

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

Recently I visited my mother's sister and during the course of the visit she mentioned that her granddaughter had seen Joe in a local Wal-Mart but had not spoken because she was not sure she actually knew Joe. My aunt went on to apologize and say she had told her granddaughter she should have spoken. My reaction was "No! Do NOT be telling her to speak to strange men in Wal-Mart! She could get raped or worse!!" It shocked my old-school aunt and made me reflect on the difference in our worlds. My big-city life offers a great deal of cultural activity — and a great many risks. I am not free to walk after dark without watching my surroundings carefully and choosing carefully where I will be. I also do not have the certainty of knowing all the people around me or the warmth of close kin daily.

I suppose there is no such thing as a perfect society.

— Lisa

## Table of Contents

Editorial	1
Reviewer's Notes	1
Book Announcement	1
Church News	11
The Digital World	11
Eclipse News	9
Hugo News	15
Network News	8
Book Reviews	
JTM Bradbury, <i>Bradbury Speaks</i>	4
AAG Ehrman, <i>Misquoting Jesus</i>	12
JCS Garreau, <i>Radical Evolution</i>	12
JTM Legler, <i>On the Ice</i>	5
JTM Haufler, <i>The Spies Who Never Were</i>	5
JTM MacLeod, <i>Learning the World</i>	4
JTM McDougall, <i>Girl Trouble</i>	7
EBF Moon, <i>Marque and Reprisal</i>	12
EBF Moon, <i>Trading in Danger</i>	12
RD Pope, <i>Journey to Mars</i>	13
JTM Turtledove, <i>Bridge of the Separator</i>	3
JTM Turtledove, <i>In High Places</i>	3
JTM Young/Braden, <i>The Last Sentry</i>	6
Candy Bar Reviews	
JC Valentine's Day Candies	11
Fanzines Received	14
Random Jottings	2
Con Reviews	
J/LM Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium	9
Letters	16
Sheryl "take an armadillo to lunch" Birkhead, Dainis Bisenieks, Jeffrey Allan Boman, Sue Burke, Richard Dengrove, Brad W. Foster, E. B. Frohvet, Alexis A. Gilliland, Marty Helgesen, David Herrington, John Hertz, Robert S. Kennedy, Trinlay Khadro, Rodney Leighton, Lloyd Penney, George W. Price, Joy V. Smith, Milt Stevens, Jim Sullivan, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster	

Comments are by JTM or LTM.

Trivia:	.....
Art:	.....
Sheryl Birkhead	8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 31
Trinlay Khadro	2, 27
Paul Gadzikowski	6, 24, 32
Alexis Gilliland	4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 18, 21, 23, 25, 30
Marc Schirmeister	3, 29

Pascha (Orthodox Easter) is **April 23, 2006**.  
 The 132<sup>nd</sup> Running of the Kentucky Derby is **May 6, 2006**.  
 The 131<sup>st</sup> Running of the Preakness Stakes is **May 20, 2006**.  
 The 137<sup>th</sup> Running of the Belmont Stakes is **June 10, 2006**.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### HEINLEIN'S CHILDREN: The Juveniles

(Advent:Publishers; 2006  
 ISBN 0-911682-34-1 (hc); \$25.00)  
 by Joseph T Major  
 Introduction by Alexei Panshin

Now available from Advent:Publishers, Post Office Box A3228, Chicago, IL 60690-3228 USA for \$25 postpaid within the U.S.

Foreign orders must be paid in U.S. funds. Extra postage to Europe is \$5.50 for surface mail and \$14.00 for air mail and for Australia is \$5.50 for surface mail and \$16.00 for air mail.

— The Author

Printed on April 4, 2006  
 Deadline is **June 1, 2006**

### Reviewer's Notes

I have been getting email from an outfit called "The Doodyville Gang," selling DVDs with episodes of (naturally) *The Howdy Doody Show*. They change their address, so one can argue they are spamming.

But it made me think; in spite of their "your kids will enjoy this," their principal audience is the aging Baby Boomers who saw and enjoyed the show during their youth. A few odd youngsters might like it; I fancy the bulk of them would find the show lacking in sfx, tie-ins, fights, and the like. Back then not everyone liked the show; though, we used to sing

It's Howdy Doody time, it's not worth a dime;  
 So turn to Channel Nine, and watch *Frankenstein*.

But even then, there's problems. 4SJ may rightly point to the poetic imagery of *Frankenstein* (1931), but nowadays the response is that of Mike Royko's son: "This is supposed to be scary?" He was likely expecting one teenager killed every seven minutes until the one who hadn't had sex would set Freddy or Jason on fire, and then next time.

Attitudes change. That nowadays what they are changing to is for a change of less value doesn't deny that roping in "them kids" to see a festival of Ray Harryhausen films, telling them what greatness they are seeing, isn't a viable strategy.

I wish I knew what *was*.

---

**RANDOM JOTTINGS**

by Joe



Our congratulations to **Marc Schirmeister**, who has won the 2005 Rotsler Award, given for long-time wonder working by a fan artist.

**Res ipsa loquitur:** "On Nov. 1, 2005, the PTO [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office] issued Boris Volfson of Huntington, Ind., Patent 6,960,975 for his invention of an antigravity space vehicle".

<http://www.slate.com/id/2135559/?nav=tap3>

The National Science Foundation has announced that the **International Polar Year** will begin **March 1, 2007** and run until **March 1, 2009**. (Obviously a very broad definition of "year".) The first International Polar Year, suggested by Austro-Hungarian naval officer Karl Weyprecht, took place in 1882-3; twelve Arctic expeditions and three Antarctic expeditions conducted meteorological, geomagnetic, and other surveys. The infamous Greeley expedition of 1881-4 was associated with this.

The second IPY was in 1932-3 (the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition began in 1933 but does not seem to have participated), and the third, better known as the International Geophysical Year, took place in 1957-8, and was marked by such events as the launch of Sputnik 1, under the direction of Chief Designer Sergei P. Korolev, and the traverse of Antarctica by the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, led by Sir Vivian Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary. (See James Blish's *The Frozen Year* (1957) for a fanciful tale of an IGY expedition.) Richard E. Byrd was Officer in Charge of the American phase of the IGY, known as Operation Highjump, until his death on March 11, 1957.

<http://www.us-ipy.org/>

One of the sponsoring organizations of the IPY is the International Council for Science. If this hadn't been founded in 1932, I would be wondering if they ever would release those scientific papers on the strange events observed by Dr. Walter T. Goodwin in Ponape (for the sensational popularization read *The Moon Pool*

by A. Merritt (1919)).

The International Council for Science:  
<http://www.icsu.org/index.php>

*The Moon Pool:*  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/765>

(Which says it was authorized by the "International Association of Science".)

For what it's worth, Admiral Byrd was a sort of in-law; his brother Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr. was married to my cousin Anne Douglas Beverage, a Beverly descendant.

Borge Ousland has reached the North Pole again. Only this time, it's unsupported — and in the dead of winter. Ousland was the first man to reach the North Pole alone and unsupported. Ousland and Mike Horn set out from Cape Artchesky in Russia on January 22 and reached the Pole on **March 23, 2006**. This is his fourth attainment of the North Pole.

<http://www.ousland.com/>  
<http://www.mikehornnorthpole.com/>

There has been a good bit of buzz about what a wonderful writer Wen Spencer is. When are we going to meet her brothers Karbunkle Spencer and Wart "Arthur" Spencer?

So I started reading *A Brother's Price* (RoC; 2005; ISBN 0-451-46038-3; \$6.99). It's a standard seventies-era Reverse Sex Roles (nowadays it's Reverse Gender Roles) story; there is a shortage of men, see, so women are warriors and leaders and all that neat stuff, while the few men that there are get bartered off to big female communes. And it plods. And it plods. There is some intrigue, a guy about to get married to another gang of gals (this situation sounds like the horny stud's dream, but it's the sort of dream that turns into a nightmare), and so on.

The front cover blurb by Catherine Asaro says, "Don't plan on getting anything else done if you start a Wen Spencer novel; they are exceedingly hard to put down!". That's a judgment call.

However, while moving (see the editorial lastish) I did find two issues of *Science Fiction Review* the Semiprozine; the December 1991 (V. 2. #5 WN 5) and March 1992 (WN #8) issues, for \$3.95 each, edited and published by Elton Elliott, out of Salem, Oregon. Elton was an associate of Richard E. Geis; they collaborated on a couple of novels under the pseudonym of "Richard Elliott" (because, as REG said, "Elton Geis" would have sounded funny), and apparently worked out licensing fees for this.

There are a number of reviews and articles by familiar names (i.e., "The New Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer) and noteworthy articles (such as Mike Resnick's "Uh . . . Guys — My Name Isn't Koriba", wherein he has to reiterate the pathetic fallacy), as well as some blah short fiction (a story by Jerry Oltion which shows he doesn't know when soldiers started marching to the beat of a drum). I admit to being amused by

the review by Steven Sawiki of Robert Jordan's *The Dragon Reborn* where he heralds this last in the series as a prize winner. At least he said "probably" about the first part.

Evidently it didn't work out.

Incidentally, James "Robert Jordan" Rigney has announced that he has been diagnosed with amyloidosis, a disease of blood proteins, with cardiomyopathy. He seems to have a life expectancy of four years, which makes the thirty years worth of writing he expects to do a little problematic. One hopes some of those works are not *Wheel of Time* novels, but don't expect too much. Rigney is being treated at the Mayo Clinic by a number of his fans.

*The Pale Horseman* (2006; HarperCollins; ISBN 978-0-06-078712-7; \$25.95), sequel to *The Last Kingdom* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #2) is out. Bernard Cornwell takes the story of Uhtred son of Uhtred further along in the struggle to save England from the Danes.

King Alfred comes across as a dedicated but misguided person, but than that's because Uhtred is basically down on Christianity. The Danes are portrayed as vicious pagans destroying civilization — sorry, no warrior women or mystical wiccan priestesses, or romantic Keltic Arthurian (these days more like Gueneverian) evocators here.

The book is dedicated to "George MacDonald Fraser, in admiration". Does this indicate something about Flashman's ancestry?

*Four Against the Arctic* by David Roberts, the story of four stranded castaways who did better with less, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #1, is now available in trade paperback (Simon & Schuster, 2005; ISBN 0743272315; \$14.00).

**James P. Hogan on Holocaust Revisionists:** "I find their case more scholarly, scientific, and convincing than what the history written by the victors says."

<http://www.jamesphogan.com>

Commentary of February 22, 2006

That's the commentary of a man who has never read the Evans Report:  
<http://www.holocaustdenialontrial.org/nsindex.html>

## OBITS

We regret to report the death of Hugo and Nebula winning author **Octavia Estelle Butler** on **February 24, 2006**, apparently from complications of a fall, at the shockingly young age of 58. Butler was the author of the Nebula-winning *Parable of the Talents* (1998) and the first science fiction author to win a McArthur Genius Grant. Oh, and she had a story in *The Last Dangerous Visions*.

Our condolences to **Trinlay Khadro** on the death of her uncle.

**Stanislaw Lem**, author of *Solaris*, the dean of Polish SF, died in Krakow on **March 27, 2006** at the age of 84.

## FEAR AND LOATHING IN VERSAILLES

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*IN HIGH PLACES*  
by Harry Turtledove

(Tor; 2006; ISBN 0-765-30696-4; \$22.95)  
“A Novel of Crosstime Traffic”

Luc said, “A gentleman to see you, Colonel.”

At least he had recognized my rank. For many years Luc had served my counterpart on B-I Two, that ravaged timeline in the Blight, and he had readily transferred his allegiance to me after my more than brother had died in my arms. How he justified the switch I had no idea, but he served me as loyally as he had served Brion Bayard the Dictator, though in more peaceful circumstances. For all that my more than brother had given himself titles and offices, Luc had never called him more than “Major”, so being “Colonel” was an accomplishment.

“Show him in,” I said.

Luc brought the man into the dining room. He struck me as somewhat off, as if he were expecting something more advanced. Once, on a whim, I’d told Manfred about his fame in my time-line, and then taken him there to buy a Snoopy doll. (I hadn’t told Hermann about *his* fate, for obvious reasons.)

But Manfred had been as interested, if not more so, in the technology of B-I Three — I found out that his counterpart there had been intimately involved in designing the Fokker Triplane, so that made sense. After we came back, I recalled that Manfred had been sort of disappointed, as if he had become accustomed to more advanced technology. Which was how this man looked; otherwise, he was a handsome, leading-man type, if somewhat frozen-faced. For some reason I felt a threat, and made ready to palm my slug-gun.

“To whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?” I said.

“Colonel Bayard? I’m Richard Lee.”

— Not by Keith Laumer or H. Beam Piper

Or is it *Fear and Loathing in Versailles*? Louisvillian Hunter S. Thompson could have driven to Versailles in a couple of hours; less once they got I-64 completed. (“It was halfway to Shelbyville when the drugs began to take hold.”) But Versailles, Kentucky is less like Versailles, France than Hunter S. Thompson is like Raoul Duke. And Duke Raoul of the Kingdom of Versailles of this book would no doubt regard our time-line with fear and loathing.

If *Curious Notions* had a bit of “Temple Trouble” (*Astounding*, April 1951) in it, this has a bit more of “Time Crime” (*Astounding*, February-March 1955), with a selection from *Tunnel In the Sky* (1955; NHOL G.124) and touches of Kajira fandom, and if you don’t

know what Kajira fandom is, you’d be surprised who bought John Norman’s books.

Jacques of the Kingdom of Versailles doesn’t know from books but he’s willing to learn. For a man-at-arms in Duke Raoul’s service he’s pretty smart; he speaks some Arabic and can even read a little! What he does know is that eight centuries ago the Black Death hit Europe hard. Only one person in five was left, and Christendom was hurt badly. No, here’s no super-technological world where Islam takes up female equality because the Hodenosaunee provided an example (what do ignorant savage infidel polytheist kafirs have to offer Islam?), or any of the other such oddities of *The Years of Rice and Salt* (2002). Just a new version of Christianity that deals with Henri, the Younger Brother of Jesus, who was martyred by being broken on the wheel and when the King and the Pope died, was proven a prophet. This is not in accordance with Islam. (It didn’t work for Jacques de Molay, either; never mind Hung Hsiu-ch’uan [Hong Xiuquan].)

Speaking of Islam, Jacques is somewhat curious about what this girl Khadija bint Muhammad al-Marsawi looks like under her burqa. As it happens, she looks a whole lot like Annette Klein of the Crosstime Traffic Home Time Line. Annette is on an outtime sabbatical with her parents, learning about other time lines in a long interval between high school (Patrick Henry High School? Never mind) and college.

There’s a lot in this time line that she finds less than cheering, such as disease, sexism, wearing fur, and slavery. Fortunately, the staff at Crosstime Traffic taught her to keep her mouth shut, even if she sees a guy in furs with a social disease raping a slave woman.

Though what she’s to do if the slave woman happens to be her . . . Annette, her parents, and Jacques (who thinks he’s going with Khadija and her parents Muhammed and Aisha) the caravan guard set off on a trip to Marseilles, which is an Islamic city in this time line (perhaps I shouldn’t have added that qualification). However, there is a little detour along the way. A gang of raiders attack the caravan and take Jacques and Khadija/Annette off to the market. Slave market, that is, in Madrid.

Where their new purchaser takes them off to something that (for a change) is familiar; a cross-temporal transport. Well, familiar to Annette. But, like the slaves transported across time lines in “Time Crime”, Jacques and Khadija/Annette find themselves set to doing field work. (I will note that Turtledove has somewhat toned down part of the marketing strategy for slaves; this is after all a YA book.)

Annette likes to keep her eyes and ears open, which indicates that one of the other slaves isn’t quite a slave either. Indeed, she turns out to be a woman from the home time line, who has paid big benjamins (inflation has been a bummer) to be a slave for a while. And you thought reality programs were getting too up-front and in-your-face. (As I said, there are women who dream of being, and even write fan fiction about being, Gorean kajiras, slave girls that is.)

In “Time Crime”, as you know, after finding

out the secret of the Wizard Traders, Tortha Karf, Verkan Vall, Hadron Dalla, and the rest took after them with all the force the Paratime Police could muster up. In her similar circumstances, Annette would probably think that was a good idea. However, there’s the little problem of informing them to begin with. As I said, though, she does keep her eyes and ears open . . .



“WISDOM FROM THE ANCIENTS, OR PARAVONIZE  
Your Local Museum, Get Culture Cheap!” ©

From the concepts mentioned in the book, it seems to me that Turtledove is repeating himself in some of his fundamental ideas. For example, to help the reader identify, it doesn’t hurt to be having technological change be diverted into the drive across timelines, the way that technological change slowed down for the peoples of “The Road Not Taken” (*Analog*, November 1985) once they discovered the space drive. Annette has available fax, email, and cell phones, for example, but not say intercranial plasma phones for worldwide q-wave thought-exchange chat. The other theme is that “Just because they’re primitive doesn’t mean that they’re stupid,” as Hovanis discovered somewhat fatally in *Noninterference* (1985). Jacques finds himself in a world of wonders and sets about understanding it.

“Colonel Bayard? I’m Richard Lee,”

Verkan Vall said as he approached the big bluff soldier. This wasn’t the usual sort of time-line swap of his experience; but he had to know what this other paratime outfit knew, and this man who had come from yet another time-line would seem to be the best source. If not — he also had a sigma-ray needler hidden under his coat.

— Not by H. Beam Piper or Keith Laumer

## POINT OF THE SWORD

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*BRIDGE OF THE SEPARATOR*

by Harry Turtledove

(Baen; 2006; ISBN 978-4165-0918-9; \$24)  
Prequel to *The Time of Troubles*, *The Tale of Krispos*, and *The Videssos Cycle*

Rhavas bade the suppliant rise, and said, “Now, by the lord with the good and great mind, what is your name?”

“Anakinos,” he said. He looked like a Haloga, a small slender one though.

There was nothing else exceptional about him save for the glove he wore over a stiff-seeming hand. Anakin raised his eyes to the patriarch's gaze and said, "I come asking your aid, the learning of your wisdom. My own Avtokrator, the Avtokrator Palpatinos, bade me travel hither, saying that you had turned to our ways and were very strong in them."

"I know that ruler not."

"He lives a far ways off; he is most powerful in the force . . ."

— Not by George Lucas or Harry Turtledove

As you know, far back in *The Legion of Videssos* (1987) Aemilius Scaurus asked about who was this Avshar who had been so effective against the Videssian army. It seems he was a most holy sir indeed, once rejoicing in the name of "Rhavas", who had turned to the dark side of the Force . . . that is, to the worship of Skotos, the god of darkness and such, and away from Phos, the god of light.

I suppose it amused Turtledove immensely to give his Byzantine-style empire a Mazdist religion. The devout would travel to the great temple of Phos in Videssos the City to be imbued with the power of Holy Wisdom . . .

But the most holy sir Rhavas, who would later discover the power of anagrams, is as our story begins no more than the high priest of Phos in the town of Skopentzana. The Empire is (as usual) riven with civil war and internal strife. This provokes the withdrawal of the garrison of Skopentzana.

Across the border, the Khamorth nomads decide it's feeding time and head south. They don't have a siege train but demoralization, hunger, and privation can work as well when all the besiegers have to do is wait. And sure enough, someone inside opens the gates. On top of that, there is an earthquake and the sack of Skopentzana is interrupted by the demolition of the city.

At which point, Rhavas decides that by damn, the world is indeed run by evil, and it's best to be on the winning side. Add to that the sudden discovery that he has turned into a more controlled version of Professor John Jones of Walter Karig's *Zot!* (1947) and can curse people dead and cities demolished (however, as he finds out, unlike the professor, not every portion of his body capable of pointing will transfer the curse). He becomes downright evangelical about his prospects.

The rest of the church isn't quite so enthusiastic about his revelation, and perhaps the trail of corpses Rhavas left along the way to the hearing had something to do with it. He gives Videssos the city as fond a farewell as he can manage (and besides the Patriarch's residence needed some maintenance work anyhow) and sets out to discover what he is now and what he can do. For you see, he had a revelation from Skotos Himself, who offered to give his new padwan all the time he needed to do his dark bidding in the living world . . .

You know the ending; it's in *The Swords of*

*the Legion* (1987). What's interesting is the point of view; Turtledove has to get inside the mind of someone who not only chooses evil but does so because it's more powerful than good. One can imagine Darth Sidious or the ci-devant Melkor instructing him in how he can rise by being superior.

### BOTH SIDES NOW

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**LEARNING THE WORLD**

by Ken MacLeod

(Tor; 2005; ISBN 0-765-31331-6; \$24.95)

**Hugo Nominee**

This is a novel of First Contact. From both sides. It's also a generation-ship novel. And there are a couple of other things plugged in as well. At least we can be sure that our descendants, hundreds of years in the future and scores of light-years away, will be blogging.

The ship *But the Sky, My Lady! The Sky!* is a generation ship; she travels from star to star finding habitable ecospheres, drops off a cadre of settlers who build space settlements in orbit around the star, replenishes, and goes on to the next one. No problem.

Darvin and Orro are two astronomers, searching for undiscovered planets in the Solar System. (Whether they might name one after a warrior woman in a popular entertainment is another matter.) Using a blink-comparator, they note a new comet coming in towards the sun. Orro is an exile, but this new country doesn't discriminate, even against those who find untoward scientific discoveries. No problem.

As the *But the Sky, My Lady! The Sky!* heads towards this new sun, they begin to discover that it's got something unimaginable; a planet with life on its surface. You know, like humans used to live. This causes strains.



Darvin and Orro continue their investigations and note that this new comet is coming from a direction where something very strange has been happening over time; stars have been becoming green. This could be very interesting. And then it becomes a security issue. After which, the local refuse insects begin developing metallic growths within. And then it gets more problematic . . .

MacLeod's work here is "rich" — it contains a variety of concepts and applications, it's far beyond the "it was raining on the planet that

day" method. There is more than one culture, there is more than one field of knowledge involved. He reminds us of the Turtledove point that just because a culture is not as technologically advanced doesn't mean that it's also stupid. And it's not just science that he cites; when the community on the *But the Sky, My Lady! The Sky!* comes to the parting of their ways, the blogger reports:

Something, somewhere, fizzes and cracks.

Then there's a sense of absence and blessed relief as the weight goes away. The call still rings through my head:

*All hands! Stand by! Free falling!*

And the lights below us fade.

— *Learning the World*, Page 252

Now where did I hear **that** before? This batch, however, has no chance of one last landing on the globe that gave them birth . . .

Now the hard part. Spoilers ahead.

The ending is straight out of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*™; one of their tired and more clangorous tropes, not made any fresher by being reversed in application. Moreover, given the nature of the societies on the planet, one has to wonder about their perceived moral superiority. Writers sometimes let it get away.

### MUNIGANT SPEAKS

Review by Joseph T Major of

**BRADBURY SPEAKS:**

*Too Soon from the Cave,*

*Too Far from the Stars*

by Ray Bradbury

(HarperCollins; 2005;

ISBN 0-06-058568-4; \$22.95)

The young Ray Bradbury wrote a story called "Skeleton", about a man obsessed by the fact that he carried a horrid, white, grinning skeleton inside him. The story was raw, exuberant, gauche, pretentious, insulting to the intellect, and unforgettable. *Weird Tales* published it, and later it appeared in Bradbury's first collection, *Dark Carnival*.

The story did not soothe its readers' anxieties nor pamper their prejudices, nor provide vicarious adventure in a romantic setting. Far from solving his problem by his own courage and resourcefulness, the hero let it be solved for him by a strange little man named Munigant, who crawled down his throat, crunched and munched away the bone that had so annoyed him, and left him lying on his carpet, a human jellyfish.

— Damon Knight, *In Search of Wonder*, Page 123

Bwana [that's Mike Resnick to the rest of you], please tell Ray the facts of life about movie adaptations. You'd think a man with so many years of experience in the movies would have learned that any resemblance to the original is coincidental if not accidental, but

evidently not, as Bradbury's essays on movie adaptations here reveal.

There's no particular focus from which these works issue, except perhaps Bradbury's trunk; twelve out of thirty-seven are being published for the first time here. Their topics cover a variety of things that have made up a career, from movies to fantasy to the human condition. As when he begins by discussing the origins of *Dandelion Wine* (1957) ["Vin Reviviere, or a Vintage Revisited" (1991), Pages 6-7], the memoir of an imagined Midwestern childhood that Knight analyzed beginning with the above, and comparing its results to the results of the protagonist of "Skeleton" (*Weird Tales*, September 1945) after Munigant got through with him. In this work, Bradbury mentions neither "Skeleton" nor Knight. What he does mention is getting bottles of dandelion wine from school kids.

(Bradbury was one of the acceptable fantasy writers of school literature textbooks; Robert Nathan another, and I believe I ran across one or two Clarke stories. You'd never see Pohl or Kornbluth, separately or together, never see Spinrad or de Camp, Budrys or Kuttner, Bloch or Anderson. Or Ellison. And they wouldn't dare have "Skeleton". Nowadays there is a new coterie of writers, acceptable by reason of background [see *The Language Police* (2003) for what I mean] but they don't really challenge the reader.)

The essays are gathered together by topic. "Vin Reviviere" is in a section "About Writing", for example. The next section is "About Science Fiction" and is more about the reaction of the world to science. By some strange circumstance, the man so frightened by science (as Knight put it) has become the intermediary for describing science to the world.

