multicultural approach, so they are rewriting the old memorial stones to drop references to "savages" and talk about how the Native Americans had been in the area for nearly ten thousand years. Similarly, they derided the historic pageants put on by the locals in the nineteen-teens for their racist and ethnocentric attitudes to colonization, Native Americans, and the like.

That these attitudes are likely to appear even worse to the next generation doesn't seem to have occurred to them. Try not to let this maudlin editorializing obstruct your observations of colonial life and the costs of the conflict of civilizations.

We were driven back to the Cliffords', made our goodbyes, and drove down I-91 to meet my other first cousin, Nancy's sister Ellie Tyson, who lives with her husband, a retired professor, in Longmeadow. They made us very welcome. It turns out the Tysons are Red Sox fans.

Ellie's father-in-law was quite a tinkerer, Ellie and Ty said. He had several autographed books by Asimov. Ellie's and Ty's son Matt is getting married, and we congratulated or condoled him.

The last time I saw Ellie, my father had just turned fifty. This year, I turn fifty.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 31

Thursday, September 2, 2004

Longmeadow — Boston, MA

We left the Tysons' after a nice breakfast and drove through Longmeadow (which in its history spares the reader the tears and flappedoodle about white-skin privilege) and took the Massachusetts Turnpike to Boston. Fortunately the complex was right next to the turnpike and we were able to get there without any problem.

As opposed to what happened next. The

clerk said our room was not ready, try again about two. At two we had another appointment. We went over to the convention center and registered, encountering Khen Moore on the way out.

After some preliminary search of the Dealers' Room we went to the Fanzine Lounge, where we found **John Hertz**, who wanted a favor (something about someone to sit there during **Opening Ceremonies**), and **Roger & Pat Sims**, who needed a favor (something about a second hurricane). **Mike Resnick** wanted to take issue with Lisa about horses; **Carol** was there, too. **Alexis & Lee Gilliland** were on hand when the starting line dropped and the pack broke from the starter gate into the Dealers' Room. Various others came by and we had **Murray Moore** and **Bob Devney** join us. **Dainis Bisenieks** discussed current events. But that had to end a little early as I had a panel at two:

Building a Better Fanzine

Guy H. Lillian III, Nicki Lynch, Joseph T Major, Steven H Silver (M), Geri Sullivan

For which read *Challenger*, *Mimosa*, *Alexiad*, *Argentus*, and *Idea*. We thrashed around several versions of the idea that what a fanzine needed was good writing, both the contributors and the loccers. **Guy** pointed out one shining example of the latter, **Milt Stevens**, sitting in on a depressingly small audience.

The would-be faned could go fancy, as with *Challenger*, or plain, as you see. **Guy** deplored the decline and fall of crudzines; everyone had to start somewhere!

Next came layout, which included art. **Geri** confessed that her personal life had become a trifle complicated of late but that she would have a new *Idea* soon. I add that *Idea* did well in that department.

As I said, there were depressingly few people there, a pattern which persisted in all the fan panels I went to. No one came up and asked for a copy, or exclaimed "Gosh-wow-oh-boy-oh-boy! I wanna do that too!"

Back at the hotel we got in a ridiculously long line that soon became even more ridiculous. After most of an hour, during which **Guy** and **Rosy** tried to help me with the auto check-in, which didn't work, I got to the head of the line and found out what the problem was: I had requested a non-smoking room with two double beds, and they had none — so I compromised on a king-sized bed, we rushed the stuff upstairs, then ran off to dinner with **Bob**, **Guy & Rosy**, and **Murray** at **Legal Seafoods**.

A splendid time was had by all, **Guy** finally getting his **LOBSTER!**, and we had a good conversation too. He had his part and so did we at the . . .

First Night

This was set in the concourse, where all the exhibits, the Fanzine Lounge, the Internet Lounge (the wireless connection did **NOT** make up for the shortage of computers), and the like were placed.

In the background we heard the trial of Terry Pratchett. We ourselves did our contribution to the First Night One-Shot. It was quite a crowded spectacle, with entertainers and other fun types. Sorry to say, we seem to have missed "**Fannish Eye for the Mundane Guy**" so can't tell **Johnny Carruthers** how well they realized his idea.

Fred Lerner came by and **Guy** recommended his buddy **Hank Reinhardt**. We kept on running across **Allen Steele**

Afterwards we hit parties, beginning with **Cincinnati Fantasy Group**, then on to the various **WorldCon** bids; **Columbus 2007/Nippon 2007** (in the same room), **Torcon**, and **Texas**. By then we were tired from the long drive and called it a night.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 102

Books read: *CIA SpyMaster* by Clarence Ashley
The Lost Land by Edison Marshall

Friday, September 3, 2004 Boston

We had breakfast at the Au Bon Pain in the mall and then after our morning's visit to the Dealers Room went to:

They Gave It a Hugo: What on Earth Were They Thinking?

Justin Ackroyd, Moshe Feder, Andrew Porter (M), Robert Silverberg

This only mentioned *They'd Rather Be Right* and soon got into reading a listing of titles from **Advent's** book of award listings. Nobody went much into why, but **AgBob** did correct one idea I had had about the congeniality of **Clifton** and **Riley**. (They weren't very congenial.)

Fandom in the Fifties

Juanita Coulson, David A. Kyle, Hank Reinhardt, Roger Sims (M)

The recounting of those wonderful days when you could know everyone at a **Worldcon**, there were maybe three other cons in the US, and no one watched a single Japanese movie. The panel had two of the big players of that era, one who had been chairman of the **NewYorCon** and one who had hoisted the most famous room party in fannish history. I think there were fewer people there at the panel than were in **Room 770**, but **Roger** can check on that.

I think I have **Dave Kyle's** address down right now. If thish comes back . . .

Kennedy Survives Dallas — Then What?

Mitchell Freedman, Joseph T Major, Mike Resnick, Shane Tourtellote (M)

Somewhat to my surprise, **Freedman** was not the worshiper that a reading (my reading anyhow) of *A Disturbance of Fate* made him out to be. He and **Resnick** were prime talkers, which was fine as far as it went for their knowledge of the subject, but . . . We pretty much dismissed the **Oliver Stone** theory and indeed no one credited any assassination conspiracy theory.

There was a consensus that **JFK** would probably have stayed the course in **Vietnam**, asking the armed forces to bear any burden, pay any price; also that he would not have had the success that **Johnson** had with civil rights. Moreover, his health was a serious consideration, but his extravagant sexual habits less so.

The Civil War and SF

Duncan W. Allen, Teresa Nielsen-Hayden, Harry Turtledove, Toni Weisskopf, Peter Weston

And no, **Peter** didn't ask "Which side was **Massachusetts** on in the Civil War? . . . Cavalier or Roundhead?" The Late Unpleasantness was on the crux of the shift to modernity, it showing many of the first signs of technology applied to conflict. This was why **SF** writers found it such fun to play with, albeit introducing *verkrampte* Boers with **Moscow** Typewriters is perhaps a bit extreme. (Oddly enough, although the First Founding Father of **SF** **Sir George Chesney** — **Mary Shelley** was the Founding **Mother** — had written *The Battle of Dorking* on account of the **Franco-Prussian War** showing the signs of technology applied to conflict, nobody mentioned it.)

This was about the time that **Mike Glycer** gave me the **Herbevangelist** ribbon for my con badge. Only one other person I met during the con knew the significance. Everyone else who asked me what that meant I told "You want I should bop you with my lollipop?" (I used to read **Herbie** comic books, and that was his tagline; he became a **Fannish Ghod**.)

We shared an elevator with **Robert Sheckley** and I mentioned my brother having given me a copy of *Journey Beyond Tomorrow* for Christmas one year. (That was in the same package with **W. Watts Biggers's** *The Man Inside*.)

Fannish Foxfire

Guy H. Lillian III, Joe D. Siclari (M), Joel Zakem

Joel said he had been recruited because he knew how to make 'shine. Can't pub your ish without swill. The idea was now that civilization as we know it has come to an end, how to pub one's ish? This turned into a discussion of how they used to publish in **pe Olde Dayes**, **Guy** describing the arcane art of slipsheeting with a moving familiarity. It all was very reminiscent of **Ian Watson's** "The World Science Fiction Convention of 2080" (1980).

Instead of the **Heinlein Society** dinner, we went to the food court, which was a lot less than \$150 for the two of us. Then it was time for the

Retro Hugos

Best Novel

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Best Novella

"A Case of Conscience" by James Blish

Best Novelette

"Earthman, Come Home" by James Blish

Best Short Story

"The Nine Billion Names"

Best Related of God” by Sir Arthur C. Clarke
Conquest of the Moon by Wernher von Braun, Fred L. Whipple & Willy Ley
Best Pro Editor John W. Campbell, Jr.
Best Pro Artist Chesley Bonestell
BDP Short Form *The War of the Worlds*
Best Fanzine *Slant*
Best Fan Writer Bob Tucker

Congratulations to **Bob**.

The Blish work, with a second section set on Earth, won the Hugo in 1960. This just might make the choice seem a little dubious.

They didn't identify most of the accepters at the time. Blish's son accepted his awards, Bradbury's editor did so for his, and Pat Molloy of Huntsville and NASA did so for *Conquest of the Moon*.

The stage tried to evoke that fifties era in its decor. One of the viewscreens was black and white, perhaps a further effort in that direction. “Beaver, don't you want to watch *Captain Video?*” Les Cole (chairman of the SFCon, the one that did not present these Hugos at the time) was not there; I haven't heard that he died. If there had been a fire people would have been able to get out of the room (cf. Torcon's hall's problems in that regard).

In between sections of the awards, Fan GoH Peter Weston interviewed the other GoH — Jack Speer, Phil “William Tenn” Klass, and Terry Pratchett — and then Ptery interviewed him. Perhaps interviewing is not quite the right word, since Ptery humiliatingly begged Peter for just one of his surplus Hugo rockets, to which Peter replied “I have Hugos. You have lots of money. We can come together.”

These are the top ten novels that did *not* make the finals list for the Retro Hugos: *Against the Fall of Night* by Sir Arthur C. Clarke; *Bring the Jubilee* by Ward Moore, *The Kraken Wakes* by “John Wyndham”, *Starman Jones* by Robert A. Heinlein, *The Silver Chair* by C. S. Lewis, *Conjure Wife* by Fritz Leiber, “If This Goes On —” by Robert A. Heinlein, *The Space Merchants* by Frederik Pohl & Cyril M. Kornbluth, *Children of the Atom* by Wilmar Shiras, and *West of the Sun* by Edgar Pangborn. The comparison is almost embarrassing.

Slant did not come in ahead of *Science Fiction Times* in the initial balloting. Tucker and Willis were tied in the initial balloting. There's a lesson here, but what it is I have no idea. (For what it's worth, **Art Widner** got three nominations and **Earl Kemp** two, while Harlan Ellison® got nine.)

And so to bed.

Books read: *The Longest Winter* by Katherine Lambert

**Saturday, September 4, 2004
 Boston**

The Green Room had tea, Earl Grey, hot, and I learned why Picard runs through artificial hearts so quickly. It is a good picker-upper in the morning, I will say. Eve Ackerman, an old acquaintance, was running the place, and she

said that she too had fallen out of touch with Chuck Lipsig. Pity.

Fannish Rivalry?
Chris Barkley, Tom Galloway, Daniel Kimmel, Bey King

The question was whether all the different subfandoms were overwhelming the original. Since all of them began by people who were “mainstream” fans (whatever that is) and also liked the other thing, but brought in scads of people who liked the other thing and didn't care for mainstream fandom, that was the problem. The flood that washed out Disclave, for example. They didn't have much of an answer.

If Rome Never Fell . . .

Esthner Friesner, Mark L. Olson (M), Susan Shwartz, Robert Silverberg, Harry Turtledove

At least no one mentioned Kirk Mitchell (*Procurator*). However, no one mentioned the problems that led to Rome falling either, though AgBob did mention his book *Roma Eterna* a few times (which doesn't so much answer those problems as elide them).

Sidewise Awards

Short Form “O One” by Chris Roberson
Long Form *Collaborator* by Murray Davies

Another Nazis-win novel. It tells the story of a British ex-soldier dealing with the qualms of being caught between the Resistance and the occupiers. Never mind the impossibility of *Fall Seelöwe*, if it would be possible to merely change the names and make this a novel about a French ex-soldier in occupied France, what is the point of making it AH?

Evelyn Leeper gave me a hint about where to send the novel I am working on about what happened when Snoopy finally tripped up the Red Baron.

Tonight we had our other fanzine dinner. After floundering around the mall, losing **Taras Wolansky** in the process, finding that the Cheesecake Factory was crammed full, we ended up eating in the Marché Mövenpick. Present were David Herrington, **George Price**, **Martin Morse Wooster**, Murray Moore, and us.

And then on to the . . .

Hugos

Hot off the presses...
 and the Hugo winners are...



Best Novel

Paladin of Souls by Lois McMaster Bujold

Best Novella

“The Cookie Monster” by Vernor Vinge

Best Novelette

“Legions in Time” by

Best Short Story Michael Swanwick
 “A Study in Emerald” by Neil Gaiman

Best Related

The Chesley Awards for Science Fiction and Fantasy Art by John Grant, Elizabeth L. Humphrey, and Pamela D. Scoville

Best Pro Editor

(The Dozois Award)

Best Pro Artist

BDP Long Form

Bob Eggleton
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

BDP Short Form

Gollum's Acceptance Speech at the 2003 MTV Movie Awards

Best Semi-Prozine

Locus

Best Fanzine

Best Fan Writer

(The Langford Award)

Best Fan Artist

Campbell Award

Special Award

David Langford

Frank Wu

Jay Lake

Erwin S. “Filthy Pierre”

Strauss

Big Heart Award

First Fandom Award

Seiun Awards

Trans. Long Form

Trans. Short Form

Erwin S. “Filthy Pierre” Strauss

Robert Peterson, William Hamling, Edgar Rice Burroughs

Heaven's Reach by David Brin

“Hell Is the Absence of God” by Ted Chiang

Frank Wu won in a blowout (as did *LotR:RotK*). On the other hand, Cheryl Morgan actually gave the Langford a run for his money. In a notorious moment the person running the screens jumped the gun and flashed the slide showing that *Emerald City* had won the Best Fanzine Hugo just as the presenters finished reading the list. *Paladin of Souls* was the only Best Novel nominee that was on line. With the success of *EmCit*, that indicates something.

The Business Meeting passed the cutback to two years lead time. This change seems to be enthusiastically supported by almost all the con chairs who had had to bid under the three years lead time rule.

And so to bed.

Books read: *Wellington's Rifles* by Mark Urban
Caesar's Column by Ignatius Donnelly

**Sunday, September 5, 2004
 Boston**

The Age of Fighting Sail Isn't Over: It's Moved to SF

John G. Hemry, Jim Mann (M), Susan Shwartz, Walter Jon Williams

As you know, they gushed with praise for Richard Russ. A more relevant comparison for space fighting might well be submarine battles,

which someone mentioned, but no one mentioned Captain Edward Beach, Harry Homewood, Lothar Buchheim, or even Douglas Reeman (who wrote *His Majesty's U-Boat*, a somewhat more realistic story about a captured German vessel).

Present at the Creation

David A. Kyle, Frederik Pohl, Jack Speer (M)

Here were the legends again, and again there was a distressingly small attendance. This time it was about the legendary thirties. Indeed, Jack properly belongs to eofandom, those amazing, astounding early days of thrilling wonder before even the Science Fiction League. Fred recounted his struggles with Member Number One of the SFL, the organizer of its Chapter One, who gaffiated pretty quickly after the Futurians-to-be got through with him..

After the panel, I got to talk to Fred Pohl, and gave him a copy of *Alexiad*. I asked, and he hadn't met Teddy Hall (later Agent MLAD) during their YCL days.

Heinlein's Juveniles

Solomon Davidoff, Joseph T Major, Tamora Pierce

The assigned moderator quit to work on the Kerry-Edwards campaign. We extolled the virtues of various works in detail, discussed why they were still attractive to kids whose grandparents weren't even born when they were written, and the like.

I made a comment about how in spite of some of her more egregious blunders, Heinlein's intellectual jousting with Miss Dalglish sharpened his work. Later I discovered that the President of the Heinlein Society was present, and his heart bled that anyone would have the temerity to take blue pencil to the Divine Robert's words. He thinks *I Will Fear No Evil* is a masterpiece. What can one say?

It was interesting watching Tamora Pierce autograph a book for a young reader. There are literate kids out there after all. Maybe I'll pick up a book by her and see what I think of her writing.

— Lisa

Fandom's Bad Ideas: Remembering the Best of the Worst

Jack L. Chalker, Joe D. Siclari (M), Jack Speer

Which was worth going to for Chalker's story of the disaster of the BayCon Masquerade. The director had a budget of \$1000 and had hired three rock bands, a light-show, and bought \$100 worth of incense. Cheap incense. Can you say "semi-trailer load"? He had also forgotten such mundane matters as setting up a stage. They improvised with dealers' tables and duct tape. Then, when the room was full, they started passing out the incense. Did I mention that the hotel did not have air conditioning, there was a riot going on outside, and the temperature was over 100°?

Don't forget Mr. Psycho, Robert Bloch,

lighting a cigarette and asking what should be done with the bodies.

— Lisa

Jack never did get to the bit about the three bands.

Someone had put a sign on a door which said that the door was not a door. Naturally this drew many comments speculating about what the door that was not a door really was. They quoted Clinton, Maigritte, Heinlein, Beckett, and Tolkien, which last was the funniest.

— Lisa

At the Heinlein Society Suite that evening, Bill Patterson read from his forthcoming biography of Heinlein. Heinlein threw away his chance at a Rhodes Scholarship in a fit of absent-mindedness, marrying a woman who wouldn't leave Missouri. And then he went to New York and made up for his wife's being in Mizzoura.

