

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

What do I look for when I'm looking for something new to read? Usually I look first at title, sometimes author. Horse covers can always sucker me into at least looking at said book. After one of the three catches my interest, though, first page is critical. It must make me want to glance through the rest of the book to see if I think the book has consistent quality unless it is so good that I absolutely have to find out what happens next. I tend to prefer old-fashioned books but have been known to take home good dark gritty urban fantasies like *Nightlife* by Rob Thurman which is a very modern style book. Despite myself I occasionally get sucked into series, as with Walter Jon Williams's *Dread Empire's Fall* books and with Caitlin Brennan's new *White Magic* and *Airs Beneath the Moon*, by Toby Bishop. The last two drew my interest because of the equines on their covers. Webmage had caught my interest before the convention because it deals with modern day Greek mythology. The Kage Baker Company novel, *Children of the Company*, came home with me because an earlier one caught my interest. Several books by unknown authors came home with me. I didn't intend to buy Elizabeth Moon's *Speed of Dark*, only to look at her books since she was at the convention. I had to have it after I read the first page. Julia Quinn's *Secret Diaries of Miss Miranda Cheever* looked wonderfully old-fashioned. *Firebird* came home with me because I loved Robertson Garcia's Wars of the Roses books. Paula Volsky's *Illusions*, Louis L'Amour's *Galloway*, Isaac's *Storm* and Susan Schwartz's *Grail of Hearts* were selling so cheaply I couldn't leave them there. The chief regret I have is not being able to bring home books by William Hope Hodgson which looked really interesting. They've been reissued by Wildside Press and perhaps I can get them from Carmichael's here in Louisville. Unfortunately it will be some time before I get around to reading them. I've had to set a rule of culling ten books for each new acquisition before I let myself read them. There's quite a few waiting to be earned.

— Lisa

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The 65<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention, Nippon 2007, will be August 30-September 3, 2007 in Yokohama, Japan. The Pro Guests of Honor are Sakyo Komatsu and David Brin. The Fan Guest of Honor is Takumi Shibano. The Artist Guests of Honor are Yoshitaka Amano and Michael Whelan.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is August 4, 2007 at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, NJ. Donato Hanover was the winner.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is August 25, 2007 at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, NY.

The 115<sup>th</sup> Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is October 6, 2007 at the Red Mile in Lexington, KY.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is September 3, 2007 at Freehold Raceway in Freehold, NJ. The 62<sup>nd</sup> Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is September 20, 2007 at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, OH.

The 51<sup>st</sup> Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is October 27, 2007 at Yonkers Raceway.

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Deadline is October 1, 2007

## Reviewer's Notes

The panel on cons at Tuckercon illustrated one thing: all the rush of gamers and animé-ers who are making up the new generation of fans are "bowling alone". Those of us who recall the horrors of CreationCon will recognize this "so entertain me" attitude and it's only getting to be more of the same. How to get the iPod and YouTube generation to realize that those things don't just appear out of thin air?

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



## STOP PRESS

Wilson Thomas Wortham was born August 5, 2007 in Madisonville, Kentucky to my niece Sarah Elizabeth [Major] Wortham and her husband, Jeffrey Hollis Wortham. I am a great-uncle.

WWI veteran, oldest man in Britain, oldest surviving veteran, last surviving participant in the Battle of Jutland, last surviving member of the Royal Naval Air Service, and last surviving founding member of the Royal Air Force **Henry William Allingham** (all thanks to “cigarettes, whisky and wild, wild women — and a good sense of humour”) celebrated his **eleventy-first** birthday on **June 6, 2007** with lunch in the wardroom of HMS *Victory* and a RAF flypast.

We regret to report the death of **Philip Mayne**, Second Lieutenant, Royal Engineers (ret.) on **April 9, 2007**, at the age of 107, the last surviving WWI British officer. He attributed his long life to “I have never had too much to drink and have always cycled, swum and gardened.”

We regret to report the death of **William [Wilhelm] Seegers** on **July 10, 2007** in Richmond, California. Seegers was one of the last two veterans of the Imperial German armies; he had previously escaped notice due to his having emigrated to America in 1922.