Bradbury writes "About People" he has met or thinks very well of. Presumably he has never read Kornbluth's "The Advent on Channel Twelve", for he delivers a long paean of praise for Walt Disney ("Mouser", Pages 71-77) and then, just to throw us off balance, follows it with an equal encomium for the Right Honourable Bertrand Arthur William Russell, Earl Russell of Kingston Russell, O.M., etc. ("Lord Russell and the Pipsqueak", Pages 78-86). Other praiseworthy people include Sergei Boncharduk the Russian movie director, George Bernard Shaw, and L. Frank Baum. (I wonder if Bradbury has ever *read The Lord of the Rings?*)

If he wanted to build the history of American technology through garage scenes he proposes ("Mouser", Page 72), the Smithsonian is out of the question. Oddly enough, he even hints at the answer, when he begins: "Open the first set of doors and you find Henry Ford shunted under his first car, busy at repairs." All together now, one, two, three —

### "THE HENRY FORD MUSEUM!!!"

Writing "About Life" understandably is even more of a catchall category, and among the items caught in this are the millennium error, trains, flight (as Bradbury sold to John Campbell twice upon a time ["Doodad" and

"And Watch the Fountains", both in the September 1943 issue], so has he flown, his legend to the contrary), and space exploration. At least his "Beyond 1984" [Pages 161-169] is about Halley's Comet, sparing him the embarrassment Asimov perpetrated upon himself when he attempted to discuss the most famous book of that year.

When he writes "About Paris", at first one questions his taste, but then one sees that he is writing about a lost world where once upon a time there was a city of light. In the real Paris du jour the principal source of light is this night's car burnings, perpetrated by people we're not allowed to pin the blame on.

A real modern city of light is his topic when he writes "About Los Angeles". For all that by image he lives in an eternal sunshine of the spotless twenties Midwest, the very real Ray Bradbury lives in Ellay, amid the turmoil and the tumult, and loves it! He describes the traffic congestion with the admiration he lavishes on the vehicles in *Fahrenheit 451*, he speaks of Poopy Panda Land er **Disneyland** with affection and warmth, he describes the light and movement in the same terms he gave to the dying separated astronauts in "Kaleidoscope"

The image left is of a man with great enthusiasm but no positions; someone who loves everybody but doesn't seem to care about anything. What has kept Bradbury popular all these years is his power of imagery, dipping into the deep well of resentment at having to grow up and quit enjoying life.

Maybe Bradbury, like his own protagonist in "Skeleton", grew uneasy about the macabre forces in himself; or maybe success, that nemesis of American writers, was Bradbury's M. Munigant. Whatever the reason, the skeleton has vanished; what's left is recognizable but limp.  
— Damon Knight, *In Search of Wonder*, Page 124

### BIG ICE PLACE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**ON THE ICE:**  
*An Intimate Portrait of Life at McMurdo Station, Antarctica*  
by Gretchen Legler  
(Milkweed Editions; 2005;  
ISBN 1-57131-282-X; \$15.95)

When the author goes into great and moving detail on her Coming Out, it seems rather surprising to say that this is the Nice version of McMurdo, unlike the Raw version found in (for example) Nicholas Johnson's *Big Dead Place* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V 4 #4). But Legler never mentions the creeping bureaucracy or the pressure to go mad in order to stay sane; she never once saw *The Thing*. It should be noticed, though, that she wasn't on staff; she was an observer, not a finge (presumably the last two words of the abbreviation turned into that word are in her case "new gal", not "new guy", and since this is a family fanzine I won't mention the first word).

This is, I suppose, the difference between going to Antarctica to find yourself and going to Antarctica to test yourself. Instead of making sure that her bouts of passion coincided with the generator running, Legler lyrically describes how she met her true love, exchanged shirts with her before she was rotated home, and movingly found her again afterwards. It's a testament to her skill and emotion that she makes it seem so beautiful.

This is a very lyrical book; Legler has a passion for the big dead place more overwhelming even than her passion for Ruth, her s.o. She sees the wonder and the beauty of it all, making it so very clear to the reader. It helps in realizing this to note that she begins with an emotional and unexpected tribute to Shackleton and his sense of beauty, as a comment on a tour of the *Discovery* Hut and the Cape Royds Hut on Ross Island (Pages 20-23): "There was a big difference, I thought, between a home, even one as unlikely a place as Antarctica, and a cold, deliberate, barely sufficient shelter."

Is this a romanticized book? Probably. Is it untrue? Not as far as it goes. It is a part of a picture, a picture of that great place that draws that different sort of person.

### IT TAKES ALL KINDS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE SPIES WHO NEVER WERE:**  
*The True Story of the Nazi Spies Who Were Actually Allied Double Agents*  
by Hervie Haufler  
(NAL Caliber; 2006;  
ISBN 0-451-21751-9; \$14.00)

Eddie Chapman had gone straight, the boys in the gang had heard; yet there he was with a huge roll, over eight thousand quid. He must have made a bloody great score, and yet no one had heard of it! What gave? Where did he get it? "Hitler," he said, and that was Gawd's own truth (Page 56). Cool!

Haufler, a WWII cryptographer, has produced a short introduction to the men and women who hoaxed the Nazis. And they were a varied and colorful lot, such as Popov, Dusko Popov (Agent TRICYCLE), the Yugoslav playboy who got upbraided by J. Edgar Hoover. Or the Polish pilot who turned again, Roman Garby-Czerniawski (Agent BRUTUS). Or Wulf Schmidt (Agent TATE), who was such a fanatical Nazi that he registered to vote in Britain (that is, he turned so very thoroughly).

Haufler covers those who spoke for themselves (Chapman (Agent ZIGZAG), Popov, and Juan Pujol Garcia (Agent GARBO)) and those who didn't. Elvira Chaudor (Agent BRONX), for example, who was a British "dangle", an agent sent out to be recruited, and who was. Or the diverse fates of Helge "Jack" Moe (Agent MUTT) and Tor Glad (Agent JEFF), sent in together to carry out sabotage. Moe cooperated fully; Glad had second thoughts and was sent to an internment camp for the duration. (One can see here what was lost when the eight German saboteurs were tried in a high-profile trial designed to increase the public

image of the FBI.)

There are, perhaps inevitably, some errors. For example, Haufler seems remarkably confused about Sir Stewart Menzies's postwar career. He didn't retire then, he stayed on after the war, see? Or "C".

Besides recounting their wartime adventures, Haufler describes what happened to them afterwards. What *didn't* happen? None was betrayed by his own side, set up for a fall by his own side, killed by his own side. All received favorable treatment. Chapman, for example, received a full pardon for his robberies and became an affluent health-farm operator. Even Arthur Owens (Agent SNOW), who had been the first German agent and the first one turned, and had been a serious problem to the authorities, was given a decent pension.

Peter Collier's tribute to brave men, *Medal of Honor* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #1) shows these bravest of the brave to be of many different sorts; but the soulless fighting automaton of adventure fiction and film is decidedly absent. And similarly, these brave men and women were of many different sorts, but the cynical dupe of modern espionage film and fiction is not among them.



(The rest of a significant source for Haufler's work, namely *The Guy Liddell Diaries, Volume II 1942-1945*, edited by "Nigel West" (Routledge; ISBN 0-415-35215-0; 2005; \$44) is now available in the U.S. Volume I was reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #1.)

## THE HUNT FOR SENTRY

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE LAST SENTRY:  
The True Story That Inspired  
The Hunt for Red October**

by Gregory D. Young and Nate Braden  
with a Foreword by Nina Sablina and Mikhail Sablin

(Naval Institute Press; 2005;  
ISBN 1-59114-992-4; \$23.16)

The place just wears you out after a while. There is not a square angle or a plumb line in all the country. Every bit of concrete is crumbling from too much aggregate in the mix, and *everything* is made of concrete. And everything that's well built turns out to be built by somebody else. . . .

The air pollution in the cities is

grotesque. No machine seems to run well. And the whole of commerce visible on the Volga consisted of carting sand and phone poles from one port to the next . . .

In the end, every little detail starts to get to you — the overwhelming oppressiveness of the place, the plain godawfulness of it.

— P. J. O'Rourke, "Ship of Fools" (1982)  
(*Republican Party Reptile* (1987) Pages 67-68)

Valery Mikhailovich Sablin was a man who knew his Marx and Lenin. He could not only provide apposite quotes from memory, he could even give the page reference. Not the sort of man to tolerate a drunken drug-addled Republican Party Reptile from the Main Enemy, obviously.

Except, of course, that he seemed to have come to share O'Rourke's view of living conditions and life in the Soviet Union. As an officer on a Soviet destroyer, he moreover had a little more of a share of Soviet Power.

The story of the strange mutiny on board the Soviet ship *Storozhevoy* (Russian for "Sentry") in 1975 was obscured by much deception, self-delusion, confusion, misunderstanding, and a best-selling novel. In this book, the naval officer who wrote the first analysis of this incident now tells the story from both sides.

Sablin was from a naval family; his father was a naval officer assigned to the Soviet Northern Fleet. He went to the Frunze Military Academy, joined the Navy, and advanced quickly. He married Nina Mikhailova Chumazova, a university student in Leningrad; they had one son, Mikhail. Perhaps it was knowing all that Marxism; he stepped out of the line officer's track and became a *zampolit* ["Political Officer"]. This was not as powerful an assignment as its predecessor, the commissar of a military unit, the political corrector who held equal power to the military technician, but it was a significant command position. On the *Storozhevoy*, for example, Sablin was third in command.

As *zampolit*, Sablin was required to give the weekly lectures on the theory and practice of Communism. As noted above, he knew the theoretical works very well. He also observed that the practice was not quite living up to its announced goal. "William Atheling, Jr." [sometimes also known as James Blish] observed that: ". . . medieval scholars may presume that God wrote two works, one being the universe conceived complete and perfect, and the other the Scriptures ditto; and still later, somebody (who will be burned for it) will ask why the metaphysics of the first work are so badly out of true with the metaphysics of the second." [*The Issue At Hand* (1964), Page 77] That was the question that Sablin was beginning to ask.

There were many officers who had noticed that. In 1959, another naval officer named Nikolai Feodorovich Artamanov, stationed in Gdynia, noticed the discrepancy. He resolved the problem by borrowing the captain's gig of his ship, loading his girlfriend on it, and sailing

to Sweden. Later on, Artamanov, who had assumed the name of "Nicholas Shadrin", would be entrapped in a clever CIA ploy to trick the KGB, ending up with his death. Many at the time believed he had redefected, perhaps even had been a spurious defector: see Henry Hunt's *Shadrin: The Spy Who Never Came Back* (1981) and even more so *Widows: Four American Spies, the Wives they Left Behind, and the KGB's Crippling of American Intelligence* (1989) by William R. Corson, Joseph J. Trento, and Susan B. Trento, with its lurid account of Shadrin's warm reception in the Soviet Union after his redefection. For what really happened to Shadrin, read *The First Directorate: My 32 Years In Intelligence and Espionage Against the West* by Oleg Kalugin with Fen Montaigne (1994), where he describes how he and the other kidnapers of Shadrin had used a fatally powerful dose of chloroform to subdue this captured traitor to the Motherland.

Others, such as Vasili Nikitich Mitrokhin or Vladimir Bogdanovich Rezun, had different ways to work the system. But they turned against it. Sablin, by way of contrast, wanted to fulfill it; he believed wholeheartedly in the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism.

The *Storozhevoy* was a pretty good assignment; a modern anti-submarine warfare (ASW) ship, of the kind classified in NATO intelligence reports as *Krivak I*. (Soviet ship types and other designations were highly classified. This extended to other matters, where for example in arms limitation treaties the Soviets used the NATO designations for missiles in preference to revealing their own.) As for the crew . . . the authors describe the privations of the men of the Soviet Navy. The economic system was failing, the way that O'Rourke describes the failures of the Volga region; it could not provide decent food, minimal housing, or functioning equipment for the men.

Relationships within the military were ones of immense, systematic, and institutionalized brutality. In *The "Liberators": My Life In the Soviet Army* (1983), "Viktor Suvorov" [Vladimir Bogdanovich Rezun], describes this viciousness, tempered in the barracks only by the consideration that this year's targets would be next year's abusers. The writers who imagine a "tough", harsh military never quite seem realize the resulting degradation of efficiency and lack of trust that such measures produce.

Sablin was concerned that the metaphysics of the Soviet Union were so badly out of true with the metaphysics of its philosophical underpinnings. He conceived a great and majestic proposal; a call for an uprising and a return to the national roots. One of the powerful masterpieces of Soviet film is Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* [*Bronenosets Potyomkin*] (1925), with its revolutionary imagery of sailors. Sablin was a pretty good sketch artist and drew a picture of an officer who had staged an uprising in sympathy with the mutineers of the *Potemkin*, which he put up in his quarters. (Who would anyone report him to?) The great moment of the Bolshevik

Revolution was when the cruiser *Aurora* bombarded the Winter Palace, her crew having turned to the Bolshevik cause. With such inspiration, if he could repeat that, if a vessel of the Soviet Navy were to appear at Leningrad, its commander broadcasting a call for a renewal and regeneration of Soviet ideology . . . the prospect dazzled him.

One problem of the Soviet military worked in his favor. The Soviet armed forces lacked a real noncommissioned officer corps. "Suvorov" comments on the problems this absence made in the Army but the Navy had it just as bad. Thus, when on November 7, 1975, while the *Storozhevoy* was visiting Riga, *zampolit* Sablin reported to the ship's commanding officer, Captain Anatoly Vasilievich Potulniy that some men were drinking in a lower-deck compartment, the captain saw nothing wrong in having to go down there and settle the affair himself. In the U.S. or Royal Navies, such a matter would be handled by a petty officer.

Potulniy was a bit surprised, therefore, when Sablin locked him in a compartment. The *starpon*, the executive officer, was off on leave, so now Sablin was senior. He called the officers and petty officers to a meeting, explained what he had done, and asked them to choose whether they supported him or not. Eight out of sixteen did. (Your exclamation is permitted.) The dissenting officers locked up, Sablin proceeded to address the crew, explaining his plan to sail to Leningrad and deliver an address to the nation.

Before he went into the political branch, Sablin had been a good ship-handler, and he took the helm and got the *Storozhevoy* out of Riga harbor, somewhat spurred by the announcement that one of the officers who had backed him had jumped ship. However, the commander of the ship the lieutenant in question had swam to didn't believe him.

As the ship made her way out to the Baltic Sea, much confusion ensued in the Soviet high command. Ships sortied to capture the mutineers. Soviet Air Force planes were scrambled at daylight to find and stop the ship. They enthusiastically bombed and shot up a ship, unfortunately it was the wrong ship, before hitting and stopping the *Storozhevoy*.

On board, Sablin had been broadcasting his message to the Soviet people. Unfortunately, it was broadcast in code, while on the land the high command was transmitting in clear. This latter very much alarmed the Swedes, who observed with some concern all this Soviet military might heading in the direction of the Swedish island of Gotland, and perhaps even Stockholm.

Some of the men on the *Storozhevoy* realized the game was up, and released Captain Potulniy, who got a sidearm, charged to the bridge, and shot and wounded Sablin. The *Storozhevoy* was boarded, Sablin (and indeed all the crew) was taken into custody, and then the recriminations began.

The authors discuss Sablin's trial. During the preliminary interrogation he was able to outargue the KGB interrogator; even, as noted, quoting Marx and Lenin with page citations. But he would never be allowed to present his

arguments in court. He was indicted under Article 64a of the Penal Code of the USSR, plead guilty, in return presumably for promises of clemency, and not surprisingly received the supreme measure of punishment (i.e. was shot) on August 3, 1976.

The Soviet system was failing. The Soviet system was remarkably strong. These two statements are dissonant but not necessarily contradictory. Their military spending was out of proportion to the rest of their economy; yet so much of it was misspent. When powerful weapons are controlled by men who are ill-paid, ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished there is a certain dissonance.



The perpetuation of this divergence was the contradiction. When the system was faced with a challenge it could not respond to, it came apart. Mark Whittington's *Children of Apollo* (2001; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #1) describes the effect of such a challenge.

Such a system could not keep the people it needed. Some committed "internal emigration", becoming less than they could be. (Maybe becoming street sweepers instead of electrical engineers, or railway trackworkers instead of physicists, and guess where I got that?) Some became refuseniks, from Andrei Dimitrivich Sakharov to Anatoly Shchransky (Natan Sharansky). Some sought to confront the system, like Sablin. And some decided to go; like Soviet Air Defense Force pilot Viktor Ivanovich Belenko, who flew his MiG-25 "Foxbat" supersonic interceptor to Japan on September 6, 1976, a little more than a month after Sablin was executed.

Today Belenko is a successful and happy man. His strength of character is such that he would and did prosper in a freer land. He chose a better way to take on the system.

Young wrote the first report in the West on this event. An insurance agent who had soaked in too much of Jules Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires* with their mind-numbing catalogues of equipment used it as the basis for a book. Now there is available an exhaustive, if somewhat dry, description of the whys and wherefores as well as what happened.

I was condemned to death by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court according to Article 64a. My crime — betrayal of the homeland. I still plead not guilty as charged. The betrayers of the homeland are those who are now in the Kremlin. The betrayers

of the homeland are those who shot millions of the best Russian farmers. Russia has always grown wheat. Grain was its most important export. Those who have made of Russia an importer of grain — they are the betrayers who should be sentenced under Article 64. On the eve of war the communist leaders shot the best marshals and generals. They were motivated not by the interests of the homeland, but by the desire to hold on to their power. For the deaths of the marshals and generals, my people paid the price of tens of millions of lives. Those who are guilty of that should be tried. Those in the Kremlin who have brought my people to complete moral and physical degradation — they are the traitors. These people are driving my comrades to their deaths in Afghanistan, demanding the deaths of innocent people — they are the criminals.

If they at some future time should be judged and given their just deserts, and if, then, my country then considered me to be a traitor also for deserting it, then I am ready to take my punishment, but only after they have taken theirs.

When I was in the GRU I could see two ways to protest: either I could commit suicide; or I could escape to the West, explain my disagreement with the communists and then commit suicide. I chose the second way, which is not a whit easier than the first. It is an agonising way. If any GRU officer now finds himself in the same dilemma — to go or to stay — I advise him to think over his decision a hundred times, and then again. If he is thinking of fleeing to the West, then my advice to him is — don't do it. . . .

Only if you know there is no other way for you, if you consider your leaders as criminals, if you yourself do not wish to be a criminal — then you should go. If you are prepared to risk your life for one minute of freedom — then go. If you don't feel yourself a traitor by going — then go. If, by going, you can bring nearer the moment when the communists are judged by the people of our country, if you can help your people, if you are then ready to stand before the people and await their decision on your fate — then you must go. You will dream of Mother Russia every night, but go for the sake of your future and I promise you that you will be happy.

— "Viktor Suvorov", *Inside Soviet Military Intelligence* (1984), Pages 174-5

## HECHO EN MÉXICO

Review by Joseph T Major of

### GIRL TROUBLE:

*The True Saga of Superstar Gloria Trevi and the Secret Teenage Sex Cult That Stunned the World*

by Christopher McDougall  
(HarperCollins; 2004;

ISBN 0-06-053662-4; \$24.95)

It used to be that pop singers could also be actors, and sometimes they could even act. Frank Sinatra's film performances could have made his name even if he hadn't ever sung a note, for example. And if Elvis Presley had managed to talk "Colonel Tom" into getting him some decent scripts now . . .

But pop singers used also to be singers. Britney Spears (who name is no kiddin' really and truly "**Britney Spears**", so her parents couldn't spell either) has dubious singing talents, for example, and her mentrix, Ms. Ciccone (whose first name really is "**Madonna**") is only so-so. Staging, enhancement, and assembling make up a lot of a recording these days; if Rob Pilatus and Fab Morvan had only contributed a few notes to the songs of their ostensible group Milli Vanilli, today they would be rich instead of half-dead.

And while Sir Paul still pens his own lyrics & music, perhaps not quite as good since he had a difference of opinion with John, few if any other singers have any acquaintance with their songs before recording them. And speaking of Mr Lennon of the Quarrymen and others, hardly any of them have any other talents, even the childish drawings and stories Lennon did *In His Own Write* (1964), which became salable because of his other activities.

So, what would you say to a pop singer who wrote her own songs, performed credibly in movies, and drew comic strips for her own fan magazine (having sold drawings on the streets before becoming famous, not to mention after)? "*Hola!*", perhaps? Gloria de los Angeles Treviño Ruiz, professionally known as Gloria Trevi, did all these things. However, she did a lot more, some of which made her end up in a Brazilian jail for two years.

But the principal thrust of McDougall's story is the marketing system of Mexican music. There is a process by which singers are made; and he describes how would-be musicians are refigured and rebuilt, then pushed and publicized. And the principal actor of this work is not so much Gloria as her manager, maker, and lover Sergio Gustavo Andrade Sánchez.

Sergio's methods seemed to rely rather heavily on the "tear-them-down-and-build-them-up-anew" method; those wishing to sing for him would undergo a degrading process which began with their having to strip for him. (One can see certain problems involved when taking into consideration the fact that most of these applicants are in their **early** teens.) From there they went on to sleep deprivation, starvation, communal living . . . Sergio could have had a great career as a cult leader.

Oh yes, he took one of the rewards of cult leadership — sometimes three at a time, and always a half-dozen women or so around. That induction process seems to have done something, as most of the women remained loyal to him; even Gloria.

For she had a spectacular career, beginning with what should have been a career-killing move; performing lewdly on Mexican TV, getting herself banned from it. Paradoxically

that made her more famous, and her songs, movies, and even fan-magazine took off. (Note; this is a professional publication for those outside the field, like *Starlog*.)

As for the matter of "lewd" — Gloria's performances often climaxed by her calling a male spectator on stage, where she would pull his clothes off, whip him with his belt, and even make him lie on the floor face-down while she ground her pelvis against his buttocks. I don't think you ever saw even Britney doing this! And for muy macho Mexicanos taking it . . .

Sergio, managing all this, became dizzy with success. He evidently got a *mierda* fetish, because Gloria's third, flop, movie featured a scene where she fell into a toilet bowl (apparently she became very tiny and could swim amid the contents, thus making the movie fantasy and this on-topic), and her flop TV quiz show featured a dunking in a sewage pond. (Another problem with the show was that her personality just overwhelmed the contestants; they could barely speak.)

Oh yes, those backup singers? One of them, Aline Hernandez, eventually had a falling-out with Sergio, in spite of, or perhaps because of, being married to him. She left him and wrote a tell-all book, describing Sergio's orgies and Gloria's participation therein. Sergio and Gloria suddenly remembered other appointments, and vanished.

Gloria was a big star but she didn't act like a big star. I mean, she took her dirty clothes to the laundromat herself. But so did the rest of the harem; in fact, they acted withdrawn and submissive, to the point of hardly washing. Even Gloria — when she wasn't performing.

As a result, during their covert odyssey, there was the bizarre spectacle of a millionaire performer begging for spare change in the streets of Spain, or selling drawings. It should be considered that trying to get her money would have drawn attention to Sergio.

Finally, they fled to Brazil, as Sergio had heard that if he were the father of a Brazilian child, he couldn't be extradited. However, that law got changed (thanks to the uninspiring example set by its notorious user "Great Train Robbery" robber Ronald Biggs); and he and Gloria were found and imprisoned.

But then, after two years (including one pregnancy under very strange circumstances) Gloria finally was extradited, stood trial on the charges of rape, kidnapping, and the corruption of minors . . . and was completely acquitted. (Since this book was written, she has begun performing again, though things have happened. . .)

One should examine this narrative carefully. It can be taken for granted that Gloria and Sergio have given self-serving descriptions; but as much could be said for Aline, whose gruesome tale broke the story. And most of the others seem to qualify as "unreliable narrators" (i.e., Gloria's mother, whose description of her and her daughter's prior lives, down even to her daughter's stated birthdate, is questionable). This isn't a reliable narrative at all; but it may be all we've got.

The psychology of submission has been codified very thoroughly on the practical level, yet hardly at all on the theoretical level; in simpler terms, we know very well how to **do** it, but hardly at all how it's **done**. Sergio could get modest teenagers from good families to become his sex slaves. Gloria, a woman with not one but several independent careers, would accept his abuse and domination.

This was a paradoxical issue in the story; for all that Gloria made herself the spokeswoman for women's empowerment and women's independence, she would turn from self-activated woman to utter submissive, from Xena, Warrior Princess to a nameless kajira [a Gorean slave girl], as soon as the show was over. Which one was the real Gloria? Or is there even a real Gloria left?

Gloria's career has a very strong bit of what one might call slut-rock about it; she would remove her underpants while performing and throw them into the audience, for example. What she did wear was hardly much more. Her songs could have stood by themselves, but marketing . . .

Which perhaps marks the whole affair. The power of creation leads to a more general assumption of power. Sergio could make singers; naturally he deserved his reward in women. And they may just have wanted to go with success.

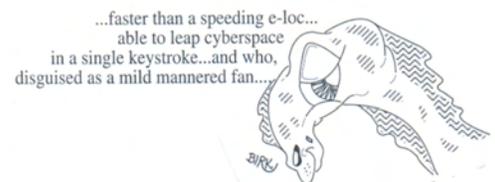
---

## MARCONI

by Joe

In our last thrilling episode we were working on a BIOS upgrade for Lisa's computer, so it would recognize the wireless card and be able to access our new wireless network at home. Well, I figured out how to do it, but what we ended up doing was a bit expensive and inconvenient.

I bought myself a new computer.



Lisa inherited the old one, which (finally) did recognize the wireless card.

After e-filing my taxes, I looked at the refund and decided I could afford a new desktop. Just as well, too, because Hewlett-Packard was just winding up a rebate program that knocked about twenty-five percent total off a computer.