Bill had access to Heinlein's letters in order to write the book. I guess it didn't matter once he had passed on.

Uh... at least *try* to be diplomatic



At CFG that evening there was a rumor, speedily confirmed by ballot counter Dick Spelman:

WorldCon 2007 Yokohama

Thirtieth day of the Eighth Month to Third Day of the Ninth Month of the Nineteenth Year of the Heisei Era (August 30-September 3, 2007 in gaijin)

Author GoH: Sakyo Komatsu
David Brin

Artist GoH: Yoshitaka Amano
Michael Whelan

Fan GoH: Takumi Shibano

Supporting Membership ¥4500 or \$40
Attending Membership ¥17,000 or \$160

I was only joking about the ¥25,000 per head per night (double occupancy) capsule hotels. But not by much, it seems.

The only NASFiC bid at the time was St. Louis. Which evidently plans to hold it in conjunction with their Archon — on the first weekend in October. That's homeowners insurance bill time for us . . .

And so to bed.

Books read: *The Island Where Time Stands Still* by Dennis Wheatley
Primary Target by Joe Weber

Monday, September 6, 2004

Boston

Alternate Holocausts

Michael A. Burstein (M), Evelyn Leeper, Susan Schwartz

This is not what one would call the ideal topic for a panel, since it is either too broad (any extermination of Jews, all the way back to the Crusades) or too grim. And it opens up a possibility of some denier breaking in. For the moment the latter was less likely, due to the demise of Samuel E. Konkin III, but . . .

I was going to raise the point about Stalin's planned "resettlement in the East" but time ran out. The latter would have had a certain *effect* on progressives.

Are Fans Still Slans?

Jack Speer, Edie Stern (M), Erwin S. Strauss

After quickly answering "no", the panel went on to discuss the problems of Degler, the meaning of "slan" and the like. Depressingly, this continued the pattern of low attendance of fanzine and fanhistorical items, with only five people in the audience.

In between we collected our books from Larry Smith: \$220 for the two of us, and that includes the copy of *PITFICS* that I had to finally get. Think of a fanzine for pros to write like fans (act like them, too) and you have *PITFICS* ("Proceedings of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies or ". . . of Twenty-first . . .") put out by Theodore Cogswell, Brigadier-General (ret.) U.S. Podiatric Corps. Reading this I became quite furious at their not having included me. I mean, I was eight years old when Ted paused the ish, I could understand those things.

For Us, the Living and the Re-Evaluation of Heinlein's Career

Bill Patterson, Robert James

After this one I ran into the Dealers' Room and said to **Darrell Schweitzer**, "I have just been in a room with people who think that *I Will Fear No Evil* is a masterpiece and that *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* is a great work of literature." He tried to reassure me. He also tried to sell me something.

Now I've always said that Heinlein had the same basic themes throughout his career; he learned to express them with more variety, subtlety, and energy as he got more experience. And I'm not alone; look for an essay titled "Reading Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei Panshin for more on this. But no, the Received Wisdom is that Panshin imposed this concept of youth-maturity-senescence on Heinlein's career, but in reality he started off perfect and constantly improved, reaching the ultimate with *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*.

These opinions did not inspire confidence in the expresser's judgment. Otherwise, it was interesting to learn about the social context that the book came from.

Allegedly, they said, John W. Campbell and **Forrest J Ackerman** had issued proclamations of gloom and doom over Heinlein's emerging into the slicks. Oddly enough, *Forrest J*

Ackerman's World of Science Fiction describes this transition as "bursting into the slicks". Moreover, 4SJ was at the con himself and could have been questioned. Why interrupt a good theory with inconvenient fact?

Closing Ceremonies

A grand and glorious presentation with drum and bugle corps, bagpipe band, lots of thanks and best wishes, and fond but overstated hopes that next syne ivery wan wad be gang a' Glesga. Wisst!

If we could have afforded it, the bagpipe band would have sold me on going to Glasgow. I could always try to see if there were any members of the Bridges clan there and then they and we could both have bad cases of culture shock.

— Lisa

After the ceremony was done, we finally got to the Cheesecake Factory, which was all right. We dined with Dave.

After dinner Lisa and I decided to take in the Athletic Club at the hotel, which had a hot tub and a pool. The former was wonderfully relaxing and the latter quite enjoyable.

As we had been coming back from dinner Mike Resnick said we were to come to his party. So we went and swapped horse stories, con stories, and other nonsense. After a while it was time to go to the formal:

Dead Dog

Which was where we finally got the copies of the First Night One-shot. 4SJ was there, but what with all the conversation and his hearing aid there wasn't much more to say than "Hi." I had a long and interesting talk with **Donald Kingsbury** and Taras, about among other things the atom-bomb spies (see above with Pohl). But all good things must end.

And so to bed.

Books read: *A Personal Devil* by Roberta Gellis
The Rough Riders by Theodore Roosevelt
Death and Thraxas by Martin Scott

Tuesday, September 7, 2004

Boston — Elmont, NY — Mt. Laurel, NJ

All in all it was a well run con and I would certainly feel confident in voting for any future Boston bid run by this bunch. Checked out of the hotel, managed to get the \$40 dollar reduction for the post-con (and pre-con, too, not that it mattered) days they had offered, and set off. They didn't mention that parking was rather high.

We came down the coastal road and I stopped to buy a Powerball ticket in Connecticut. The prize was up to \$54,000,000 which ought to enable us to even take Elizabeth to Yokohama Heisei 19.

Crossing into New York City was an adventure in itself. But at first perhaps not, and we could use the wide-spread results of Robert Moses's destruction of neighborhoods (i.e., the

Belt Parkway through Queens and Brooklyn) to get to . . .

Belmont Park Racetrack

. . . which was closed! No point in hanging around, so we went on, passing Aqueduct Race Track, which is right by the parkway. After some maneuvering, we managed to get there and it was closed.

This was a pretty big disappointment to me, knowing I would not get another chance for years to see Belmont

— Lisa

We even survived to get to the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and across first Staten Island and then most of New Jersey, where after finding out that if we couldn't get to the Red Roof Inn right away it was almost impossible to do so, called our next day's appointments, then checked in with Elizabeth about the cats.

Fortunately there was a non-toll road almost paralleling the New Jersey Turnpike, so we were able to eat at Steak & Ale, and then go to Borders. Or try to, as it seems every road in that part of Joisey has a barrier between the lanes and no left turns. We got where we were going in the end but after great stress.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 373

Books read: *Kindling* by Mick Farren
The Gray Prince by Jack Vance

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Mt. Laurel — Philadelphia, PA — Glen Burnie, MD

Got up in the morning, walked to the Bob Evans in front of the place for breakfast, and then went into town. We parked at Penn's Landing just before the rain broke out. Scampering through the downpour, we went to the museum, which has many interesting displays. Like an exhibit of a few memorabilia of passengers (not all survivors) of the *Titanic*. Outside there was a ship that floated:

USS Olympia

I am not made for the Great White Fleet. I nearly scraped my head on bulkheads, piping, etc. a number of times. Did see one astonishing display item: an Ark and Torah scroll given to the ship. I got a picture of the USS *New Jersey* from one of the gunports on the *Olympia*.

Then we drove through town (I'm told that navigating in Philadelphia is easy, thanks to the layout of the four main streets) to my cousin Howie Maisenhelder's. His wife Linda and mother Mary Douglas were there, as was their cousin Elizabeth and her husband. We had a long time talking, so long that it became impossible for us to go to Pimlico.

So we headed for our night's destination, the happy home of my cousin Leonard Lackey. Leonard and his wife Julie welcomed us with open arms and took us to that café with the diverse menu where we'd eaten in 2001.

Spent the evening catching up on family ties and setting up Leonard's laptop computer, until he began coughing terribly. Which with the lateness of the hour suggested we had better call

it a night.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 164

Thursday, September 9, 2004

Glen Burnie — Woodbridge, VA — Hagerstown, MD

Leonard was feeling better in the morning and showed us the way to the best route to Washington. Traffic wasn't so bad, but I managed to miss the first turn-off on the Prince William Parkway and spent half an hour trying to find the Donovans. We stay with Katherine Donovan's sister Martha Cassidy in Lexington, and wanted to take the opportunity to meet them. Lisa fell in love with Jim when he confessed to having written for *The Blood-Horse*. They served us lunch and I discovered I do like avocado, with lemon juice.

But they had appointments and so did we, and struggling through difficult traffic — sensible people, trying to escape Washington, D.C., we got to Hagerstown. Ate at a Texas Roadhouse (familiar territory) and went shopping at Best Buy, Borders, and Wal-Mart, all of which were conveniently in the same shopping center, and all of the preceding being on the same road as the Days Inn we were staying at (the first room had a bad light, so we got a new one with a refrigerator, and sound towel racks.)

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 189

Books read: *The Last Cruise of the Emden* by Edwin P. Hoyt

Friday, September 10, 2004

Hagerstown — Dayton, OH

In the morning we drove by **423 Summit Avenue**, which once upon a time was the Hermitage of the Hermit of Hagerstown, famed fanzine loccer Harry Warner, Jr (Ghod! People might not have known that!) The place is shabby; the porch is breaking apart. There were men working inside, so maybe the place is being fixed up to sell. I was tempted to stop and go in, but decided not to, as we had a long long drive in prospect. Breakfast at International House of Pancakes, but aside from that there was nothing really to note until we got to Dayton.

After checking in at the Red Roof Inn we went to the familiar Borders and Half-Price. Since there is a T.G.I. Friday next to the Borders we could eat and shop without moving the car. By the time we were done it was eleven and we had to conk out for the night.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 444

Books read: *Toast* by Charles Stross

Saturday, September 11, 2004

Dayton — Louisville

Went to Walgreens to pick up my prescriptions. Who says the Internet and satellite technology hasn't changed society? Then we went looking for Quaker Steak and Lube, which has a franchise in Dayton now. One that didn't serve breakfast, it seemed. After

eating at a nearby Big Boy, we went to the . . .
Air Force Museum

This has opened up a Cold War wing. One can see there everything from a B-52 to the A-10 (with that **BIG HONKING GUN**), not to mention the only B-2 in captivity, or on display. Other exhibits include the Apollo 15 capsule, a piece of one of the Doolittle Raid planes (all of them except Ski York's crashed in China, you see), and several feet of fabric from the 1903 Wright Flyer. As well as, of course, the *Bockscar*.

We left a little early, wanting to have dinner at Wertheim's in Covington, that wonderful German place. There was one little problem with getting there. Strike the "little". That weekend was Oktoberfest in Covington, and the restaurant was smack in the middle of the festivities. We had to park some distance away and walk. On the way back I checked my Powerball ticket, found out I hadn't won anything but no one else had won the big prize, and bought another. Then we were off on the last stretch of the road home.

Elizabeth had maintained that there were six moping penitents wondering where They had got to. When we got inside the door there was Red Wull, sitting on the bookcase, and as he was so conveniently to hand, he received a few gentle head-scratches. Elfling may have been really moping, Lisa was afraid he was losing weight, so we let him spend the night in our bedroom to demonstrate that he was loved. (And on Monday he went to the vet.)

I can't believe we got all that stuff in the car.

Miles driven: 200
Total mileage: 2634
Gas bought: \$193

Books read: *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet* by James R. Reckner
Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnis, Henricius Barbatus scripsit
The Jerk with the Cell Phone by Barbara Patcher & Susan Magee

Time out: 7:37 A.M.
Time back: 6:51 P.M.

States passed through: 11 + the District of Columbia (KY, OH, PA, NY, MA, CT, NJ, DE, MD, DC, VA, WV)

New WorldCon bids:
Denver in 2008
Montreal in 2009
Kansas City in 2009
Washington DC in 2011

New NASFiC bid:
Ocean City, Maryland in 2007

Other Awards:
Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award
Henry Kuttner & C. L. Moore

Prometheus Awards
Best Novel:

Sims by F. Paul Wilson

Best Classic Fiction:

"The Ungoverned" by Vernor Vinge

Rick Katze finally posted the Hugo nomination numbers. Flynn and Berkwitz kept off the Best Fan Writer list two *real* fan writers, Lloyd Penney and John Hertz. Other near-missers included Evelyn Leeper, Steve Silver, and Guy Lillian. We're pleased to see that *Alexiad* got nine nominations; unfortunately, we needed sixteen more to actually get on the ballot. Finally, in the art department, Sheryl Birkhead got only half the number of nominations she needed to get on the ballot. Taral Wayne and Alexis Gilliland also missed out (see the response to Sheryl's letter).

There are a number of people who I'm sure will be pleased to hear that *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* got less than half the number of nominations it would have needed to get on the ballot. Two *Enterprise* episodes, two *Angel* episodes, three *Farscape* episodes, a *Futurama* episode, and two commercials failed to get on the BDP-Short Form list, along with a *Buffy* episode and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (?).

<http://www.noreascon.org/hugos/HugoNominationDetails.html>

Sunday, September 12, 2004

Today I did laundry.

Images:

Pennsylvania has the biggest barns I have ever seen.

Seeing the Orthodox Jewish couple in the Best Buy in Middletown. Then I checked the map (or Microsoft Streets and Trips '03 ©™SM Bill Gates is GOD!, anyway) and discovered that Kiryas Joel isn't that far away.

The commemoratives of the human members of the Harness Racing Hall of Fame, which are not just photos with plaques (or even, as at the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame, just plaques), but statuettes of them in their customary poses. I liked the guy who was tickling a cat with a riding crop . . .

If I were casting *The Belgariad*, I'd consider having Jack Speer as Uncle Wolf/Belgarath. He looks like a foxy grandpa with a huge secret.

Didja ever notice that you never see the neighborhoods when they broadcast the Triple Crown on TV? Churchill Downs, Pimlico, and Belmont are, it seems, all in working-class neighborhoods. Archie Bunker could amble over and take in a race at Belmont on a day off from the loading dock. "Boy, the way Citation ran/Saw Assault from the stand/Guys like us, we had a plan/Those were the days . . ."

Four Air Service men won the Medal of Honor during the World War. Eddie Rickenbacker and Frank Luke, of course. But the other two were the pilot and observer of a reconnaissance plane that got shot down; they fought it out with the Germans until they both were killed. Incidentally, they no longer list Charles Lindbergh among the Air Force Medal

of Honor winners, on the grounds that he got an Army Medal of Honor, and for a noncombat act. Looking forward to Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* . . .

NEUROLINK

by M. M. Buckner

(Ace; 2004; ISBN 0-441-01188-8; \$6.99)

Review by Lisa Major

This book opens with Dominic Jedes thinking about his father's coming death in the middle of a group of protes, short for protected employees. Dominic is a future aristocrat. His father was president of Zahlenbank, the monopoly bank of the future. In this future Earth's resources are waning.

A mousy secretary named Elsa brings up the subject of the Benthica, a submarine home to perhaps two thousand protes. He does not want to be bothered in the light of his father's bad accident. He goes into a meeting and finds his father recording a meeting for his NP, short for Neural Profile, a machine which stores memories and personalities. In the meeting the subject of the Benthica comes up. To appease his father Dominic has to let the Benthica off to fend for itself and save two million of cash. Buckner's society seems to be based on the pre-revolutionary societies of France and Russia, with the protes playing the part of serfs and peasants. Dominic's father dies but his NP is still around to control Dominic's life.

Left to fend for itself the Benthica begins broadcasting invitations to other protes to come and join them in their freedom. Zahlenbank stock begins to fall. Dominic is forced to go undercover in an attempt to stop the Benthica's broadcast. He meets up with a secret agent, a woman named Qi Raoshu. They go on a journey to the Benthica, now called the Pressure of Light by the freed protes. From here the plot goes something like Kipling's *Captain Courageous*. Dominic comes to like the protes and ends up taking their side against his father's NP. It comes out that he is a very exact clone of his father. In the end he buys the freedom of the Pressure of Light by surrendering himself to his father's NP and becoming its partner.

This is not a bad read. It's not Hugo-worthy but it is better than some nominees of the past. It is a little draggy in spots but not seriously so. Readers might want to try *Hyperthought* first. *Hyperthought* is Buckner's first book and considerably shorter than *Neurolink*. I haven't read *Hyperthought* so I cannot speak for its quality.

Neurolink has the great virtue of being a stand-alone book and I like the society Buckner has created. If she should write a book about a revolution set in *Neurolink*'s universe I would not mind acquiring a copy of said book if it comes out in paperback. It is increasingly harder to find stand-alone books and as paperbacks, her books are quite reasonably priced. I think buying stand-alone books sends a message to their publishers that there is indeed a market for such things. I like the unusual twist on the father-son conflict in having the father be a machine for much of the book.

TAILOR FIT

by Lisa

On our last trip to the Horse Park, I noticed that Da Hoss and Staying Together were not to be seen but when I asked I was told that they were simply having a nice day off. There was a new name on one of the stall doors, that of Quarter Horse champion Tailor Fit, there now to fill the spot left vacant by Pepper's death.

Tailor Fit was retired from racing in September 2003. He is nine years old. He won 20 of 40 starts and has career earnings of \$1,299,010. He was Champion of Champions winner twice, in 1999 and again in 2001. He was winner of three consecutive Remington Park Championships and winner of the 2001 MBNA American Challenge Championship. He was World Champion Quarter Horse twice.

I traced his pedigree and was surprised to learn he traces back to Native Dancer through the Dancer's son Raise a Native. The Raise a Native male line seems to be playing out among the Thoroughbreds but apparently it is still going strong among the Quarter Horses. This pleased me, as this line produced such fine horses as Alydar, Affirmed, Alysheba and Genuine Risk.

His owner, Betty Jane Burlin, sent him to the Horse Park so that his many fans could see him in a very generous gesture. If only Ferdinand's owners had done the same! I haven't seen him yet but am looking forward to seeing him on our next visit to the Horse Park.