According to Melanie Phillips (author of *Londonistan* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #1), a Belgian publisher issued a new French translation [of course, technically it was a retranslation of Joly, but] of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Shortly thereafter the book was on sale in the EU Parliament building (presumably its bookshop), briefly. This so disturbed Dr. Emanuele Ottolenghi, the director of the Transatlantic Institute in Brussels, that he sent a copy of Will Eisner’s *The Plot* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #2) to every MEP — except that the European Parliament post office

refused to distribute them.

<http://www.melaniephillips.com/diary/?p=1550>

We regret to report the death of **Sir Walter William “Wally” Herbert** on **June 12, 2007** in Inverness, Scotland, U.K. Born October 24, 1934, Sir Wally first went to the poles in 1955, taking part in surveys of Antarctica for the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey. His greatest expedition was the British Trans-Arctic Expedition, running from 1968 to 1969, in which he led a four-man party that completed a traverse of the Arctic Ocean, reaching the North Pole on April 6, 1969. In later years, he was known for his analyses of his predecessor Robert E. Peary’s journey, summed up in his *The Noose of Laurels: Robert E. Peary and the Race to the North Pole* (1989). He was also an accomplished artist. He held the Polar Medal with Bar and had been knighted in 2000. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

**Dr. Nora D. Volkow, M.D.** has been director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse since May 2003. However: her father is Estéban Volkow, né Vsevolod Platonovich Volkov. Vsevolod’s mother was Zinaida L’vovna Bronshteina. And Zinaida’s father, of course, was **Lev Davidovich Bronstein**, better known as **Leon Trotsky**.

Does this make our War on Drugs a Trotskyite movement?

The Associated Press describes a new book:

*Exposure* (Little Brown, 272 pages, \$23.99), by Kurt Wenzel: It is 2017, and Los Angeles is under assault by electronic image.

Digital billboards litter the landscape, lining highways, blocking scenic vistas and even shining from beneath transparent sidewalks. They transmit a constant flood of commercials, including ads that feature long-dead movie stars like Humphrey Bogart and Clark Gable, digitally reanimated to hawk Pepsi and dandruff medicine.

This startling innovation is one that those sci-fi geeks would have *never* have thought of. Eat Teegmee’s Food! [*First Lensman*, E. E. “Doc” Smith, Ph.D. (1950)]

Stephen H. Dole’s report for the Rand Corporation on the characteristics and likelihood of other livable worlds, *Habitable Planets for Man* (1964), is now available as a free download at:

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R414/>

Thanks to Robert J. Sawyer for posting the link.

## OBITS

*Locus* reports the death of notorious SF

anthologist **Roger Elwood** on **February 2, 2007** in Norfolk City, Virginia. Beginning in the sixties, peaking in the seventies, Elwood brought out a large number of original SF anthologies. These works, while reaching new markets, were marked by a lack of consistent quality, and were generally held to have killed the market for such works. He was also associated with Laser Books, the ill-executed initial attempt by Harlequin Publishers to enter the field.

We regret to report the death of **Walter James “Walt” Daugherty** in his sleep on **June 14, 2007**, in Santa Maria, California. Born December 18, 1918 in Oklahoma City, Walt pursued a number of interests, including Egyptology (where he was an expert on Tutankh-amen), anthropology (where he had his doctorate), and tropical fish. He was Chairman of the Fourth WorldCon, the Pacificon of 1946, Fan Guest of Honor at Baycon, the 1968 WorldCon, and a member of First Fandom. He was responsible for the recording of Robert Heinlein’s Guest of Honor speech, “The Discovery of the Future”, at the Denvention in 1941. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen.

We regret to report the death of **Sterling Lanier**, at home in Sarasota, Florida, on **June 28, 2007**. Born in 1927, Lanier was known for a broad variety of works, from the quirky Brigadier Ffellowes tales to the swashbuckling Hiero saga to space-operas such as his last novel, *Menace Under Marswood* (1983). He also sculpted and was the editor who got Chilton Books to publish *Dune*.