It set up fine, but still had problems connecting to the wireless. This involved talking to Grant over the telephone at ten in the evening — we owe him a dinner.

And the problems of transferring email — I will have to sit down and get the addresses for my various email lists.

Now I have a flat-panel screen and a computer that can play *Rome: Total War*.

Meanwhile, Lisa can check her wants on Abebooks; and when we get tired of that, we can sit in bed together with our laptops, emailing love notes to each other.

However, it doesn't seem to work with either Netscape Mail or Outlook (Express or regular), so I have to send the email *Alexiad* copies from Lisa's machine.

## YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

On March 29, 2006, a total eclipse of the sun took place. The path of totality ran from Ghana to Mongolia, with a maximum totality of four minutes and seven seconds. Uninformed reporters spoke of the first total eclipse in years, which indicated they hadn't been to Madrid recently. The eclipse was part of Saros 139, which began on May 17, 1501 and will end on July 3, 2763. The next eclipse in that saros will be on April 8, 2024 and will be a total eclipse. It will be visible in central and northern Mexico, Texas, the Midwest (even near Louisville), New England, and the Maritime Provinces. The maximum totality will be four minutes and twenty-eight seconds.

The next solar eclipse will be on September 22 and will be an annular eclipse, visible in Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. It is part of Saros 144, which began on April 11, 1736 and will end on May 5, 2980. The next total eclipse will be on August 1, 2008, visible in Nunavut, Greenland, Siberia, Mongolia, and China; the maximum totality will be 2 minutes and 27 seconds. This eclipse is part of Saros 126, which began on March 10, 1179 and will end on May 3, 2459.

<http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse>

## SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Trip Report by Joseph & Lisa Major on  
**The Twenty-Fifth Sherlock Holmes/Arthur  
Conan Doyle Symposium**  
Dayton, Ohio, March 10-12, 2006

### Friday, March 10, 2006

We had made preparations once Tim indicated that he could in fact go. I made room reservations on the Internet, printed out a guide, and got appropriate time off. Elizabeth got maps and a tour book from AAA. On Tuesday, we went to see Kim and arranged to have her feed the cats. Her little boy James likes them all.

I had taken Friday off, so did some shopping (including for a new watch, since I had managed to launder my old one) and got my B12 shot. Lisa had to buy some kitty litter. We loaded the car and went by Walgreens to pick up some prescriptions, then on to the post office to check mail and mail a CD with pictures to a cousin of mine in Seattle. We got to Tim's and Elizabeth's just before four.

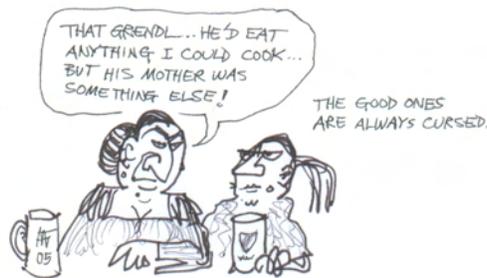
Elizabeth got in a little while later, and we were off. I filled up at Kroger's, they having the best price (what with the Kroger Plus™ Shopper's Card discount), and then went around to and up I-71 to Newport.

There was a brief traffic congestion and I recalled a few years ago when there had been considerable construction on I-71 and we had gone home by going along the legs of the triangle; I-75 to Lexington and I-64 to Louisville. This goes by the Horse Park, and I mentioned that if we had to pass by there, we might stay for a while. Elizabeth opined that we could just leave Lisa there. Tim said, "Oh, please don't throw me in the briar patch!" and then wondered why Lisa and I thought that so funny. We then explained about Breyer model horses, and, especially at Breyerfest, the Horse Park is a "Breyer patch".

Dinner at Wertheim's, as usual astonishingly uncrowded on Friday night. Now this is a standard of our trips. Tim and Elizabeth ate there after going to a Reds game; Lisa and I ate there on the way back from NorEasCon.

On the way out I remembered one errand I hadn't done, and bought a PowerBall ticket at the last gas station before crossing the river.

All our directions (MS Streets & Trips as well as AAA Tour Book) said to exit at Exit 60. There was *no* Exit 60. They were rebuilding I-75 and I-70 around the exit, and we had to go out a couple of miles on I-70 and then back to exit at Exit 59, then go north on the local road.



Fortunately, the Days Inn had our reservations, so we checked in. Too late to go shopping, so we put things off till tomorrow. I was somewhat surprised to find that the motel had a wireless internet connection.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 171

Books read: *Heir of Autumn* by Giles Carwyn and Todd Fahnestock JTM  
part of *Blue Moon Rising* LTM  
I'm on vacation so I am taking time to read things I really want to read instead of potential culls.

### Saturday, April 11, 2006

Up betimes and out to breakfast at Golden Corral, which was extremely filling. We bought the gas, Tim bought breakfast. After packing for the day's trip, we set off again, when it started raining. We got out to the shopping center with the Borders and the Half-Price to find . . . the Borders would be open in May at its new location, but we couldn't really stay around till then. So we went back down the road and did some shopping in the Barnes & Noble until Half-Price opened. I found a copy of "Nigel

West's" *Mortal Crimes* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #4). We left for the familiar old Holiday Inn and got there about twenty after.

Familiar faces were evident. Mary Frost-Pierson saw us and said hello. The dealers had all kinds of expensive things available including a complete run of *The Baker Street Journal* on CD for only \$100. Or the very first ever publication of Doyle's Sherlockian play "The Angels of Darkness".

(I found two interesting trade papers for two bucks apiece. I also replaced my paperback copy of *Sterkarm Handshake* at Half Price, as well as a Ken Macleod book from the clearance section and a two volume history of science fiction magazines. — Lisa)

Cathy Gill called the meeting to order at noon and preceded to read a list of bad news. The motel was increasing the rent for the meeting room about sixfold, so it was time to consider moving. Greg Sullivan, the genial long-term host, was nursing a broken foot and could not make it. Roy Pilot, the annotator of *The Lost World*, had had an accident coming there and was in the hospital. It was not a good day.

Therefore, Roy's speech on the history of the Symposium was skipped, and Steve Doyle would give his paper on **Arthur Conan Doyle's 1923 Indianapolis Visit**. A. Conan Doyle had been there in 1894 and liked the place. That speech was part of his lecture tour on Spiritualism, and the history of his tours and of his Spiritualist belief (including his falling-out with Houdini) was discussed and relevant.

The next two papers had to do with *Mauve* (reviewed by Rod Smith in *Alexiad* V. 2 #5). The first, by Lorraine Reibert, discussed the conjunction of **Sherlock Holmes and William Perkins (or, Was the World's Greatest Consulting Detective Also a Fashion Maven?)**. She discussed Perkins's work in chemical researches; and as you know, during the Great Hiatus, Holmes had spent some time at a lab in Montpelier researching coal-tar derivatives. Mauve of course was the first of the coal-tar derived dyes. But Holmes's young life was just a little too late for working on mauve, and it seems more likely that he was trying to carry out Perkins's original concept of synthetic quinine.

Then, Regina Stinson (I hope Jan will note if she is related) showed the uses of **Art in the Aniline Dye**. That colour and material was used on everything from dresses to stamps. Perhaps Holmes's grandmother, the sister of Vernet the artist, also painted, and imbued by example her grandson with the artistic taste that expressed itself in the whole art of detection.

Ending this session was S. Brent Morris, a historian of Freemasonry, who discussed all the examples of the Craft that are **Lodged in the Canon**. He showed the various incidents, discussed how they were related to the reality, and ended by concluding that while Holmes was not a Mason, Watson was. (As was Conan Doyle himself.) He is from Ellicott City, by the way. No one will ask you.

During the first break I renewed a few more acquaintances and got Lisa's computer out of the car. As we seated ourselves for the

resumption of business, a friend of the Fellers from Nashville came by; he thought he recognized the name.

At the resumption, Cathy introduced a battered but whole Roy Pilot to immense cheering which soon segued to groans as she read her successful paper from the 1996 Symposium, **Plumbing the Mystery of Sherlock Holmes**. She theorized that Holmes must have paid his way in his early days, when the whole art of detection failed, by being a plumber. Many toilet jokes ensued.

This was followed by Bob Cairo reading two short bits by the sadly absent Greg Sullivan, both from 2000. The first, **Dr. Doyle Spins**, was a string of bad combined titles starting with "A Study in the Scarlet Letter" about how Holmes was hired by New England Puritans to learn who among them was committing adultery, and went down from there. The second, **Sullivan's Index**, listed the odds on various Sherlockian events. I'm surprised they would take bets on some of those events, but some betting commissioners will make bets on anything.

Finally, Louisvillian Ralph Hall of the Silver Blaze (the local BSI Scion Society; a very natural attribution), discussed **Canonical Creepy-Crawlies** again (first time was in 1992). He is an exterminator by trade and his BSI investiture is "Smack! Smack! Smack!" which is not a Terry Pratchett title but what the little Rucastle boy did with a slipper as he wiped out cockroaches. Ralph was accompanied by a large spider which he called, of course, "Professor Moriarty". He discussed the most likely species of cockroach that the Rucastle boy was swatting, the types of flies around Black Peter Carey's harpooned corpse, and other insectile matters of the Canon.

(He also confirmed that there was almost certainly no real reason to have killed our very shy mailbox spider. —Lisa)

We broke for the last time. Cathy announced that the dealers didn't have to pack up right away.

Roy Pilot, shaken but not stirred, presented a brief version of his speech. He had had no idea of organized Holmes fandom when he began collecting Sherlockiana, and now he was a BSI member. Moreover, he is now working on an *Annotated White Company*. We'll all drink together to the grey goose-feather . . .

This was a hard act to follow, but William Cochran did, giving us **Four Views from the Windows of Camden House**. This explained many of the curious incidents surrounding the murder of the Hon. Ronald Adair and the subsequent events of "The Empty House". It wasn't so much Ronald Adair, or even capturing Colonel Moran that made Holmes break his cover, but the implicit threat to Watson. Cochran put forth some theories about the doings of Moriarty's brother the Colonel and added other speculations about the gang of the consulting criminal. (He also made the keeping up of furnishings at 221b more mysterious than it could be, and for some reason failed to mention Harry Flashman's role in the events.)

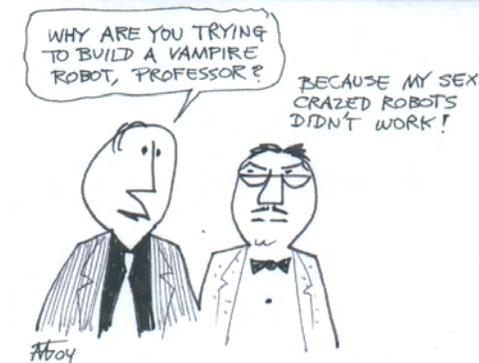
Richard Jeryan gave a Power Point

presentation on the question of which model of Ford car Watson had been driving in "The Final Problem". Since at least one theorist had thought that a "little Ford" was a generic term, determining the actual model turned out to be of some importance, and not just to the Ford Motor Company. (Now that's something for the Henry Ford Museum — "and this is the actual Model T driven by Dr. John H. Watson taking 'Altamont' to report to Graf von Bork".) The problem is that he was interpreting "spare seat" as "extra seat" when it could just as easily have meant "small seat".

We went out to dinner at the Quaker Steak and Lube restaurant down the Colonel Glenn Highway that Lisa and I had noticed when we had come through Dayton on our way back from Boston in 2004. We had some interesting times with the menu; Lisa ended up eating a cup and a bowl of clam chowder as well as some very large shrimp ordered as a side order on my dinner.

We liked the place but it was a bit costly.

From there we went to Best Buy to shop and look for the other Borders. That wasn't there, but I did buy copies of *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Serenity*, *Edward Scissorhands*, and the original *Dracula*, the one with 4SJ's friend Bela Lugosi.



Returning to the hotel in time, we managed to get run out of the auditorium so they could rehearse. I spent the time doing some reading and checking up on people. Cousin Eddie, for example, who went up to the upper level in a barn, kicking the ladder away in the process so he had to lower himself and drop, hurting a leg. That's all right in an 18-year-old, but Eddie is eighty-one.

The Reader's Theater was "Silver Blaze". You can imagine that Lisa was eager to see that. I discovered how the famous byplay goes even better when delivered:

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident."

All we wanted then was to get some rest, and accordingly we went back to the motel for the night, to stow our purchases. There was a parking place open right in front of our room, but there was also a gargantuan truck on one side and the car on the other side was parked right on the line, so I ended up having to park around the corner. Somehow being in an SUV, particularly the mammoth models so popular these days, or one of those huge pickup trucks built on the same frame (Dale Speirs wonders about where is all the money coming from for these million-dollar houses if everything above burger-flipping is outsourced to India; where is the money coming from for these mobile mountains?), seems to make the driver oligarchally contemptuous of lesser beings.

And so to bed

Miles driven: 65 miles

Books read: *The Good, the Bad, and the Innocent* by Barbara R. Kirwan

She agrees with me that the most unsound and ridiculous part of the criminal defense strategy is the "designer defense", where the psychologist concocts an exotic mental lapse that just happens to fit the events of the crime. She's a psychologist herself(?!).

**Sunday, March 12, 2006**

Up about seven and then we packed to go to the **Morning Quiz**. Tim professed amazement at the amount of gear I could get into the trunk of the car.

Cathy Gill expressed some minor concern about the future of the Symposium. Robert Cairo passed out the quiz. He denied repeatedly that he had consulted with the speakers, for many of the questions had been answered in the recent Symposium papers. I got 68 out of a possible 87, and chose a copy of Carol Bugge's *The Haunting of Torre Abbey* (2000). After the others left, we spent some time chatting up a local and discussing the difference between Dragon\*Con™ and other conventions, before heading for our next destination.

(I ended up with a copy of *The Lost World* with an interesting dinosaur cover. — Lisa)

In a hands across the border moment, the Air Force Museum was full of Junior Canadian Forces Air cadets. Lisa got the cat sitter an Air Force Museum keychain, and then we set off to look at the exhibits. These include the only B-2 stealth bomber in captivity . . . er on exhibit. It does sorta look like a flying saucer when seen head-on. And the *Bockscar*, complete with a full-size and original coloration (yellow and red) model of the Fat Man bomb. And an A-10, with alongside it on display another Big Honking Gun, the 30-mm seven-barrel gatling gun that is the plane's armament. If only Ben Böst were still active . . . they had two B-26 Invaders as well as a B-26 Marauder. Terry Jeeves would recognize from his Wartime Daze in India the Liberator (B-24) and the Mosquito. In the Big Honking Plane department there was an XB-70 Valkyrie, a B-52 Stratofortress, and a B-36 Peacemaker as well as the *Bockscar*, which is a B-29 Superfortress. Also on display is the MiG-23 Flogger that the general sold to the Finnish

businessman for the money needed to buy food for the troops.

A special section showed many of the Disney designed unit patches. Some were tragic, as the POW patch showing Donald Duck as a guest of the North Vietnamese. They didn't, however, show the most successful flier who used a Disney logo, but then Adolf Galland didn't have Walt's approval to paint Mickey Mouse on his Bf-109.

The Space Section has the Apollo 15 capsule and some other Moon memorabilia, along with unused Mercury and Gemini capsules, and Thor, Jupiter, and Titan rockets. They really should move the X-15 there.

Our feet were bothering us, so we left just before closing time. As we left, I got a shot glass for my cousin Mae, who collects them — I didn't want to have to carry it through the museum. We drove through Dayton to get on I-75, and went south to Cincinnati, where they had a Borders. After shopping there, we ate at a nearby Frisch's. It rained heavily as we drove through Cincinnati, but the rain stopped once we got on I-71 to Louisville, and we arrived home again around nine.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 198

Books read: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Truman Capote

Weellll . . . the man can characterize, describe, but his plots sorta trail off.

**Monday, March 13, 2006**

Today I did laundry.

The Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium has always been a source of enjoyment for us. Next year's is tentatively scheduled for **March 9-11, 2007**. Mark that date on your calendars . . . if they can find a place to hold it.

## WELCOME TO THE DIGITAL WORLD

by Lisa

Last Thursday at Wal-Mart I was looking over the selection of low budget cameras when my gaze fell on a child's digital camera priced a little less than twenty dollars. I did not have the cash on me right then and it was too late to go to the bank.



I returned the next day after a short detour to the bank. There had been five, now there were only two. I took one of them and walked

quickly to the checkout, stopping only to grab a package of the required batteries.

This being St. Patrick's Day, the trip home was noticeably slower than usual. (There are at least four Irish bars on the last section of the bus route.) Joe came home and was kind enough to use his pocket knife to open it for me.

I took it on our walk down to a local Asian buffet restaurant and took several shots. Sadly those pictures got lost in the learning process. I had bought the camera to begin learning about the digital world and you cannot learn without making mistakes. I lost another group of random cat shots before I learned how not to lose photos by saving them to MyDocuments.

For my twenty dollars I had acquired the digital version of the 110 camera that was my first introduction to photography many years ago. Only the word digital on its front distinguishes it from a cheap 35 millimeter. It lacks the streamlined sophisticated appearance of the more expensive models marketed for adults.

One thing I have learned, though, is that no camera actually capable of taking pictures can be considered to be only a toy. It can only be considered less advanced than other cameras. So now I too have entered the digital world, even if only via a camera intended for children.

Curiously the digital seems to be better at distance shots. It devours batteries so I will have to keep it plugged into the computer when I'm not using it. It can shoot through glass, does not require flash and best of all I don't have to worry about the cost of developing film. It is very light sensitive, though, more so than any other camera I have owned. That could be an advantage at the Horse Park, where the champions are shown in a dark arena. It is a decided disadvantage almost everywhere else.

## OUR NEW PRIEST

by Lisa

On March 19 Father Nicholas Nichols retired in order to be with his family in Florida. I almost lost it when we of the choir sang the many years unto him at the end of the service and I realized it was the last time we would sing it for Father Nicholas. I remembered the time he drove eighty miles out of his way to visit my mother. The service ended and we went on to the farewell luncheon for Father Nick.

Next Sunday we had our first liturgy with Father Larry. We were Father Nick's last parish, we are Father Larry's first. I suppose there's some grand symbolism about the circle of life there. I am not entirely comfortable with the milestone in my life. Father Larry is the first priest younger than I am. He is only a little bit older than my oldest nephew.

## VALENTINE'S DAY CANDIES

Review by Johnny Carruthers

<http://www.xanga.com/janusfiles>

I think I've mentioned several times that Valentine's Day is probably one of my least favorite days of the year. (Hell, I look forward to April 15 more than I do February 14.) Instead, I tend to look forward to the day after Valentine's Day. As I usually remind people, that when the stores mark down all of the remaining valentine candy to 50% off — or less. (I can't blame the stores. They want to get rid of all the Valentine's Day stuff so they can have the space to start pushing the Easter stuff.)

Well, a few days ago, the inimitable CandyDishDoom, one of my favorite fellow bloggers, called me on this one. She asked me, "What is your favorite Valentine candy? I imagine something chocolatey, but I'm seeking specifics."

Oh, dear. I suppose the quick answer to "What is your favorite Valentine candy?" would be, "Yes." To borrow a line from Will Rogers, I never met a chocolate I didn't like. And yes, I do have something of a sweet tooth. Give me a big heart-shaped box of candy, and it is quite likely that I will thoroughly enjoy each and every piece. Of course, I will probably take my time to enjoy and savor each piece. Depending on the size of the box, I could easily make it last through Independence Day. (A smaller box might only last through St. Patrick's Day or Easter.)

Ah, but CandyDishDoom asked for specifics. One that definitely tops the list is Hershey's Rich Dark Kisses. For one thing, they're dark chocolate. (The darker the chocolate, the better.) For another, they're wrapped in purple foil — my favorite color, as you might have guessed from my email address, [MegaPurpleRanger@yahoo.com](mailto:MegaPurpleRanger@yahoo.com). And for Valentine's Day, Hershey adds a little something. The little flags contain valentine messages, such as "Happy Valentine's Day," "I Love You," or "Kiss Me." (There are eight different messages; those are the ones that immediately come to mind.)

A new valentine candy I found this year came from Nestle. They marketed a Crunch Heart, in both milk chocolate and dark chocolate. The easiest way to describe them -- think of a heart-shaped Crunch Bar. Yummy in both varieties.

I've tried some of the various chocolate covered marshmallow hearts, but they can be a little disappointing. Invariably, the marshmallow is too light, too spongy. I have found that what I like in a chocolate covered marshmallow is one that has a denser texture to it. Think of what s'mores taste like, and how the melted marshmallow feels in your mouth (assuming that you've waited for it to cool briefly before biting into it). That's the density that I'm hoping to find. Maybe in 2007.

I think my favorite chocolate covered heart candy this year came from Russell Stover. It was a coconut cream heart. For starters, it was covered in dark chocolate. The center had a wonderful coconut flavor. No coconut, though — it had the flavor of a Mounds bar, but not the texture.

I also found a few interesting candies of the non-chocolate variety that I really liked this year. All marshmallow, and much more satisfying than the chocolate covered marshmallow candies. For one thing, they didn't have the overly spongy feel in the mouth.

First on the list, Marshmallow Hearts from Frankford Candy & Chocolate Company. These were about the size of normal marshmallows, and were the ones that most resembled regular marshmallows. They were heart-shaped, and white with a pink outer edge. I found these to be the most visually appealing of the group. I could

easily see myself putting these in a mug of hot chocolate.

Then we have Valentine Treats from Spangler Candy Company. These had a chewier, denser texture than your average marshmallow. It also looked and felt as though they had an outer shell. They reminded somewhat of marshmallow circus peanuts — perhaps not too surprising, since Spangler also makes those. They came in pink and white, and in cherry and vanilla flavors.

Finally, there were marshmallow hearts from Just Born, the people who gave us Marshmallow Peeps. I couldn't put these in a mug of hot chocolate — they're too big to comfortably fit in the mug. And if you like Peeps, you know just what you're getting.

So, was this specific enough?

---

### TRADING IN DANGER

(2003; Del Rey; \$24.95 hc/\$6.99 pb)

### MARQUE AND REPRISAL

(2004; Del Rey; \$24.95 hc/\$6.99 pb)

by Elizabeth Moon

Reviewed by E. B. Frohvet

No good deed goes unpunished, so reads the proverb. This is happens, as finding a chaplain outside official channels for a fellow cadet blowe up in the face of Kylara Vatta in the beginning of *Trading in Danger*. (This does not appear to be the same Fleet as in the Heris Serrano books, and certainly not the same Academy as in *Sassinak*; but the general trend is familiar.) Forced to resign her position as cadet, Ky reluctantly accepts a job from her family; to take an obsolete starship on its last voyage to the salvage yard. But the young captain promotes a side deal that would let her make profit enough to bring the old ship up to spec. If she can stay alive in a war sone, without credit, in a vessel urgently in need of repair.

I found this book agreeable for its low-key sense of realism, despite a rather flat style (even for Moon, not noted for verbal pyrotechnics). The situation was resolved, not with a convenient miracle, but hard decisions and gritty work. And then everyone gets on with their lives.

The second in what promises to be a lengthy series; *Marque and Reprisal* is the further adventures of Kylara Vatta, her ship renamed *Gary Tobai* (to honor a casualty of the first volume), and her crew including new security advisor Sergeant Gordon Martin. There has been a massive attack on Vatta family headquarters. Ky is cut off from family and corporate resources, accounts frozen, insurance cancelled, not knowing who is alive. Reinforcements arrive in the person of cousin Stella (not the airhead she's perceived), young Toby, and their partner Rafe, of multiple skills and obscure connections. The survival aspect comes to a head in an ugly confrontation with a renegade Vatta. Then on to the next step, *Engaging the Enemy* (scheduled for release in April 2006).

I admit to a fondness for good military SF, something Moon does pretty well (and John Ringo, among others, does badly).

### RADICAL EVOLUTION The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies — and What It Means to be Human

by Joel Garreau

(Doubleday, 2005, 384 pages/indexed,  
\$26.00, ISBN # 0385509650)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

Evolutionary changes in the world are radical today especially in GRIN technologies: genetic, robotic, information and nanotechnology processes. Examples of such exponential changes in those areas are gene therapy, cloning, in vitro fertilization, blood doping, gender and trait selection for offspring (designer babies), artificial arms and legs for wounded servicemen, smaller and faster microchips for use with those limbs, distant learning on computers, the whole field of artificial intelligence, and atom and molecule sized machines, such as nanobots that are so small they can course through a human's bloodstream to monitor health, and much, much more.

These and other dramatic changes are on an ever-upward curve. New developments are coming faster and faster. The feeling among scientists and thinkers about the future is that when the curve of change goes straight up, as it inevitable must, it will reach a point called The Singularity. The author defines that "As a metaphor for mind-boggling social change." The term is borrowed from the fields of math and physics.

The question is, how will it all turn out for mankind? In answer to that question, Garreau suggests three possible outcome scenarios: Heaven, Hell, or Prevail (or most likely).

The Heaven scenario, optimistic and exhilarating, is mainly based on the thoughts of Ray Kurzweil, a scientist, who sees good things happening for the human race, like overcoming disease and poverty, and enhancements in beauty, wisdom, love, truth, and peace.

The Hell scenario, as noted by many, including Bill Joy, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, will be depressing and downright frightening, with bad things happening, large parts of humanity and/or the biosphere wiped out, and all at an accelerating momentum. And, even worse, people will then become immobilized because they won't be able to agree on what could or should be done to halt or control the problems. Then the world becomes unwelcoming and unpleasant to live in.