Sadly when I researched Tailor Fit on the Quarter Horse Association website, I learned his sire, Strawfly Special, had died of colic on August 11 at age 17. He was one of the most famous Quarter Horse sires. His offspring had total offspring of over \$17 million, putting him seventh on the list of all-time leading sires. Like Pepper, he seems to have been a real gentleman. His loss is a severe blow to the Quarter Horse world.

KABARDIANS

by Lisa

Joe's review of Yenne's *A Damned Fine War* prompted me to read the book. I was especially taken with the scene featuring the Kabardian horse and set out to research the breed on the Net. I found a site, www.kabardian.com, with much interesting information. Kabardians are very good mountain horses, noted for endurance and mental stability. They are excellent at orientation and memory, and quick learners.

They are a rare breed but this is changing thanks to their many fans.

Sosruko, a Kabardian stallion, won first place in Championship of Russia, which was held in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic in the Northern Caucasus.

Kabardians are medium-sized horses. They are mostly black, dark bay and bay in color with a few rare grays. They have rich manes and tails. Their legs are occasionally sickle-shaped, which is usually a conformation fault in horses

but is an advantage for a mountain breed because it helps the horse balance on steep hills.

Kabardian hoofs are hard enough that many can do light work without horseshoes. Their hoofs are very resistant to the problems of cracks and rotting. They are late-bloomers but stay active longer, often working into their late twenties.

The Kabardians are a combination of many breeds of steppe horses, Mongolian breeds and the purest of them all, the Arabian, ancestor of many warmblooded horses.

Kabardians are an old breed. Historical sources first mention them in the sixteenth century. The Kabardian people are an old people known widely for their skill at breeding horses and horsemanship.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries Russia began expanding into the Caucasus. This expansion destroyed many of the Caucasus local nations along with their horses. Many Kabardian horses died during the Russian conquest.

The Communists at first destroyed the horses which were a symbol of the independence of the Caucasus but then the Red Army realized that the Kabardians could be useful so they revived them.

The end of Communism nearly destroyed the breed. Thousands of Kabardians went to the slaughterhouses. Over the last 15 years the KBR republic has not treated the Kabardians well. I hope, though, that the breed's fanciers will be able to keep the Kabardians from going extinct.

THE TRIPLE CROWN OF TROTTING

by Lisa

Windsong Legacy has won two legs of trotting's Triple Crown, the Hambletonian and the Yonkers Trot. Ahead of him is the Kentucky Futurity. He is in exactly the same position Smarty Jones was before the Belmont. Smarty's name was a household word. Windsong seems to be unknown outside the harness racing world.

The Kentucky Futurity will be run at the Red Mile track in Lexington on October 9. I went to the Red Mile website to see how much it would cost to see this race. I found out general admission was two dollars but couldn't find out how much extra it would cost to see the Futurity. I emailed the track and was told that admission was two dollars. Cheapest admission at the Derby is \$40 and you don't get to see the race from the cheap spot. I promptly went downstairs and asked Joe if we could go. I still can't believe a Triple Crown race can be seen that cheaply but if it does turn out to be too expensive there are plenty of things to do and see in Lexington.

There is a very strong challenger in the form of Tom Ridge, a colt who has broken the trotting record for a mile. He did badly in the Hambletonian and had surgery for a displaced palate afterwards. He finished third in the Yonkers Trot. Should he win the Futurity, he will at least have been in the other two races and suffered physical problems along with this.

So far I have found harness racing very interesting.

CHECK THE CHARTS

by Lisa

While doing research on the pedigree of Tailor Fit I chanced to look at a picture of another Quarter Horse and thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. Surely I was only imagining that this Quarter Horse was a dead ringer for 1937 Triple Crown winner War Admiral! I looked away and looked back. He still looked like War Admiral. I mentally ran through my memory of pictures of the Admiral and my eyes still insisted there was a very strong resemblance.

I glanced at the pedigree on the opposite page and saw that indeed this horse, Check the Charts, was descended from the Admiral. I looked back at the picture and the resemblance was still there. I went back to the stacks and returned with a book on War Admiral. Even after I compared the pictures, I still didn't believe what my eyes told me. I didn't believe it until Joe took one look and commented that the Quarter Horse had a lot of War Admiral in him.



Will the real War Admiral please rear up?

THE GRAND TOUR

by Patricia C. Wrede & Caroline Stevermer

New York: Harcourt, 2004
A review by Colleen R. Cahill

Many years ago, I picked up *Sorcery and Cecelia*, a delightful book that mixed Regency romance with magic, humor, and mystery. Since then, I reread this book at least once a year, as it is a perfect antidote to a drab day. At long last, there is a sequel and *The Grand Tour* gives me a second book with a touch of Jane Austen, bit of Agatha Christie and a dash of magic.

As in the earlier work, the story is told by Kate and Cecelia, now Lady Schofield and Mrs. James Tarleton respectively. We follow their adventures through Kate's commonplace book (a diary) and Cecelia's deposition to various British ministries. Obviously the two ladies and their new husbands are more than just touring Europe on their honeymoon trip. While traveling to Paris, a mysterious lady in blue gives Cecelia a bottle of oil. It is, of course, no ordinary bottle but the oil used during coronations of French kings. It has not been of much use since the French Revolution and while it is unknown on how it reached our band of newlyweds, it does lead them to confer with Lord Nelson, who sends them across Europe seeking other missing pieces of royal regalia.

Kate and Cecelia may now be adult married women, but they still have a nose for trouble. While Cecelia begins her training to be a magician, Kate is adjusting to her new title and status. Both still enjoy days shopping and a leisurely tea, but unlike the average Regency lady, they also insist on joining their husbands in following the trail of clues that lead them from Paris to Vienna to Rome. Along the way, interesting tidbits are revealed, including why Kate is so clumsy and why you should not cast spells in Venice.

Stevermer and Wrede have created a magical piece: one of romance, mystery and a good bit of fun. The description of the journeying through Europe adds to the atmosphere, especially the trouble the characters have when traveling out of season through the Alps. A well-researched work, this will appeal to historical fiction fans who enjoy learning about the details of living and traveling in the 19th century.

If you have had the good fortune to read *Sorcery and Cecilia*, this book will be a must read. The wonderful interact between the two cousins continues, as does their ability to stumble into the center of a mystery. But unlike many sequels, this book is not a mirror of the first, but a next step in the characters lives and as in real life, our heroines mature and grow.

So take your own grand tour back to the world of Kate and Cecelia and enjoy exploring a magical time.

The Joy of High Tech

by Rodford Edmiston

Being the occasionally interesting ramblings of a major-league technophile.

I'm getting tired of folks touting some clever

innovation as a "revolution." Yeah, cell phones are convenient, but they're just telephones with attitudes. With a handful of exceptions, none of them can do anything phones weren't doing fifty years ago (faxing images, sending teletype messages, etc.). When are we gonna see something *new*?

Consumer-level digital cameras are still in the fad stage. The smallest and lightest aren't much smaller and lighter than the smallest and lightest 35mm cameras, and even the top-end ones produce images with less resolution and color fidelity than a good-quality single-use 35mm. There have been no revolutions in imaging since color, and that was available around the *previous* turn of the century, not the one we just went through. Moving images are even older. When are we gonna see something **new**?

People keep chiding me for not "keeping up with technology." Except that what they're talking about is usually fashion, not tech. I tell them I'm a futurist and waiting for something **really** new, and meanwhile I know when to leave good enough alone. They just stare at me.

Most of the new technology we see today is simply old technology made faster, smaller and sparklier. Where are the great advances, like the programmable computer, sound recording, telephones, photography? And, no, everything has **not** been invented already. People have been saying that for over a century, and they've always been wrong. I'm going with the odds.

One suggestion: the thinking cap, which has been a fixture in SF for decades. Something you put on your head which can read brain activity and use that as direct input for some outside purpose. We can already read the activity in small areas of the brain using room-sized equipment. It's been proposed seriously (and I mean by someone besides me) for use in controlling suits of powered armor.

Even better, if a way can be developed (at least one possibility has already been suggested and may be in development) to send signals back through the skull without needing holes in the bone (either natural or artificial).

Now **that** would be a true user interface...

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Wonka Bar

Review by Johnny Carruthers

Over the years, I've seen a number of candies bearing the Wonka name. (Actually, they're made by Nestle, who probably pays a substantial licensing fee for the rights.) With only one or two exceptions, however, most of them were decidedly *not* inspired by either Roald Dahl's book *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, or by the movie *Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory*.

Most of the Wonka candies are also of the non-chocolate variety. The one exception here is the Wonka Bar. And until recently, I don't recall having ever tried one.

The Wonka Bar is a block of milk chocolate studded with graham cracker pieces. The graham cracker pieces are roughly pea-size, and the bar itself is larger than the average candy

bar.

The chocolate seems to be the same milk chocolate used in Nestle's other candy bars. There is a slight malty flavor to the chocolate. That may come from the graham cracker pieces, although I didn't see malt powder listed as one of the candy bar's ingredients. That malty flavor is also present in the graham cracker bits.

The graham cracker bits have more of a crunch to them than the average graham cracker you find in the grocery store. If they were available as actual crackers, and not just pieces, the crackers would be quite substantial. Probably thicker, and far less fragile than the average graham cracker.

I've been reading about a new movie being made from *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, this one starring Johnny Depp as Willy Wonka. I rather hope that Nestle will use the opportunity to release new candy bars, using some of the imaginative names mentioned in the book.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

York Chocolate Truffle Mint Pattie
Review by Johnny Carruthers

I'm not overly fond of peppermint. So it probably shouldn't come as a big surprise when I say that the York Peppermint Pattie is not one of my regular confectionary purchases. If you like peppermint, however, it is a wonderful choice. The peppermint center has a flavor that can best be described as intense. Unfortunately, it is intense enough that it overpowers the flavor of the dark chocolate coating.

I was intrigued when I recently saw the limited edition Chocolate Truffle Mint Pattie. As is the case with most of the other limited edition variations that Hershey has produced, I was curious to see (and taste) just how this variation differed from the original.

The one thing that has stayed the same is the dark chocolate coating, which is good. A variation that had the peppermint filling covered in milk chocolate would have an even more overpowering peppermint flavor. If you have difficulty tasting the dark chocolate, milk chocolate would be even more difficult to detect. And I think that a white chocolate coating, while it might have a certain esthetic appeal, would be overly sweet, and not a good flavor balance with the peppermint.

The filling of the original York Peppermint Pattie could probably be best described as a fondant. I suppose I'm belaboring the obvious here, but the filling of the Chocolate Truffle Mint Pattie is more like, well, the filling of a chocolate truffle. It has a chewier, fudgier texture to it. In fact, it's rather like a batch of fudge to which the cook added either peppermint extract or oil of peppermint. And while the peppermint flavor is still strong, maybe even intense, it isn't overwhelmingly so. The chocolate truffle filling provides more of a balance to the peppermint.

As I said at the beginning, the Chocolate Truffle Mint Pattie is a limited edition. In other words, I have no idea how much longer it will be on the shelves. That's the most irritating thing about these limited editions. While you

can be glad that a candy bar that isn't appealing won't be around for long, the same can be said for one that really is good. And you're left to the whims of Hershey as to when it might appear again.

CANDY BAR REVIEW

Honey Roasted Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
Review by Johnny Carruthers

Last year, Hershey released limited editions of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups in dark chocolate and white chocolate varieties. This year, Hershey tried yet another variation on the Reese's Cup. This year's limited edition is the Honey Roasted cup.

Nice idea, in theory. Presumably, "honey roasted" means that first honey roasted before being made into peanut butter. At least, that was my first thought. But when I looked at the list of ingredients on the wrapper, I did not see honey listed anywhere.

When I tasted a Honey Roasted cup, I didn't notice much of a difference from the original Reese's cup, either. The peanut butter in the Honey Roasted cup might have a slightly sweeter taste, but it's not readily noticeable. In fact, the only way I noticed any difference was to take a bite first out of an original Reese's cup, then a bite from a Honey Roasted cup.

The concept of a honey roasted peanut butter cup is good in theory. This time, unfortunately, it wasn't quite right in the execution. I hope that Hershey tries again, and if they do, I hope they try something a little different. You know, something like actually using honey in the product.

FANZINES

I'm a fanzine star!



Bento #16, 2004

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Beyond Bree August 2004, September 2004
Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA
beyondbree@yahoo.com
Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15 in envelope or overseas.

eI #15, August 2004

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File 770:143

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FOSFAX #210 September 2004
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The Knarley Knaws # 107 August 2004
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MT Void V.22 #49 June 4, 2004 — V. 23 #14 October 1, 2004
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Nice Distinctions #7 September 2004
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No Award #15 Summer 2004
Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore Street #105, North Hollywood, CA 91606-2889 USA
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<http://www.efanzines.com>

Opuntia # 54.5 July 2004, #55 August 2004, #55.1 September 2004, #55.2 Late September, 2004
Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA

Outworlds #50 April 4, 1997
Bill Bowers, 6000 Townevista Drive Apt. 114, Cincinnati, OH 45224-1762 USA
BBowers@one.net
A DVD fanzine! It was a production at Corflu IV in Cincinnati.

Peregrine Nations V. 4 #2 July 2004
Jan G. Stinson, Post Office Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA
tropicsf@earthlink.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Rodney's Messy Zine-Like Thing #5
Rodney Leighton, #11 Branch Road, R. R. #3, Tatamagouche, NS B0K 1V0 CANADA
And last.

Sansevieria # 62
Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA

Taboo Opinions # 18, #19, #20, #21
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Vanamonde # 548-557
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Visions of Paradise # 100
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The Zine Dump #7
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DITTO NEWS

Ditto 18 Bid for Milwaukee in October 2005

Fellow Fanzine Fans:

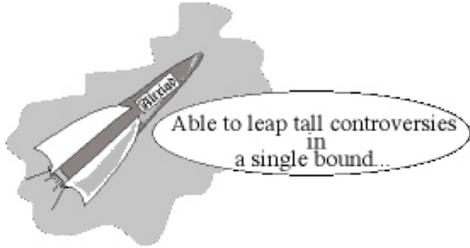
You are probably not aware of this, but I am preparing to bid to host Ditto 18 in Milwaukee in October 2005. As regionally close fanzine fans who may have some interest in attending I'd like to know of any preferences favoring one weekend in October 2005 over another.

For those of you who are not aware, Ditto is a small relaxing convention nominally for fanzine fans. It is generally attended by a small group of like-minded individuals who gather to socialize and a bit of light programming.

Thanks for your input.

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Letters, we get letters



From: **Trinlay Khadro** July 29, 2004
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I'm having a lot of pain lately, since a fall I had Saturday had aggravated the fibro. I feel much like I did after being rear-ended by a minivan. Hopefully my note will be neither gloomy nor terse.

KT is getting ready for school to start Sept 1 and made A's in both her summer courses (English and Creative Writing).

I've toggled some of my photos into compositions and Black & White graphic. They remind me of several assignments from back when I was in art school. I may see some interesting pieces developing shortly.

I've been crocheting and making purses — I've sold quite a few of them; the smaller ones at \$15 and the larger at \$20. Some of the local shops are carrying my work, and I've got some stops to make next week to check on stock and any special requests. I've got to buy some yarn this evening as well.

Earlier in the week, while waiting on prescriptions, I went to get Norton Antivirus; I ended up getting Norton Security — it does much more and was only \$10 more.

August 15, 2004

Lisa — one thing I realized early on was that King stories don't translate to film well at all. We used to pass around Stephen King books when I was in middle school, but also noted that one of the reasons they don't film well is that so much of the story is occurring inside the character's head. It's easy to make an action-horror flick and much more difficult to do psychological horror. I haven't read any Stephen King in . . . in . . . well a very long time.

As for Yokohama in '07 the Copelands might be a good resource for "How to do Japan on the Cheap — or at least not as incredibly expensive". (Jeff Copeland — Southern Fandom apa — copeland@alumni.caltech.edu might do an article for you.) I have heard that if one is willing to forego "living like an American" even Tokyo may be reasonably priced, i.e., taking the smaller, sleep on the floor, "Japanese" rooms rather than the "American" rooms in the hotels.

In other words, Life in a Sardine Can, the way Khen Moore would get 25 people into a suite.

Seriously, the Breeze Bay Hotel near the convention center is ¥9450 per night for a single room and ¥14,700 for a double. That would seem to be your Japanese-style inn. The most expensive one they list is the Pan Pacific Hotel, which is ¥33,600 per night for a twin room.

Do you think the fanzine panels were scheduled as they are with the feeling "Who does zines anyway?"? Or worse "Zine fans are anti-social?" Similar scheduling happened to a con of another fandom, that my sisters went to. If the con chair wasn't interested it got "backburner" scheduling . . . and careless scheduling at that.

Monarchy News — glad I sent you the article. I suspect it didn't appear in many papers.

Clockwork Orange — actually, in my humble opinion, NC-17 is what R used to be.

Weapons of Choice — This is the third review of this I've seen. The prior reviews suggested the "Giant Green Space Lizard" comment was a salute to Mr. Turtledove — who used the lizards in the same period for an alternate history.

And writes historical novels as
 "H. N. Turteltaub."

I wonder if they took into account how much current tech is dependent on exterior elements — GPS units need the satellites, email needs network and/or internet access. (1942 is decidedly pre-internet! ☺)

Resnick at Large — GASP! Lisa lets you read at the dinner table! Either eat or read, not both together; it's not good for digestion or for the book. (Is that a notation or spaghetti sauce?)

She reads at dinner, too.

China Voyage — I've seen those bamboo rafts on t.v. — not even almost a dry way to travel.

Imagine someone running into *your* office saying "The silliest/coolest/weirdest boat landed a day trip away . . ." and you could go see it on company time! I'd go!

The shipwrecked Japanese crews had much more sea-worthy boats than that raft! Though not as big or secure as one would like for crossing the ocean.