We regret to report the death of **Fred Saberhagen** on **June 29, 2007**. Born **May 18, 1930**, Saberhagen became one of Fred Pohl’s hot discoveries with his Berserker stories. He branched out into horror (his *Dracula* series) and fantasy (the *Empire of the East* series).

## MONARCHIST NEWS

**July 20, 2007** marked the eightieth anniversary of the first accession of **King Michael [Mihai I] of Romania**.

**Princess Isabella Henrietta Ingrid Margarethe of Denmark**, second child of Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary, was christened at Fredensborg Parish Church on **July 1, 2007**.

We regret to report the death of **Mohammed Zāhir Shah**, late King of the Allah-granted Kingdom of Afghanistan, on **July 23, 2007**, in Kabul. Born October 15, 1914, the King succeeded to the throne upon the assassination of his father, **Mohammed Nadir Shah**, November 8, 1933. The monarchy was overthrown by a coup in 1973, and the country was wracked by war and invasion thereafter. In 2002, after the overthrow of the Taliban, the King returned, but was given only the life title of “Father of the Nation”.



## THE GREAT IDEA

Review by Joseph T Major of

### THE GLADIATOR

by Harry Turtledove

(Tor; 2007; ISBN 978-0-7653-1486-4; \$23.95)

“A Novel of Crosstime Traffic”

It was a bright cold day in April and all the clocks were striking thirteen. Peter Uldanov stood outside the Gallery of the People, waiting for the man. Adams had said that something he had heard from the Italian Soviet, here in fact, might be of help in their efforts, and Peter had considered it important enough to go there himself.

“Comrade Uldanov?”

Peter turned. “Yes,” he said. “And you would be Comrade Richard Lee?” The man had the sort of looks that would make him a success in the movies, playing a class-struggle hero overcoming capitalist oppression . . .

— Not by “George Orwell”, Henry Hazlitt, or H. Beam Piper

In Henry Hazlitt’s *Time Will Run Back* (1951) [available online from the Mises Institute (<http://www.mises.org> [WARNING: Cranky!]), in a sorcerer’s stonish moment titled *The Great Idea* on its initial U.S. release, it is the year 282 A.M., or in the dead bourgeois terminology, 2100, and the inevitable victory of Communism has come to pass. Yet, the state is not withering away and the proletariat is neither empowered nor enriched. The protagonist, Peter Uldanov, son of Stalenin the Dictator of the Global U.S.S.R., sets out to find a way out of the conundrum. One wonders what would have happened if he had gone to the Italian Soviet Republic and bought a role-playing game about setting up and running a successful railroad.

Gianfranco is not the son of the General Secretary of the G.U.S.S.R., or the Italian Socialist Republic as it is here in this part of this version of Oneworld, or even very important, and it’s not quite 2100 CE, but he does play running the railroad at the game store called The Gladiator [“Il Gladiatore” but ecco, who’s counting? They haven’t imposed Marxanto, after all]. This unusual game cooperative (read *The Rosa Luxemburg Contraceptives Cooperative* (1972) by Leopold Tyrmand for an explanation of how that works) has more ordinary games, even odd ones about going

adventuring in a feudal reactionary world as a sword-swinging exploiter or a mystic. What Gianfranco and his girlfriend Annarita like are playing trains, so to speak. (Now if he’d done something like, “I call my line ‘Taggart Transcontinentale’.”)

Then something happens, and The Gladiator is abruptly closed. This is followed by an even bigger surprise; one of the clerks was not rounded up by the Security Police, and he turns up in Gianfranco’s apartment. And then he reveals the great idea; time will run sideways, if not back; he is from another parallel world, one where there was no Communist triumph, and the intent of the game store was to infiltrate free-market ideas into this world. He is an unperson, in a far more literal sense. Maxoni and Cocini either weren’t born here either or didn’t do their work [see *Imperium* by Keith Laumer (1961, 1965, 1968, 2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #3)], so Eduardo the clerk has to find the others from his time line.

And then, all sorts of curious notions start getting into peoples’ heads . . .