The Prevail (or likely) scenario, with its main proponent, Jaron Lanier, a philosopher and scientist, has people disturbed by all the changes but stumbling and fumbling through the problems as they have since time immemorial and finding ways of coping with the vast changes. In short, as in crisis after crisis in the past, mankind has more or less always found ways through or around what they had to.

But none of those people mentioned, including the author, is aware of which of the three possible scenarios will befall mankind. Yet when change reaches The Singularity stage, one of the mentioned outcomes, or something quite

similar, will happen, that's for sure. And it's not that far off

The author writes,

The people you will meet in Radical Evolution are testing these fundamental hypotheses:

- We are riding a curve of exponential change.
- This change is unprecedented in human history.
- It is transforming no less than human nature.

This isn't fiction. You can see the outlines of this reality in the headlines now. You're going to see a lot more of it in just the next few years — certainly within your prospective lifetime. We have been attempting to transcend the limits of human nature for a very long time. [...]

Joel Garreau works at the *Washington Post* newspaper as both a reporter and editor. He's written other books, best known: *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* and *The Nine Nations of North America*. He resides in Virginia.

Highly recommended!

---

### MISQUOTING JESUS The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why

by Bart D. Ehrman

Reviewed by Alexis Gilliland

The Style section of *The Washington Post* carried a profile of Ehrman, with a bit on his book which is, unexpectedly, a best seller. The author found religion as a teenager, becoming a fundamentalist Christian, and embarked on a course of studies which led him to a position not too dissimilar from my own. Rather liking the man — who is an authority on the history of the New Testament, the early church, and the life of Jesus, without being pompous or overly impressed with himself — I went out and bought the book.



Ehrman writes well, displaying less a facility of style than a profound clarity of thought, of hard won understanding, as he lays out the problem which has engaged him for most of his life, and I finished the book in a single day. Basically, *Misquoting Jesus* is a summary for

the lay reader, the short version of what might easily have been a multi-volume argument, turgid with rigor and directed at the necessarily small scholarly community capable of reading the New Testament as set down by scribes in their various original languages. Ehrman's case is set forth in 218 pages with an additional 24 pages of notes and index, and his strongly argued conclusion is that the New Testament is a human work.

Today we have 5,700 Greek manuscripts ranging from a fragment of manuscript the size of a credit card to very large and magnificent productions preserved in their entirety, plus the writings of assorted church fathers quoting the New Testament from the ancient texts they then had available, and which no longer exist. The number of variants is estimated at 200,000 to 400,000, so that there are more variations among our collection of manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament.

Where did all these variants come from? Ehrman makes the point that any text must be interpreted by the reader in terms of their own life experience, which is to say the reader necessarily expresses that (or any) text "in other words" in order to understand it. When the reader is also a scribe, making a copy of the text for his community — the way the New Testament was propagated in those days — those other words were sometimes written down to produce a variant. This was standard practice, and Luke, who had consulted the text of Mark in preparing his own, changed the last words of Jesus from "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," to "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Why? Because Luke had something different to say than Mark, and felt that he had just as much right to report what Jesus might have said as Mark did.

While I find the Darwinian view of Genesis persuasive, one must acknowledge the passionately held and persistent fundamentalist arguments against Darwin's theory of evolution, asserting that God created man in his own image. The essence of all fundamentalism is the reliance on the word of God, on biblical inerrancy. What Ehrman shows — the hard won fact that led him to abandon the fundamentalism of his youth — is that the present New Testament, rather than being the carefully conserved word of God, a divine revelation, is the result of the textual evolution of the life of Jesus. All of those variations in the text, like mutations in DNA, represented not only copying errors, but also competing versions of Christianity, (Ehrman gives thumbnail sketches of the most important, and the changes made in the text in response to their various challenges) the scribes of each sect modifying the text to support their belief, and competing not only against each other (heretic!), but also against the Jews and pagans. Eventually, the most successful version of Christianity was able to impose its text upon the others with imperial support, after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. (The Edict of Milan established toleration of Christianity in 313, the Council of Nicaea decided against the Arians in 325, and

Constantine was baptized on his deathbed in 337.) Thus does the authority of scripture rest on the exigencies of human politics, since without the conversion of Constantine, there would have been a multiplicity of Christianities, each supported in its theology by its own home grown version of the New Testament. Instead, we have a multiplicity of Christian churches, but thanks to Constantine, all of them use the same Bible — or are, at least, retranslating the same Bible — so any theological disputes should be easier to resolve.

### JOURNEY TO MARS

by Gustavus Pope (1894)

Reviewed by Richard Dengrove

Who was Gustavus Pope? A physician in Washington, D.C. who also wrote a book about Shakespeare. He had an even greater achievement however. I am willing to bet his *Journey to Mars* inspired Edgar Rice Burroughs' serial "Under the Moons of Mars" (1911) and the novel adapted from it, *A Princess of Mars* (1917), which was the first in his Barsoom series.

Burroughs never said, so we can never know; but I am willing to bet that. There is no time problem. Burroughs was nineteen at the time *Journey to Mars* was published. He could easily have read the book.

Some have argued that the similarities between Burroughs and Pope are an illusion; they were just reflecting their time. It is true for some things.

- 1.) In both, the villain tries to force the heroine to marry her. My understanding is that that was typical of Victorian and Post-Victorian Melodrama.
- 2.) Also typical, in both, the hero saves the heroine's life.
- 3.) In both, the Martians are basically human beings. It was more than a matter of convenience like it is in Star Trek. It was a matter of ideology.

However, there are plenty of similarities between Burroughs and Pope that cannot be explained that way. The best explanation seems to be that Burroughs borrowed from Pope. Consider these.

- 1.) In both, Mars is ruled by nobility and kings.
- 2.) In both, a princess takes a fancy to the Earthling hero. In Pope, it is Princess Suhlamia and, in Burroughs, it is Dejah Thoris.
- 3.) In both, the Earthling hero is an American military officer. In Pope, the officer is Lieutenant Frederick Hamilton of the Navy; and, in Burroughs, it is Captain John Carter of the Army. While Carter had been mustered out of the Confederate army years before, he is still addressed as captain.
- 4.) In both, the villain is a king. In Pope, it is Prince Diavojahr, of Sundor-Luzion, who tries to force Princess Suhlamia to marry him. During the plot, Lieutenant Hamilton falls into his clutches. Unless Princess Suhlamia marries the prince, he promises Hamilton will die by crucifixion. Of course, Hamilton succeeds in escaping,

with the help of a Sundor-Luzion nobleman, and reaches Suhlamia and safety. The prince's plot is foiled.

By contrast, Burroughs handles this in a less genteel manner. Sab Than, prince of the city of Zodanga, captures Dejah Thoris, and threatens to conquer her city of Helium unless she will marry him. Eventually, John Carter arrives. However, he is too late and she has promised herself to the prince. What does Carter do? He kills Sab Than. I bet Lieutenant Hamilton would have abhorred such violence.

5.) In both there are four different colored races that inhabit Mars. In Pope, there are red, yellow and blue races. In addition, there is a fourth more peculiar race. These are giants with golden skin and purple hair. I have a vague feeling they were supposed to look like the statues of the gods the Greeks and Romans painted in Ancient times.

Pope makes them descendants of refugees from "Pluto". Pope is not talking here about our Pluto, the ninth planet, which was not discovered until 1930, 36 years later. In 1894, the name Pluto was up for grabs, and Pope could use the name for the legendary exploded planet between Mars and Jupiter.

As for Burroughs and race, three of his races are similar to three on Earth: White, Black and Yellow. Then, like Pope, he has a fourth peculiar race, the Green Race. They are very tall and have tusks and two sets of arms.

6.) In both, life on Mars is threatened with destruction at some point. In Pope, a comet is driving the Moons of Mars closer, and they will ultimately crash into it. He has theories both "scientific" and Biblical about why. We never learn whether those moons do in fact crash into Mars.

By contrast, Burroughs does not make as big a deal about this threat. It is almost as if it is just a plot element he has to include. The oxygen on Mars depends on the plant a mad scientist runs. When the mad scientist dies, the plant stops manufacturing oxygen and the Martians are having a harder and harder time breathing. However, John Carter saves the day with derring do.

7.) In both, there is mind reading. In Pope, Lieutenant Hamilton and the Maori John learn to speak Martian through Ascopion, a member of the blue race who is telepathic. Like a lot of wonders in Pope, telepathy is mentioned just once, and then you do not hear any more about it.

In short, it speeds the plot but does little else. By contrast, Burroughs wants to give his hero the super powers of escapism. In addition to giving Carter super-strength in the low Martian gravity, he gives him telepathy when it comes to Martians.

Carter uses telepathy a few more times than in Pope. He reverses Pope, and learns the one Martian language via his own telepathy rather than someone else's. Also, he reads the mind of the mad scientist who runs the oxygen factory that sustains Mars.

So ends our discussion of similarities. These similarities are not to say that Pope's and Burroughs' novels are not very different. They

are. Pope aspires to greatness. He wants to show us he is witty, deep and knowledgeable.

He writes long descriptions and long opinions with every turn of the plot. Many modern readers find him a crashing bore. I found his descriptions so extraordinary and his opinions so off the wall that he kept my interest. Probably these descriptions and opinions are better than if he were as witty, deep and knowledgeable as he aspired to be.

He advocates vegetarianism and at least a feminist attitude toward women. He believes monarchy might be the best form of government with a good king, but the worst form of government with a bad king.

Also, he believes in one of the Nebula hypotheses, that planets were created from pieces of space rock (planetessimals?). Similarly they can be destroyed by pieces of space rock, like his "Pluto" Like is threatened of Mars. At the same time as he subscribes to a scientific Nebula Hypothesis, he believes, with the Bible, that God destroys planets because of the decadence of their inhabitants.

This gets us to one view we in our time definitely cannot stand, his belief this decadence comes from race mixing. In the case of Mars, mixing between the Martian races and the "Plutonians."

Of course, I am not certain that Pope is not, for his time and place, liberal on matters of race. Reviews also criticize Pope because Lieutenant Hamilton's Maori's companion is a buffoon. On close inspection, the Maori is wise to act like a buffoon, and is far more sagacious than the Lieutenant.

Some of Pope's most off the wall views, however, are part of the plot. He claims to have written *Journey to Mars* to encourage science. However, it is science as in gosh wow. Instead, he is more steadfast in advocating magic. He claims modern positive thinking, a modern form of magic, prospers on Mars; but his magician, unoriginally named Thaumatur, uses old fashioned invocation of spirits to move the plot along.

Boring, as opposed to Pope's views on magic and race, is how his characters act. Like I remember characters in Victorian melodrama were supposed to act. The good are all so upright and the bad are all so dastardly. So Victorian are his characters, in fact, that, except for the advanced technology it sometimes gets hard to tell Mars from the Earth of his day.

Edgar Rice Burroughs had a completely different approach. He wanted to provide his readers with an escape. In the style of action adventure, he hid himself, and his feelings, as Pope reveals them. We hear little of Burroughs political, social and scientific views. The idea is we are to lose ourselves in the action.

For reasons of action too, Burroughs' Martians are quite different from the Earthmen of his readers. They act more oriental or more barbaric. It is a world of kill or be killed. The reader would not identify it as being American.

Burroughs differs from Pope in another way. He was not interested in the least in degeneracy. I bet he figured his readers wanted to escape from a morality that was still stultifying in 1911.

His villains are as dastardly, but his hero and heroine are no plaster saints.

Also, his Martians go around naked. This was quite a scandalous idea then. His attitude toward science and magic is just the opposite too. I suspect invoking spirits and positive thinking were too high society for Burroughs' readers. Such airs may have been what his target audience were escaping from too.

Burroughs writes only science fiction. All the wonders of Mars are supposed to be scientifically possible, although it may be as an alternate development of science. While I bet the different colored rays came from the views of the occult Theosophical Society, Burroughs succeeds into transmuting them into an alternate science idea.

Now let us go from Burroughs to another author. *Princess of Mars* was not the only novel that Pope inspired. Nor was it the only very different novel. There is Edwin Arnold's *Gullivar Jones* (1905). It was reprinted in the '60s as *Gullivar of Mars*.

It has a comparable number of similarities to Pope:

- 1) Mars is ruled by nobility and kings.
- 2) The hero is an American naval officer.
- 3) A tyrannical king tries to force the officer's beloved princess to marry him
- 4) Mars is threatened by destruction at one point
- 5) Mind reading plays a part.
- 6) Magic plays a part.

As I said, like Burroughs' novel, Arnold's is also very different: it is a satire on present tendencies. The princess' people, the beautiful Hither People, have lost all motivation. They hardly resist as they are taken over by the Thither People, who resemble apes.

Also, the princess, bereft of motivation, does not even think of thanking Lieutenant Jones for saving her twice. This is Arnold's view of how an advanced race, like the Martians, would act, not woodenly virtuously as on Pope's Mars.

On the other hand, I am uncertain that Pope's Mars is the sweetness and light his trappings of Victorian melodrama may deceive us into thinking. If Mars is about to be destroyed, it is more typified by the decadence of Prince Diavojahr than the virtue of a Princess Suhlamia.

Still, you have to hand it to Pope. His *Journey to Mars* had a great influence considering it is basically a bad book.

## FANZINES

*Banana Wings* #25 February 2006

Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer, 59 Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES UK  
[banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk](mailto:banana@fishlifter.demon.co.uk)

*Beyond Bree* February 2006, March 2006

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA  
[beyondbree@yahoo.com](mailto:beyondbree@yahoo.com)

Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15 in envelope or overseas.  
The **Twenty-Fifth** Annish!

*Catchpenny Gazette* #15 March 2006

David Burton, 5227 Emma Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46236-2742 USA  
[catchpenny@mw.net](mailto:catchpenny@mw.net)  
<http://www.geocities.com/cpgzine>  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*eI* # 24 February 2006, #25 April 2006

Earl Kemp, Post Office Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 USA  
[earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Lofgeornost* #82 February 2006

Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Avenue, White River Junction, VT 05001-8011 USA  
[fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu](mailto:fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu)

*The Knarley Knews* # 116 February 2006

Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA  
[welch@msoe.edu](mailto:welch@msoe.edu)  
<http://www.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

*MT Void* V. 24 #31 February 3, 2006 — V. 24 #40 March 31, 2006

Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA  
[eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net)  
[mleeper@optonline.net](mailto:mleeper@optonline.net)  
<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

*Nice Distinctions* #13 March 2006

Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, NY 10704-1814 USA  
[hlabaty@panix.com](mailto:hlavaty@panix.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>  
<http://www.livejournal.com/users/supergee>

*Opuntia* # 60 February 2006, #60.1 March 2006

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA

*Peregrine Nations* V. 5 #3 October 2005

Janine G. Stinson, Post Office Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 USA  
[tropicsf@earthlink.com](mailto:tropicsf@earthlink.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Pixel* #1 March 2006

David Burton, 5227 Emma Drive, Lawrence, IN 46236-2742 USA  
[catchpenny@mw.net](mailto:catchpenny@mw.net)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*The Return of the Famulus* [*The Reluctant Famulus*] #60 Winter 2005

Thomas D. Sadler, 422 W. Maple Avenue Adrian, MI 49221-1627 USA  
[tdavidsadler@verizon.net](mailto:tdavidsadler@verizon.net)  
**He's back!**

*Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* #15

Garth Spencer, Post Office Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6B 5B1 CANADA  
[garthspencer@shaw.ca](mailto:garthspencer@shaw.ca)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Vanamonde* # 623 — 632

John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

## CON NEWS

ConGlomeration, which prides itself as Louisville's Science Fiction Convention, has announced its Author Guest of Honor:

### HARRY TURTLEDOVE

An author whose name and reputation should be known to you by now.

Other guests include former RiverCon chairs **Steve & Sue Francis** and artists **Omar and Sheila Rayyan**. The convention will be **August 11-13, 2006** at the Clarion Hotel & Conference Center in Louisville, the location of the previous two, as well as the 1984 RiverCon.

Registration is \$25 per person until June 25 and \$35 afterwards and at the door. For information:

**ConGlomeration**  
**Attn: Registration**  
**Post Office Box 32095**  
**Louisville, KY 40232-2095**

<http://www.conglomeration.com>

**Hypericon 2** will be June 23-25 in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Days Inn Stadium. Registration is \$25 until April 15 and \$35 afterwards. The Writer Guest of Honor is **Tim Powers**. For information

<http://www.hypericon.info/>

## 2006 Hugo Awards Nominations

The LA Con IV Hugo Nominations committee has announced the Hugo nominations for 2006:

### Best Novel

*Learning the World*, Ken MacLeod (Orbit; Tor)  
*A Feast for Crows*, George R.R. Martin (Voyager; Bantam Spectra)  
*Old Man's War*, John Scalzi (Tor)  
*Accelerando*, Charles Stross (Ace; Orbit)  
*Spin*, Robert Charles Wilson (Tor)

### Best Novella

*Burn*, James Patrick Kelly (Tachyon)  
 "Magic for Beginners", Kelly Link (*Magic for Beginners*, Small Beer Press; *F&SF* September 2005)  
 "The Little Goddess", Ian McDonald (*Asimov's* June 2005)  
 "Identity Theft", Robert J. Sawyer (*Down These Dark Spaceways*, SFBC)  
 "Inside Job", Connie Willis (*Asimov's* January 2005)

### Best Novelette

"The Calorie Man", Paolo Bacigalupi (*F&SF* October/November 2005)  
 "Two Hearts", Peter S. Beagle (*F&SF* October/November 2005)

"TelePresence", Michael A. Burstein (*Analog* July/August 2005)  
 "I, Robot", Cory Doctorow (*The Infinite Matrix* February 15, 2005)  
 "The King of Where-I-Go", Howard Waldrop (*SCI FICTION* December 7, 2005)

### Best Short Story

"Seventy-Five Years", Michael A. Burstein (*Analog* January/February 2005)  
 "The Clockwork Atom Bomb", Dominic Green (*Interzone* May/June 2005)  
 "Singing My Sister Down", Margo Lanagan (*Black Juice*, Allen & Unwin; Eos)  
 "Tk'tk'tk", David D. Levine (*Asimov's* March 2005)  
 "Down Memory Lane", Mike Resnick (*Asimov's* April/May 2005)

### Best Related Book

*Transformations: The Story of the Science Fiction Magazines from 1950 to 1970*, Mike Ashley (Liverpool)  
*The SEX Column and Other Misprints*, David Langford (Cosmos)  
*Science Fiction Quotations* edited, Gary Westfahl (Yale)  
*Storyteller: Writing Lessons and More from 27 Years of the Clarion Writers' Workshop*, Kate Wilhelm (Small Beer Press)  
*Soundings: Reviews 1992-1996*, Gary K. Wolfe (Becon)

### Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

*Batman Begins* (Warner Bros.)  
*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Walt Disney Pictures/Walden Media)  
*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Warner Bros.)  
*Serenity* (Universal Pictures/Mutant Enemy, Inc.)  
*Wallace & Gromit in the Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (Dreamworks Animation/Aardman Animation).

### Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

*Battlestar Galactica "Pegasus"*  
*Doctor Who "Dalek"*  
*Doctor Who "The Empty Child" & "The Doctor Dances"*  
*Doctor Who "Father's Day"*  
*Jack-Jack Attack*  
*Lucas Back in Anger*  
*Prix Victor Hugo Awards Ceremony*

### Best Professional Editor

Ellen Datlow (*SCI FICTION* and anthologies)  
 David G. Hartwell (Tor Books; *Year's Best SF*)  
 Stanley Schmidt (*Analog*)  
 Gordon Van Gelder (*F&SF*)  
 Sheila Williams (*Asimov's*)

### Best Professional Artist

Jim Burns  
 Bob Eggleton

Donato Giancola  
 Stephan Martiniere  
 John Picacio  
 Michael Whelan

### Best Semiprozine

*Ansible* edited by Dave Langford  
*Emerald City* edited by Cheryl Morgan  
*Interzone* edited by Andy Cox  
*Locus* edited by Charles N. Brown, Kirsten Gong Wong, & Liza Groen Trombi  
*The New York Review of Science Fiction* edited by Kathryn Cramer, David G. Hartwell & Kevin J. Maroney

### Best Fanzine

*Banana Wings* edited by Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer  
*Challenger* edited by Guy H. Lillian III  
*Chunga* edited by Andy Hooper, Randy Byers & carl juarez  
*File 770* edited by Mike Glyer  
*Plokta* edited by Alison Scott, Steve Davies & Mike Scott

### Best Fan Writer

Claire Brialey  
 John Hertz  
 Dave Langford  
 Cheryl Morgan  
 Steven H Silver

### Best Fan Artist

Brad Foster  
 Teddy Harvia  
 Sue Mason  
 Steve Stiles  
 Frank Wu

The release goes on to say:

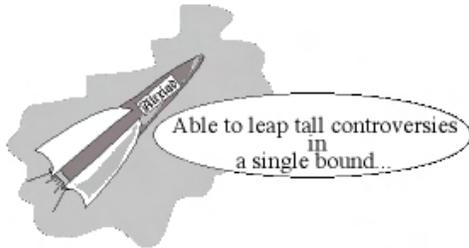
The Best Interactive Video Game category, added to the nominating ballot this year by the L.A.con IV Committee, has been dropped because of a lack of interest (as per Section 3.6 of the WSFS Constitution).

Congratulations to Claire & Mark, Guy, Mike, Alison, Steve, & Mike, Claire, John, Steve, and Brad. Congratulations especially to Mike Resnick.



Voting deadline is **July 31, 2006**. There will be on-line voting just as there were on-line nominations. Your voting suggestions are solicited. (As a first measure, don't vote for *Locus* or Langford at all.)

## Letters, we get letters



From: **John Hertz** January 31, 2006  
236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Bill Breuer on live theater recalls Miller's "Darfsteller".

"People forget that it's a celebration of liberation and freedom." — Speak for yourself. ¡Viva turrón! Of which plenty was in shops here last month.

Vote for the King for President!

Shouldn't that last line be in Bulgarian?

February 13, 2006

Thanks for *Alexiad* 5/1 and the honor of placing me first in the letter column.

Schweitzer's historical verse is an ornament to your fanzine. I say this as one who has outdone him in limericks.

Much as I admire D. Speirs, several fan writers well known to you are more deserving of the Hugo. Stevins for one.

The way to get *Dancing & Joking* is to donate at least \$5 to TAFF or DUFF and tell the Administrator.

We resent abuse of the sense of wonder because it is so great a gift.

February 27, 2006

From Steve Allen's days as the Question Man:

The answer is, "Dr. Livingston, I Presume."

And what is the question, Mr. Question Man?

"What is your full name, Dr. Presume?"

One of those jokes ruined in print.

Everybody at the office groaned when I told them that.

— JTM

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** January 27, 2006  
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3422 USA  
[catsmeouch@yahoo.com](mailto:catsmeouch@yahoo.com)

Appropos of absolutely NOTHING, I saw a special on Chernobyl revisited and it looked as if everyone just LEFT things and ran. But, it showed, while "hot" now nature is coming back and it showed the bands of natural wild horses that *looked* to be Przewalski's horses — but it was a quick look on screen.

FYI — it has been shown that, under the "right" circumstances, felines are susceptible to the avian flu. Note the canine influenza is documented as a equine flu that moved to a canine (greyhound) and then dog to dog

Just read in a veterinarian's publication that the Cleveland Bay has only 550 animals in the world = endangered.

Just got the return ish of Tom Sadler's *The Reluctant Famulus* — interesting and . . . different in its new persona.

Supposedly (after a lot of record-breaking HIGH temperatures in January) we will be seeing "some" snow in the next few days — again, we'll see.

In the followup department, I checked the weather results for Gaithersburg for that day and they had seven inches of snow. Louisville got hardly any.

Well, I got a new used typer and now can't thread the ribbon so it actually types. It SHOULD be easy, but I just can't get it to work. Next step — get the manual and see how the ribbon is *supposed* to go.

Trinlay — way to go — keep sending stuff out!

I like the Mega M&M's — I tasted more chocolate. Saw in the news that in alternative mediums they are doing a (6 weeks, I think) trial run for lowering hypertension using a special (drum roll) dark chocolate (at least it LOOKED dark) in a beverage — but it's a special chocolate — but chocolate all the same. I await the results.

I'm just starting to use the new computer system to copy my sketches and I'm SO lost. At the same time I have the new version of the software — I need to install it — but that feels like a double whammy . . . sigh.

February 24, 2006

My aunt (my deceased father's oldest sister — I think) Louise in Owensboro turns 100 on March 2. My brother said he and his wife visited her last year and she was bright (etc.) with a great sense of humor. I couldn't find a card specifically for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. (I did, however, find them up to the 90<sup>th</sup>!)

I checked the letter I got from LA Con about nominating and realized it actually said I was not a member. I have NO idea how that happened — I vote at every Worldcon . . . so I sent off the \$ and checked with Japan to be sure. Yup — I have a supporting membership for Japan — so what happened with LA?? No matter, I now have supporting membership, just need to remember to nominate before . . . March 10<sup>th</sup>, I think it is.

Agh — *Challenger* . . . I was in the parking

lot at the vet school when I heard . . . profound disbelief.

I was at the Naval Ordnance Station here in Louisville. The other programmer who was from Hopkinsville, who was named of all things James Jones, was listening on a transistor radio and heard, then told the rest of us.

Ah — computers! I have a scanner that never seemed to "do" what a scanner should — but **now**, with OS X, everything is *waay* different and I have yet to figure out . . . What I've been doing is to scan in a sketch and "trace" it, then delete the scan. Um . . . er . . . now I can't figure out **how** to get the scan into my software so I *can* scan it . . . I can *see* it, but . . . and TurboTax — which started this whole mess by **requiring** OS X — is a horrible mess. Yes, I have now spoken with an Indian tech — a **long** time (will you hold for two minutes . . .?) only to ask to speak with the supervisor . . . who turned out to *also* be Indian — big communication gap along with the PC versus MAC problem. Whee!