Da Vinci Code etc. — KT's friend Kevin was swept up in *The Da Vinci Code* and it didn't help that apparently "all info is from authentic sources" as declared in the intro. There's a bit about human proportions which KT blew to heck with a tape measure and a calculator. They might be "authentic sources" but it doesn't make it facts. (Medieval and Renaissance "science" often isn't.)

Hybrids — when I do need to replace my Neon I'd like a hybrid — though, I'm getting to

be really unhappy buying gas.

Sitting In Darkness — Well up here it's definitely been a cold wet summer. Sorry about your power outage.

Thank heavens, I've never felt a need to resort to vanity press. It's easy enough to learn bookbinding and print things at Kinko's — and set one's self up as a "small press". Of course I'm NOT doing anything I haven't done myself — and nothing even nearly novel length. (Eventually I'll reprint *Civil Serpents* and send you one.)

I've been having a rough time with the fibromyalgia . . . but I'm keeping busy crocheting and knitting hats, purses, and scarves. I'll be setting up a photo page for my work soon. If anyone is interested in seeing my work, just drop me a line or email.

I'm now aware that my Chicago sewage info is either outdated or just plain wrong. Fifteen years ago I got the information from an uncle. I now suspect the Spring Ewww on the lakefront is-has been farm runoff and Milwaukee's muck. I'd originally been informed that when the lake was nearly frozen all the muck would sink to the bottom where the current goes clockwise around the lake . . . or something like that. Said relative is now long-deceased so I can't even razz him about it.

Henry — shouldn't the coment be (sillily) "a good professional conference organzier is worth their weight in gold/credits/pressed latnium/some SFnal units of cash/rare metal . . ."

I'm about two blocks away from the line for the 53209 zip. Uncle's house is in it and a bit north of 53217. 53209 is most of northern Milwaukee and parts of the burbs.

Comment to me — it occurs to me DNA matching between Tokugawa and Minamoto lines could be pointless — with such an entrenched tradition of adoption, I don't know how well any of that would have been documented.

Faery Godfather = "I don't do wishes, I do favors . . ." A fannish friend dressed up as faery godfather for a kid's party years ago — pin-stripe suit, dark shirt, and tie . . . and fairy wings. I might have a digital photo I can dig up of KT as a Goth faery.

Come to think of it, dressing in purple might make you look like the Joker. In the animated Batman episode "Be a Clown" the Joker kidnaps the clown going to the mayor's son's birthday party and takes his place. Much hilarity ensues, for some definitions of hilarity.

For Friday the 13th KT and pals had a "Gothnic" (gothic picnic) at Veteran's Park in Milwaukee. They dressed in black and were basically their silly selves.

Last night she stayed over at a friend's house, dog sitting, and Megumi was missing her. But that means I had the cat on me all night. ☺

KT was taking the over-the-counter Prilosec — she's off it now for the time being. (What is

thionite? Sounds like something that ought to be explosive.) She got A's in both English and Creative Writing this summer. I hope she keeps it up.

By Klono's carballoy claws and gadolinium guts, you haven't read the Lensman Series! Your SF knowledge is sadly deficient. (Thionite is a drug in the Lensman Series that causes the instant and total realization of the user's every mental desire. It is also purple.)

Joseph — I always had the impression that US troops were supposed to be decent to prisoners because "that's just what we do", not because we *had* to. (And for a good part of the US Revolution the Revolutionaries often did not have uniforms due to a lack of resources.)

Joy — Megumi sends a snuggle to you too!

E.B. — I have seen *The Magnificent Seven* though not recently. Never seen an SF version. Manga covers a big range — kids stuff to SF to very odd stuff to hentai.

Lloyd — "Reality" t.v. just means they're too cheap to hire writers. I hope this trend comes to a swift end. Aside from *Last Comic Standing* I hate the genre.

Robert Kennedy — Condolences on your loss.

On the up site, in my humble opinion the Sci-Fi Channel's *Dune* and *Mists of Avalon* were fun and we're looking forward to *Earthsea* (December?).

Colleen — Megumi says "Mrrrr!" (Thanks for the praise.)

AL — of the relative with muscular dystrophy, what DID his mother think was going on? Or just so deep a denial? How terrible — how sad.

From: **Jan G. Stinson** August 12, 2004
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David Wilson, poor soul, is just trying to fulfill a lifelong dream. Unfortunately, he's doing it with a novel that is too painful to read past the first page. I wrote him a letter and politely told him that, and encouraged him to keep trying. His earnestness bleeds off the page of the letter he sent me with a copy of the book, and that's what I responded to. I know how he feels. I just hope he takes whatever constructive criticism he gets and uses it to write a better novel.

I know. I wish it had not been me. But any new writer is up against stiff competition these days. They have to deliver a quality product if they want to sell. Wilson had an interesting idea but his talent does not yet match his ideas.

— LTM

September 24, 2004

Hey Joe (where you goin' with that loc in your hand?),

That was the obligatory Hendrix reference. <g>

Okay, pub your ish, get the next Peregrine Nations out.

It was probably explained in a previous ish, but please tell me, what is a Dormition and who is the Theotokos?

Dormition is what the Western Church calls "Assumption" and the Theotokos is the Virgin Mary.

Re: "Reviewer's Notes," \$78 an hour for mechanic's labor on a car is highway robbery. Find a new mechanic or another dealership for future car repairs.

I've enjoyed reading your extended examination of "A Clockwork Orange" and *A Clockwork Orange*. I never did finish reading the book, but I saw the film in a lecture hall when I was in college in the late 1970s. Completely shattered me. I walked out of the lecture hall wanting to vomit; the majority of that reaction was to the rape scene, which I'd never seen in a film before that one. Still makes me shudder, and I'll never watch that movie again for that reason.

Your review of *Thomas the Rhymer* gives me another reason to hunt the book down, as I've read other positive reviews of it. But when I went to look up the page it was on, I had to page my way to it since the review is actually on p. 20, and not on p. 19 as the ToC stated. Did you do that on purpose to see if anyone would mention it?

Congratulations to Lisa for not believing the hype about Stephen King. Lisa, try *Bag of Bones* sometime. It's beautifully written and has a great story as well. It's my current favorite of all of King's books.

Joe, thanks for the nice write-up of *Peregrine Nations* in the latest *No Award*. Much appreciated. Your questions on p. 33 in *Alexiad* on the reason why so few faneds were planning to attend Noreascon 4, "Is the WorldCon becoming uninviting? Or just too expensive?" prompted a response. It's some of both, I think. WorldCons now seem more like a trade fair for writers, editors and publishers than a fan-centered event. The costs alone (travel, accommodation and membership) for WorldCons are probably the largest roadblock for most fans, and faneds. Seems to me the pros could keep their business dealings confined to the Nebula Awards weekend and telephone/e-mail conversations, and attend the WorldCon to meet fans and participate in panels if they so choose. Or someone could start a BusinessCon and provide a way for SF pros to network like everyone else does it.

But that's what World Fantasy Con is for. I don't particularly feel that way about WorldCon myself, and surely there aren't five thousand writers, editors, and

publishers".

DragonCon (which I have yet to attend) gets tens of thousands of attendees, and its program items seems to run the gamut of available media wherein SF/F appear, including books and magazines. Comparing it to what I've read of the last three WorldCons, it sounds like DragonCon is a much more fan-oriented event (my definition of fan is anyone who enjoys SF in any of its forms, and is not restricted to activities others characterize as belonging exclusively to their definition of a fan). From what I've read, it appears that the pros (which includes writers, actors, film producers, etc.) who attend DragonCon are there to promote their latest product and meet fans. But DragonCon is also probably the most congested event in SF cons as a result of its attendance numbers.

The standard advice to neofans is to attend regional cons first before trying a WorldCon. I've done that (two Tropicons and an Oasis, both in Florida). I'm not sure I really want to attend a WorldCon, any more, but I'd like to try DragonCon at least once; its accessibility is greater because it stays in the same place. Which is not to criticize WorldCon for, as its name states, it's supposed to move about the planet often enough to give as many people as possible a chance to attend. But I think I'd be happier at a ReaderCon or a WisCon than at what's currently calling itself WorldCon. Glasgow, for financial reasons, is completely out of the picture for me.

From: **Henry L. Welch** August 14, 2004
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Thanks for the latest *Alexiad*. In atypical fashion I've read it right away, am doing the LOC promptly and have at least a bit to say.

I'll see your brake job (earlier this summer in one car) and raise you a rebuilt transmission last week in one of the vans. Second tranny for this vehicle with the first being covered entirely by manufacturer's warranty. More on this in the forthcoming *The Knarley Knews*.

We listened to *The Da Vinci Code* during our recent trip to Pennsylvania. An interesting story if a bit contrived, but you'd have to be foolish to read it and think that it might not have its own bias or spin.

Maybe so but there are a LOT of fools out there, evidently.

Hybrid vehicles will improve as the government and market forces dictate. The computer and high-technology industries are prime examples. The popular technologies are the ones that receive all the attention, the R&D, and thus the plummeting consumer cost. A prime example are computer displays. For years and years CRTs dominated the market and in the late 90s saw a huge decrease in cost for quality. This was driven, not by some special feature of

CRTs, but rather the growing need for high resolution displays and no one fully understood the dominant role portable computers (laptops) would rapidly play. As soon as laptops benefited from decent battery technology the need for flat screen became apparent and the R&D push moved to that area. Now flat screen technology is very competitive with CRTs and so interest in them has lessened. With the decrease in interest CRTs so has the R&D in that area decreased and so I would not anticipate rapid improvement and lowered cost in CRTs again. The new plasma models will be next and we'll see their cost and features adjust as HDTV becomes more dominant. It isn't about technology as much as what is hot and popular to force the issue.

To get back to the hybrids. At least one major manufacturer is working on a minivan or SUV which will solve your space problems. As more are built and gain more market share, R&D will shift in that direction and reliability and capability will increase as consumer cost comes more in-line with traditional internal combustion engines.

As for worldcon, cost has become a major factor for me. Not only is worldcon expensive for two, but then add in three children. It isn't easy finding someone to watch your kids for a week when the nearest one step relative (aunt, uncle, grandparent) are half a continent away. Taking them along isn't yet worth the cost and hassle. Factor in that school starts prior to Labor Day (public and law) and it just doesn't begin to add up.

Any weekend the WorldCon was would be inconvenient. Originally, remember, it was Fourth of July weekend. Originally it also had membership in the low hundreds or high tens, and didn't have to have babysitting, an Animé lounge, and a bondage programming track. It may be outrunning its feasibility.

— JTM

From: **Arthur D. Hlavaty** August 15, 2004
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Another enjoyable *Alexiad*.

Lisa: Teresa Nielsen Hayden has done a lot of good work on her blog dealing with PublishAmerica and other vanity presses. If you want to have something that looks to you like a book and an impressive e-mail address that calls you a "published author," go with them. If you want to be read by people who aren't doing it out of friendship, take your chances with a real publisher.

Henry L. Welch: The only reason worldcons are anywhere near affordable is that they don't have professional organizers.

Trinlay Khadro: I believe the story about Bush having a 91 IQ was debunked. Actually he said he didn't have to take the test because he was a legacy.

George Price: The reason some historical novels include anachronistic dialogue is that they didn't have a good copy-editor, like me.

Joy V. Smith: When I was a kid, I loved peanut butter and olive sandwiches.

E. B. Frohvet: I voted for Steve Stiles for the Fan Artist Hugo. He's good, and he hasn't won before.

I'm glad to hear that you and **Bill Bowers** like each other's zines. I agree with both of you. *Outworlds* was one of my gateway fanzines.

Jason K. Burnett: As to *No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*, a title, like a person, should not have two colons.

Robert Kennedy: The "my parents, Ayn Rand and God" story appears to be a folk tale of the Publisher tribe. No one can find a source, and the last two are a most unlikely couple. There is actual evidence for a review of a Peter Ustinov book that says he met "Nelson Mandela, a dildo collector and a thousand-year-old demigod." Lynne Truss, incidentally, doesn't use the serial comma, which I consider a forgivable error. What is not forgivable, especially in a book of such dogmatic certainty, is that she follows the common British practice of treating the comma for a nonrestrictive clause as optional. It's almost enough to make you think that Standard English is superior to Anglonics.

Taras Wolansky: Ken MacLeod says the Singularity is "The Rapture for nerds." For some reason he says that as if there were something wrong with it. There's a hilarious bit in Jerome Tuccille's *It Usually Begins with Ayn Rand* about Murray Rothbard quitting Objectivism after the whole cult philosophical discussion group did an intervention to get his wife to stop believing in God.

I got that book when it came out and met Tuccille shortly thereafter. What strikes me about it now is how well it shows Rothbard's pathetic wanderings around the fringes of the political world, striving to find anyone, anyone at all, who would be his political ally. And after the book came out he got even worse.

I should have known . . .

— JTM

From: **David A. Wilson** August 14, 2004
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You have a right to your opinion about my Civil War/Vampire novel, *Curse of the Vampire*, but I suggest that you buy Issue 15 of *Dark Realms Magazine* (available through www.monolithgraphics.com) and read their review of my book, on Page 38.

It's \$7.50 an issue. Maybe if I could see one at WorldCon and see what else they say about things, but I didn't.

— JTM

I think you should do yourself a favor and start work on your next book if you haven't already. You might consider attending a science fiction convention the next time one is in your area, especially if it offers workshops where professional writers can give you pointers that you might find helpful.

—LTM

From: **John Thiel** August 14, 2004
30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904-2950 USA

It's interesting to hear that you have a Barnes & Noble SF reading club which you attend where you live. I've been at a Barnes & Noble literary function where they lectured about *Watership Down*; it was the second SF book in a row that had been chosen for Lafayette's summer reading and discussion program, "One Great Read, One Greater Lafayette", the first being Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. For some reason they don't appear to have had a great read this summer, though. The read was rotated through various meeting places. The Barnes & Noble here does not sponsor a literary society of its own. It goes to show that two Barnes & Nobles might have two different social setups.

I was agreeing with Lisa's attitude toward Stephen King, but before the paragraph ended she'd established herself as a steady reader of his books. But I have to disagree that *From a Buick 8* is free of the excesses she started out describing. My experience of the book is that one can stick one's finger into it anywhere and come up with something abominable. Perhaps it's all in the way one reads the book.

I wouldn't really describe myself as a steady reader of his books. I've only read three, *Gunslinger*, *From a Buick 8*, and *The Shining*. *The Shining* wasn't nearly as good as the others and went into the cull pile. I'll read more of them, if only because I loved the scenes involving the gerbils Jimmy and Rosalynn.

— LTM

Gilliland's cartoon on Page 20 has me wondering what the bad part is, is it printed in pink ink? I suppose the bad part must be "He's also in this office" (or wherever the speaker is at).

I liked your close look at *A Clockwork Orange*. Certainly it wouldn't be X-rated in comparison with the SF films of today, but it requires close interpretation, anyway. Was it sincere SF? Or was it more avant-garde than anything else?

It wouldn't be rated X (or NC-17) but then it wouldn't be filmed in the first place. Nothing is blown up, there are no women kickboxers, and in fact the plot can't be expressed in two to three short sentences containing no words longer than three syllables (so as not to exceed the attention span of a Hollywood exec).

— JTM

From: **Robert Lichtman** August 17, 2004
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Some comments on *Alexiad* for August 2004: First, is that Toyota Prius you drove, Joseph, a 2004 hatchback model or one of the first series 4-door sedans? I suspect the latter because of your comments that the driver's space was cramped even with the seat all the way back and that the trunk space was inadequate. A friend of mine has a 2003 Prius which I got to drive and I observed that at three inches over six feet tall there wasn't enough leg room for me, either. And I noticed the inadequate trunk space in 2000 when the car first came out and I checked one out at a Toyota dealer. In addition, driving a section of interstate highway with a lot of up and down grades — rather like a roller coaster — I noticed it was underpowered when climbing. All this is taken care of, in my view, with the much larger 2004 model.

It was the 2003 model sedan. I only drove it around town, so can't say how well it did on hills.

— JTM.

Regarding Jan Stinson's comments about fanthologies, the last ones that came out were all basically edited by me with some input concerning overall page count from their publishers — and they *were* all put out in conjunction with Corflus. At the time there was some complaints about my choices of what to include, but as I wrote in my introduction to the 1992 collection:

In making my selections, I freely acknowledge that the sort of fanzine writing that appeals to me most is the personal essay, whatever the subject matter, so long as the topic attracts and holds my attention and the writing is well done. But there is at least one piece of fiction in this selection. To those who might point out the absence of articles on science fiction, I reply that 1992 didn't produce any memorable sf/fnal articles in my estimation. (But in the previous year's volume, Sam Moskowitz's "I Remember Campbell" was my suggestion.) But remember, there's no rule that only one collection can be done of a year's best fanwriting. If you want to make an alternate selection of 1992's

best fanwriting, you're welcome to put out *Fanthology '92*, Volume 2, and please put me down for a copy.

No one has gotten it together to put out a fanthology since the one I edited covering 1994, after which I resigned from doing them. Anyone is welcome to take it up, with or without the blessing of a Corflu committee.

While making no excuse — what could one say? — for Victor Gonzalez's rude treatment of Martin Morse Wooster at the 2000 Chicon, I want to point out that Victor's behavior is far from "typical" of what MMW calls "fannish fanzine fandom," and also that as a full-fledged member (I don't deny it) of "fff" I don't consider my fanac superior to that of anyone else — not "sercon fanzine fans," definitely not "all other fans." I might have a preference for the type of fanzine characterized by *Plokta* and my own *Trap Door*, but I get all sorts of fanzines, am in four apas, and participate in quite a few "e-lists," and the only thing that puts me off is uninteresting and/or poorly written stuff. Sturgeon's law applies to *all* fandoms, whether a self-proclaimed elite or not.