The idea of corrupting a system by gaming it out may not be original, but it has a certain samizdat piquancy under these circumstances. As for the last page: they daren’t carry *Tempo Correrà Indietro* [*La Grande Idea*] by Enrico Azlitto, but perhaps if it were under cover, hm?

That’s an interesting Heroic Proletarian Uplifted Fist on the cover. Kudos to Scott M, Fisher, the credited artist, and may he always get a Critical Hit when he needs one.

## EXIT, PURSUING A BEAR

Review by Joseph T Major of

### KUSHIEL’S JUSTICE

by Jacqueline Carey

(Warner Books; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-446-50003-6; \$26.99)

Sequel to *Kushiel’s Dart* (2001), *Kushiel’s Chosen* (2002), *Kushiel’s Avatar* (2003), and *Kushiel’s Scion* (2006)

Imriel nó Delaunay de la Courcel is engaged and deeply in love. With two different people, but that’s the way royalty does so often. But then, his girlfriend just happens to be Sidonie de la Courcel, the heiress to the throne of Terre d’Ange — and his first cousin twice removed. Eep! (At least he doesn’t want to be her well never mind this is a family fanzine. Camilla . . .)

In our last thrilling episode, Imriel was initiated into the fringes of a conspiracy so immense and a magic so black that when its linaments are exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men. That is, he traveled to first the last rump of the Tiberian Empire, then north to the more renaissance state of Lucca, where he found magic and intrigue.

Now, it’s still a good idea to get him out of the way. If only it were discontented lords who were out to get him! In fulfillment of the diplomatic revolution in train, Imriel is dispatched to the foggy, rainy land of Alba, across the waters, to marry the Cruach’s niece

Doralei and father the next generation of Alban leaders. (For Blessed Elua’s sake, don’t name one “Michael”!)

Or not. For during a friendly cattle-raid (yes, Alba is still at that state of development, and one would think that a cultured Angeline would be tres horrified at that), an older and darker magic emerges, and Doralei is fatally savaged — by a werebear!

So where did the guy go? Out east — and he got a good head start while Imriel is recovering from his wounds. Which means a trip into the wild east, marked by shipwreck, civil or sible war (the brother of the Grand Prince of Vral didn’t take too kindly to the religious revelation or revolution), blizzards, and Imriel’s past rising up to bite him in the behind. And then, there is the final encounter . . .

The images of life in this skewed, AH world of magic and sexuality are made sharper and more deeply rendered in this volume. Which to some extent obscures the lack of significance to the plot; such matters as the whereabouts of Imriel’s treacherous, vanished mother, or the ambit of the unseen plotters recede into the background, unresolved.

The open and often alternative sexuality presented here makes this not everyone’s read. Imriel only gets lashed bloody as a penance; for Phèdre, it’s her job, and sacred too. And the other establishments offer different levels of relief. Makes *The Da Vinci Code* rather tame.

While Imriel has fulfilled his current obligation, longer-term ones are yet to be resolved. Like *Kushiel’s Chosen*, this has the longer-term weaknesses of being a “middle book”. If Carey stays on course, though, the next book will have resolution. We can also be certain that there will be more and deeper trouble on hand when this is . . . [To Be Continued]

## GARDEN ON THE MOON

Review by Joseph T Major of

### ASCENT

by Jed Mercurio

(Simon & Schuster; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-7432-9822-3; \$24.00)

One of the chronic fears of the moon race was that one player would win by sending someone who didn’t need to come back. Sometimes, there was the qualification of “right away”, as in Hank Searls’s *The Pilgrim Project* (1963), based on a real proposal, with an astronaut and a habitat sent to the moon separately. More realistically, if less in keeping with our values, the moon-traveler might end his life there; thus Pierre Boullé’s *la Jardin de Kanashima* (1964) [*Garden on the Moon* (1965)] with the infamous “exploding in vacuum” scene (the character in question being an “unreliable narrator”; he thinks he’s going to go boom when he opens his suit in seppuku but the author didn’t commit himself on the topic).