Jan, are circus peanuts those **big** sorta *orange* candies? Gee, I haven't had them in **years** — probably at least twenty — and I'd ened to check the ingredients to see if they have gelatin. My sister gave me a tin of Altoids in my Christmas stocking and I decided to buy more. While waiting in the checkout line I read th ingredients . . . um . . . gelatin. So back on the shelf . . . only to be traded in for the Altoids "Sours", which appear vegetarian safe.

I got six of the eleven zines listed — not too bad.

Thank you for the kind words about Hugo nominations. Reminds me — I *do* have a fillo to send *if* I remember to print it and put it in here before I seal this. [You did.]

Trinlay — just in case, I have two of the Verilex (I think that's the name) lamps to mimic full sun. I've never noticed Seasonal Affective Disorder — but . . .

Brad — feline only vets **stopped** the scruff injection about 10-15 years ago, but dog & cat practitioners often don't get the word. Treatment is **radical** excision (at *least* 3-5 cm 360°) of a **lot** of tissue; if it's a rear leg — rabies vaccination — this is usually an amputation, followed by chemo. I can explain why — but a MRI of the tumor will *show* an octopus and surgical excision *only* gets the *body* — not the legs — just had a meeting on oncology. Vaccination — there is an unadjusted (we think the adjustant is the culprit) annual rabies vaccine. If no risk (i.e. **not** an outside cat and all cats are FeLV/FN/-/-) distemper (loose skin off to the right behind the right shoulder every three years or longer *or* annual titer to get a value of the true state of immunity. **Know** what vaccines are being used. The distemper is usually a modified live-vaccine — hence unadjusted — but the USUAC rabies is *not*. Rabies to be given bar back under the skin on right leg (tail is a problem — need to avoid bone/canal). Visit the [www.aafponline.com](http://www.aafponline.com) (I

think) feline practitioners site. There is only **one** feline only rabies (unadjuvanted) vaccine on the market. If your vet uses a rabies vaccine that is for **both** dogs and cats it is **not** the one I'm mentioning. Was Duffy's sarcoma a corfibrosarcoma in the right hind leg? I could really go on and on but I've been aware of this for almost twenty years and wanted to hear the recommendations — then begin following them *immediately*.

I am a chocoholic . . . really I am . . . laugh, but it's a (ahem) heavy problem — but so far no chocolate as chocolate (mocha — decaf+ ½ hot choc pack does **not** count). I **want** Reese's and Hershey and an agh over valentines the store had bags of kisses buy one get one free and I **had** to buy one for a family and I **did** give them both **unopened** bags but it was difficult and the car smelled of **chocolate**.

Walgreens was also selling sugar-free Oreo cookies. With those and sugar-free Hershey miniatures and York Peppermint Patties . . .

— JTM



From: **Jim Sullivan** February 14, 2006  
803 Woodcliff Drive, South Bend, IN  
46615-3247 USA

Editor Joseph, how do you manage to read so many books and review them in just a month's time? Surely you must be a speed reader and don't watch much TV. I'm curious to know your secret or secrets.

Yes, I am a speed reader and don't watch much TV. I learned to read when I was two and a half years old and evidently fast was part of it. As for the tube, "500 channels and nothing on" turned out to be an accurate prophesy.

— JTM

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** Feb. 12, 2006  
4030 8<sup>th</sup> Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA

Many thanks for *Alexiad* #5.1, which arrived in the run up to Valentine's Day. Enclosed are

four cartoons and one decorative spot — which is a drawing that I really liked, but couldn't think of a caption for. It would be much appreciated if you would deploy your computer graphics skills to print them a little darker. God knows, I didn't draw them with a 6H pencil, as would appear to be the case from the reproduction in your fanzine.

Touching upon WSFA politics, and the failure of Capclave's promised Chapbook of Howard Waldrop stories to appear in a timely fashion, Martin Morse Wooster says: ". . . but since I'm not a member of WSFA, and thus can't be expelled from the Gilliland's house, I have no idea why the chapbook hasn't appeared." Tsk tsk. The Chapbook was assigned to Michael Nelson, who had to move just prior to Michael Walsh's Capclave, but neither gave up the assignment, nor completed it. Prior to the February 3rd meeting, a registered letter sent by the club secretary on this subject was refused, so WSFA is currently about as enlightened on the matter as Martin, who is misinformed about being ineligible to be banned from Chez Gilliland — which is, after all, a private residence. As the fallout of a flame war on the WSFA list, Keith Lynch, the club secretary, chose to resign, and Lee, with my consent, banned Ted White, an ex-president who had not been a WSFA member for decades. (FYI, a flyer handed out at a subsequent meeting is enclosed.) Nor do I think that y'all would be interested in my speculation about Mike Nelson's motives for not doing the chapbook. (A northern variation of y'all is yinz, which appears to be based on you 'uns, Pittsburgh Pirate fans also being called yinzers.) Suffice it to say that losing Keith, Ted, & Co. has been pretty much offset by the return of several WSFA members who weren't coming to meetings because of Keith and Ted. So after a certain amount of aggravation the status quo prevails, and may even have become a little more congenial — at least for the hosts. The Waldrop Chapbook, I have no doubt, will be done in time, as opposed to on time.

A bit more on Saint Cyril, who was Bishop of the Nitrian Order; becoming the Archbishop of Alexandria when he succeeded his uncle, Theodosius; and finally styling himself Patriarch, when he wrested secular control of Egypt from the failing Roman Empire. Cyril established the Coptic Church as the religious and secular authority in Egypt, and because he was profoundly misogynistic, he severely curtailed the legal rights of women and never mind that those rights were of great antiquity. Thus, when Islam swept in two centuries later, Egypt embraced it as a women's liberation movement, and Coptic Christianity has been a minority sect ever since.

Surely there are better ways to honor the memory of Bill Rotsler than putting him up for another Hugo? While it is true that Joe Mayhew and Ian Gunn both won the award posthumously (in '00 and '99 respectively) they had been alive when nominated. The perennial posthumous publication of Rotsler's prodigious output presumes a peculiarly prestigious position in the pantheon of phanartists. Nor was he without honor during his lifetime; besides his four

Hugos, back in æ73 he was the fan GoH at Torcon II, and in '96 he received a special Hugo for his services to LA fandom. So, given the precedent of ConFrancisco in '93, which nominated Mark Twain as Dead GoH, perhaps some future worldcon could have Rotsler as their Dead GoH. Whereupon modern fans, mindful of Kelly Freas, Robert Sheckley and Howard DeVore, recent worldcon GoHs deprived of their laurels by ill-health and death, can say, gee, they didn't even know Rotsler had been sick.

Long time passing, Dolly and I went to see "The Last Temptation Of Christ." There were picketers, and we stood in line with a silver haired lady who said she was there because her minister had forbidden the congregation to attend. The movie may have suffered for adhering too closely to the book, so that it was too intellectual to be a proper entertainment, but I liked it. We note that Kazantzakis was Greek Orthodox rather than Roman Catholic, but in his writing he was seeking to find God.

We saw it and I thought it was an embarrassment. The way Harvey Keitel did the role, they could have saved money and got Carrot Top to play Judas. And Mary Magdalene as Lydia the Tattooed Lady?

More recently Lee went to Egypt for three weeks on the Theban Mapping Tour. An adventure, rather more strenuous than she had anticipated, and whose highlights included a visit to the grandson of a passenger on the Titanic in Luxor — whom she knew from being on various Titanic boards; being stung on the wrist by a scorpion; and going into K-5, where, by poking around with a stick, she knocked a hole in a wall and discovered a new passageway. Also she met people from our trip two years before; you could hardly call them friends on such brief acquaintance, but they remembered her with kindness, which impressed at least some of her fellow tour members. She took maybe 600 pictures, and is enjoying the memory of her trip probably more than its reality. I stayed home. Seeing all the tombs in the Valley of the Kings? When we were there two years ago we saw three of them, which I thought was at least one too many, and she does admit that maybe she has had her fill of ancient tombs. Or maybe not. Lee is thinking of going back in '07, for a whole month, the deal being that she gets her room and board in exchange for going into the tombs and copying the art on the walls onto photographs of the walls. That should do for now.

And now that they've discovered a new tomb there, she has a new reason.

— JTM

March 20, 2006

A short note, touching on some WSFA business brought up by Martin Morse Wooster

in the last *Alexiad*, namely the club's failure to produce the Waldrop chapbook promised for last year's Capclave. This past weekend, the club secretary, Ernest Lilley, brought in copies of that chapbook to the WSFA meeting to be stuffed in envelopes and mailed. This is admittedly a little late, but — to save Martin the trouble of coming to a meeting to make his inquiry — the fault rests with Mike Nelson, who initially had the assignment, and Mike Walsh, the con chair who didn't push to get it done. When Lilley finally got hold of Waldrop's manuscript in late February, it had not been proofed, nor had a font been selected, and the club secretary did an excellent job of honoring the club's commitment to Howard Waldrop and the members of Capclave.

Never on Sunday. The Tournament of Roses in Pasadena was on January 2<sup>nd</sup> this year as I'm sure everyone knows. There are a lot of churches on Colorado Blvd. and many years ago an agreement was made not to interfere with Sunday. Well, for the first time in 51 years it rained on our parade. And did it ever rain! Having lived in Pasadena for 47 years I think that I can call it our parade as I've probably seen some 40 of the parades. Everything went off as usual and the parade participants are to be congratulated. (The meteorologist on the Weather Channel referred to the parade as the Rose Bowl Parade. Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! There is no such animal as the Rose Bowl Parade. The parade existed well before the football game. Officially it is the Tournament of Roses. But, you can also call it the Rose Parade.) Of course, the weather on January 1<sup>st</sup> was ok and on January 3<sup>rd</sup> it was great.

I obtained *Big Dead Place: Inside the Strange and Menacing World of Antarctica* by Nicholas Johnson (2005) on Interlibrary Loan from the City of Mesa Library in Mesa, Arizona. I think that it is somewhat disjointed; but, I enjoyed reading it. You're correct that Johnson is "seriously deranged and badly disturbed" with which he apparently agrees.

As I mentioned last issue, on Wednesday, October 26, Dennis Prager interviewed Nicholas Johnson. Prager thoroughly enjoyed the interview and invited Johnson back after he publishes his next book. (The Stanley Milgram book to which Johnson refers [pp. 70-71] is *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* [1974/1975]. I recommend it highly.) The political Correctness and petty bullshit is incredible. Interesting that "Safety Girl" didn't understand the use of "ibid." (p. 225).

There were two surprises. First was the number of people in Antarctica. Second was the sex. On further thought the sex should not have been surprising. The military has a large problem with mixed sex units and it doesn't like to talk about it. The Navy has a big problem on co-ed ships with a high number of females getting pregnant. Personally, with all the ways in which to keep from becoming pregnant, I believe that they become pregnant on purpose so as to get off the ship and maybe out of the Navy. A Second Cousin of mine did tours in Antarctica as a diver. I contacted him and he has not heard of the book. If he reads it I've asked him for his opinion. No response as yet.

When Shackleton was organizing the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, he got a letter from "three sporty girls" who wanted to go. He had an idea what would happen if they came and in that era could turn them down without being chastised.

*The Hidden Family* by Charles Stross (2005) was obtained from a library in Apple Valley, California. An enjoyable read. There is a gap that bothered me between the last regular part of the story and the Epilogue. Maybe some of it will be covered in the next book.

*Dragon America* by Mike Resnick (obtained from The Seattle Public Library) was a most fun read.

*The Enchanter Completed: A Tribute Anthology for L. Sprague de Camp* Edited by Harry Turtledove (2005) was a mixed bag. I enjoyed some of the stories and didn't care for some others.

I read *Ring of Fire* and *1634: The Galileo Affair*. Eric Flint has seven or more novels in the same universe in mind. Apparently, it's never going to end.

Writers have made vast plans before only to have them aborted by half-vast sales.

*LOSCON 32* (November 25 – 27, 2005) was enjoyable, as have been the ones that I've attended previously. Once again it was at the LAX Marriott.

Only two purchases were made this time, a painting and a t-shirt, neither of which has anything to do with Science Fiction. Some of you may remember that last year I was out bid on a painting by Joseph O. Mueller that was of an eagle protecting the American flag from a dragon (obviously the People's Republic of China). This year he had a similar painting, except it was smaller and has a nice frame. I was the only bidder and it's mine! (It's indicated as being 044/200, but that's ok.) The t-shirt has a quote from Benjamin Franklin—"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch." I loved that, but it's the second part of the quote that really sold me on the t-shirt—"Liberty is a well-armed lamb..."

I went to the following programs: "Take Me To Your Leader. What do aliens who have been visiting Earth want?"—"Nanotechnology: A new report on current discoveries"—"Heinlein 101 – An introduction to the writings of Heinlein"—"First Contact/Alien Communication – How would the human race react to first contact? How should we communicate?"—"Gort vs. Frodo: What are the best Science Fiction/Fantasy films ever produced?"—"Forward into the Past. Could it be true that some ancient civilizations had equal or even better technology than we do today? Is there any archeological evidence?"—"Pure Evil vs. Pure Good: Can they exist and does it make a good story?"—"Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire Movie Discussion"—"Control-Alt-Delete: The history and future of computing"—"Firefly: Why didn't fans get it the first time?"

I'll comment on a few of the programs. "Take Me To Your Leader"—I am not one of the people who believe we have been visited. The panel was more about trying to establish contact. The big question is what if their method of contact is not something we can read. "Harry Potter"—People who have read the book were somewhat disappointed in the movie. Nonetheless, they enjoyed it. I have only read the first book and did so after seeing the movie to determine how close they stuck to the book. I have not read any of the other books and I've enjoyed all the movies. As a matter of fact, I



From: **Robert S. Kennedy** January 12, 2006  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA  
93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

NOTE: Bob Kennedy did indeed try to loc lastish. However, he got caught by my antispam somehow. Sorry about that.

Thank you for Vol. 4, No. 6. Incredible to realize that this represents four years.

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, my brother, John, was found dead in his bed by his cleaning lady. He was only 68. He was here for Christmas and was fine. We don't yet know the cause of death. Tomorrow I leave for Alameda, California (where he lived) to meet up with his children who came down from Idaho. I am taking this very hard.

We were very sorry to hear of your loss.

— LTM & JTM

I would like to ask anyone voting for the 2008 Worldcon to vote for Denver. This is a very selfish request on my part in that I will go to Denver, but not Chicago or Columbus. Thank you.

And we can see the Richthofen Castle, tour the site of the DenVention, go down to Colorado Springs and see my cousin Rives and the Heinlein House . . .

think that *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* is the best movie so far. "Firefly"—Rather misleading. Fans did get the TV series. It was felt that it's the non-fans who didn't get it. A friend of mine who never saw any of the TV series (and who I would not consider an SF Fan) went to the movie *Serenity* and thoroughly enjoyed it despite not knowing the background. At "Gort vs. Frodo" I tried to mention the movie *The Thirteenth Floor*, but never got called on. After the panel I mentioned the movie to two of the panelists. One of them had never heard of the movie. The other had seen it and liked it, as do I. Rather reminds me of *LOSCON 31* when I mentioned the movie *12:01* and no one on the panel had heard of it.

By the way, Bill Patterson informed us that Joe's book will be out in January. Jerry Pournelle was to be on some panels, but he was a no show. Oh, I almost forgot, there was a note in one of the items in the program package telling people not to use the expression Sci-Fi unless talking to you know who. It's Science Fiction or SF. That made me very happy. I picked up my art work about 11:00 a.m. on Sunday and left after the "Firefly" panel.

Glad you had such a good time. The "January" was my fault, but I'm glad to hear that Bill is boosting the book. When is his biography of RAH coming out?

I signed up for *LOSCON 33* which will be held this year at the same hotel. However, it's not certain that I'll go this year. There are several possible reunions/conventions that I want to attend (including the World Science Fiction Convention in Anaheim) and may not be able to afford *LOSCON*. We'll see what happens. (I had to get a crown in December and the cost was about the same as going to *LOSCON*.)

I've mentioned *The Thirteenth Floor*, so I finally decided to purchase the DVD. At the same time I purchased *The Wizard of Oz*, the three disc Collector's Edition. Amazon.com is a wonderful place; but, it may cause me to go broke. I try to save up my purchases in order to have over \$25.00 so as to receive free shipping. However, sometime it seems like I buy an item just to get over the \$25.00.

*The Force of Reason* by Oriana Fallaci has been postponed again. This time it's to March 21, 2006. She is probably doing the translation herself just as she did for *The Rage and the Pride* (2001). These postponements are frustrating and becoming ridiculous.

I just remembered another movie (in addition to *Wild Things* and *Zathura*) where I was the only pardon in the theater—*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

**Joseph T Major:** So, Leigh and Baigent are suing Dan Brown. What fun. I guess they want to get in on the money Brown has been making. Very enjoyable review of *THUD!*. "It isn't widely realized, but the title character in *The Ugly American* (by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick; 1958) is one of the good guys (p. 14)." I have had several arguments on this

subject. "The "Ugly American" refers to his looks, not to his acts. I have not been able to convince people. The only solution I can see is to get them to check the book out of the library. A fine review of *Disinformation* by Richard Minter (with credit to **Martin Morse Wooster** as the researcher). I highly recommend the book.

I read *The Ugly American* in the sixties and I got the difference. I also read *Sarkhan* not long after it came out.

—JTM

**Richard Dengrove:** I don't think that I'll bother with *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*. Your review tells me about all I need to know.

**Lisa Major:** Very enjoyable commentary on the feeding of cats. It brought back a lot of memories. I no longer have any cats as I don't wish to be bothered having to take them to a kennel when I travel. Probably selfish on my part; but, that's it. The neighbors who would feed my cats moved.

**Trinlay Khadro:** My other wisdom teeth were removed when I was quite young. I was put out and awoke with them gone. That's about all I remember about it. Now I'm 72 and the last one was pulled with the result being no problem and no pain.

**Lloyd Penney:** Thank you for your comments regarding Penney, Penny, and Pennie.

March 17, 2006

Thank you for Vol. 5, No. 1.

Also, thank you for your condolences regarding my brother John. It's been a very hard time. One's younger brother is not supposed to go before oneself.

Excellent review of *American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps* (p. 10). I add my recommendation for the book.

*The Force of Reason* by Oriana Fallaci was rescheduled again. This time to February 27<sup>th</sup> (from March 21<sup>st</sup>). I have it.

I read *DEXTA* (2005) by C. J. Ryan because I thought the concept as it appeared in an ad sounded interesting. I'm not sure if it was that concept or the sex that is the main thrust of the novel. It was, however, interesting. The book is not a keeper and I donated it to the friends of the Library to sell. I purchased the sequel, *Glorious Treason*.

Anyone interested in vampire novels should enjoy *Midnight Mass* (2004) by F. Paul Wilson. An excellent read.

I've started subscribing to *NOW PLAYING* (the schedule for Turner Classic Movies) which is a great help since they run movies 24 hours a day and I can tape them at any time. I taped and watched the movie *Shampoo* (1975). I remember some scenes from when my then wife and I watched the movie in a theater. It appears that TCM cut part of the scenes (they involved sex). I also taped and watched *The Sea Hawk* (1940) expecting Rafael Sabatini. No such luck as only the title was the same. Also taped and watched was *The Third Man* (1949). At what

was probably the last scene the picture was lost. It has been so long since I last watched this movie that a great deal was not remembered. Hopefully, TCM will rebroadcast the movie so that I can spin down and see what I missed.

On Friday, February 24, I went to the library to pick up *The Way To Glory* by David Drake (2005) that had been ordered on Interlibrary Loan. (Another excellent Lt. Leary with a good twist near the end.) There were four other books waiting for me including *Infernal* (another good Repairman Jack Novel by F. Paul Wilson). Sometimes it happens that all the books I have ordered on Interlibrary Loan arrive at the same time. Not being a speed reader like Joe, that doesn't make me happy.

I read *Genesis of the Grail Kings* by Laurence Gardner who is also the author of *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*. (It's one of the Barnes & Noble reprints that sell for \$9.99 or so.) Nice pictures and illustrations.

Laurence Gardner has broken with Michel "Prince Michael of Albany" Lafosse, the subject of *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*. But Lafosse just keeps on picking up adherents, sigh.

I taped and watched *They Are Among Us* on the Sci Fi Channel. Bruce Boxleitner was in it and I thought that it might be reasonably good. Wrong! It was another crummy made for the Sci Fi Channel movie. When will I ever learn?

On February 28 I needed some laughs so went to see *The Pink Panther* (staring Steve Martin). I got the laughs and for the fourth time I was the only person in the theatre.

My copy of *Heinlein's Children: The Juveniles*, suitably inscribed by Joe, arrived on March 4<sup>th</sup>. A very eclectic Bibliography. Any Bibliography that includes Henry Hazlitt's *Time Will Run Back* has to be good. (Now, if I can only find my copy.) The book is Copyright 2006 and eligible for the Best Related Book HUGO in 2007. Don't forget!

The Academy Award nominations for Best Picture of 2005 just may be the worst year ever. The best movie of 2005, *Cinderella Man*, was not even nominated. On the recommendation of a friend I rented *Crash*. It is reminiscent of the magnificent *Grand Canyon* (1991); but, it doesn't even come close. Early in the movie they have a man and his daughter go into a gun store, purchase a handgun, and walk out with the gun. This is not possible, it's illegal. California has a waiting period during which a criminal background check is performed. I have no doubt that the falsehood in the movie was purposeful. It was not an auspicious beginning. Overall the movie was good and I gave it a 3 on my scale of 1-5 because of the lie about the gun purchase. (If not for the lie I would have given it a 4.) Well, *Crash* won the Oscar. But, probably because it was the best of a poor lot. The Academy needs to add a line to their ballots the same as we need on ballots for political office—None of the Above. *March of the Penguins* won an Oscar so it was not all bad.

E. Annie Proulx (author of the story it was based on) threw a temper tantrum because **Brokeback Mountain** didn't win. She should grow up.

I really enjoy the TV program *Bones*. *Bones* has been up against *Lost* (which I also watch) on the same day and time. That has to have really hurt *Bones*. Thanks to more than one VCR I have been able to tape both. *Bones* has moved to one hour earlier and that will hopefully help the show. But, it now appears to be up against *Survivor*, so who knows?

**Joseph T Major:** In a comment to **Dainis Bisenieks** you ask: "What was Ben Franklin's agent number for British Intelligence?" I think that you already know the answer since just above that question you refer to the number "72". Yes, his British Intelligence Number was 72. Also, he had the code name "Moses". See the book *Code Number 72/Ben Franklin: Patriot or Spy?* By Cecil B. Currey (1972, Prentice-Hall, Inc.). If memory serves me, the main thrust of the book is that Franklin covered all his bases so that he would be ok regardless of the end result of our War for Independence.

Asked his name, he removes his clay pipe from his lips, adjusts his bifocals, blows out a smoke ring, and says, "Franklin." <pause> **Ben Franklin.** In a money saving effort, he is also Q Branch.

— JTM

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** Feb. 17, 2006  
6900 Cote St-Luc Road #708 Montreal,  
QC CANADA H4V 2Y9  
[croft@bigfoot.com](mailto:croft@bigfoot.com)

Am I really in the  
**Alexiad** lettercol...?



Thank you for *Alexiad* vol. 4 No. 6.

Joseph saw my first letter in *The Knarley News* and invited me here. I'm a freelance writer (unless you read fps magazines or roleplaying game books you haven't read me... YET) and as a result I'm often juggling deadlines. That's what happened here and as a result I missed the deadline. As a result, if both my letters for that issue and the current one are both printed I will temporarily be this zine's Mark from Memphis (a reference you'll get if you listen to the Dragonpage and Kick-Ass Mystic Nija podcasts... if not, I'll explain it soon).

I saw several names here I recognize from TKK. For the rest of you: I'm a native of Montreal, Quebec Canada (I already paid my pre-support for the Montreal Worldcon bid for 2009 that Joe mentioned here), and I'm also

Jewish (though Joseph seems to know more of the calendar and events than I do). As I mentioned above I'm a writer racking up my rejection slips for fiction... but each rejection slip is one less before an acceptance!

Ghu, a refugee from the days when every Fan was trembling on the verge of being a Pro . . . Those were the days, my friends. Good luck & bonne fortune.

No detailed comments from me on the letter section and reviews this time, but I must say I was impressed at the variety of areas covered. A common bit of advice to us future writers is to read more than just fiction, but it's also a lesson I never took to heart. I read other types of fiction than just SF (thrillers, police procedurals and other mysteries) but I never really caught the history bug. I am trying to beef up my knowledge of science though (how's this for irony: I write science fiction, but I was bored by the sciences in school), but even that is coming along slowly.

I noticed the review of Terry Pratchett's *Thud!* right away. He was our GoH at Con\*Cept in 1996, and I saw him at WorldCon in 2003. He's a terrific writer, can be entertaining at times, but he also puts his foot in his mouth very often... I heard about him blasting the French at a convention in French Canada!

By the way, 2-month belated birthday Joe!

Welcome to Fanzine Fandom.  
Any new lochack is always welcome.

March 30, 2006

Thank you for *Alexiad* vol. 5 No. 1. This is Jeff from Montreal...

('Mark from Memphis' has the alliteration thing going, something I lack to make a catchy gimmick. Oh well.)