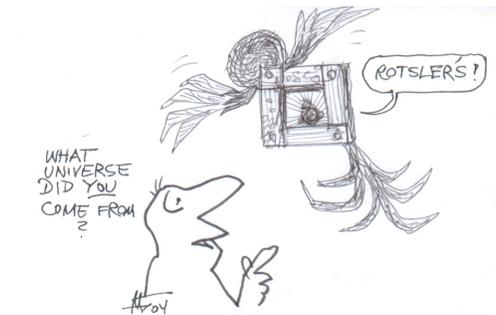
Martin is wrong that Moshe Feder last published a fanzine in 1978. Actually it was 1990, when he published the eighth and final issue of *Hysteresis* before dropping out of FAPA. Yeah, that's a long time ago, too. Oh, and what's wrong with "most of the American attendees of Corflu . . . not publishing fanzines, but used to, once upon a time, long ago?" Just about all of them are still active in some aspect of fandom besides attending Corflu.

For that matter, when was the last time MMW published a fanzine . . . ?

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** August 14, 2004
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* #3.4, which arrived between the leftovers of Hurricane Bonnie, which provided a hailstorm and two and a half inches of rain, and Hurricane Charley currently blowing in our general direction.

I hope that the string of hurricanes hasn't blown Ditto away.



George Price wonders of there is any historical justification for Morrie the Critic's characterization of Pontius Pilate. Besides the

Gospels, the writings of Josephus, a Roman collaborator, are the principal secular account dealing with the period and Darrell Schweitzer says Josephus describes Pilate as a resolute and brutal man, which is consistent with what I wrote. Darrell cites the Gospels to support Gibson's portrayal of the flaying of Christ, noting that "Christ then died after a mere three hours . . . [surprising] Pilate." He also shares my suspicion that the Gospel might have deviated from the strict historical record for whatever reason.

Regarding my theory about the Crucifixion, Marty Helgesen says: "I wonder where he got that bizarre idea. It's not in the Bible." Well, no textual support nor any urls accessing lengthy documents are on offer, but here is an outline of my thinking, citing the events leading up to the Crucifixion together with the questions they led me to and my answers to those questions.

- Event I: Christ, a candidate for the title of Prophet, arrives in Roman-occupied Jerusalem to the acclamation of what we will call the Jewish street.
- Question I: What was the Jewish street so excited about?
- Event II: Within days there was an urban riot in Jerusalem, which the Romans suppressed without much difficulty (not the Zealot Rebellion of a generation later, Joe.)
- Question II: Did Christ have anything to do with instigating that riot?
- Event III: The Romans arrested Christ and condemned him to death.
- Question III: Did the Romans — who were experienced Imperialists — know what they were doing?
- Event IV: At the trial and on the way to Golgotha, the Jewish street showed great hostility to Christ.
- Question IV: Why did they change from their initial enthusiasm?

My answer to Question I is that what the Jewish street wanted to hear was that they were to be delivered from Roman rule, and that they expected Christ to deliver such a message. My answer to Question II is that whatever Christ actually said, the Jewish street heard what they wanted to hear — that God would come to their aid if they rose in rebellion — and started the riot on the strength of that. My answer to Question III is yes, the Romans had good information and acted rationally. They identified Christ as the instigator of the riot, and the sign on his cross, INRI, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was explicitly political. My answer to Question IV is that the Jewish street was hostile towards Christ because he had shown himself to be a false prophet as demonstrated by events.

Marty should not be surprised that this is not included in the Bible. It is reasonable to assume that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who recorded these events to bolster and support the early Christian Church in the Roman Empire

either chose not to portray Christ as an instigator of riots who was justly put to death by the authorities, or they let their texts be edited. Why? Clearly for the good of the Church. Other answers are possible, of course, but the Biblical explanation that the High Priest Caiaphas manipulated Pilate to kill an innocent man is more complicated than strictly necessary, and was mainly intended to excuplate Christ from being justly executed on the charge of inciting a riot. Since you can't do only one thing, that text has also been used to excuse the Romans and justify anti-Semitism on the basis of Decide.

Henricius Barbatus dixit:

Haecine omnia propter paucos sermones? Eheu! Si quis grave maleficium committat, quali poena eum multent ista propudia si, exempli grata, Imperatorem vocet irrumatorem?

— Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus VII.viii.iv

[All that because of a pair of lousy sermons? Man, what would those clowns do to you if you did something really serious, like call the Emperor a buttwipe?]

— JTM

From: **Alex Slate** August 17, 2004
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Sorry I missed commenting on Volume 3 #3. Time runs away with me all too often and my organization is sorely lacking.

Like so many others, I, too, was unaware of the 21st chapter of *A Clockwork Orange*. Yes, what you show us of the "missing" chapter does change things.

It sounds like Sue Burke's interaction with the royal wedding is being close by, a lot different than I expect a similar event here in the US involving one of the Bush girls would have been. Witness the nuttiness of the recent Democratic convention, and I expect the Republican convention to be even worse.

I still don't get to conventions, but my reading has picked up a bit, though I doubt it still matches yours, Joseph. Most of my fiction reading has been catching up with three series: Weber's "Honor Harrington", Weber/Ringo's "March", and J. D. Robb's "Eve Dallas" series. Speaking of J. D. Robb, or more correctly Norah Roberts, did you know that she actually "collaborated" with herself on one book? Very strange to my way of thinking.

No more than Police Your Planet by Lester del Rey and Erik van Lhin (1956, 1975) — the self-revised version of the book del Rey cranked out at high speed after it won an award and had to be serialized.

I've also been reading a lot of non-fiction;

philosophy, ethics, political commentary, and self-improvement for the most part. I've also taken to listening to stuff on CD while driving. A very productive affair, I think, but I need our local libraries to buy a lot more non-fiction on CDs. Not cassettes, though.

I have a new vehicle, a 2004 Nissan Frontier. I've joined the pickup crowd. It's a manual transmission with an extended cab and I enjoy it immensely. The twins now have the Saturn.

So you have learned to shift for yourself?

— JTM

JT, if I was eligible to nominate and vote, I think fan writer of the year would have to be either you, Guy Lillian, or E. B. Frohvet.

Anyway, thanks and keep 'em coming.

From: **E. B. Frohvet** August 14, 2004
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott
City, MD 21042-5988 USA

The jockey who was injured at Pimlico has made a substantial recovery after some time at a rehab center. It is unlikely he will ride again, at least in competition; but he has expressed an interest in continuing in the sport, and may be offered a job with the Maryland Jockey Club.

Lisa: It's possible to cheat at baseball too. Spitballs, corked bats, steroids. Then there was the famous occasion when Bill Veeck waited until the bottom of the ninth inning, bases loaded, and sent up a midget as pinch-hitter. Naturally the pitcher could not throw strikes to such a target; the guy walked on four pitches and forced in the winning run. They won the game, too: the umpires checked the rule book and found no rule that it violated. (That actually happened, don't take my word.)

It's possible to cheat at anything, I think. Strictly speaking, Zito did not cheat. As you said last time, there is nothing in the rules against entering a fresh horse in the Belmont. Baseball, however, seems to penalize teams for ducking out on games they might not win and in that respect is fairer, I think, than horse racing.

Joe: I look forward to your report on the "Building a Better Fanzine" panel. My thoughts would begin with (a) actually produce a fanzine (b) with some regularity (c) about more than fannish in-jokes. Of course, this would eliminate most of the audience and possibly some of the panel . . .

The panelists, Guy Lillian, Nicki Lynch, Steve Silver, Geri Sullivan, and me, all did real fanzines, but the audience was almost equal in numbers to the panel, and that included Lisa and Milt Stevens. And as I said there, what disappointed me was that there seemed to be no interest from

anyone wanting to do that too.

I think a lot of what would be fanpubbing these days is going into blogs, discussion lists, and chats. All which, to my mind, have problems of either accessibility or persistence. Darrell Schweitzer said this might be the last fanzine generation, and sometimes I wonder if he doesn't know best.

"Is the Worldcon becoming uninviting? Or just too expensive?" Yes.



Now at least ten nominally active fanzines which have not published in over a year. In correspondence, one of those faneds — I mention no name — says, "I *want* to publish again" (emphasis *sic*) but admits not having made much progress lately.

I would not consider either *A Clockwork Orange*, or anything by Stephen King, to be science fiction.

From a Buick 8 features a link to another dimension and therefore, I think, has SF elements in it.

— LTM

Sometimes the power goes off. I acquired the habit years ago of keeping a box of emergency supplies in the cupboard — crackers, a jar of salsa, peanut butter, tinned meat, some jars of fruit. I suggest some of that irradiated milk (brand name Parmalat) that stores months at room temperature. See the box of "iron rations" in *Alas, Babylon* that comes in handy.

John Hertz favors the Retro Hugos. I disagree.

Trinlay Khadro: The problem with "reality TV" arose out of the first year of *Big Brother*. As the group shrank, the survivors bonded and became supportive of each other. The networks have taken great care to see that does not happen again; they screen contestants for bitchiness. (Yes, that applies to the guys too.)

Jan Stinson raises an interesting point. Is the term "Fanthology" copyrighted by the Corflu Cult? Of course anyone wishing to publish such a thing could find a new title. Curious that Certain Gentlemen are eager to see a fanzine "actually about SF" but could not be troubled to respond to my, explicitly sercon, fanzine.

See Robert Lichtman's letter.

Joy Smith: Peanut butter and cheese sandwiches. Grilled is best. No olives.

David A. Wilson: If you expect to be published as a pro and paid as a pro, you should get used to being reviewed as a pro. I agree with Joseph and Lisa, a review which says "I could not finish this book" says something valid about the book — and, of course, about the taste of the reviewer. You volunteered a review copy — you don't get to choose what the reviewer writes.

Lloyd Penney: An intriguing question, how many Canadian fanzines are there (not counting clubzines)? I get *Opuntia*; Andrew Murdoch's *Covert Communications* has been very sparse of production lately; what else is there? I don't think Worldcon will die in the immediate future; it may have to scale back to a more realistic and affordable level. Perhaps a rule should be considered to prevent any city from hosting for ten years after its last Worldcon, to open bidding up to other sites. (I was much disappointed at the failure of the Charlotte NC bid and would like to see them bid again.)

Martin Morse Wooster: My only personal encounter with Victor Gonzalez was at the 1998 Worldcon fanzine lounge — and he was perfectly polite to me and shook my hand. Your anecdote seems to put paid to my theory that Gonzalez's actual self is much different from his written persona. Not that I care at this late date, but it's still odd.

Jason K. Burnett: Congratulations to you and your wife. I hope the two of you are getting more sleep now. I tried to do a sercon fanzine about written SF. Some said it was a failure because it was sercon; some said it was a failure in spite of being sercon; a few thought it was not a failure at all. I folded it after seven years due to lack of contributions. Fatigue and expense were factors also.

AL du Pisani: I agree that I found Bujold's *The Curse of Chalion* and *Diplomatic Immunity* disappointing. However, I quite liked *A Civil Campaign*, which is a hoot. The "dinner party from Hell" scene is alone worth the cost of the book.

Marty Helgesen: I did not invent the term "Biblical inerrancy". Many fundamentalist Christians believe that every word in the Bible is literally and exactly true and means literally and exactly what it says, no ambiguities, no inconsistencies, no grey areas. I have difficulty with that. As in the case of the individual who insisted that God created the world, exactly as we find it today — complete with fossils of creatures that never existed! (Why God would do such a thing is, again, beyond my limited understanding.) But that's how some people think.

From: **John Hertz** August 18, 2004
236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Thanks for *Alexiad* #3.4. Thanks for printing my letter. What I said was "We are imagining more widely" — not wildly, ouch —

"and writing worse."

I'm running the Fanzine Lounge at Noreascon IV.

I had some trouble reading the word and had to guess.

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** June 26, 2004
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8093
mmwooster@yahoo.com

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 16. Two further thoughts on PublishAmerica:

- * Anyone who uses an email address that ends with "publishedauthors.net" is telling people that he really isn't an author, but a wannabe.
- * In my 29 years of book reviewing, I have reviewed three self-published books. I reviewed a book about the murder of Hillsdale College president George Roche's daughter-in-law because it was the only book on the subject. The author had published several real books. I reviewed Bob Skilnik's *The History of Beer and Brewing in Chicago Volume 2* because I had read and enjoyed Volume 1 (which came out from a real publisher). I reviewed James Payne's *A History of Force* because Payne, who had published eight books from trade and academic publishers, is a writer I like.

Note that in all three cases the authors I reviewed *had published professionally*. That's a signal to me that the book was worth my time.

Robert Kennedy: Thanks for your kind words about Eric Felten's *The Ruling Class*. That was the project where I pretended to be a Heritage Foundation policy analyst for a month (I even had an intern). Oddly enough, it's the only project I've worked on where I don't have a signed copy from the author. I think this is because he hates to admit he used ghostwriters.

Janine Stinson: What I mean by a fanzine that's primarily about sf is that it mostly consists of book reviews and commentary about sf and fantasy. *SF Commentary* and *The New York Review of Science Fiction* are two examples. *Emerald City* is also primarily about sf. Fannish fanzines are primarily about fans' lives and fan history. *Plokta* is a good example of a fannish fanzine.

Am I correct that *The Turnstile* is primarily a drawing-room drama where Antarctic explorers occasionally enter? If it is, Mason used the same device in *The Four Feathers*. I was hoping to read a rousing African adventure, but instead I got a book where characters periodically went to the country home of the repressed heroine and tell her how Our Hero is suffering for her in Egypt and Sudan. *The Four Feathers* was more oblique and less straightforward than I would have liked; I found it quite disappointing.

Aside from the "occasionally" — **Captain Rames** is on-stage for maybe two-thirds of the book — pretty much so. The Fishers' biography of Shackleton lists a few

other novels from that period about polar exploration, some of which seem pretty silly.

— JTM

From: **Lloyd Penney** August 21, 2004
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2
penneys@allstream.net

Many thanks for Vol. 3 No. 4, WN 16 of *Alexiad*. Always a pleasure to receive, always a challenge to respond to. I will try my best. . .

I have tried Stephen King . . . not my cup of tea. Then again, I've never been a fan of horror films or stories. I could always tell my story about how I met Stephen King at the 1982 Chicago Worldcon . . . I think . . . there was someone at Chicon IV (my first Worldcon) dressed as the Jordy Verrill character from Creepshow, with parsley pasted over most of his face, and his badge read "Stephen King, Bangor, Maine". He said it wasn't actually the author, but he registered as King to make the costume complete. I've never known for sure if it was a fan or Stephen King, going incognito as himself.

Ah, the Boston Worldcon . . . far out of our reach now. I have just ended a lengthy period of unemployment, and in that period, we sold our Boston memberships to get a little money back. On Monday, August 23, I start at Stronco, the biggest company in the Toronto area serving the AV and furnishing needs of the convention industry. I shall assume the position of Sales and Marketing Assistant, which is a freshly created position. I think it was a combination of editorial skills, convention experience and contacts within the industry that got me the job. . . now to see how I do in it. With luck, this will help us recover financially.

Hm . . . the copy of *Clockwork Orange* I have is a 1973 Penguin Book, and it is missing that final chapter, which I never knew was missing. Zammechat! Never did viddy that. Which editions have the three parts with seven chapters each?

Well, the original publication, of course. All the ones in the past few years, too — in fact, I think the 20-chapter edition is dead and buried.

I agree with Trinlay Khadro . . . I cannot abide reality shows. See my comments in my loc in this issue. These shows are overly competitive, or embarrassing, or degrading, or a complete sham, or a combination of all. There certainly do not entertain me, but they obviously entertain a demographic of the viewing public I am not in contact with. And, just as well.

E.B. Frohvet mentions there are many fanzines that have not seen light in some time, and may never be seen again. I received issue 143 of *File 770* just a few days ago, and it's a pleasure to see, even after an absence of a year or slightly more. I miss *Mimosa* . . . He is also right that we need a central news-type fanzine to keep us tied together. *File 770* has done a great job of that, but Mike is more than busy right

now, raising a cute kid named Sierra. (Pictures in the latest issue. Bet she's got more aunts and uncles than she knows what to do with.)

Our comments on the future of fandom . . . I wish we could look ahead as fondly as we look back. So much of our tradition is based on what some people said and did 40 years ago or more. It would be good to keep some tradition, but we do a poor job of communicating those traditions to what few successors there may be, and their attitude is to say, "Who cares?"; and create some new traditions. Our generation calls them fakefans, and the lack of communication continues. (Some of this unfriendly attitude may be detailed in Martin Morse Wooster's letter. I do not refer to any fan in particular, but this attitude has been evident in fandom for generations, and I, for one, am tired of it. It's not constructive in any way.) I can only hope that some kind of communication continues amongst future fans, but how available it will be, I don't know. Fandom, the proud, the lonely, the one or two . . . By the way, the poll was actually quite interesting. We tried to conduct the poll according to the rules laid down by Elections Canada, but those rules were worded in such a way as to be totally flexible in some cases, totally rigid in others, and totally unexplainable in yet more. We tried our best, wrapped our poll up as best as we could, and we did our part for democracy in action. Got \$135 for my troubles, too.

Bill Breuer makes a reference to the X Prize. Yvonne and I took the opportunity earlier this month to go and see the WildFire Mk6, the capsule the Toronto-based daVinci Project intends to launch in early October in Kindersley, Saskatchewan. Brian Feeney, mission leader and intended pilot, is still preparing to launch. He may yet get the jump on Burt Rutan, you never know.

You're welcome, Marty . . . I wish the artwork with Snoopy cursing the Red Planet was mine to reproduce, but alas not. Still, it was fun to pass along. And, greetings to AL duPisani. I understand about taking time out to get affairs in order; I'm doing that right now. Haven't heard much from SFSA lately.

Is the Worldcon too expensive? We think it is; we also have the exchange rate to overcome, too. Is it uninviting? Depends; my own attitudes towards it stem from the terrible way we were treated by the Torcon senior committee, and the terrible job they did running something they'd had no experience running before. I wish there was the opportunity for all fanzine fans to get together and enjoy a weekend of chat. I know, some would say there are, named Ditto and Corflu, but sometimes, they are just too far away or too expensive, or some people go to one, but won't go to the other. We're not the friendliest crowd, even to each other.