One of the chronic stories of the moon race was that of the Lost Cosmonauts. Robert

Heinlein gave currency to this tale in his essay "‘Pravda’ Means ‘Truth’" (1960; NHOL G.144), but two Italian radio hams, the Judica-Cordiglia brothers, reported them by the squadrons, a handful of men (and even women) who were shot into space, made broadcasts that only the redoubtable Italians could pick up, and perished, unnoticed by NASA, the Jodrell Bank Observatory, NORAD, or anyone else.

And then there is Yefgenii Mikhailovich Yeremin, an orphan of the Great Patriotic War who fights his way into the Soviet Air Force. Yeremin is a pilot with the Right Stuff, but his career is conducted under a shadow; his combats and his victories don't exist. He is fighting in the air during the Korean War, and officially all the credit goes to the heroic pilots of Kim Il-sung. But he impresses his superiors and is a real comer — until he pulls a stupid stunt that gets him made an unperson and packed off to Siberia. Well, Franz Josef Land, which makes Siberia look positively benign. [As you know, that was where Albanov and Konrad finally managed to get to land after escaping from the *Saint Anna* in 1914; see *In the Land of White Death* (1917, 2000, 2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 1 #5) for more on this.]

But even there, even injured, Yeremin manages to pull off an impossible one, not only shooting down a U-2 but saving at the risk of his own life the other pilot who had gone after the imperialist invader. Which gets him the attention of certain others.

Then the desperate days of 1969 come in. The Soviet lunar spaceship is almost workable. They can only even think of trying if they do it in "all-up" mode, everything having to work right, nothing being tested beforehand. Even then, the mission payload needs to be cut to the bare bone. Say, having only one cosmonaut. And by Bog, or nonexistent symbol of the opiate of the masses, here is an nonexistent man to fly it! (Already disgraced, Yeremin is only in the program by surffiance, under a pseudonym.)

And then, partway to the moon, he suffers a catastrophic system failure, an explosion in a fuel cell. Getting back isn't an option . . .

Mercurio has done his homework. During his sub rosa flying career, Yeremin brushes up against a number of American astronauts, all of whom really did serve in Korea. And indeed, two of them, Armstrong and Aldrin, are thanked for their assistance. So his pre-space history is good. And similarly, the Chief Designer (Korolev, as everyone except the CIA knew at the time), Gagarin, Komarov, and the other doomed chaps of the era have their lives and the endings thereof recounted properly.

Similarly, the Soviet moon-landing vehicle is realistic. Yes, they actually did plan to send a two-man capsule and have one man do an EVA to get to the moon lander. And, as Yeremin's dying capsule heads towards the moon, "failure is not an option" gets a whole different spin.

However . . . It seems impossible to believe that Yeremin's launch would go entirely unpublicized. Gagarin's accomplishment was announced while he was in orbit. Wouldn't

"Brave Soviet Hero Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov sets off to round the moon!" be top item in *Pravda* and lead piece from TASS? Even if they didn't, a rocket launch would be detected by the Main Adversary and its Main Ally (I referred to Jodrell Bank), the radio transmissions monitored, and the explosion observed.

On a more literary level, Yeremin seems to have totally blanked himself out. He assumes the persona of an unperson beforehand, as it were, and impresses the reader as an emptiness, raised in an environment designed to make him emotionally void, and acting appropriately. Perhaps it fits with what is done to him. All around him is a fascinating alternative Soviet space program, a striking portrayal of what they were doing for the Cause. It's better than John Calvin Batchelor's *Peter Nevsky and the True Story of the Soviet Moon Landing* (1996).

### THE BOGLAND OF DR. MOREAU — PART TWO

Review by Joseph T Major of

**LEGACY:**

*The Sharing Knife, Volume Two*

by Lois McMaster Bujold

(Eos; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-06-113905-5; \$25.95)

Sequel to *Beguilement*

(reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #1)

Dag is suffering the inevitable problems of having brought a stranger-woman into the closed little settlement where ever-one is sot in their ways and don't take no likin' to outsiders.