I really had to race to get this LOC prepared: mid-March I tried to install a 512 MB upgrade in my PC, and it trashed my motherboard. I had to buy a new one, then reinstall Windows to start from scratch again. I despise having to reinstall my OS like this, but in the end I had no choice - and lost more than a week of writing time.

I sympathize about the move. I've never had to move offices, but I've moved apartments a lot... 10 times in 16 years. I still haven't fully unpacked and I've lived in my current place nearly 5 years. Just the sight of cardboard boxes gives me nightmares...

Re: Random Jottings... I'll have to see the entire Clone Wars series some day, if only to was away my disgust over the last 3 films. // Regardless of the IMDB references, Catwoman looks better in anything other than that travesty of a movie last year. // Robert Sheckley had a special significance to me: he was the GoH at Con\*Cept 1993, the first one I ever helped to run.

Re: The RAH book review... I still have a collected volume by him called *Expanded Universe* on my bookshelf that I have to get

around to reading. He's seen as a real visionary by my friend Spider Robinson, and *Stranger in a Strange Land* is one of my favorite books, but I have to agree with another viewpoint on his works: after *A Moon is a Harsh Mistress* he went loony, and his books got more and more unreadable after that. // I guess it's the traumas of having Holocaust survivors as great Aunts and Uncles, giving me the horror stories . . . I can't see any book using Hitler as entertaining. // Re: The Annual Vaccination . . . we don't have similar animal laws here in Canada, but since my cats are indoors only (I live on the 7th floor of my building, and won't see if they can evolve wings instantly), so I don't really need to inoculate them against things they can catch outdoors.

**Friday and Job: A Comedy of Justice** have their moments, but generally I can see your point. By the way, have you bought a copy of **Heinlein's Children** yet?

Re: Letters, we get letters

John Hertz: did the Anticipation room party at Loscon XXXII seem well attended? I can't state enough how eager I am for Montreal to win this bid; funds are extremely tight, so going across my hometown would fit the bill. :)

Robert Lichtman: I didn't realize that Roger Ebert was fen! That explains why he's not as tough on SF films . . . // I gave efanazines.com a glance once. I realized a longer study would result in me likely never leaving it. I have too many other projects on my plate, so I'll let it stay a "maybe, someday" item on my ToDo list.

Alexis A. Gilliland: In my past as a SMOF I was on many panels at conventions as well as helping to run them. In my opinion, I've been able to enjoy them more since I stopped. I did get invited by a guy named Wombat to offer my gab at Albacon in 2005, but the panel chief never got back to me. Just as well; border-hopping from Canada to the US and dealing with exchange rates I didn't miss.

Trinlay Khadro: Boots, Squeaky and me also send our condolences. // I don't have SAD to deal with (I have enough other things!), but I still changed my PC desktop to something brighter during the winter just in case. Montreal experienced one of its mildest winters in years fortunately . . . // Re: Phishing e-mails . . . what I find amusing are the ones from banks either not in town (like CitiBank), or just ones I've never been part of (Scotia Bank here).

Jason K. Burnett: I'm glad you were able to get away from NOLA safely. One of my former high school acquaintances lived there also . . . once I found out she was okay, I went back to ignoring her existence. // Re: Mercedes Lackey, so far I've only read her co-written *Knight of Shadows* series, and it sets my teeth on edge.

I liked some of her early, original stuff, but she got stuck in the "abused girl gets empowered" groove for a while, and then went off on all sorts of tangents, personal and literary. She was

guest of honor at RiverCon one year and Steve Francis (the co-chair) is still in an interesting mood.

Joy V. Smith: In 1990, I went to Orlando as a university graduation gift. I went to a store that was a prototype for the Wal-Mart superstore. We have a few here in the Montreal area, but I haven't gone to them too often myself.

E. B. Frohvet: I light a mental candle in tribute and memory of Pearl Harbor, next to the Holocaust memorial that my elders have never let me forget.

Brad W. Foster: Re: cats worrying about feeding time — both of mine are similar to your Vlad — except they don't stare at me for hours, just start crying for food about 3 hours before time. // VFS sounds to me as a good reason for me not to get my cats shots! // I've rarely heard good words from people who met Harlan in person, so him being crotchety comes as no surprise to me.

Henry L. Welch: I almost called you "Knarley" :) // When I was in Calgary this past summer for Westercon, plans to see the Canadian Rockies fell through. A shame, but I don't expect them to go away before I visit again.

George W. Price: Re: building a light rail system — the mayor of Montreal has been talking of building a tramway here, something the city hasn't had in more than 50 years. It's a logistic nightmare, considering how traffic has grown exponentially since then . . . but even more important, our city doesn't have the funds for it. Regardless, the mayor has decided it will happen. // You addressed the major problems we'll also have. // Canada doesn't have mass-transit in the black either, at least here in Montreal. Our system has rate increases at least twice a year the past 4 years, and its budget is still in the red.

Milt Stevens: It still amazes me how long Robert Silverberg has been around. That doesn't excuse him being a rude guest at Torcon 3 in 2003 though.

Martin Morse Wooster: The souvenir program book from Torcon 3/WorldCon 2003 wasn't out until the second day of the con, but with a good reason: Toronto was hit by the rolling blackout that shut down several cities on the East Coast just a few days earlier.

Dainis Biseneiks: I'm accustomed to folks calling my skill as a Fount of Pointless Knowledge proof of me being a wonder silly too. Glad to hear that other fans are like that! // Tolkien actually having editors and printers leave in gaffs really hurts his writing skills to me. Now we'll never know if turns of phrase were his, or mistakes not caught.

Rod F. Smith: I was also a huge fan of the Wildcards series, but I don't remember Freemasons as villains. // Infinity Inc. also has the (in)famy of being one of the series Todd McFarlane drew early in his career.

Sheryl Birkhead: The saddest thing about New Orleans is the fact that it's being rebuilt exactly as it was — dangerously below sea level, only levees as a hope to keep storm waters

out. Chicago built the city higher due to a flood, but not NOLA. I love jazz, and as the birthplace I cherish the place, but I think it is just re-inviting disaster. // All the talk about chocolate hurts. I'm a choc-o-holic, but I haven't been able to touch it for over 3 years now . . . turns out it has enzymes I can't digest, so they cause me problems.

Lloyd Penney: The chair for the Montreal Worldcon was with me in Calgary at Westercon last summer. He held a panel on it and a room party, as well as running a table to promote it. I bought my pre-support at Con\*Cept the year before. I don't know why people say it's secretive — unless they mean in not listing guests yet. That's not done for any Worldcon bid; they don't speak of guests unless they win the bid.

Sue Burke: I studied Spanish in college, then University. Unfortunately I didn't get to use it often, so 16 years later I remember very little.

Richard Dengrove: An Orthodox Jewish child good friends with a Palestinian. If only people in the Middle East could be so open! // I've seen how all faiths (including ours) have fundamentalist sects that do things to be ashamed of. I heard of rumbles in Vermont between Hasidic and Lubavitch groups, and years ago of a movie house in Israel fire bombed for being open on Shabbas (the sabbath, on Saturday). Also, Christianity has this blot on its history called the Inquisition.

Marty Helgesen: I used to forward Ebay phishing mail to spoof@ebay.com, but just got the same form mail and lack of results. I just delete them now.

AL du Pisani: The election slogans you mention are pretty similar to how things were done here in Canada. Now we have a right-wing demagogue in charge of the country just like our US neighbors. How nice . . . not. If you hadn't guessed, I didn't vote for the guy we got.

That wraps up this LOC for me. Now I have my APA deadline for the 17th and minutes to type for my building tenant committee. A writer's never done!

Mundanes toil till set of sun,  
but a fan's fanatic is never done.

— JTM

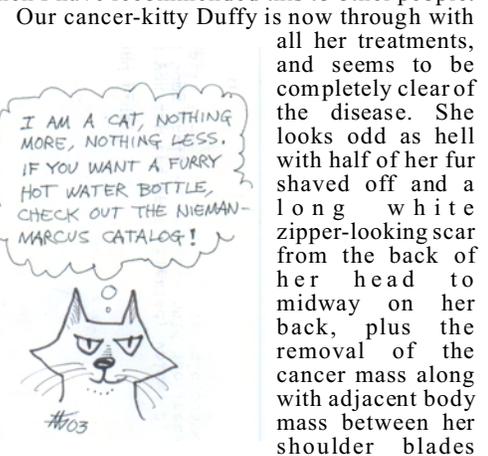
From: **Brad W. Foster** February 18, 2006  
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA  
[bwfoster@juno.com](mailto:bwfoster@juno.com)

New issue in this week, more good reading. I liked your opening story of your 104 year old step-cousin Robley. I like to think that, while arguing over the lost interest on his certificate of deposit, he was getting ready to take out a new multi-year one, since he figured he might need those extra bucks down the line when he got a bit older!

He volunteers at the Veterans Hospital here in Louisville three days a week. The old guys need a cheering-up every now and then.

I loved the idea of the Pentimento Paradigm, a great phrase indeed. There are certain actors who can make me forget they are that actor, and get really into the role. Others just bring all that real-world baggage along and I can never shake that after-image of them. PP is a great way to refer to it. (Too bad I know I'll never remember the phrase, curse these senior moments!)

I think EB was right in saying that "Summerland" ". . . seems to lack a natural audience", but I see that as a positive. I read and hugely enjoyed it. I think it's the kind of book that will be discovered by different people at different times, getting what they will from it. (I've never understood the whole idea of trying to get kids who don't want to read interested in a book because the book talks about some physical activity they like.) I didn't find it at all too cutesy. In fact, I was impressed by how he brought in so much material, such as using American mythic characters, without bothering to spend too much time to explain their backgrounds. You either knew where they came from, and thus got a little extra jolt of literary fun, or didn't, and just read them as new characters. It's the first big-quest style fantasy novel I've picked up in a while that seemed to be trying to do something new while staying with a mostly now classic format. And not once has the phrase "deliciously ironic" popped up when I have recommended this to other people.



Our cancer-kitty Duffy is now through with all her treatments, and seems to be completely clear of the disease. She looks odd as hell with half of her fur shaved off and a long white zipper-looking scar from the back of her head to midway on her back, plus the removal of the cancer mass along with adjacent body mass between her shoulder blades has given her an odd swaying motion when she walks... but she is with us, she is healthy, and she seems to have become even more loving than before, which I didn't think was possible. "Purr machine" is now how I often refer to her.

Congratulations to the cancer survivor from the six masters in our house, and from the two human slaves also.

And yes, I too will look up the other guests at a convention when I am a guest of honor myself, since I think it would be odd to not know something about them (though I am also amazed if anyone else really has any idea who I am!). But if one of them tells me to fuck off for an innocent comment I made, I'd probably first think they were nuts too.

Finally, left with a weird visual image from

the opening of Henry's loc, due to a couple of missing commas: "The sound on the other hand takes some getting used to." The sound coming from your other hand? Hell man, I'd have a hard time getting used to the sound coming from my first hand! (I think that was supposed to be: "The sound, on the other hand, takes some getting used to." Right? Makes more sense, but nowhere near as much fun to read!)

What would the sound on the gripping hand be like?

— JTM

From: **E. B. Frohvet** February 15, 2006  
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott  
City MD 21042-5988 USA

Water heater problem (resolved, expensively). Plumbing problem separate from the water heater problem (resolved, expensively). Drywall problem, to repair the holes in the walls and ceilings made by the plumbers (resolved, expensively). Sanding and repainting walls and ceilings (pending). Family problem of substantial proportion (appears to be resolving, fingers crossed that it doesn't blow up again).

And one of my plants died. Other than those items, I'm doing well. How are you?

Cold house. Having to stuff ten pounds of office stuff into a five-pound office (so to speak). Collapsed sewer between house and office, spreading sewer gas all over. As for family, the worst thing of late has been telling relatives the degree in which they are related to Edgar Cayce.

In correspondence with a friend, I said of the Lost Causes *neé* Fan Hugos, if there was any fairness and justice in the system, by now Steve Stiles would have received one, and Joe Major, and Guy Lillian.

I'm a fanzine star!



Robert Lichtman: No snipes here. I have known Steve Stiles for a long time; we are not close friends, but have always been on civil terms. I have long and publically encouraged a Hugo for Steve. I don't know Dan Steffan or Ross Chamberlain personally though I have seen their work from time to time. I have no personal problems with either of those gentlemen. TAFF and the FAAN Awards are a different story. My prejudice is irrelevant, the facts speak for

themselves. The last three North American TAFF delegates — Victor Gonzalez, Randy Byers, Suzle Tomkins (significant other of Jerry Kaufman) are all Seattle fans who are closely affiliated with the Corflu crowd. Coincidence? As I discussed in my article in *Knarley Knews* a while ago, the FAANs show a noted tendency to go to Corflu people. In theory both of these things are open to anyone in fandom voting. In theory, seats in Congress are fairly contested and not shamelessly gerrymandered to assure incumbents of re-election. Theory does not always accord with practice. I am entirely willing to go with "embittered" to describe my feeling about Corflu Valentine; and consider that a fair and justified feeling.

Joy V. Smith: I had to look up last issue to see what we disagreed on. Oh. "There can never be too many awards." Well, I still disagree, politely and respectfully. Friends are allowed to disagree about some things.

I did not know that I had LOCced every issue, though it does not surprise me. If memory serves, the very first *Alexiad* was done as a one-shot at some Worldcom and was not generally distributed? The first one I received was "Volume 1 #2," April 2002. I always enjoy it, even if I have not read many of the books reviewed.

Most interesting long review about Heinlein's short fiction. One can see where the author, never shy about recycling an idea or gimmick he had used before, drew on some earlier pieces for later novels. I look forward to my copy of *Heinlein's Children*, in anticipation of many debates. Autographed copy? I don't know. If you and Lisa should be passing through Maryland, you're welcome to stop by and sign it. Lunch is on me. A little advance notice is preferred.

You should have your copy by now. George Price sent me all the pre-ordered copies so I could autograph them.

"Earth is a very pleasant planet and . . . has been so for millions of millenia." I'm sure that would be great comfort to the herbivores, not to mention the occasional time traveller, facing the allosaur. I would rather say Earth has been a habitable planet for a long time. That liquid water is stable is an accident of astrophysics, that Earth formed at a convenient distance from the sun.

Trinlay Khadro: "What do people do for income" while the Social Security Administration is backlogged on disability claims? Sadly, that's pretty much their problem. In my company people usually have a decision within a month. It may not be the decision they want, but they get one.

"Engage the enemy" is almost always a lawful command. As a general rule, if they shoot at you, you can shoot back.

And then there was the problem with Mike Resnick's father's last Social Security check . . .

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Feb. 21, 2006  
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring,  
MD 20907-8093  
[mmwooster@yahoo.com](mailto:mmwooster@yahoo.com)

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 25. **Darrell Schweitzer** can certainly give a better answer than I can, but in the matter of *Science Fiction Review*, I believe Joe is right and **Milt Stevens** is wrong. I remember that in about 1984, Elton Elliott decided to make *Science Fiction Review* a magazine that would be sold on newsstands, that would have Richard E. Geis and some other SFR features but would not be published by Geis. My memory is that this version of SFR lasted 2-3 issues but failed due to lack of capital by Elliott. But agian, Darrell probably has the complete story.

On **Mitrokhin**: Isn't his 2002 book *KGB Lexicon* a "raw" Mitrokhin book written with no help from Christopher Andrew?

I checked on Amazon.co.uk and apparently so.

**Lloyd Penney**: I think that you'd find a lot of Americans would support a Montreal bid, provided the convention committee tells us something about itself and its experiences. I think Toronto fandom had made itself pretty well known to Americans, but Montreal fandom hasn't. I'd hope one point that Montrealers would make is that Montreal is truly a bilingual city. As long as you begin every conversation with "*Parlez-vous Anglais?*" and then talk in English, you're fine. I only found one person who had difficulty with English, and even then she made herself understood enough for me to buy the maple syrup I wanted. I understand that parts of the Quebec countryside are more resolutely Francophone, however.

**George Price**: I agree that streetcars are much more fun than buses to ride in. I love the streetcars of Melbourne, for example. The Baltimore light rail line that goes from downtown Baltimore to Hunt Valley (where this year's Balticon will be held) passes through some very pretty parkland in the middle of Baltimore. But as I understand it, Baltimore light rail is a boondoggle of vast proportions, since the trains get stuck in downtown city traffic and aren't particularly fast. Land, even with the Kelso decision, costs a lot to acquire and maintain. Baltimore built a lot of track on the ruins of an old interurban line that was abandoned in the early 1960s but never built on. Even then, it was pretty expensive to build, and the line doesn't recoup its costs from the fare box. In Silver Spring, we are currently having a mighty debate about whether to build a light-rail line that would connect two of the spokes of our subway. (As in many places the planners of the 1960s assumed that people would want to go from the suburbs to downtown, but not from burb to burb.) But the protest from not-in-my-backyard suburbanites convinces me that this line won't ever be built.

The proposal I saw was for a light rail that ran from the

suburbs to downtown. I won't be expecting to see it built.

—JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** February 26, 2006  
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA  
93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* V5#1, Joseph mentions his 104 year old cousin who is a WWI veteran. It has occurred to me a couple of times to wonder why not much fuss is being made about the remaining WWI vets. By now, the total number of these vets is getting to be fairly small. I recall quite a lot of attention was given to the remaining Civil War vets when their number was getting to the last dozen or so. I don't recall that veterans of the Spanish-American War were noticed at all. Of course, there weren't a lot of participants, so there also weren't a lot of veterans. I doubt the silence was based on the fact it was entirely a war of imperialistic aggression. Like nobody is perfect. With WWI, you have a big historical event that involved most of the countries on Earth. In retrospect, it was a dumb move on everybody's part, but what the heck. There are lots of dumb moves in human history. Maybe it is anti-war sentiment that is leading to people pretending there never were wars. I suppose they can pretend that if they want, but it isn't likely to stop any future wars or even slow them down.

Wikipedia says there are twenty-one surviving WW I vets in the United States and seventy-seven worldwide.

But the band plays "Waltzing Matilda",  
And the old men still answer the call.

But as year follows year, more old men disappear,  
Someday no one will march there at all.

— Eric Bogle, "And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda"

(I have had to change the numbers from 22 and 80 since I first entered this!)

The last surviving veteran of the Spanish-American War died in 1992 (Nathan Cook) or 1993 (Jones Morgan of the "Buffalo Soldiers"; who had lost his records in a fire in 1912, he said).

I just realized something about the address for the crooked house in Heinlein's story. My memory told me the address is a vacant lot. I remember that, because local fan Fred Patten said he had gone out to look at the site and found it to be a vacant lot. When did he say that? It was in his *Apa L* zine in the early days of *Apa L*. When was that? About forty years ago. Hm, I wonder if anything might have been built on that lot in the last forty years. I suppose

it really is one of those pieces of research that should be repeated, but I have no idea when anybody will actually get around to doing it.

Having local things in a SF novel can be interesting. I read one series (Rick Shelley's *The Varayan Memoir*) where the hero lived in Louisville. In the first one he discovered he was really a prince in Faerie. Hm. In the third one Louisville (and the rest of our world) was destroyed in a nuclear war but then the hero became God and everything was all right again. Well!



In the letter column, Joseph mentions picking up a semi-prozine copy of *Science Fiction Review*. That doesn't mean Geis had sold the publication. *Science Fiction Review* became a semi-prozine at some point in its evolution, and the category of semi-prozine was created some time after that. However, Geis never relinquished ownership of *Science Fiction Review*.

As you mention, L.A.con IV released the Hugo nomination ballot. That was in Progress Report #3. It is just about time for me to start working on Progress Report #4, since the copy deadline is March 1 (next Wednesday). I've got two more LoCs to write before then. I can devote March 1-9 entirely to working on the progress report, and then March 10-12 will be an open L.A.con meeting at the Anaheim Hilton. I can't finish the progress report until the final Hugo ballot is finished. With March 10 as the deadline for nominating ballots, I should get the final ballot within the next week or two. After that, I'm sure there will be something else to do.

From: **Lloyd Penney** February 27, 2006  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON M9C  
2B2 CANADA  
[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)

*Alexiad* 25 is here . . . is this the fifth anniversary? If so, congratulations on an admirable streak. If it's not the anniversary, congratulations on 25 issues. It's time for some response.

There's not many current cartoons I like, but I will make exceptions for *The Fairly Oddparents* and *Atomic Betty*. *Clone Wars* was on television here intermittently, so I saw some

of the cartoons, but definitely not all.

That collection of Heinlein's other stories looks very good indeed. With your own book on Heinlein, Joseph, they are invaluable additions to the Heinlein collection. Should money allow (don't hold your breath), I'd like to get them.

Where was I when the *Challenger* exploded? I was at work at Sears Canada, fiddling away in the catalogue editorial department, and the boss' secretary mentioned it in passing. "Oh, by the way, did you hear? The shuttle blew up," and walked away without so much as another word. Just another event in the day for her . . . I sat at my desk, and soaked in that devastating news. I had a radio Walkman at my desk, and tuned it to the local news station, where I got more information. I remember not getting much of anything done that day, and certainly got nothing done when I got home. Yvonne and I spent the rest of the evening trying to find as many reports on as many television stations as possible.

I'd certainly agree with your Hugo nominations. I agree with E.B. Frohvet when he says he'd like to see different names on the annual rockets. I might even add *Alexiad* to that list, too.

From John Hertz' letter . . . I am pleased to see that the Montreal bid is traveling here and there to promote their bid. It isn't easy to afford the travelling about to promote a bid, and we couldn't do our share with the Toronto in 2003 bid, but we did what we could afford.

We looked things over and it would certainly be interesting to go to Montreal. If Denver wins for 2008 we will be very very interested.

I used to think there was a large club in Toronto that was bloc voting in the Aurora Awards nominations. It wasn't until I talked with other fannish groups in Canada that I realized I was wrong . . . that club was the only group truly participating. Most others were apathetic, and couldn't care less. I've tried to get more people involved in the Auroras, but even the administrator seems not to care too much about getting the word out about the award nomination process. I think E.B. Frohvet may be looking at the FAAns the same way. The only way to block the people who he sees as the Corflu Cult is to participate in the awards and vote.

To Trinlay . . . in Toronto, Starbucks is here and there, but there are Tim Horton's everywhere, and Second Cup, and Timothy's. In fact, a Timothy's is being built just down the street from us. Makes you wonder . . . is there really that much coffee in the world?

For George Price . . . Toronto also has a system of streetcars and streetcar lines, and is thinking of expanding it. I think the 501 Queen streetcar line is perhaps as long as Chicago's Western Avenue line. Last time I was on a streetcar and an accident blocked the street, some passengers actually asked the driver why he didn't just drive around it. Makes me wonder if IQ can be measured with negative numbers .

My loc . . . the Aurora nomination forms are now available from Dennis Mullin's Aurora website. I hope he'll be at Ad Astra to distribute nomination forms. The awards could use the publicity. You're right about the fanzine fans being the fringe . . . I am finding more and more that when I say "fanzine" to any given friend at a convention, they either look at me quizzically, or maybe roll their eyes a bit. Oh, he's on about that again . . .

What I get most often is that blank look. Second favorite is "Is it available online? I only read things online."

— JTM

Time to go, it's close to dinnertime, and I've got to fire up the oven. Take care, and see you next issue.

From: **Joy V. Smith** February 28, 2006  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA  
[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)  
<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

I enjoyed your review of *Off the Main Sequence: The Other Stories of Robert A. Heinlein*; it was interesting that you mentioned the different versions of "Let There Be Light", which were discussed in the Interface column of the SFBC main brochure (March 2006), along with your book, *Heinlein's Children: The Juveniles*. (George W. Price said that he had just finished editing it.) Anyway, the first version, as you said, compared Dr. Martin to Sally Rand; the next version compared her to Betty Grable, and Heinlein's final approved version compared her to Marilyn Monroe. And there was a mention of the disagreement about the juvenile categories . . .

James Gifford was the one who pointed out the differences; see his *Robert A. Heinlein: A Reader's Companion* for that and much more. If you like I can send you the deleted paragraphs from "Water Is for Washing"; they put an interesting twist on the story.

I always learn a lot from your non-fiction reviews, but *American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps* was a real shock and a surprise. (I'm still snarling and hissing.) Jim Sullivan's review of *Reading the Rocks: The Autobiography of the Earth* (great title) was interesting. (I enjoy geology.)

Richard Dengrove's review of *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150 to 1750* is intriguing. I see that categorizing them isn't easy. Thanks to J.G. Stinson for her review of circus peanuts, an old favorite, so to speak. I'll keep my eyes open for Zachary's.

Thank you for the list of fanzines and their websites. That's really helpful. And thanks for the Hugo recommendations; I posted your suggestion of *Thud!* in Pratchett's folder on the

AOL board: SF Authors; I didn't know he declined a nomination last year. Do you know why?

The story I heard was that he didn't want to have the bother associated with being a nominee. Maybe again this year; we'll see when the nomination results are given out in August.

— JTM

Lots more info in the letters column. Thanks to Robert Lichtman for pointing out that you can view a fanzine online at [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) so you don't have to download it. I enjoyed Trinlay Khadro's version of *Where's My Cow?* Thanks to E.B. Frohvet for the historical background on Lieutenant Commander Thomas and the U.S.S. *Nevada*. And thanks to all the reviewers and LOCers for their enlightening and enjoyable contributions.