Time to get this into the e-mail for some lightspeed delivery. Many thanks for another good issue, always looking for more.

Best wishes with the new job.

— JTM

From: **Evelyn C. Leeper** August 22, 2004
80 Lakeridge Drive, Matawan, NJ
07747-3839 USA
cleeper@optonline.net
<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

Monty Python's Life of Brian as a Gnostic classic?! I wonder if the Pythons did this intentionally.

Also, in your response to Martin Wooster, you say, "They could award Retro-Hugoes for 1929 or 1904." No, they couldn't, because Retro-Hugos (I prefer without the 'e', and so does the WSFS Constitution — see below) can only be awarded for years in which there was a Worldcon but no Hugos were awarded:

Section 3.13: Retrospective Hugos. A Worldcon held 50, 75, or 100 years after a Worldcon at which no Hugos were presented may conduct nominations and elections for Hugos which would have been presented at that previous Worldcon. Procedures shall be as for the current Hugos. Categories receiving insufficient numbers of nominations may be dropped. Once retrospective Hugos have been awarded for a Worldcon, no other Worldcon shall present retrospective Hugos for that Worldcon.

Spoilsports.

— JTM

From: **David A. Herrington** August 22, 2004
2515 Berwick Drive, Box A-10,
Shelbyville, IN 46176-3163 USA

Since the topic of vanity presses has come up in *Alexiad*, I have a story to tell. At Inconjunction this year, we had a author named Jeffery Testin selling and signing copies of his first novel *T'top*. He had his own table in the hallway and stayed there all weekend. The promo sheet intrigued me enough that I decided to take a chance on it. It cost me 22 dollars and was in trade paperback. It was published by American Book Publishing, out of Salt Lake City, an outfit that I never have heard of. I read it from cover to cover. I didn't find anything wrong with it as a novel.

I would like you to do me a favor and read it for possible review in *Alexiad*. My reading tastes are less discriminating than yours. I have a complete run of the American edition of *gasp* *Perry Rhodan* and thoroughly enjoyed it. I would like to hear your take on this novel and publishing company. I would benefit from your analysis.

Dale Speirs: I read Tim Lane's copy of *Opuntia*.

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 22, 2004
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com

Another great collection of book reviews! Your continuing review of *A Clockwork Orange* continues to impress me, and it's interesting

about the missing last chapter in the American edition and thus the movie . . .

Lots of intriguing stories and non-fiction books out there. (I enjoyed the pirate persona in your review of the William Dampier (naturalist and pirate) biography, btw.) A book that sounded really fascinating, though, is *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* by Thaddeus Holt. Interesting tidbits about Japanese intelligence (very poor) and the best Axis intelligence service (the Italian army's Servizio de Informazione Militare); and I liked the way you interspersed the quotes by Sun Tzu and Ping Fa (The Art of War). Or were those from the book?

No, the quotes from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (Ping Fa) weren't in *The Deceivers*, they were just appropriate.

And thanks for reviewing *The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code*. Lots of enlightening background information. (I believe that everytime you see a movie or read a book like that, you should read up on the subject.)

Re:LOCs (Black Stallion, Misty, etc.). Lisa, did you get to see the top 50 animal stars on *Animal Planet* Saturday night? The Black Stallion, Trigger, Flicka, Black Beauty, and more were on the list. Lots of great footage. Toto was #1. What I like about Toto, besides being cute, is that he was used as a character, not a prop.

Unfortunately, no. I don't watch *Animal Planet* that much. It's interesting but they have a tendency to broadcast guilt trips in the form of cute shelter animals in desperate need of homes.

— LTM

Lisa, I agree with you about stuffing pets. They're gone, and you have an opportunity to give another animal a good, loving home. Spend the money on the living.

Re: reviews. Writers don't understand that editors and reviewers don't have to read the whole thing, which reminds me that I watched only pieces of *Raptor Island* on the SciFi channel last night . . .

Eric Lindsay: The Australian government mandated a change to HDTV?! Incredible!! (I read recently in *Consumer Reports* that there are not enough High Definition channels here to make having an HDTV worthwhile — for most people.) *The Prisoner* is on BBCAmerica now, btw. Thanks to E. B. Frohvet for adding proof texting to my vocabulary. (But how can I use it in a sentence for practice?) And thanks, Mr. Major, for the additional info.

Re: Jasper Fforde's books: *The Eyre Affair* and sequels. Everyone is recommending them. They are on my list of books to get and read. (Thanks to Dainis Bisenieks for the other recommendations too.)

As usual, lots of history in the reviews and in

the LOCs, along with the fun stuff. Btw, there's a *Firefly* website: *Serenity*: <http://www.serenitymovie.com/> And Tinker Tailor Soldier Jedi was an enjoyable ending to this issue.

Just wait until they do "Kenobi's People"!

— JTM

We were on the west side — the quiet side — of Hurricane Charley, so we didn't even lose power. Lots of communities nearby and south of us got hit hard. The aftermath coverage in the paper and on TV has been fantastic. Seeing all the volunteers helping out and the donations pouring in is heartwarming.

In case you're interested, here are some of my recent publications:

I have a non-fiction book coming out in October: *Building a Cool House for Hot Times without Scorching the Pocketbook*.

My short story, "The Princess Quest", is in the CyberPulp anthology, *Kings of the Night II*: <http://www.fictionwise.com/ebooks/eBook20541.htm>

My short story, "To The Last Drop!", is in the summer issue of *pseudo science fiction*:

<http://pseudofs.tripod.com/summer04/id3.html>

I have a little piece, "Writing SF", which is actually a writing panel report adapted from my Oasis 17 con report (which is online and upcoming in the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin* this month), in the August issue of the SF and Fantasy Workshop newsletter.

Another article, upcoming in the SF and Fantasy Workshop newsletter, and also adapted from my con report, is "Designing Space Ships", based on a presentation by Mike Conrad, a designer, illustrator, and writer. (It was written and submitted with his permission and input.)

My audiobook, *Sugar Time*, which is available from Project Pulp:

http://projectpulp.com/item_detail.asp?bookID=989785639

now has audio excerpts which can be accessed at Project Pulp.

From: **Colleen R. Cahill** August 26, 2004
5112 Huron Street, College Park, MD
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ccah@earthlink.net

The August, 2004 *Alexiad* has brightened my week. After a frustrating time dealing with a scanner at work, it is great to relax and read some good words.

To Trinlay, Pyewacket tends to let us sleep in, as I leave out dry food all the time and only give her wet food at night. With no expectation of morning feeding, she is a pleasant puss.

To George Price: My apologies on the misuse of hoards: even the best spell checker

won't catch that sort of thing. But I should note that my name has 2 L's (Colleen). :-)

To E.B., Henry Welch contacted me and I am now enjoying my first issue of *The Knarley Knews*. Thank you for the introduction! And Henry, thank you for the fanzine!

Congratulations to Jason Burnett and his wife on their new son: I hope you have a new fan in the house.

My sympathies to Robert Kennedy on losing Reba. It is always hard to have to do the right thing with an aging cat: always remember the happy times and that you gave her a wonderful life.

Also to Robert, have you read *The Transitive Vampire: A Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager and the Doomed* by Karen Elizabeth Gordon? Truly a great word that is illustrated with examples that will have you rolling on the floor, as well as teaching you a lot about proper grammar. If you liked *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, you will also like Gordon's *The New Well Tempered Sentence: A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*.

To Joseph, no I don't remember a Klondike double chocolate ice cream bar, but I do remember buying frozen Zero bars. Do they still make them?

I believe so. I remember going out and getting a box of Klondike double chocolate bars (like regular Klondikes or Inupiat Pies, er Eskimo Pies®, but with chocolate ice cream instead of vanilla) when the new issue of *ElfQuest* came in.

— JTM

To Mary Helgesen, I saw *The Passion*, mostly out of curiosity: I heard about it being anti-Semitic. I am Catholic, but did not find it to be negative to Jews and I agree with the statement about the film making me aware of my sins and what price was paid for them.

To Al du Pisani, I send prayers your way that your work situation gets better soon.



From: **Milt Stevens** August 29, 2004
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA
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The conclusion of Joseph's article on *A*

Clockwork Orange in *Alexiad* V3#4 ended a quite excellent article. As I said, I hadn't been aware of the other ending for the book. Now that I am aware of it, I have mixed feelings about it. I liked the ending I was aware of quite well. I didn't think of it as a celebration of violence. I thought of it as a portrait of evil. What was the exact nature of Alex's evil. He totally lacked empathy for his fellow humans. That's an entirely believable picture of evil. Empathy isn't a thing you are likely to grow if you don't have it already. Lacking it is basically a failure of imagination.

As Joseph describes the alternate ending, Alex seems to be only concerned about himself. Even a total monster has a certain degree of self interest. It doesn't sound like he had developed anything like empathy. I'm undoubtedly more suspicious than most, but I don't think Alex's moral conversion would persist for any amount of time. Really bad people are bad to the bone.

Thinking about *A Clockwork Orange* reminded me of another novel, *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene. *Brighton Rock* is also a portrait of evil about an English thug. The title needs an explanation for American readers. Brighton Rock is (or was) a type of candy cane which has the word Brighton imprinted all the way through it. No matter how many times you bite off a chunk the word Brighton still appears. The thug in this novel is known as Pinkie, and unlike Alex, Pinkie is a believing Catholic. Believing doesn't stop him from doing much of anything. At the beginning of the novel, his criminal career has extended to murder. Pinkie has grown up in the gutter, but believes his criminal career will someday bring him to a point of safety. Then he plans to go to confession and be forgiven for his sins. An additional detail about Pinkie is that he has a complete revulsion for the idea of sex. He gained this from living in close quarters all through his childhood and listening to his parents having sex every night. To cover the murder he has committed, he has to marry a woman to keep her from possibly testifying against him. For Pinkie, this is the final degradation. I think you may be able to see why Greene's novels are commonly referred to as theological thrillers. It's an outstanding novel, and I recommend it highly.

Before reading Lisa's article on Publish America, I hadn't thought much about POD publishing. I knew it existed, and one LASFS member told me he had published a book that way. He didn't mention the subject of the book. On thinking about it, POD sounds like a cure in search of a disease. It makes it easier for people to sort of have a book published. I don't think we were experiencing any shortage of published books before POD came on the scene. No matter what your interests may be, there are more books being published than you can possibly deal with. POD just adds to the tremendous supply of things we'll never get around to reading anyway.

I was surprised to see the *Fantasy Amateur* mentioned in *Alexiad*. Maybe Dale Speirs has dark intentions of recruiting you into FAPA. I think it's a fine idea, but I don't give it much

chance of succeeding. People who publish frequent genzines usually aren't too likely to be active in apas as well. Of course, at the speed Joseph seems to do things, it would only take him ten minutes a quarter to read a typical three to four hundred page mailing and do eight pages of mailing comments. However, that would still require that Joseph had those ten minutes still available.

As I have said before, I remember when the apa for the waitlist for FAPA (the waitlist being the people who could join as soon as someone dropped out) itself had a waitlist. Now FAPAns are begging people, even me, to join, How the mighty have fallen!
Good seeing you at Worldcon.

— JTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** August 15, 2004
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,
PA 19143-3310 USA

The e-mail address with my LoC was not actually cited in that letter and has ceased to be. There is another which is my son's, but never mind that.

In fiction, English (in our case) *represents* the language used by the character — or additionally, the narrator — where that language is not English, or is a version of it remote in time. Going back two centuries, possibly more, an author, to be convincing, ought to study the idiom of the times and to eschew gross anachronisms. What's more: that "scale of one to ten" is an Americanism, isn't it? There are idioms, and also there are terms of reference, which simply should not be applied to the wrong time and place. I remember a subediting job on an anthology, where one story had a late 19th century English narrator whose language was thick with Americanisms. I didn't want to start altering wholesale, but I could not in the end resist changing "locomotive" and "passenger cars" to "engine" and "carriages." (See the first page of *Zuleika Dobson*.)

See also *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Two novels in which the language of a past time was used with success are *Wife to Mr Milton* by Robert Graves and *The Devil in Velvet* by John Dickson Carr. Graves admitted to being caught out with God tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, not attested until a century later.

My favorite horrible example remains *Out on Any Limb*, an early novel by John Myers Myers. It's set around 1600, and the language is the most incredible farrago.

How should a first-person narrator narrate? Many of my favorite books are, in fact, first-person, and I've found nothing to fasten on. But there are some I have *tried* to read which are in novelese. What might be perfectly okay if described by an omniscient author strikes a false note when the first-person narrator is doing it.

A case in point: Steven Saylor's Roman whodunits. The bits of scene-setting do not emanate from the personality and the interests of the narrator. In the case of Marcus Didius Falco, they do. He is alive to what is around him, either in detestation or in love. He is consciously fond of Rome, as Vimes is of Ankh-Morpork.

And of course it is part of the game that he should be *exactly* like a contemporary private eye in his attitudes and his idiom. We *enjoy* his most anachronistic locutions . . . though even I think the author should have drawn the line at stomach acids, blood pressure, and adrenalin (all used in reference to states of feeling).

I have my doubts, incidentally, about sunflower seeds. Doesn't the cultivated sunflower of today derive from a New World plant?

The second most famous corn cob in literature occurs in Arthur Koestler's *The Gladiators*, about the revolt of Spartacus.

I thought it sort of amusing that the movie *Spartacus* (starring Issur Densky and Bernie Schwartz, maybe they should have done the Zealots' Revolt with Kirk as Elizear ben-Ya'ir and Tony as Josephus) should be based on novels by Arthur Koestler (a very ardent ex-Communist) and Howard Fast (a very ardent fellow traveler).

A related example just came to my attention in Jeffrey Ford's *The Physiognomy*, a tale set in World Elsewhere. Its detestable narrator tells of seeing (in a dream) a man pissing and then closing the zipper of his trousers. What's Wrong With This Picture? That in a world radically unlike our own there should be known an invention that was painstakingly perfected, mass-produced to precise tolerances by specialized machinery, and known by a lower-cased trade name. As a watch (in the old argument) implies a watchmaker, so does this imply the like. It has become even more difficult to read this book as I wait for another brick to drop. I can put up with, let us say, the inevitability and normality of men wearing tubelike garments between waist and ankles. The alternative is that far too much must be described. However . . .

I'm reminded of Blackadder's Christmas Carol which has Ebenezer Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson, of course!) seeing himself as Commander-in-chief of the armed forces of a stellar empire with Baldrick (Tony Robinson) as his groveling flunkey, or vice versa, depending on a choice he makes. Would the very proper Victorian gentleman he was then even comprehend such concepts?

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094754/>
One of the other actors in the show was Stephen Fry, author of

Making History.

<http://www.stephenfry.com>
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000410/>
— JTM

From: **Brad W. Foster** August 23, 2004
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA
bwfoster@juno.com

Looks like it's time to replenish my fillo file for your selections, so enclosed there should be three new pieces (one-time use only, I'll keep sending you new stuff as you use em up, and prefer they not be printed a second time), if I remember to put them in the envelope. So much going on around here these days, I'm lucky to keep anything straight. The latest burst of activity has been a small army of plumbers turning our back and side yards into a reproduction of World War I trench warfare, all in an attempt to take out all of the old collapsing sewer lines and put in brand new stuff. This includes digging tunnels large enough that a man can crawl through, running some 45 or more total feet completely under our foundations. It's all horribly expensive, but watching these guys working, I definitely feel they are working hard for the money. Now we'll get to see how long it takes to get anything green back in the yard, since the parts that weren't dug up completely have been smothered with small mountains of that dug-out soil.

Thanks for the response on my question about handicapping Fan Artists. Sometimes it seems to be the one category that gets the least attention, which has always been fine with me, sitting here doing my funny little doodles now and then and sending them off to fanzines was always just for fun. And actually, most of the nominees have been fanzine-printed fans, it's just the occasional name like Wu that seems to pop up out of nowhere when folks realize it really doesn't take much effort to get enough nominations to get on the ballot. Me, I'm hoping Stiles gets it this year. (Especially be cool since his name only recently got back on the ballot after having been nominated the last time at the end of the sixties! This is an artist who has been contributing quality work to fanzines for decades, and a little official recognition is long overdue.) (And if not Steve, then Sue certainly deserves a second one!)

You got 26 nominations, were fifth in first-place votes (41 as compared to Frank's 328 (!)), but came in fourth when all the votes were tallied.

— JTM

Been a slow year for art so far, but I'm hoping to get a bit more time at the drawing table this fall. I've got a couple of fannish pieces I've promised for quite a while, so better get my act in gear!

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** September 4, 2004
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
20882-3422 USA

catsmeouch@yahoo.com

I'm sitting with Mimosa (the feline) while the Lynchies are in Boston, figuring I'll check the Noreascon 4 site periodically over the next few hours to see if the Hugo Results are out yet. So . . . while I'm waiting . . .

Am I really in the
Alexiad lettercol...?



Really nice to see so many Gilliland cartoons!

He got fourteen nominations
for Best Fan Artist. You got ten.

My "portable" (260 pounds!) generator has arrived, but I still need the electrician to find the circuits I selected with a power box and then *that* to an outside line box. THEN I need to learn how to start the generator. That sucker is **LOUD!** If I get hit with another hurricane similar to Isabel, the basement will **NOT** be flooded, if I can help it.

The fresh runner idea applies (perhaps a bit more obviously) to the Olympics — people understand the tiredness of someone who just ran the Marathon then comes back to run the 400 m (I just guessed at distances) versus the "fresh" runner at 400 m.

Robert Kennedy — "Thank you for your support." — seriously, I do appreciate your comments, I DO find it incredible that fans oohed, ahed, and drooled over **Alan White's** plethora of art these past few years, and, yet, did NOT nominate him, while Teddy's appearances dropped (he has a good excuse: writing a SF novel).