The settlement is closed because they need to conserve their powers to fight the bogmen. Imagine Jed Clampett having to be the front line of defense against Cthulhu. (Well, Jethro Bodine couldn't have his brains deliquesce and flow out of his ears upon encountering some eldrich, squamous, rugose, and cthonian horror; seein' as he don't got none nohow. . .)

The patroller society has many odd and intriguing features. They can't live in permanent buildings; but if you build something with three walls and a roof, it isn't really a building. Or the growth and use of one of their major food items, the "plunkin", which grows underwater. Fantasyland usually doesn't have any fields and as you know, the people eat only **Stew** and drink **Ale**, so it's nice to see someone take a little time to innovate there.

Bujold hasn't stopped her society-building there. Dag has committed a grave sin in his culture, he has married an *outsider*. One could say that this was a means to conserve their special powers, but as the story unfolds it becomes clearer that this is merely "we don't wed folks from that holler over there".

While all this is festering, Dag has to go out to deal with yet another infestation of bogmen. When Fawn goes out after him (still more unwholesome realism, it takes three days for her to get there and she has to look out after the horse), she reaches him in time to discover that she may have to make a dreadful sacrifice . . .

And then, there is the unresolved question of whether or not she can live there.

In *The Sharing Knife*, Bujold has departed from familiar territory again, bringing an unfamiliar perspective to the new situation. The war against the bogmen is not conducted by an elite, snug in castles or habitats and drawing on the support of the populace; these people have to support themselves, and have become suspicious of all around them, for reasons both well and ill. It is all well and good to have a cosseted elite responsible for destroying the general enemy of all humankind; but the underpinnings are usually neglected in the process of chronicling the story. I doubt we'll see any fandom of fans playing at being the people in this book.

### WILDERNESS YEARS

Review by Joseph T Major of

**TROUBLESOME YOUNG MEN:**

*The Rebels Who Brought Churchill to Power and Helped Save England*

by Lynne Olson

(Farrar Strauss Giroux; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-374-17954-0; \$27.50)

McLachlan arrived. The talk turned, as so often at Stour, to Neville Chamberlain and appeasement. Randolph spoke angrily about the pre-war editor of *The Times*, Geoffrey Dawson, for cutting out parts of the despatches of his Berlin correspondent, Norman Ebbutt. The visitor, in a quiet voice, dissented. Ebbutt's despatches were not cut because they told the truth about Nazi Germany, but because they were sometimes too long. Randolph looked puzzled. It was an act of faith at Stour to denounce Dawson for hiding the truth about Hitler's Germany from the British people. We, Randolph's minions, wondered what would happen. The visitor went on in his quiet, but now also firm voice, to say that it was not Dawson who had cut the despatches but our visitor himself . . . Now the 'villain' had revealed himself, and done so without realizing what he had done. I looked at Randolph, but he had risen from the table and was already at the sideboard, where the baron of beef was awaiting, his back to us. Suddenly he turned towards the table, brandishing the carving knife, shaking and trembling, and exploded with a bellow of fury, "**Shits like you should have been shot by my father in 1940.**"

— *In Search of Churchill: A Historian's Journey* (1994), Sir Martin Gilbert, Page 37 (emphasis added)

Slowly, subtly, Lynne Olson lays forth the evidence in support of Randolph's assertion. *Troublesome Young Men* is the story of how England slept, and how a tiny and beleaguered few strove to rouse the country to the terrible menace.

It is a story of a group, and to some extent less focused. It was an interesting group, including for example two future prime

ministers — **Anthony Eden** [Robert Anthony Eden, later Earl of Avon] (Warwick and Leamington (C.)) and **Harold Macmillan** [Maurice Harold Macmillan, later Earl of Stockton] (Stockton-on-Tees (U.) — and the grandson of a third, **Robert Cecil, styled Viscount Cranborne** [Robert Arthur James Gascoyne-Cecil, later Marquess of Salisbury] (South Dorset (C.)), grandson of Victoria's last P.M. the Marquess of Salisbury. (One other future prime minister comes up, referred to obliquely as "Lord Dunglass"; he was Alexander Frederick Douglas-Home, *styled* Lord Dunglass (Lanark (U.)), later the Earl of Home, later Sir Alexander Douglas-Home, later the Lord Home of the Hirsel; back then he was Chamberlain's parliamentary secretary.)