From: **George W. Price** February 28, 2006  
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL 60690-3228 USA  
[grgpric@aol.com](mailto:grgpric@aol.com)

February 2006 *Alexiad*:

Joe's review of *The World Hitler Never Made* by Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, is titled "Lightning in the Night." That was also the title of a novel serialized in *Liberty* magazine in November and December 1940, about how the U.S. might enter World War II. (I didn't realize it when I read it at the time, but in hindsight it was obvious propaganda for the U.S. to get into the war before it was too late.) It starts off with the Nazis winning the Battle of Britain and occupying the British Isles. Hitler consolidates his empire, and then in 1945 attacks the U.S., in concert with Imperial Japan and the Soviet Union (since this was written during the Stalin/Hitler pact). The war opens with a devastating Japanese/Russian air raid on Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. German armies invade the U.S. East Coast, the Soviets invade south through Alaska, and the Japanese invade the West Coast. The war goes badly, and the U.S. is compressed into the area between the Appalachians and the Rockies. And then the President asks for a peace conference, which is held in Pittsburgh, at the battle front. But unexpectedly, he does not ask for terms, he offers terms: The U.S. has developed an atomic bomb, which at that moment is being exploded over Siberia (making a crater a mile across). Hitler commits suicide, and the war is over.

The novel is astonishingly accurate about the start and end of the war, but way off in the middle — it does not recognize the gigantic logistical difficulties of mounting huge invasions across the oceans. This fictional war is ideologically neater than the real one turned out to be — the loathsome dictatorships are all on the same side. It is also far less brutal: there is no Holocaust, no Bataan death march, no strategic bombing and firestorms in cities, and America's atomic bomb is demonstrated in an uninhabited region of Siberia.

I've got this in hardback. As you mentioned, there were a lot of "we can't not get involved" books out there. One that comes to mind is *Invasion*, a novel by Hendrik Willem van Loon (as in *Van Loon's Lives*) where German paratroops flying off German aircraft carriers in Hudson's Bay land in the pleasant Vermont county where by an amazing coincidence van Loon himself lived. As you said . . . I wonder if Sir William Stephenson was involved in all this somehow?

\*\*\*\*\*

Brad W. Foster mentions a cat that can apparently count to three in checking out the food bowls. That reminds me of an experience when I was twelve. Our two cats were both pregnant. One had a litter of four, and a month later the other had two. Whenever she got a chance, the one with two kittens would go steal one of the four and take it to nurse along with her own two. She never took two or three, but only one, so that each mother then had three kittens to nurse. Could she count? We never knew, but she wasn't very smart about anything else. Of course, we had to prevent this kit-napping, because the borrowed kitten, being a month older and bigger, would shove the two younger ones aside and hog the milk. It was a constant chore to keep that mother cat away from the box where the older litter lived (now there's a whole new meaning for "litter box").

\*\*\*\*\*

Responding to my own letter about streetcars, Joe says, "Transport nostalgists can be something else; ever met a dirigible buff?" Only casually, not to argue with, but I know what you mean. As I recall, Turtledove's *The Two Georges* has dirigible airships used as luxury transport in his alternate world where the U.S. never became independent of Britain.

In the real world, of course, dirigibles have one terrible defect that prevents their widespread use: They require a very light structure, which makes them too flimsy to withstand bad storms; and they are too slow to evade storms. I believe that's why the U.S. Navy got rid of its dirigible fleet in the 1930s, after two or three were destroyed in storms. (It's something like the alleged reason why fat men are jolly: they have to be nice to other people, because they can't fight and they can't run.) Blimps, being smaller and having no rigid

framework around the gas bags, can stand bad weather better, but are too small for serious passenger or freight transportation.

Some years ago I saw an Indiana Jones movie in which our hero is riding a German passenger dirigible (in the 1930s), and discovers that it is carrying a small plane that can be launched in mid-air (and which he later steals to escape from the dirigible). When that plane was shown in the airship's belly, a lot of people in the audience tittered — apparently that was too fantastic even for an Indiana Jones movie. But it wasn't fantastic at all. Each of the U.S. Navy's *Macon*-class dirigibles carried several small fighter planes in its belly for reconnaissance and to defend the airship. They were biplanes (as most fighters were then) with a framework above the upper wing which hooked on to the bottom of a matching frame (nicknamed "the flying trapeze") that lowered them out of the hangar bay for launching and pulled them back up on return. Hooking on to the trapeze when they came back was no harder than making a carrier landing — maybe easier, since the dirigible would not be rising and falling in the waves.

Even if big airships were still in use today, I doubt it would be practical for them to carry fighter planes, because a jet fighter could not slow down enough to match speeds to hook on to the flying trapeze — a jet's stalling speed is way more than a dirigible's top speed. Well, maybe a Harrier could do it. But it would be very tricky.

**Akron, Macon, and Shenandoah**, all built in America, were wrecked in storms. The Navy's first dirigible, **Los Angeles**, built at the Zeppelinwerke in Germany, didn't. What I've observed is that a what-if novel has fleets of dirigibles, it's likely to be self-indulgent and unrealistic in other ways.

— JTM



From: **David Herrington** March 2, 2006  
2521 Berwick Drive, Shelbyville, IN  
46176-3163 USA  
[david2419ad@yahoo.com](mailto:david2419ad@yahoo.com)

Here are my picks for Hugo Awards, (Trumpet Fanfare).

#### Best Novel

David Weber, *At All Costs*  
Dan Simmons, *Olympus*  
Jack Williamson, *The Stonehenge Gate*

#### Best Novella

James Gunn, "Uncreated Night and Strange Shadows", *Analog* Jan-Feb 2005  
Bud Sparhawk, "Chandra's Pup", *Analog* Jul-Aug 2005  
John Barnes, "The Diversification of its Fancy", *Analog* Nov 2005  
Harry Turtledove, "Audubon in Atlantis", *Analog* Dec 2005

#### Best Novelette

Richard A. Lovett & Mark Niemann Ross, "Netpuppet" *Analog* Jun 2005  
Robert R. Chase, "Endeavor", *Analog* Jul-Aug 2005  
Peter S. Beagle, "Two Hearts", *F&SF* Oct-Nov 2005  
Rajnar Varja, "Of Kings, Queens, and Angels", *Analog* Jul-Aug 2005  
Robert J. Howe, "Do Neanderthals Know", *Analog* Dec 2005

#### Best Short Story

Michael A. Burnstein, "Seventy Five Years", *Analog* Jan-Feb 2005  
James C. Glass, "Dark Peril", *Analog* Mar 2005  
Jim Young, "The Pitiless Stars", *F&SF* Jul 2005  
Stephen Baxter, "Climbing the Blue", *Analog* Jul-Aug 2005  
William Scott Carter, "Christmas In Amber", *Analog* Dec 2005

#### Best Dramatic Presentation — Long Form

"The Island"  
"Serenity"  
"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"  
"The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe"

#### Best Professional Editor

Stanley Schmidt  
Gordon Van Gelder

#### Best Semiprozine

*Apex*  
*Nth Degree*

#### Best Fanzine

*FOSFAX*  
*Alexiad*  
*Opuntia*  
*Challenger*  
*Probe*

#### Best Professional Artist

Vincent Di Fate  
George Krantetz  
Cory & Catska Ench

#### Best Fan Writer

Tim Lane  
Joseph Major  
Dale Speirs  
Steven H Silver

Well Joe I only read three 2005 novels this year; one serialized, one series I have been following, one a sequel to a 2004 Hugo nominee. Not enough time to read novels. The short stories in *F&SF* were pretty light weight

this year

I received *Heinlein's Children* in the mail yesterday. I have read the first three chapters so far. I will recommend buying it at the Circle of Janus meeting this Saturday.

From: **Rodney Leighton** Feb. 16, 2006  
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,  
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0  
CANADA

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad* which arrived yesterday, along with a letter from Rich Dengrove.

Life is full of intriguing little ironies which is about all that makes it bearable. Rich had previously suggested that he was seeing letters from me in fanzine after fanzine; I wondered what the hell he was reading and in this letter, he says that it might be due to: "*Alexiad* comes out so frequently and each has a letter of yours." No letter in this one, which may be due to my last letter going astray or there being nothing that the editors wanted to print in any recent letters or perhaps because Robert Lichtman bitched about the last one. Not that I resent that; I would not have printed that stuff either. It does point out the irony of how many people in fandom (possibly not Robert) accept without complaint people who vanish with neither warning nor explanation and yet people become exasperated or worse with me for my frequent suggestions of departing from this silly hobby. Something which I decide to do on a very frequent and regular basis; I find it is just like trying to quit smoking. Another irony: Rich mentions quitting addictions. I know that I really should quit smoking not only for the sake of my finances but also for my physical health. But I can't seem to.

Nope, it was not being able to tell what was for publication and what wasn't. Saying "Print anything you wish" makes that clear.

Well, Trinlay, I always answer letters. And queries via fanzines. Sometimes it takes awhile. Sometimes letters are not answered for any number of reasons ranging from the person deciding s/he no longer wishes to correspond with me to the post office of one country or another losing a letter to who knows what. Joe occasionally corresponds with me via *Alexiad*; mostly it is direct mail; mostly what people read in the fanzine is letters to Joe which he chooses to share. No response to my last letter; I figured he said all he had to say in the upcoming *Alexiad*; no sign of me in that so I guess either my letter to him or perhaps his letter to me got lost. Sometimes I pursue these folks; sometimes I don't.

I had come to the decision that I was finally, after years of promising to do so, cease responding to fanzines. But regardless of how boring he found my letter, Robert read it for some reason and sat down and typed a long paragraph about it which included a couple of questions. I could have ignored them as well as *Alexiad*. And your comment. But it is along

ingrained habit with me to respond to such things. Sort of like Robert defending TAFF.

A few days ago I received a zine and a short letter. Last issue; I am ending much of my correspondence, I hope you don't mind, the chap said. No response is necessary. Sorry but at least I didn't just disappear. Such was the theme of the letter. I appreciated it all; I could understand how he would want to get out of all this racket . . . not an SF guy; Christian punk. I thought about writing a letter to thank him for all that and especially for letting me know he was quitting but I decided that he stated he did not need nor expect any response and so I honored his wishes. In the 20 some years I have been involved in small press/by mail stuff there have been many people and many publications vanished from my life. Sometimes the zines continue to be published. Sometimes I wish I had gotten an explanation. Sometimes I don't care much.

I was interested in seeing EBF complain about seeing a listing for a fanzine Joe received but he didn't and should've. Being a gentleman, he refrained from mentioning names. Not being at all a gentleman I mention that I was curious, looked at the listing last issue and figured he must have meant *Banana Wings*. I have wished that Mark would have had the decency to drop me a note and explain why they dumped me off their mailing list.

But that is a facet of all small press not only sf fandom. There is a polite young (I think) lady over in the U.K. named, um, Violet Jones. She does a fanzine; I forget what it's called. I received a couple of issues and sent her some of my publications and we exchanged short letters which each said that we did not find what the other one was going of interest and let's stop and we did. But then there is also, say, Nic Farey, who is, I gather, a great friend of Mark's who simply stopped publishing when he got caught stealing copies at his place of work and got fired and who may be directly responsible for my dismissal from *BW*. Or maybe not. No way to find out. Doesn't really matter. I don't miss fighting with him in the least. I confess to missing his fanzine although I don't remember what it was titled; I admit to missing *BW* although I suspect all the tales of boozing would have gotten to me long since.

Nic's fanzine was titled **This Here**. I hadn't known about the firing; it seems to have driven him into retirement if not mundania.

I am actually finding all fanzines boring these days. So.

Before I forget: if you are interested, Robert: truck is a 2003 GMC Sierra half ton 4x4. Tires are 17 inches and about 8 inches wide; big tread. Sometimes in my work I am in interesting places; yesterday, checking out a small job which I will start shortly, I drove back a road with about 7 inches of snow on it; some sites see me driving through mud up to the bumper.

Yes, Canadian money. As to the rhetorical question of how many places and times you have read my meanderings on these subjects, I

have no idea. Not very often about buying typewriter ribbons. Possibly a lot about abandoning fandom. But I have a question for you: why bother?

Feb. 18. Yesterday was spring; plus 10 with a nice southerly breeze; snow was melting. Today is another matter . . . minus 10 with a very strong west wind; probably minus 25 with the wind chill.

It's been going up and down here, from highs in the 70s to, two days later, lows in the 10s.

And, in the interim, I have finished reading what I wished to in *Alexiad*; found that Joe had read a couple of books I might enjoy if I ever encountered them; a couple of things happened in life and I wondered at why I persist in typing things like the foregoing. I've written it all before. I probably will again.

Some things hang on for a long time. I found it very easy to stop drinking but I only did it very rarely and never have any desire for that. I have smoked a lot for years, well, started when I was 14, started smoking steady at 19; quit once for 5 years but still; no matter how often I promise myself to quit I can't seem to.

And currently I have no money and no change to mail letters. I suspect it will be 3 weeks or more before this goes into the mail. Various things could happen.

This morning I am typing a bit while the fire gets going; it's damned cold here. I don't have any plans on doing much today. At various times of my life I would have sat here, answered the one letter I have; written a review of *Daze on the Land* and *Space Opera*, an anthology of SF and fantasy in which Lyn McConchie has a quite good short story and probably *By the Light of the Moon* by Dean Koontz which I read all the way through not too long ago. Am I going to do any of that?

Hell no. I, am going to have some breakfast, go out and get some wood; other way around, actually, and probably sit and read books. One of the books in my stack is *The Da Vinci Code*. halfway through. It's okay. Don't know why it caused such a furor.

It's too cold upstairs; thermostat is out of sight!

What does phishing mean?

"Phishing" is sending an email message that appears to be from a bank, credit card, etc. asking (usually under some urgency) for account information. Like I said, the standard of literacy is going downhill; the message said, you will recall, "Your account was take by a third part!"

I also got *Da Vinci Code Decoded* by Martin Lunn; reading bits of it as well. I note that this book's author, Martin Lunn, states that the Roman Catholic church, all it's authority and power are all based on a forgery and a lie. That is interesting. Book itself is kind of boring. One of the things I have noted is that, at least in what

I have been reading, there is way too many plots which call for an apparently strong female to allow some dude to invade her life, her privacy, her business, her body and her heart in a take charge, do what I say and do it now and you don't have any choice manner, even if they have only known one another for a few days or hours. I am rather pleased that *The Da Vinci Code* is the reverse. Robert Langdon was portrayed as a man of action in *Angels & Demons*; in this one he allows a woman to turn him into a fugitive from the law and actively takes part in various methods of escape including spending money for nothing with neither explanation nor protest. Best part of the book so far in my view.

Feb. 22. If I were doing some sort of newsletter/zine thing/letter sub I would now be typing about yesterday. Went and cut a little wood; gathered up a bunch of firewood in case I need it next winter. Put my gloves on the bumper while I was loading some gear and forgot them. Drove out a rough road, partly ice; through a rutted up road, down another one and started up the road my house is on. Noticed something black on the road; looked like it had fallen off the truck. Saw it in the mirror. Couldn't imagine what it was. Parked and found the one glove. Now I know what I saw on the road. Went back down and got it; gibbering aloud about how amazing it is that the two of them stayed on the bumper through a couple of miles of fairly rough road and one stayed there all the way home.

Came in the house and found a message from the lady who has been dealing with my truck payment account. Left her a message; when she called again she asked me if I wanted to do something she had told me she would do and also that she had not done something she was going to. I was a tad disappointed but what the hell; if 200 bucks will wreck me, I deserve to be wrecked.

I did music reviews for *Jersey Beat* for years; enjoyed most of it. Took a hiatus in 2003; tried again briefly once; last fall I wrote to the editor and told him I was going to retire from that; I didn't have any interest in doing reviews and had lost my confidence in my ability to do such things. But I still, occasionally, wish I would get a package of CDs and sometimes I wish I were still doing those reviews. I have done lots of bitty zines. Got no real plans to do another. Yet, periodically, I find myself thinking about resurrecting *The Nova Scotian Hermit*. I might even do so this summer; 20 copies per issue would be more than enough.

Well, you can do that now that Harry Warner (the "Hermit of Hagerstown") has passed on to that great collation in the sky.

Recently I received 3 books from New Zealand. *Farming Daze*, published in 1993, came inscribed and autographed and was thoroughly enjoyed by myself and most of my family. And I wrote a bunch of reviews of it and sent them to various zines. *Daze on the Land*, published 10 years later, arrived pure, was read and enjoyed by me. I will likely lend it to sisters.

I have thought of trying to write a review of it for this zine. But I don't think I will. Having typed that, no doubt I will take a fit and review it.

Or the other 2 either. But I might.

Sort of like fanzines. I used to receive dozens of the things of various types. And packages of secondhand zines. Don't get very many of either these days. For years I would take a notion that I was getting out of this hobby; usually every few months. These days I change my mind on that daily. I am a strange person. On Feb. 15 I was certain that I was going to write one last letter to the 3 or 4 publishers who still send me fanzines: thanks for sending them; I am not responding to any fanzines. *Alexiad* arrived; I sat down and typed all that stuff. In between I decided I would add a sentence to the effect that this was my last response to the fanzine, send it or not, as you wish. Last night I read some of it, figured I would miss it and I know I would miss letters from Joe. This morning, well, having typed all this, I am about to type that I don't know what I will do.

Yesterday I heard that there is a possibility that a sometime employer might have lots of work in a month or so. Most of it will be up around Amherst. He has a "cottage" in the woods. He offered me the use of it. So I started thinking that if this comes about, I might take him up on it and live most of the time in the cottage; come home once in awhile. Resurrect the *Hermit*; make copies once a month and send those to people I hear from. On the other hand, if this happens, it will likely last 6 months and many of my correspondents will only appear in my mailbox once during that span of time, if at all.

Ah, I guess I will go have some bacon and eggs and toast.

Feb. 19; about 7 in the a.m., Dead on 0 Fahrenheit on the glass.

And, well, you can print any or all or none of this as you wish. I have written it all before. I can't seem to stop any more than I can stop smoking cigars or spending plastic money for things I don't need, like cigars. If the work mentioned above actually materializes and especially if I do stay up there some of the time, I suspect that will be when I stop responding to fanzines. The time is coming. I am certain of that. When it will be.

In the interim I had gone to the mailbox and found the last T4 I needed to do my taxes. Also a fanzine. *Peregrine Nations*. That one you listed last issue. Mailed from the United Kingdom. Only in SF fandom would one find a situation in which a U.S. fanzine is mailed from the U.K. and a U.K. fanzine is mailed from the U.S. I also got a copy of a Sheryl Crow CD from a friend; not the one I wanted but I am listening to it.

And Jan's another one who is having publishing problems because of health problems. (The story of her illness in PN V.5 #3 is particularly terrifying.) There are many reasons that fanzines vanish.

Would anyone want to read any of this? Probably not. I will certainly thank my friend for the CD. If I were doing some sort of copied thing Jan would get a copy; she may not get any response from me to this issue. Sheryl is now singing: "No one said it would be easy." Right.

Feb. 25. Time to finish this thing before it becomes a zine in itself! I note a couple of errors: the lady in the U.K. is not named Violet Jones; she lives in California; that person I was thinking of is named Sue something.

Did my income tax return this morning. That wore me out! To my great surprise I discovered I was not too far off my 2004 income. My refund is only going to be half what it usually is.

And, well, I am having some trouble with the brakes on the truck; got to go to the truck hospital; trying to decide on whether to go to Amherst or Truro. Got no money to spend; but maybe I can find some. Brakes should be warranty; unless I tore something off driving through holes.

In a case of utter irony: I have been cutting some hardwood; firewood. Spent part of the day yesterday pondering resurrecting the *Hermit* and suspending non-family correspondence for the summer and fall at least; came home and found a letter from someone who rarely writes letters which concluded with the promise to answer any letter sent . . .

In 5 weeks my mother will have been dead for 3 years. I think I will mark the occasion by finally ceasing responding to fanzines. Will I actually do it?

Ooooh, I hope not . . .

— JTM

From: **Trinlay Khadro** February 28, 2006  
Post Office Box 240934, Brown Deer,  
WI 53224-0934 USA  
[trinlay63@wi.rr.com](mailto:trinlay63@wi.rr.com)  
<http://stores.ebay.com/sillykitty>

Sorry it's taken so long to get started on this LoC. It's been a long and difficult winter. And now, since last week Wednesday my uncle has been seriously ill and in the hospital. He has pneumonia and slips in and out of consciousness —



TRINLAY KHADRO

o n e d a y c o m p l a i n i n g about everything and the next non- or minimally responsive. The doctors don't know why: tests show heart and brain are fine (or as fine as they've been lately). We are very worried about him, he's only 74 . . . (In my family, non-smokers live to 90 or so . . .) We've been fortunate, though, to have been able to be so close with him, but at the same time his illness

is hard on us.

I'm lucky too that my heat bill is included in my rent. And I signed a two-year lease before hurricane season.

We very much enjoyed your *Star Wars: Clone Wars* comments and have read them aloud to several friends.

Thanks. People have said that perhaps Lucas should have turned over doing Parts I, II, & III to Genndy Tartakovsky (the producer of *Clone Wars*), and I can see their point. He has a fine appreciation for the background; for example, the scene where Obi-Wan shows Boy Anakin the cave on Dagobah. Oh and did you notice that Anakin Skywalker is a hothead?

This evening, I'm trying to watch *Alexander* on cable tv. Unfortunately, I'm distractable. I find that with uncle ill I'm distractable and acting superstitious. I was making a pair of socks for my sister when uncle fell ill and I can't make myself start the second sock. I find myself "counting" things and trying to avoid certain patterns. Egads!

Is your Heinlein overview on Wikipedia yet? 7:45 p.m. — My parents returned to Uncle's house from visiting him at the hospital. He had passed away while they were here at his house for dinner with us.

10:49 p.m. — egads, I'm almost never up this late — been crying since we got the news and already my mom (who finds solace in activity) is cleaning the house and getting us packing up our stuff that we'd kept at uncle's since we were visiting him so much. I'm going to have to look into getting the cable net services transferred to our tiny apartment. That fast net access is so vital to me for keeping in touch and I really need it for keeping my eBay shop going. I'm going to have to sit down and talk to the parents about that — as for now I can't afford to keep it on my own.

My disability claim is still hanging in Limbo while I'm waiting for a hearing date — probably in November of *this* year and then two or three months waiting for the first payment to come through. Money, rent, laundry charge etc. are continuing concerns. The loss of uncle is rough for us . . . and we are keenly aware of all the small favors he gave us, in exchange for just our company.

Re: *The World Hitler Never Made* — I think there's been a couple movies recently, where yes the Nazis were the "instant" bad guys but also included, even if just a quick commentary of one character to another, describing what is that makes Nazi = evil. Oddly enough, even in a celluloid comic book like *Bulletproof Monk*.

On one of the Buddhism discussion groups (and oddly it's more of the Sangha "rec room" than a sanctuary) we long ago decided that once a person brings "Hitler" or "the Nazis" into the debate — no matter what the point; they automatically lost the debate.

That's called Godwin's Law.

See also:  
<http://www.americangathering.com/?p=1032>

The idea being “If you have to drag in that example, you haven’t done enough homework to argue your point adequately in the first place.” I also suspect that using their example one can argue for or against just about anything, however loony.

Re: Timothy Treadwell — wasn’t there a *Simpsons* episode where Homer built a Bear-proof suit? Hmm, I wonder if a good rule of thumb could be, “If you can envision HOMER doing it; it might not be such a good idea . . .”

*Worth More Dead* — In the distant past, being severely depressed and perhaps over-insured by my employer, I contemplated suicide. KT greeting me joyfully as I got home from work reminded me how much I was loved and needed. (If the decision was in someone else’s hands, I might not have fared so well.)

Vaccination Day: Megumi has gotten used to the idea of the carrier meaning “going to visit” until we go past the turn-off for uncle’s house and *then* she knows it’s a trip to the vet. We may need to adopt someone to take her to visit to *all* car trips aren’t to the vet.

Ferrets used to be “odd” pets but they’ve certainly become more common. They’re small and quiet like cats, but like dogs are more amenable to things like coming when called and doing tricks on cue. In contrast Megumi has trained us.

Robert L and Rodney: My dad recommends going to someplace like Sam’s Club or Costco for things like oil changes. I haven’t tried it yet but he says it is about half as much as the same work done at an oil change chain.

Me: After visiting Uncle at the hospital this morning, I napped and drempt of Elric ferret “dancing” with excitement. In retrospect I wonder if it was a sign.

Megumi getting a “sibling” for her birthday is going to have to wait until my economics stabilize if ever. (I already know what sort of kitten we’d want and what we’d name him . . . but now we’re counting every penny.)

Uncle did get through two of the books on tape and about halfway through a Terry Pratchett book. “Hey! This has wizards in it . . .” though he seemed unsure if this was good or bad.

I’ve found selling my work on eBay to be rather satisfying but it’s not a living . . . yet. I may put up some of my photos as posters on 8x10s soon.

EB re: Gladiatrix . . . I’ve seen a book and some articles where in excavating a gladiatorial cemetery they found the grave of a gladiatrix, with appropriate grave goods as well as signs of her career in her bones. They’ve also uncovered graves of warrior women in Eastern Europe (again with appropriate wear and tear on her skeleton and appropriate grave goods).

Re: Halloween: we sewed performers cocoa, tea, or cider depending on desires and dietary restrictions.

Brad F: re feeding the cat: I had two early morning phone calls to rush and attend to uncle: resulting in throw on clothes, dump food in cat’s

dish, and run out. Now Miss Megumi is campaigning for breakfast to be served at 4:30 am rather than 6:30 - 7:00ish.