Alan White got one nomination
less than you did.

Marty — *that's cheating* — but yes, Nellybelle was Pat Brady's jeep . . . then Bullet the dog; of course, Trigger and Buttermilk. . .

This is of course not the Pat
Brady who does **Rose is Rose**.

(Almost time to go to ✓ the site and see if anything is listed by 9 p.m. — probably not.)

I'll try to remember to toss in some fillos. Unfortunately the envelope in which I store completed pieces appears to have been damaged (I know I had a *series* of four pieces meant to go as a unit and only one remains . . .) — so I need to work on a few more.

Gotta go check . . . nope, nothing, I was so hoping that live coverage meant "current" but I guess not — will check later.

Sigh — almost 10 p.m. and I **know** at least some of the Hugos have been awarded — guess

it's all or nothing, so I may have to wait until tomorrow.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Sept. 11, 2004
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About *Clockwork Orange*, Anthony Burgess claims Alex was using his own free will when he decided to give up the droog life, because he was getting older. However, he wasn't using his own free will when he went straight, because Ludovico conditioned him not to be violent. This doesn't compute. In both cases, Alex's behavior was caused: once by conditioning and the other time by age. *Clockwork Orange* may have made an argument for nice determinism. Change from getting older is more natural and nicer. Also, more other aspects of Alex's personality are congenial to it. Nonetheless, Alex's behavior was determined both times. Anthony Burgess, like everyone else, doesn't have a clear conception of what free will is.

It was the difference between
human development and being a
machine, between being an orange
and being a clockwork orange.

About Joe's review of *The Final Countdown*, it works for me that science fiction goes outside of mundane reality while mundane fiction doesn't. I differ with Joe in this: mundane reality does not have to be changed permanently. The idea behind my favorite '50s show, *Captain Z-Ro*, was that Captain Z-Ro made sure no one changed the great events of history. He did this week after week, with his time travel machine. While it was probably bad science fiction, I deem it science fiction.

Twenty-six episodes shown
from December 18, 1955 to June
1956, in syndication and apparently
earlier as a locally-produced show.
Roy Steffins, who played Captain
Z-Ro, also wrote the scripts.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0147753/>
<http://home.earthlink.net/~joesarno/tvscifi/captainz.htm>

However, I would add something to the definition of science fiction. It has to have a connotation of science. Although it is outside mundane reality, it is not outside of science. Otherwise, it is fantasy. To the extent a novel is science fiction, everything has a scientific explanation. We may never learn what it is. I gather SF writers never explain faster than light travel anymore. Also, the explanation may be bogus. It may be the Shaver Mysteries, Pyramidology or Aromatherapy. Or that molecules go mad. Still, everything has to have a scientific explanation.

About Joe's review of *Rivers of Gold*, he points out Columbus's claim that he lorded over the Carribean savages with his knowledge of eclipses. It was a widespread belief in Europe that a civilized European could do that. I do not

know how powerful that knowledge ever made us. Eclipses are not that frequent. I heard that the British thought they could do that with the Zulus at the Battle of Isandlawana in 1879. They knew a partial eclipse would take place during the battle, and they figured the Zulus would flee. However, the eclipse did not faze the Zulus, and the vastly outnumbered British got beaten soundly.

I have to admit when I went on the web to verify this memory, the one site I could find downplayed the eclipse.

The *Washing of the Spears* (by Donald R. Morris (1965), the definitive history of the Zulu War) doesn't even mention the eclipse. Morris makes more of the lack of ready ammunition.

About the Priory of Sion, the word Sion is nothing arcane; it means Zion in French. There was in fact an Order of Sion during the Crusades that built its big monastery on Mount Zion. However, I am not convinced that any of the orders with the word Sion in them had anything to do with the Priory of Sion. Instead, I suspect Dr. Steven Misrach hits the nail on the head on his website with this alternative explanation: the Priory of Sion was the creation of the Czech author, Prokop Chocholousek (1819-64), in the mid-19th Century. Prokop was supposed to have written a historical novel where the Priory was behind the creation of the Templars. Of course, Pierre Plantard read the novel and paraded this fantasy as fact. Only that explanation makes sense to me.

There is an irony in the Priory of Sion mythology. Pierre Plantard was a would-be Nazi collaborator, and I am sure the idea of Mary marrying Jesus was originally supposed to be right wing. In Pierre's ego-sodden mind, there would have been no blasphemy. What he was doing was tracing his ancestry back to Jesus Christ. Of course, for the last several decades, a few religious liberals have discarded the Plantard hagiography and concentrated on Mary marrying Jesus.

About Josephus and Christ; I do not know whether Texas sized brags would be evidence that a passage where he mentions Christ was authentic. They are pretty prominent in Josephus and any forger would be sure to insert them. On the other hand, the passage on Christ could be an interpolation: a sentence here, a word there. In short, the passages would contain a lot of Josephus no matter what. By the way, I also heard there is an Islamic version of Josephus extant. There Josephus does not think that highly of Jesus.

Them's mighty big
words for one little loc!



The Penguin edition I have summarizes the "Slavonic Additions" which seem to be pretty substantial. Some of the comments are highly critical of the Romans. The "Texas-sized brag" I was thinking of is: "Moreover it is stated that he [Jesus] could not have been stolen away, as guards were posted round his tomb, 30 Romans and 1,000 Jews."

— Joseph bar-Thomas

In his reply to Eric Lindsay's letter, Joseph discusses how he broke the frame to his glasses and had to get a new one. When I have broken the frame on my glasses, it was because a pin would work its way out. It happened several times a years. However, a friend of mine had an idea how to stop that. Take some epoxy, mix it, put a dab on the very tip of a toothpick, and glue the top of the pin to the frame. There is not enough epoxy to ruin the glasses. My friend claimed that would be sufficient to seal it. The suggestion worked until today. A year isn't bad. That's it.

From: **Robert Kennedy** September 17, 2004
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Thank you for Vol. 3, No. 4.

The Hummingbird Feeder was hung up on August 18. I saw the first Hummingbird the next morning. Now there's five or so.

Lisa: Based on you commentary concerning *The Gunslinger* by Stephen King, I obtained it from my local library. The book I obtained is actually titled *The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger* and is composed of five stories previously published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* between 1978 and 1981. Interesting that King refers to the "... incomplete enchanter" (p. 86). There appear to be at least six books in *The Dark Tower* series. That's too many and I don't plan to obtain the rest. I'll obtain *From a Buick 8* later.

Joe: I voted for Nippon 2007. They've earned it. Very unlikely that I'd go. But, you never know. I haven't been to Japan since 1957 while in the Navy.

In your review of *Weapons of Choice*, you make reference to the movie *The Final Countdown* (1980). I have this movie on video tape and enjoy watching it periodically. I've remarked on it here or elsewhere. Especially the comment by the female protagonist (a highly competent female assistant to a United States Senator in 1941) to the effect that if her looks get her in the door, then God help them.

They were listening to Jack Benny on Saturday night, though he was on Sunday Nights at Seven (by Jack Benny and his daughter, Joan; 1990). Well!
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080736/>

I put *The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code* by Carl E. Olson and Sandra Miesel (2004) on a note to obtain it from the library, and then lost the note. After reading your review, I attempted to obtain it from my local library or on Interlibrary Loan. No luck in finding it in any library I can access. So, I ordered it from Amazon.com along with *Breaking The Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everybody's Asking* by Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D. (Nelson Books, 2004) and *Secrets of the Code: The Unauthorized Guide to the Mysteries Behind The Da Vinci Code* edited by Dan Burstein (CDS Books, 2004).

When I read *The Da Vinci Code*, my thinking was that it is a good work of fiction and I thoroughly enjoyed it. This was especially the case since I have read most of the books on which Dan Brown obviously based his novel. I was very surprised when, on the ABC presentation *Jesus, Mary and Da Vinci: The Da Vinci Code* (November 3, 2003), Brown turned out to be a true believer. At least that is what he claims. There are numerous obvious flaws in *The Da Vinci Code* and Brown is wrong to claim that it is wholly based on historical fact.

During your review you make reference to *Stolen Valor: How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of its Heroes and its History* by B. G. Burkett and Glenna Whitley (1998). My copy is autographed by Burkett. I recommend the book highly.

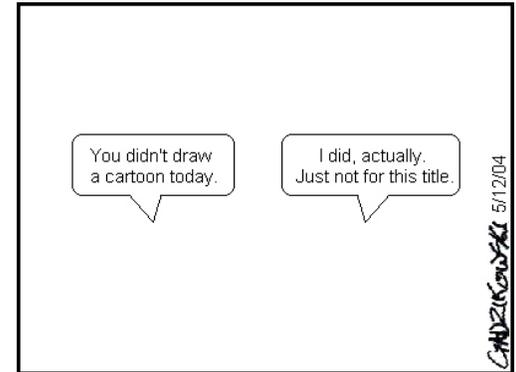
As I mentioned in Vol.2, No.6, *The Priory of Sion* has apparently been demolished (at least in its present incarnation) by Robert Richardson in his tract, *The Unknown Treasure: The Priory of Sion Fraud and The Spiritual Treasure of Rennes le Chateau* (North Star Publishing Group, 1998). That rather puts a damper on the subject. Although Olson and Miesel make reference to Richardson, this tract is not included in their Selected Bibliography.

The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code can definitely be considered the Roman Catholic response to *The Da Vinci Code*. (Given *Angels & Demons* and *The Da Vinci Code*, it is obvious that Dan Brown does not care for the Roman Catholic Church.) I did not read the book starting at the front and going to the end. Rather, I read various parts as they can all be read separately. I had problems with the authors coverage of The Knights Templar and Freemasonry. They should at least read *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry* (1989) and *Dungeon, Fire and Sword: The Knights Templar in the Crusades* (1991), both by John J. Robinson.

Breaking the Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everybody's Asking can be considered the Protestant answer to *The Da Vinci Code*. Darrell L. Bock "... is research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas ... a corresponding editor for *Christianity Today* and past president of the Evangelical Theological Society." This is a short book, just 188 pages. It is, nevertheless, very well written. I once again had a problem with the commentary on The Knights Templar. The Foreword is by Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., D. Phil., Dean, School of

Theology and Religious Studies and Katherine Drexel Professor, The Catholic University of America. Dr. Moloney says, concerning *The Da Vinci Code*: "I loved it!" But he "loved it" as a novel and states that it is a "myth" without "a leg to stand on ..."

I recommend both books for anyone interested in the subject.



I just started reading *Secrets of the Code: The Unauthorized Guide to the Mysteries Behind The Da Vinci Code*. It is 373 pages and seems like a great deal more. It has commentary, excerpts, and interviews with some 48 individuals on all sides of the issue. I may comment on it later.

There is an incredible website at <http://priory-of-sion.com/>. No, this is not the *Priory of Sion* itself. It is a site covering the subject and it is huge. Also, more information can be obtained by a Google search for "Priory of Sion" and "Priory of Sion Hoax".

An extraordinarily interesting subject. If the whole thing is a fraud, then a lot of people have invested a tremendous amount of time and effort to perpetrate the fraud.

Because they got such a satisfying return on investment, both financial and mental.

By the way, I gave copies of your review to some friends.

For the record, like the priest on the ABC Special, I do not have any problem with Jesus being married to Mary Magdalene or their having a child or children. I do not buy into the sacred feminine concept. The figure in Leonardo's painting of *The Last Supper* appears to be a female. I know several people who agree. Either Leonardo knew something or he is playing with us.

In your commentary "Hybrids", you quote Grant McCormick as saying, concerning a Toyota he once owned: "I have a toy Ota and someday I'll have a real one." Last year I purchased a Toyota Camry. It is an excellent car and definitely not a "toy Ota". *Consumer Reports* magazine has consistently over the years rated Toyotas as outstanding vehicles, which is basically the reason I purchased the Camry.

I read *Conquistador* by S. M. Stirling and it

is an excellent novel of Alternate History. But, then, I have liked all of his novels that I've read. If it were not for the fact that it was published in 2003, and I didn't read it until after sending in my *HUGO* nominations, I would have nominated it. Nevertheless, I did have some problems with it. First, he uses the word "gender" instead of "sex". I suppose I'll just have to get use to it. But, I doubt that people who moved to an alternate America in the 1940s would have used the word. Second, he indicates that in the alternate America, Alameda is an island (p. 170). In our America, Alameda is an island in San Francisco Bay just off Oakland. It is, however, a modern creation. It was created by a channel being dredged to create a passageway for ships. It would not have existed as an island in the alternate America. Third is something that always brings me to a grinding halt in reading and drives me up the wall. He has one of the protagonists use the following: "Roger, wilco, she said. Over and out . . ." (p. 426). That is horrible, terrible, completely incorrect radio usage. All these words are not used together. Roger means I understand. Wilco means I will obey an order. Over means it's the other person's turn to talk. Out means that's the end, no more talking. In the case in the book, the correct usage would probably have been "Roger, Out". Later (p. 567), Stirling uses the word "wilco" correctly even if radio was not involved. Many years ago I had a friendly exchange with John Dalmás on this subject as he had also used the expressions incorrectly in one of his novels.

I rented the movie *The Butterfly Effect* because the concept sounded interesting. A young man is able to change his past several times, hopefully for the better. But, it doesn't work. The final solution, while interesting, would not have the positive effect depicted in the movie. If you haven't seen it, don't bother. On my scale of 1-5, I gave it a 1.

Perhaps you should, then, rent Lola Rennt (Run Lola Run) which does that a lot better (reviewed in Alexiad II #2 (WN 8)).

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0130827/>

As for *The Butterfly Effect*, the comments I saw on it were decidedly mixed and I think I'll take your point.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0289879/>

Having greatly enjoyed *Lion's Blood* by Steven Barnes, I recently read the sequel, *Zulu Heart*. Another excellent novel. I did have to suspend the knowledge I've gained concerning Islam since 9/11. Anyway, it looks like the stage is set for a third book.

Until now, I never watched *Stargate* on the SciFi Channel, having seen the original movie and not being impressed. With the loss of some of the TV shows I've enjoyed, I decided to watch *Stargate Atlantis* as it was a brand new spin-off. At the same time I thought I'd try the new season of *Stargate SG1*. Somewhat to my surprise, I am enjoying both.

Joseph T Major: Following my plug for the

book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynn Truss (2003/2004), you comment that Arthur Hlavaty was once quoted as saying: "I would like to thank my parents, Ayn Rand and God." Oh for the lack of a comma. Perhaps Arthur should contact Dan Brown.

Taras Wolansky: You comment on the movie *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. You were disappointed, having read the books. Yes, I think that can often be the case. I felt the same way about the movie *Starship Troopers*. On my scale of 1-5, I gave it a 1.5. As for *Master and Commander*, having not read the books I just thoroughly enjoyed the movie

The Da Vinci Code may or may not be "preposterous nonsense". In any event, it can be read as fiction and, as such, is a good read.

Marty Helgesen: You are correct that AT&T will not seek any new residential customers, but not drop the ones it has. A few months ago I had reason to call AT&T customer service. I could not understand the woman who answered the phone. I said so and hung up. I waited a few days and tried again. This time I got a man who could be understood, but who had an English accent. I asked where he was. He said they were not allowed to tell us where they were. Obviously, they are in India. I cancelled my AT&T Long distance service and switched to Verizon, who has my local service. Now, all my phone service is with Verizon. I inherited a few shares of AT&T stock from my Mother. Since then they have sold off a number of their areas causing me much confusion. Even taking into account adjusting my Cost Basis, I was losing money. Recently, they offered to buy back the shares with, of course, a processing fee. On receiving the notice, I decided not to sell the stock because it ticks me off when companies want to buy back shares and charge a fee for doing so. Then I read that they have even more troubles and about their not taking any new residential customers. The notice time period had expired. But, a second notice came and they had extended the time period. I sold the stock back to AT&T and consider myself well rid of it. At least I can take the loss off on my Income Tax. And, in truth, I had paid nothing for the stock as it was an inheritance.

Since the election will be shortly, I would like to recommend three books. They should be of special interest to anyone still laboring under the illusion that elections in this country are, with a few exceptions, clean. First, a book that was just published, *Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy* by John Fund (2004, Encounter Books). Second, *Dirty Little Secrets: The Persistence of Corruption in American Politics* by Larry Sabato (1996), and last, if you want to read a book that includes vote fraud in Florida, *VOTESCAM: The Stealing of America*, by James M. Collier and Kenneth F. Collier (2000).

Anyone in Kentucky who believes elections are completely honest is either wilfully witless or

helplessly handicapped. Buying votes is one of the state pastimes, along with basketball.

— JTM

No information on whether or not my Navy ship reunion in Mobile, Alabama is still on. It is scheduled to start on September 30th.

I just noticed the following in the Acknowledgments section of *Stealing Elections*: "Martin Wooster stepped in to do some critical research; any author would benefit from his meticulous combing of libraries." By the way, Martin Morse Wooster is himself a published author. Two of his books are *The Great Philanthropists and the Problem of "Donor Intent"* (1994) and *Angry Classrooms, Vacant Minds: What's Happened to our High Schools?* (1994). There are others, but in my piles of books disaster areas, I am unable to find them right now. Perhaps Martin will furnish a list.

September 27, 2004

I will be in Mobile, Alabama for my Navy ship reunion.

From: **Taras Wolansky** September 29, 2004
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Well, I did make the Heinlein Dinner at Worldcon, though I fled before the speeches to see the Retro-Hugos. On the other hand, I ended up missing The Last FOSFAX Dinner, when I got to the scheduled restaurant two minutes late, and some thoughtless person (who shall remain nameless) had already taken the group somewhere else!

Comments to Brad Foster: "**I'm not as acquainted with Fan Artist nominees.**" As I've suggested before, each nominee should be given one page in a Progress Report to show off his best work from the previous year.