Some of the others were already well-known, and older. For example, there was Churchill's schoolmate **Leo Amery** [Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett Amery] (Birmingham Sparkbrook (C.)), who was as Jewish as Wolfgang Lotz. Or **Duff Cooper** [Alfred Duff Cooper, later Viscount Norwich] (Westminster St. George's (C.)), who was known then by his wife, Lady Diana Cooper (né Manners), the reigning beauty of London, and is now known by their child, the writer John Julius Norwich [the Right Honourable John Julius Cooper, Viscount Norwich]. And one who is known by his sister the writer; though then he was more the Honourable Member from the King's Norton Borough of Birmingham (C.)

A shared doctrine can be instituted without formal organizations or decrees among those who share the same community. The newspaper editors and the higher echelons of the government were all members of the same clubs and went to the same parties. Editors such as Dawson were predisposed to cutting out such alarmist rot because good chaps like Neville, what what, knew that it was all alarmist rot and no point in getting the wind up. It all sounds like Japan today (see *A Public Betrayed* by Adam Gamble and Takesato Watanabe (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #2) for more on this).

Going against the flow could be dangerous. **Her Grace the Duchess of Atholl** (Katherine Marjory Ramsay Stewart-Murray) M.P. (Kinross and West Perthshire (U.) — a seat later held by Sir Alex Douglas-Home) should be better known in history; she was the first female minister in a Conservative government and an undifferentiated opponent of totalitarianism. This last may be deduced from her having both protested human rights abuses in the Soviet Union (in 1931, before the real Stalinist action kicked in) and supported the Spanish Republic.

Her Grace resigned from Parliament in 1938 as a protest against the Munich Pact. The network succeeded in keeping her out when she stood for re-election as an independent.

Not that the "troublesome young men" had any lack of conflict among themselves. Not particularly political, though. Lady Dorothy Macmillan, Harold's wife, was notorious for her affairs, including one with fellow "t.y.m." **Robert Boothby** [Robert John Graham Boothby, later Lord Boothby] (Aberdeen and Kincardine East (C.)), who was apparently the

father of her youngest daughter, Sarah. This had a serious emotional effect on Macmillan. Duff Cooper was also known as a philanderer, of which people said that the worst part was Lady Diana commiserating afterwards. (She doesn't mention the story of Brendan Bracken [later Viscount Bracken] (Paddington North (C.)) bragging who his real father was . . .)

Those who like odd gender politics might well consider the case of **Harold Nicolson** [Sir Harold George Nicolson] (Leicester West (Nat. Lab.)) and his wife, the famous writer Vita Sackville-West. They were both homosexual — and had two children, including the writer Nigel Nicolson.

As the European situation deteriorated, the Government responded by withdrawing even further into denial. Olson describes the terrifying scene at the debate of September 2, 1939, where as Warsaw burned, Chamberlain droned on about peace. (He wanted to get over the inordinate fear of Naziism.) The Labour response was delivered by their deputy leader, Arthur Greenwood (Wakefield (Lab.)), who rose to the occasion, buoyed perhaps by a famous response — Leo Amery's cry of "Speak for England, Arthur!" He did. Chamberlain's government might have fallen then and there; but he had offered Churchill a cabinet position, and Winston felt that it would be desirable not to set a bad example.

The climax was the debate over the Norwegian campaign. Olson describes the tempestuous struggle between the Government and the Opposition, internal and external. And inside the internal, too: Leo Amery had to struggle with himself before making the famous quote, "In the name of God, go!" (It would have helped her thesis to mention the preceding quote Amery used, which described the leaders of the government as "old decayed serving men and tapsters".)