It’s a rough morning, but sweet Megumi let me sleep till 8:30, but some stuff has gotten knocked behind my dresser. Fortunately, nothing breakable. My fibromyalgia is flaring up big time and I’m worried about KT (still in bed) and where I’m going to put things that had been kept at Uncle’s. I may have to clear out some of what I’m not using to my storage area in the basement to make space in my apartment for the stuff I use more often.

Dainis: After my divorce, feeling lost and lonely, I made contact with many old friends very carefully not telling how lost and lonely I felt. I realized but never spoke my hope that maybe some friend from long ago might become something else. The reason I never mentioned these things was that some of this was my grief talking to me. In my humble experience, the grief of a divorce is very much like a death in the family. I was also grieving for the man I thought I married, who turned out, in essence, to be a completely different person.

If you are **really** interested at some point in a romantic relationship with a friend or old flame, date a few other people first so she isn’t a “rebound”. I think I would have been more aware of what was not-right about my relationship with my ex if he hadn’t been the rebound relationship after a break-up of one that really broke my heart. . . . be a good friend by mail or email and date people who live in your area if you’re ready to date.

QPB is still around, usually with a 5 books @ \$5 “no strings, no kidding” opening offer. It’s how KT ended up with a copy of *The Tale of Genji* to haul around at school and impress people with. Much as I had as a High School Student. I, however, was fortunate to get credit in History and Literature courses for reading it. Be warned though, *Genji* runs like a soap opera and I kept a score card of which characters had slept with which other characters as the relationships got really entangled and complicated.

“Most honorable husband, I see you have taken honorable bath. I have just had the most lamentable and insignificant dream in which a year ago you had been commanded to commit seppuku . . .” You mean like that?

A fine companion to *Genji* is *The Tale of Murasaki*.

Rod Smith/comment from Joseph: KT recently read “Metamorphosis” for a class; part of the discussion being whether or not Gregor actually became a cockroach or if he was merely insane . . .

Sheryl B: The Reese’s Cups with Caramel are advertised on tv here. I find dark chocolate more satisfying than milk chocolate. I can get by with one or two small pieces of Dove dark chocolate and be fine, but maybe two or three bars of milk chocolate and I want **MORE**.

Yes, Randy Cleary had so me of my work in

his Art Show. I sold all but one of the scarves (a surprise as here in the cold north I’ve only sold a few all winter) and several of the origami dragons. I also now make the very cunning hat worn by the character Jayne in *Firefly/Serenity*.

Sue Burke/comment from Joseph: I’m wondering at the appearance of Mary at Lourdes having a connection to the historical marker in Kentucky. Tell us more!

A local grotto built on the former grounds of a Catholic Hospital is called “The Grotto and Garden of Our Lady of Lourdes”. Somehow it was thought that saying this on a state-owned historical marker violated the separation of church and state. The attorney general’s office indicated that in their opinion it didn’t.

Richard — I didn’t intend for it to sound like you said/thought skull size matters, but rather to use your comment on the old idea as a jumping-off point for my comment. More in the direction that “if these guys were really paying attention to the real world they’d have dropped the idea pretty quickly.”

Marty: Yes, I’d forgotten about forwarding the phishing to the appropriate parties.

Joseph re: phishing — I’ve seen, and stuffed envelopes for, letters from management to customers (other businesses usually) that were just as poor English as what we see in the spams. Unfortunately, they just made thousands of photocopies and I never had a chance to proofread the letter written, or at least signed by, the top exec.

Marty re comment to EB . . . In my experience, Buddhism presumes the Universe is really huge and full of sentient and possibly sapient lifeforms . . . all served by their own buddhas, and being potential buddhas themselves.

Gampopa, for example, gives me vertigo with the description of transtemporal, interdimensional, subatomic Buddhas.

Um — that makes me think of something not from James Blish’s *A Case of Conscience* —

“Father Ruiz-Sanchez! I think Egtverchi is about to attain Nirvana!”

“Oh, so that solves the problem of the giant talking lizard meant to corrupt Catholicism by having phylogeny recapitulate ontogeny, thus demonstrating Evolution.”

— JTM

AL du Pisani — Good luck in the job hunt. If you are considering going to school to expand your skill-set I say go ahead: I’ve gotten more out of education as an adult than I did in my late teens/early twenties. You might want to start with a visit to a career counselor.

Hopefully, I may have some fresh art for you soon; I just haven’t been drawing much.

KT is up and we have a lot to get done today, if I'm able.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** March 6, 2006  
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,  
PA 19143-3310 USA

"It was the year the bears were so bad in Bosnia."

— A. Davidson

"Whacking him with the bear"  
(*L'assommant à coups d'ours.*)

— A. Jarry

"Exit, pursued by a bear."

— W. Shakespeare

I thought the correct wording was better known than that.

But in *Cvltvre Made Stvpid*, the little-known play Weller commented on, "Something For Nothing", had that inimitable stage direction:

They are eaten by a bear.



NEILA GETS "INKED"

2/1/06

In the matter of *Lord of the Rings*, I see now that my memory has played me false on one point; but never mind. I have also now bought and read the Hammond & Scull *Reader's Companion* (and written a LoC). A chart for the principal years of the story makes it perfectly easy to see what the phase of the moon was on any date; I at last satisfied my curiosity by computing it for a date outside the chart: Bilbo's Farewell Party. It was about three days past full. In the story, "the black sky was dotted with stars" when Bilbo stepped out the door; but it was nice to know that he and his three companions would have moonlight for the first leg of their journey.

I keep protesting that moons are no particular shibboleth of mine: rather, a metter in

which, armed with correct knowledge, I am alert to error and inconsistency. Only the other day, Verne's *Robur the Conqueror* came for proofreading, where in Chapter 5 "the moon was only a thin crescent just beginning its monthly life" but "now it was midnight, and the pale crescent of the moon began to sink in the west behind the trees in the park." Something has been omitted from Verne's schooling, nor has it been compensated by observation.

In Chapter 7, the flyer is described; among the instruments are "different barometers, some for estimating the heights attained, others for indicating the variations of atmospheric pressure; a storm-glass for forecasting tempests . . ." That a barometer should serve as altimeter is just right, but you cannot know the precise height unless you also know the pressure on the ground, corrected to sea level. One equation, two variables. The "storm-glass" I take to be a barometer with some kind of retarding mechanism, so that you can see if it is rising or falling; a fall in pressure was known as a portent of rough weather. But the motions of the flyer also cause changes.

I don't think I want to go on with chapter-by-chapter nitpicking. The writing isn't so hot, either, even if this here weren't 19<sup>th</sup> century translations. By comparison, Doc Smith has fully realized characters who speak as real human beings speak. Verne never got beyond funny foreigners with the stereotypical traits of temperament of their nation.

Some editorial work had been done on the first few pages, setting an example of what correction can be allowed in what is, after all, only a translation. In that spirit, I changed "what it is that takes place" to "what is going on" and "impassible" to "unmoved". French syntax, idiom, and vocabulary shine through here and there, but the exact counterpart of the French is not always the best English. More than once I looked up the *French* word in search of a better one among its English counterparts.

"'Impossible' n'est pas français."

— N. Bonaparte

In another proofing job, as so often a roughly cleaned up OCR job sent to me without accompanying copy text, I found it useful to make such changes as: contraction = contradiction, expiration = expiation, while = wild, were = wear, struggling = straggling, tickled = tackled, and denouement = dénouement. In the Verne, minister = minster.

A reviewer (in the *Times Literary Supplement*) of some recent editions of Verne points out that he couldn't always keep his East and West straight. Now I would call that a sort of dyslexia; I do not find it endearing at all. Gross errors have prevented me from reading on in more than one book; fear of the *next* boo-boo was too distracting.

I rediscovered my old *Dune* calendar; except for moveable feasts and such, it serves for 2006. The outer leaf which alone tells the year is, alas, missing, but several reasons combine to make it 1978. I recall when a friend got to wondering on what day of the week she was born. Her age

just then happened to be twice 28, and I told her to look at the current year's calendar. I will not inquire why women, in the main, are not at home in the realm of numbers; but so it is. By contrast I have no culinary imagination.

Reading one of Alfred Duggan's novels, I thought to glance at the corresponding entries in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Everyman's Edition). A note described Easter tables (framework for some chronicle entries) and told of the 19-year cycle in which lunar months come out almost exactly even, to within a small fraction of a day. There I perceived that computation had done with a more precise value of the year than that of the Julian calendar. Further details did not interest me.

"Jeopardy" has kept up on Ben Franklin fairly well — he is mentioned more weeks than not. Once there was a contestant from Ben Franklin High School, which I was willing to count, but he showed up (as depicted on the currency) that same week anyway.

An old copy of *Partisan Review* came into my hands — Fall 1964; therein Susan Sontag's "Notes on 'Camp'", doubtless reprinted, and I may even have seen it long ago. "A vision of the world in terms of style." "Camp sees everything in quotation marks. There is more, much more, and the whole is punctuated with quotations from, who else, Oscar Wilde, including the one about Little Nell (death of). What strikes me is that this is not far at all from the fannish sensibility.

It seems to me that the movies of Ed Wood would fall into that category; as the amphibology goes, Ed Wood was a man who wanted to make movies in the worst possible way, and did. How would Sontag have reacted to *Plan Nine From Outer Space*, for example?

Of things seen with a "camp" or fannish sensibility, one of my favorites is the August 1922 cover of *Field & Stream*, featured in the 2003 *F&S* calendar. It shows a young man and a young woman in the outdoorsy gear of the time — by then, high lace-up boots and jodhpurs for both. A motorcycle with sidecar has brought them to the bank of a stream — two fishing rods lean against it — and enabled them to bring not only a tent but a folding table and a pair of folding chairs. Their meal has reached the fruit course; one observes also salt and pepper shakers. In the man's hand is a straight-stemmed pipe. An idyll, which we now see in quotation marks and not straight as intended in 1922.

That indeed is camp.

Otherwise, my favorite example of intended effect is "Saskatchewan Chicken Marketing Board."

A lucky thrift shop find was a pristine copy of *The Investigations of Avram Davidson*, which I see is now the third collection in which I have "The Lord of Central Park", the other two being *The Redward Edward Papers* and *Collected Fantasies*. I have not entirely relied on lucky finds for this author; but then again, two books

came to me as perks because I copy-edited them for Owlswick Press. I have told that when a few pages were found to be available at the end of the Unhistory, I indexed it, chiefly to display the variety of the subject matter; I did not neglect to include a barber whom Avram mentioned in passing.

"Apples, golden, see in Hesperides, Garden of." Did it all on 3x5 cards.

This here typewriter, a Swedish-made Facit 1620, would be jim-dandy if the shift-lock key were not as elevated as it is; time and again I nudge it when typing A.

Dainis also included two sample cards:

"Jason. See under Argonauts."

"Mauritius. See under Dodo."

— JTM

From: **Richard Dengrove** March 15, 2006  
2651 Arlington Drive, #302, Alexandria,  
VA 22306- USA  
[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

Enjoyed *Alexiad*. Feb. 2006. Why? You gave me something to complain about. Of course, they are good rousing complaints rather than bad bitter complaints. I hope I make myself clear.

What is my first complaint, Joe? You claim that the historical Count Saint-Germain is an impostor. When it comes to the Count Saint Germain, you ignore the different perspectives. Waite's historical Count Saint-Germain is the real one if you are in a mood for facts. Yarbrow's fantastic one is the real one if you are in a mood for fantasy.

Of course, I like Waite's Saint-Germain because he speaks to the human condition. We are very mortal yet we yearn for immortality. Either the historical or fantastic Saint-Germain can be used for that purpose. But then the other must be implied.

The opposite happened to Agrippa von Nettsheim, the encyclopedist of the occult, than happened to Saint-Germain. His enemies made up the legendary and demonic Agrippa. His friends have been comfortable with the historical Agrippa, their brave — maybe even foolhardy — humane hero whose powers were very earthly.

Also, I have another complaint about you, Joe: you were right. The Norwegian ship you mention is the *Sir James Ross*, and not *Sir John Ross*. I thought I was copying what you wrote. I don't know why I copied it wrong.

However, I think I am right when I make this complaint. You claimed in your Reviewer's Notes that the Vikings had to have explored further south than Newfoundland because they mention grapes in Vinland. However, the grapes that the Vikings talked about were not necessarily grapes as we know them, They could have been berries more congenial to the Newfoundland area. 1,000 years ago, people did not use the precise nomenclature we use.

No, I said that there had to have been grapes in Newfoundland.

The Little Climatic Optimum explained how that could happen. Then the Little Ice Age kicked in and the Greenland Settlement was cut off, the Black Death spread across Europe, rivers froze solid, dogs moved in with cats . . .

A more literary thing I want to complain about is in your review of *Off the Main Sequence*, an anthology of Heinlein stories. I think we should have a different standard for fast writing than for slow leisurely writing. While I do not know whether Heinlein wrote fast well, there is a definite art to writing fast.

One way a writer can write well fast is he has a clever way of avoiding the need for introspection, like fast action. Another way is he, like Lionel Fanthorpe, makes himself immortal with his badness.

Next I have another literary complaint. It is aimed at E.B. Frohvet but doesn't quite hit him. Frohvet complains that Hoffman's novel *A Fistful of Sky* has no plot. If a world of magic was sufficiently consistent and the characters were sharply drawn enough, a novel would almost plot itself. Clearly drawn personalities and magic interacting would generate a plot.

I guess the characters are not drawn well enough, and the magic is not consistent enough.

Now I go from literary complaints to a historical complaint. A more historical complaint concerns Joe's review of *The World Hitler Never Made*. I agree, in a post-victory Nazi world, irrationalism and totalitarianism would have run rampant. However, the totalitarian era did end. The Russian Communists couldn't sustain it and the Spanish Fascists couldn't sustain it. I imagine that the Nazi era would have ended too.

Of course, it would be a world with far fewer Jewish people. Probably minus me.

Another complaint misses all of *Alexiad*, and hits phishing. Trinlay Khadro mentions the many phishing emails claiming to be eBay. One I received recently had particular chutzpah, though. When you clicked the link, it didn't even bother to have an eBay URL..

Another complaint is because I have a question. What is the Babylonian Conspiracy you mention to Martin Morse Wooster? Is there a Babylonian conspiracy?

It's a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man; a conspiracy in infamy so black that when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.

— JRMc, er JTM

Finally, I have to end this letter by complaining about the biggest entity of all, God. Marty Helgesen is right, which is why I am complaining. Not all Christians say that, in the end, things turn out well as we recognize it. Some admit they turn out well, but we may not recognize it. God works in mysterious ways.

Of course, it takes as much faith to believe in God's mysterious ways as it does in his recognizable long range goodness.

From: **Taras Wolansky** March 18, 2006  
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H, Jersey  
City, NJ 07302-3787 USA  
[twolansky@yahoo.com](mailto:twolansky@yahoo.com)

I see I missed one *Alexiad* deadline, so I'll include a few comments on the December issue.



About the movie, *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, failing to establish a franchise: what has always baffled me is why, as far as I know, there were no follow-up comic books for this *faux* comic book hero.

The problem with the hypothesis that cranial capacity has nothing to do with intelligence is that the hominid family tree strongly indicates the opposite. In spite of their extremely high metabolic cost, brains keep getting bigger and bigger from one species to the next. Of course, there's much less variation in any single species.

*Alexis Gilliland*: "If a religiously based culture makes breeding compulsory — or otherwise encourages it — the whole population will breed, including the skeptics, and no selection takes place." And if such a culture eventually returns, that will be again be true. But that's not the case now: clearly, some subcultures are breeding much faster than others. For example, in the U.S., "red" states have higher birth rates than "blue" states. Traditional religious and cultural views make the difference; and studies indicate such things are partly heritable. In other words, the equilibrium of genes favoring skepticism versus those for belief is shifting in the direction of belief.

*Lloyd Penney*: Michael Fumento points out that this was an "extraordinary season for hurricanes" only if we ignore what was happening from 1851 to 1960. See the chart at: <http://www.fumento.com/media/medjournals.html>

February: I read somewhere that "vin" meant grass, not grapes, in Old Norse, so that the idea that Vinland was a land of grapes was a confusion with Latin.

"Vin" means "grape", "vinja" means "grass". The *Saga of the Greenlanders (Grœnlendiga Saga)* says that Leif's two Scots runners Haki and Hekja came back with grapes; see *An Old Captivity* (1940) by N. S. "Nevil Shute" Norway for a fictional exploration

of this (even though he puts it in Massachusetts, since L'Anse aux Meadows was not known about then).

**"Oh, Europe is quite religious."** Beautiful! And growing more so every day. All religions are *not* the same. Politically incorrect but true.

*George W. Price:* They've put in light rail here in Jersey City. I've told myself I'll take a trip on it one of these days when the weather is nice. But it's been years and I've never gotten around to it. It's just too inconvenient, compared to a car.

More bad news: a collision between a rail vehicle and a car is thirty times more likely to kill somebody than a collision between two cars.

*Jason K. Burnett:* Recently I read (if that's the word) an unabridged recording of the 19th "Brother Cadfael" book, *The Holy Thief*. By this point the series should have been tired, but in fact the book, a direct sequel to the first "Brother Cadfael" book, *A Morbid Taste for Bones*, is terrific. It shows Ellis Peters' deepening understanding of the medieval mind, especially in the way little St. Winifred is a beloved and active member of the Shrewsbury community. Even Brother Cadfael believes she watches over them and helps them from time to time. This, even though he knows that's not really her bones in the reliquary.

And what will the Venetians do if they find out that the body in the reliquary of St. Mark is actually that of Alexander the Great?

— JTM

*Milt Stevens:* On the subject of children of superheroes, I enjoyed the first six issues of *Runaways*, in which kids with superpowers make a break for it when they learn their boring parents are actually supervillains. The conflicted motives make their battles, with both sides pulling their punches, more interesting than usual.

All for now!

From: **Sue Burke** March 25, 2006  
calle Agustin Querol, 6 bis - 6D, 28014  
Madrid, Spain  
[sue@burke.name](mailto:sue@burke.name)  
[www.sue.burke.name](http://www.sue.burke.name)

I'm getting ready for Eurocon 2006, the European Science Fiction Society convention, ([www.eurocon.kiev.ua](http://www.eurocon.kiev.ua)), which will be held in Kiev, Ukraine, from April 13 to 16. I've signed up for the optional day trip to visit Chernobyl. What city could be more science fictional? Expect a glowing report in the next LOC.

I'm trying to learn a few courtesy words and the Cyrillic alphabet. I'm also reading a book about the Ukraine in the 1920s and 30s, *The Harvest of Sorrow, Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, by Robert Conquest. For every letter in the book, which is fairly long, twenty lives were lost. I don't know if the

information will enrich my visit, but the book is worth reading. It also lowered my opinion of Stalin, which I hadn't thought possible.

Conquest has a career in SF almost as long as his career in Soviet Historiography. For every *Stalin and the Kirov Murder* (1989) there is on the other hand such items as his tenure as co-editor with Sir Kingsley Amis of the *Spectrum* (1961-1965) anthology series. If you want to know what he wanted to retitle the reissue of *The Great Terror*, let me know.

My husband and I got to see the movie "Serenity" because it finally came out on DVD so we could select English and enjoy the dialogue. Great fun. "El Viaje del Emperador" ("The March of the Penguins") never came to theaters, but it is now out on DVD in Spanish, Catalan, and French. We'll have to rent it.

But not at Blockbuster Video. It was a good place to get less popular foreign movies like "Serenity" or "Shawn of the Dead," but its stores are closing. The chain came to Spain in 1991 and had as many as 108 stores, but it has been losing money lately. It blames digital television, increased movie purchases, and pirated videos.

Piracy is rampant here. Last year in Madrid, 1,300 pirate vendors, called "top manta," were arrested. "Top" means "most popular," as in "top ten," since they specialize in the most popular videos and music. "Manta" means "blanket," because they arrange their wares on blankets on sidewalks. This protects the merchandise from dirt and allows them to make a fast getaway from the cops by gathering the four corners of the blanket to make a quick bag for their wares. People who engage in top manta tend to be immigrants who can't get legal work, which they would no doubt prefer, because they don't have legal status.

Of course, "top" really means something slightly different in English. Words move into other languages oddly. "Footing" means "jogging" in Spain. "Chopped" is a kind of lunch meat. "Relax" is a personal service legal in many parts of Europe, including Spain, and in some counties of Nevada.

Vocabulary is an example of the fun of living overseas. Things aren't just different, they're incongruent.

Maybe you bought a drawing from Gloria Trevi in Madrid and didn't know it (see the review in this). She would relax with her manager after a day singing.

— JTM

From: **Marty Helgesen** January 31, 2006  
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New  
York 11565-1406 USA  
[mnhcc@cunyvm.cuny.edu](mailto:mnhcc@cunyvm.cuny.edu)

I enjoyed Joe's Bon Ami pun and obscure reference. My mother used Bon Ami and I was

impressed by the cleverness of the slogan and the accompanying drawing. I haven't seen it in years so I wondered if it still exists. (A lot of companies seem content to sell to their traditional customers but not to advertise.) A quick search of Google revealed that the product almost disappeared from the market by the late sixties but the company was acquired by the Faultless Starch Company and sales of Bon Ami have increased.

My thanks to Robert Lichtman for telling me about the site [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com).

I must thank Alexis Gilliland for making his position clear. In his letter in the June 2005 issue he said that in a previous letter he had "argued that a secular text of Jesus (based largely on the history of Josephus) might also be valid." In the August issue I quoted the one brief paragraph about Jesus that Josephus wrote (omitting the later Christian interpolations) and observed that it doesn't seem much on which to base a life of Jesus. In October Alexis suggested Googling on "Josephus Pontius Pilate". In December I reported that doing so produced approximately 96,100 results and asked if he could quote or provide links to specific passages that would provide a basis for a secular text of Jesus. Now, instead of offering specific texts he suggests commentaries on Josephus or the 20th century novel, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Instead of providing specific primary sources he suggests that if I read a whole bunch of books I might possibly find something that supports his position. That suggests that he has nothing but conjecture, perhaps reflecting an assumption that the traditional Christian beliefs about Jesus, based on the teachings of His Apostles and their successors, can't possibly be true.

E. B. Frohvet: Of course there can be any number of possible impediments to a marriage. I just mentioned consanguinity as one possible example.

Joe, following up on one of Martin Morse Wooster's comments on the idiocies of *The Da Vinci Code*, says, "Inquiring minds want to know." Shouldn't that be "Enquiring minds want to know"?

Give me enough time and  
I think I can peck this  
editorial apart....



The rest of the zine was interesting but had no comment hooks.

**WAHF:**

**Lloyd Daub**, with various items of interest.

**VISION**

by Paul Gadzikowski.



**A MOVIE TRAILER I'D LIKE TO SEE**

Black screen.

We hear "Dixie", the sounds of marching men, the crack of gunfire, the clop of trotting horses.

The words fade in, in white letters:



**GENERAL LEE (v.o.)**

"It is my fault we lost at Gettysburg. We can but hope for a miracle in the coming campaign."

The scene fades in. It is a wintry, weary place and time in the camp of the Army of Northern Virginia. A group of men in bedraggled gray are placing paper targets on sticks in the ground. As they finish they go off camera to the right.

Then, there is a fast *brrrrp!* of gunfire and dust rises amid the targets. Some dance about, others fall.

**GENERAL LEE (off)**

"Most ingenious, Mr. Rhoodie. With how many of these repeaters could you supply me?"

The camera pans right. There is a man who is not in Confederate gray among the group of Lee's lieutenants; he is wearing a mottled green jacket and trousers, and holding a very strange weapon, its muzzle pointed safely towards the ground. He is surrounded by brass cartridges. He speaks with a slight accent, unlike the gentle Southern drawls of the general and the other officers.

**ANDRIES RHOODIE**

"How many would you like? Suppose, General Lee, suppose I am able to get you a hundred thousand of these rifles, with their ammunition. How would you — how would the Confederacy — use them?"

The camera pans on towards GENERAL LEE, who is also holding a similar rifle, not as if to fire it, but merely by barrel and buttstock. He looks down at it, then at the other man.

**GENERAL LEE**

"Sir, that is not a piker's offer."

**RHOODIE**

"We aim to see the South free and independent."

**GENERAL LEE**

"What do you call this rifle of yours? Is it a Rhoodie too?"

RHOODIE has slung the rifle; he unslings it and holds it up with a knowing look.

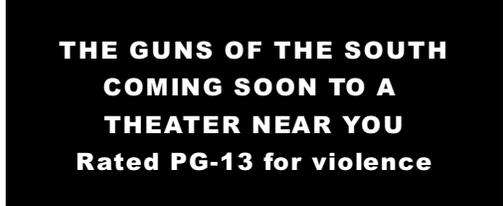
**RHOODIE**

"No, it's not a Rhoodie. Give it its proper name. It's an AK-47.

"With these guns, the south will win the war."

The sound of a fife playing a march swells up as the scene fades to black.

Then, in white letters,



(The Director's Cut will be unrated and will show Private Bean getting a pay supplement.)

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.

Material in *Alexiad* is copyright © 2006. All rights reserved. Upon publication, all rights revert to the original contributor, but we reserve the right to use any item more than once, unless otherwise specified by the contributor. All letters sent to *Alexiad* become the property of the publishers. Any material by the editors is available to other fanzines if they provide proper credit and send a copy.

Available for The Usual (letter of comment, trade, contribution). Sample issue available upon request. Back issues \$1; subscription \$10/year. *Alexiad* is also available by email in either text or Adobe Acrobat .pdf format.

**ALEXIAD**

c/o Lisa & Joseph Major  
 1409 Christy Avenue  
 Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA  
[jtmajor@iglou.com](mailto:jtmajor@iglou.com)