Continuing Commentary on Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*: "**Thanks to the activities of the porno producers there is now a 'NC-17' rating that means what 'X' used to.**" Actually, Siskel & Ebert campaigned for the NC-17 rating, because (I kid you not) the ill-repute of the X rating made for *not enough sex* in mainstream movies! In the end, the attempt failed: the NC-17 rating is avoided as well. Or did it fail: the R rating now smuggles in material which would once have earned an X or an NC-17.

George W. Price: Georgette Heyer learned to write in the Regency idiom by reading deeply into the published diaries and correspondence of the time. (Much as C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian steeped themselves in the *Naval Chronicle*.) Her imitators learned to write Regency novels by reading Georgette Heyer! Not surprisingly, the second-generation copy is inferior.

Which is what we are seeing in fantasy; Tolkien read deeply in Anglo-Saxon and Norse legend. By

now we have got to (or declined to) books written by people who read books written by people who read books written by Marion Zimmer Bradley and Terry Brooks.

There's also the serious commercial problem that Heyer's accurate rendition of Regency cant and slang puts demands on the reader. While I find her language delicious, occasionally even I wish for a Regency dictionary! (The sheer alienness of the world Heyer creates is probably why the overlap between her fans and SF/F readers.) Part of the romance novel-reading public is not fully literate; take a look at a Barbara Cartland novel sometime.

Alexis Gilliland: "Why did the Romans arrest [Jesus]?" The Romans were interested in one thing only, that Judea pay lots of taxes to Rome; and, therefore, that there be no disorders that might interfere with economic activity and tax collecting. To the Pharisees, on the other hand, Jesus was not just a "theological competitor", but a blasphemer. They treated him no worse than the Catholic Church later treated false messiahs. (According to an article in *Skeptic*, parts of the Talmud written in the first two centuries of the Roman Empire take the attitude, "Yes, we did it — and we're proud!")

"Taras . . . goes with the Gospels . . . but also finds nothing wrong with [Mel] Gibson impurgating his movie with the visions of a nineteenth-century nun." What I wrote was, "The Gospels say Jesus was scourged, not flayed! This seems to be based upon the dubious visions of a 19th century French nun." Alexis, this may come as a great shock, but when people would describe your arguments and ideas as "dubious", thousands and thousands of times over the past 20 years, they were not expressing agreement!

However, it's been suggested to me that I've been too hard on the film. That the Roman torturers overdid it, for example, would explain why they had to dragoon somebody to help Jesus carry the cross. (Cf. Darrell Schweitzer: "So maybe the soldiers did get carried away.") Still, the person who told me that could not explain why Jesus is shown carrying the whole cross instead of just the crossbar.

N.B.: As an atheist, I don't "[go] with the Gospels". As historical sources, they leave much to be desired. My point was that, to Mel Gibson, they are divinely inspired. If the Gospels present the Pharisees and the Jewish mob unfavorably, as a devout, old-style Catholic he can only do the same.

Darrell Schweitzer: "The Pilate we know from the historian Josephus was a resolute and brutal man, who would have crucified first and asked questions later." On the other hand, there is an arguably authentic passage in Josephus which describes how the Pharisees talked Pilate into executing Jesus. It's not implausible; to the Romans, Jesus would be just another anonymous country preacher.

The vanity press author's "worst nightmare is that a competent critic might actually review his book." I think most of them would be ecstatic about the recognition — even if there is

not a single phrase that can be taken out of context! The vanity author could identify himself with all the famous authors who got bad reviews from their contemporaries.

Eric Lindsay: You didn't see Gibson's *Passion* because of "No belief, and no desire to support any activity that may potentially raise any interest in a religion (any religion) I wish would die out." I'm an atheist, but I recognize that "nothing can't beat something". If Christianity dies out, it will most likely be replaced by Islam. This is happening already, in Western Europe.

Like the reports about neighborhoods in Sweden (Sweden!?) where ambulances can't go without a police escort. Or the school in Denmark (Denmark!?) where no Danish is spoken. Bernard Lewis calls it "Eurabia". This is not likely to be a cute warm fuzzy "Eurabian Nights" society, either, but a Wahhabi one.

— JTM

Trinlay Khadro: "It indeed seems unlikely that [George W.] Bush has a 91 IQ." To put it mildly! That story in the political sphere is comparable to a perpetual motion scheme in science: strong evidence that one is an ignoramus in the field in question.

Lloyd Penney: You speak of "going to a Michigan convention about 15 years ago, and finding a single-serving can of pork brains in the con suite." I got a friend who travels in the South to buy me a can of "Pork Brains in Milk", which I leave in the pantry to gross people out. Interesting scientific point: mammalian brains appear to be made mostly of cholesterol. Or, at any rate, the cholesterol content of one serving is 1100% of the daily limit. (No, that's not a typo!)

Actually, I think veal dishes in milk are more sickening than pork brains in milk. That's adding insult to injury.

— LTM

Al du Pisani: I was also "deeply disappointed" by Lois McMaster Bujold's *A Civil Campaign*, except that I knew it immediately. One flaw that stands out is that Miles, flatly contradicting the character we thought we knew, behaves as one without integrity. It's as if a Supreme Court Justice tried to fix somebody's parking tickets. Also, the armsmen were never very well developed characters, but they always had their dignity. Until now.

From: **Marty Helgesen** September 30, 2004
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I see that Joe uses the exclamation "by Joe". I suspect the influence of Count Felix von Luckner. No, I didn't remember his name. I read about him in the late fifties. However, I

did remember Lowell Thomas' name. It was easy to check library catalogs online and get his name.

Yes, I read his *Count Lückner The Sea Devil* (1927) at a very early, corruptible age. Later on, reading more balanced books like *The Kaiser's Pirates* by John Walter (1994), I got a more interesting view. The bit about sailing a captured ship into Rio de Janeiro to buy more supplies, for example . . .

This issue has several fascinating reviews of books that look worth reading. All I need is for my requisition for 96 hour days to be granted, but while waiting I'll try to squeeze in at least some of them. Unfortunately, most of the reviews do not have comment hooks that I can use.

Joe correctly says that a problem with recreations of ancient journeys is the explorers know there is something there. However, a main purpose of recreations is to show that it was possible to make the journey. The fact that modern explorers have knowledge and emergency back-up technology that the original travelers did not have does not affect that.

But it does make a difference in how they navigate. Like I said, those drift simulations of the South Pacific showed that no one could drift any further from South America than to the Galapagos.

— JTM

I see that I really did say I had "replaced" the April issue. I meant to say I had misplaced it. As I've said elsewhere, I'd fire me as my typist if I didn't work so cheaply. Because I had misplaced it I had not located it for the June issue. Later I unpapered it. (Well, it wasn't buried under earth.)

From: **AL du Pisani** October 2, 2004
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24 September is a public holiday in South Africa. This year it fell on a Friday. In Pretoria, on that day, there was an Aerospace and defence expo, with an airshow. So I planned to visit my sister in Pretoria, and have a nice long weekend, with airshow and some low key relaxing.

Unfortunately, some criminal nearly sunk all my plans. On Thursday 23 September, I had already loaded everything I planned to take along in my bakkie, and was just ready to leave on an errand before going to work, when I noticed a disturbance in the cab. This was when I realised that somebody had broken in and stole the radio/tape, and just about everything inside not nailed down. This person had gained entry by bending the passenger side door until there was enough space to fit in a hand, and then popped the lock.

Luckily there was not too much damage, and I could still drive around, and I had to place my plans on hold until I had reported this occurrence to the Police. And then had to contact my insurance people for fixing and replacing what had been stolen and damaged, respectively.

To say that I was in a lousy mood, once all of this had to greater or lesser extent taken been care of, and I had spent a day that did not want to end at work, is a bit of an understatement. So it was after dark that I got to my sister, for a quiet long weekend.

But then things mellowed out a bit. For the first time in months I could just sit around and talk, to somebody that knows me well enough. And after a decent night's sleep, I could look at weapons and aircraft, and relax that way. There were some aircraft of the USA at the show. I have never experienced exactly how huge a C5 Galaxy is, until I walked around and under one.

Many years ago, while driving from Hopkinsville past Fort Campbell, the army base, I saw a C-5 Galaxy coming in for a landing, flying right over the road. Imagine a skyscraper falling out of the sky towards you.

Some other interesting sights: I have been informed that the second largest air force in Africa is in private ownership in Cape Town. Some of the aircraft were there for the air show. As well as a Mirage III, in private ownership and on the SA Civil registry.

But most of the show was for governments buying arms, and a lot of the exhibitors had packed up and gone on the two days open to the public. Even so I had heard and seen some interesting things, and will probably carry on visiting these expos in future.

Later that day my sister from Upington arrived for her visit with my other sister. And for most of the next day I could just visit and relax. A good thing. Since it is just my family, friends and congregation that is keeping me sane. Work continues to frustrate me, and my looking for new jobs have so far not had any responses.

I do not know how much of that is because of Government interference, because the big word currently active in the workplace is "charters". Just about every niche of the economy have had a charter produced for it, explaining how they will in future make sure that the workplace mirrors the racial makeup of South Africa. This to be at every level of the workplace, and at every pay-grade. As a result there is reluctance to employ white males, as that would impact on the companies performance according to the charter.

I have mentioned previously that from my experiences while on holiday in deep rural areas, I had worries about what is happening there economically. When I mentioned this to a guy I know, reasonably high up at a bank, he said that I had seen only part of the picture: What is happening is that farmers are down-scaling their operations, to make use of

less medium skilled workers. And that they are mechanising, switching to crops that take less effort to raise, and switching to methods of farming where they can make use of day labourers. This mostly in response to Government initiatives that grant farm workers partial title to the farm they are working on. As a result the farmers are surviving, and in some cases thriving. But the whole rural infrastructure of towns to support farming activities is dying.

Third example of how the Government is destroying jobs in an effort to increase jobs: In 2000 the Government passed a new firearms law. Where the previous one tried to ensure that no non-White person shall own a firearm, the Government have decided to extend those provisions to Whites, and that no private person shall own a firearm.

Government stated that this was in effort to reduce crimes in which firearms are involved. Working on the (totally unjustified) assumption that all firearms involved in crime are sourced from private ownership. Now, this law was not well accepted at the time, and Government delayed implementing it until July this year.

It is particularly onerous, limiting each individual to owning four firearms, of which one may be deemed for self defence. (And every handgun and shotgun are deemed by the firearms act to be for self defence.) And that a firearms owner have to undergo training and re-qualification every five years, to see if they are (still) competent to own a firearm. And, keeping one of the more odious aspects of the previous firearms control acts, the Registrar of Firearms does not have to supply any reason for denying an application to own firearms.

There was considerable wild talk about the effect of the new firearms act before it went into place, with not even police officials that went on special training to prepare for the implementation of the act having a clear idea what the act allowed and disallowed.

As a result of this act, a huge number of firearms have gone on sale. So much so that the price a firearms dealer is willing to pay for any second hand handgun is down to R 300. (With new handguns starting in price at R 2 000.) You can get the most amazing bargains now, if you can get a firearms licence.

And that is the rub: According to a recently published report, the application of the act have been problematical. Before the act was implemented, about 15 000 firearms had been sold per month, and, I assume, a similar amount had been licensed, since even the previous firearms acts required licences for the ownership of firearms. Since the implementation of the act no firearms licences have been granted. Eight persons have been trained, since the training requirements was only finalised some time after the firearms control act was implemented.

There are still confusion as to what is allowed under the act and what is not, and overseas hunters had their firearms confiscated on entry to South Africa. An estimated 100 000 jobs are expected to be lost from the collapse of the firearms and hunting industries in South Africa.

One of the conversations I had overheard at

the defence expo was that firearms dealers are expecting to have to store bought second hand firearms for a minimum of two years, before they will be able to sell them. There are some backlash about the firearms control act, with even a newly formed Black Firearms Owners Association speaking up against the law. But for now Government are standing pat.

This is one of those areas where failure of a doctrine leads only to further and deeper implementation of said doctrine. Gun control is a "hot button" item, with little attempt to compromise involved.

With all of this in the air, there are times I seriously think about emigration. But the Moon is not available as a destination.

But it may be coming closer. By the time this is published we will know if the X-Prize had been won. And a small milestone had been reached.

YES!!!

Thank you for sending me *Alexiad*. I really appreciate it. I look forward to reading your Worldcon reports, and have to admit that I am feeling the urge to come again. Not soon: 2008 or 2009. If I can afford it. I need to build on to my place, and that is going to syphon off money for pleasure.

It is good to hear from friends from afar

We will look forward to seeing you at Chicago or Denver (2008) or Kansas City or Montreal (2009).

— JTM

WAHF:

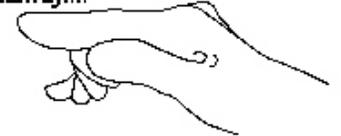
Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

R'ykandar Korra'ti, with reports on the fanzine library and other matters at Norwescon.

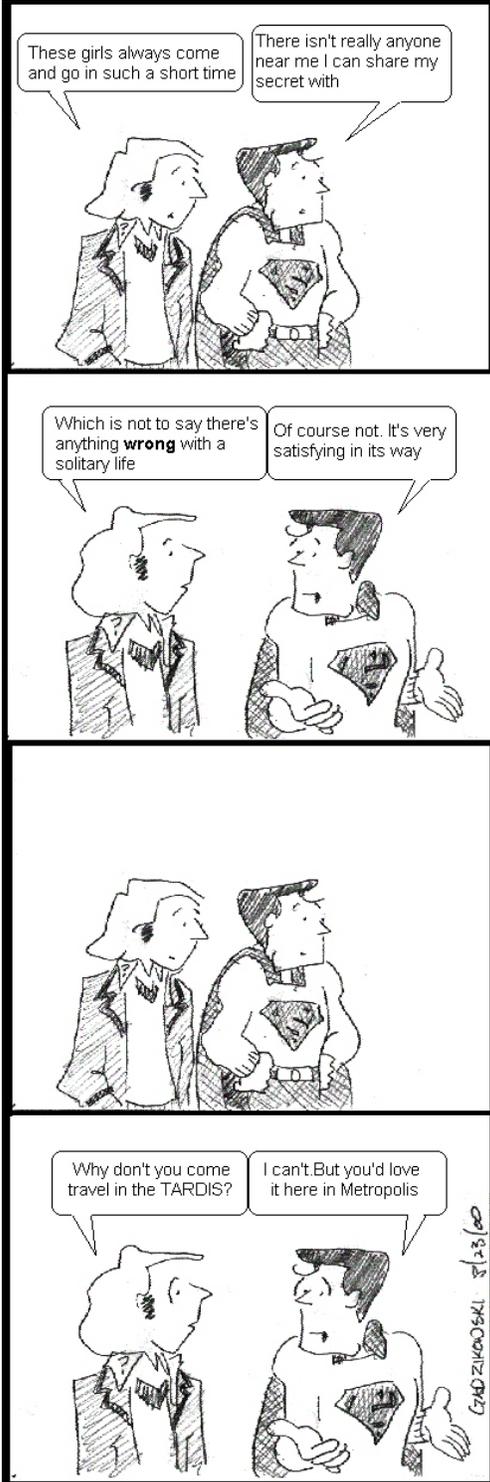
Tom Feller, who reports that OutsideCon was enjoyable.

STOP PRESS: Leroy Gordon "Gordo" Cooper, Mercury Seven astronaut, died October 4, 2004 . More nextish.

Alexiad...thataway...



ASK THE DOCTOR
by Paul Gadzikowski



THE GODFATHER

"I do not understand why you came to me, of all people," the Godfather said, as Tom Hagen shifted his view between Don Vito and the strange tanned Englishman. Outside on the lawn, Michael's son played some unfamiliar American game.

The foreigner smiled. "Because of your wide network of associates, Mr. Corleone."

"You do not understand. I am just a simple olive oil distributor. I have no such associates as you think. I fear you are wasting your time."

"For one billion American dollars in gold?"

Hagen jumped to his feet in amazement, and opened his mouth to make a point.

"No, no, Tom, wait," the Godfather said.

"You believe I can sell on your behalf this amount of gold? Americans, you understand, are not allowed to personally own gold. Are you thinking that my relatives still in the old country could, on your behalf, represent themselves as its owners? Doing so for such a large sum would beggar credibility."

The foreigner smiled even more broadly. "Perhaps you don't understand. I am proposing to offer you partnership in an undertaking that will assuredly place in your treasury, within one month, the sum of one billion dollars." He held up his hand. "We have different views in Europe and America as to what constitutes the arithmetical expression, 'a billion'. I use this word in the sense of one thousand million. Do I make myself clear?"

The Godfather blinked his rheumy old eyes but held his silence. The man then went on to explain . . .

When he had left, the Godfather asked Tom to come closer. "This Englishman, I don't trust him. Have Michele and his American wife take a little drive over to Jersey City. Let him see this Englishman's plan, this Operation GRAND SLAM, see if he is not just blowing smoke."

"Who should I have following him?"

"Have Clemenza send a couple of button men, and ask Neri to come to me."

The telephone rang and after a brief exchange of hellos the man handed the receiver to Tom Hagen. "Al! What's up!" he said when he heard the familiar voice.

"Good God that gook sumbitch can fight!" Neri said. He proceeded to stammer out a brief explanation of how the two soldiers from Clemenza's regime had engaged the Englishman's Oriental bodyguard. "Sumbitch knew ju-jitsu or sumpin, he took off Lambrino's head with one snap of his fist and then he thrun his hat and busted Lupa's neck! I had to drive like the Devil was after me to get them away, and ya know what, I think he was!"

"Al, you done good. Are they safe?"

"Outside in the car, and I'll be there with them within the hour."

When Tom told the Godfather of this development, he became very somber. The old man looked up then. This was going too far. "Call in this man Goldfinger. I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse . . ."

— Not by Ian Fleming or Mario Puzo

By the way, did anyone get the hidden reference in the *Clockwork Orange* article?

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph & Major, Lisa

Art: What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

Contributions: This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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