And then the vote came, where Chamberlain's majority was well below viability. Note this; technically, the Government won, but in a way that indicated that it no longer had effective support. Even Lady Astor [the Right Honourable Nancy Witcher Langhorne Astor, Viscountess Astor (Plymouth Sutton (C.)) (my cousin Nancy; you knew there had to be a connection)], chatelaine of the pro-appeasement Cliveden Set, voted no, fed up by the impotence and incompetence of the government.

But how did the "troublesome young men" do afterwards? Not all that well, initially; aside from Eden, they got minor posts, or none at all. As time passed, they had more significant assignments; Macmillan, for example, was de facto minister for the Middle East, and developed significant diplomatic and managerial skills. As opposed to his personal life, which was gravely burdened because of Lady Dorothy's affair with Bob Boothby. Olson tells how Macmillan and Boothby had a sad few meetings after Dorothy died.

Oh, and the hon. member from Birmingham King's Norton? He was in the Army then, and left London after the vote to go to the front lines. Quite, because not long thereafter he was

killed in action, the first Member of Parliament to die in that war, but by no means the last, Major **Ronald Cartland**, Royal Artillery, brother of the romance novelist Dame Barbara Cartland.

#### Glossary:

C.	Conservative and Unionist
U.	Unionist (i.e., more Tories)
Lab.	Labour
Nat. Lab.	National Labour (Supporter of Ramsay Macdonald)

#### NOT SO TOUGH GUIDE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE GOVERNMENT MANUAL™ FOR  
NEW WIZARDS**

by Matthew David Brozik  
and Jacob Sager Weinstein  
(Andrews McMeel Publishing; 2006;  
ISBN 978-0-7407-5732-7; \$10.95)

This is an amusing little trifle to give your local junior Fan as a cooling-off from \*THE\* \*BOOK\* \*OF\* \*THE\* \*SUMMER\*, *Harry-Who-Is-Not-To-Be-Named* . . . Or, in another approach, it can be considered to be a *Tough Guide to Urban Fantasyland*.

The authors have a dry, deadpan approach to some of the more outré parts of wizardry:

**MYTH:** Wizards Prison is located in an alternate, hellish dimension.

**TRUTH:** Wizards Prison is located in Rahway, New Jersey.

— *The Government Manual™ for New Wizards*, Page 40

Okay, so it's not *alternate*.

This work gives the young growing wizard a simple, effective guide to all the changes that are happening in his or her life, with examples of such useful topics as how to pick a proper familiar ("Does a winged horse need a stable or a nest, or perhaps a nestable?" [Page 58]). Or what the well-dressed wizard will wear: ("[Wizards] young and old alike are partial to flannel pajamas, often decorated with moons, runes, stars, pentagrams, and teddy bears." [Page 76]).

More detailed discussions cover such vital topics as relationships with the dead. (Chapter Five, "The Dead (Grateful and Otherwise)", (Pages 85-101)). This contains many points worthy of notice, for example: "Royalties earned through ghostwriting are still subject to income tax." [Page 98] They never let go.

I won't even mention He Who Must Not Be Named Melvin . . . oops

#### EARS OF THE JUNGLE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**MY TANK IS FIGHT!:**

**Deranged Inventions of WWII**  
by Zack Parsons

(Citadel Press; 2006;  
ISBN 0-8065-2758-7; \$14.95)  
<http://www.somethingawful.com>

Outré technological developments are often the preserve of military research. When great wads of dollars are handed out with no sense, what do you expect will happen? Nothing so good as in John T. Sladek's *The Reproductive System* (1968), where throwing government money at a failing dollmaker got a von Neumann Machine. The more likely result was the "blip krieg" that the grunts despised in-country, the elaborate unworkable items of immense complexity that were supposed to make pushbutton war in Vietnam possible, but got results more like in Pierre Boule's *les Orielles de jungle* [*Ears of the Jungle*] (1972), with its American bombing raid, directed by a computerized navigation and control system, redirected onto the airbase that launched it. (Shades of "The Ultimate Computer"!)

But the masters of this arcane art had to be the Nazis. Now this book doesn't give the ultimate proposals. It omits the Kriegsmarine Design Bureau's H-44 *Schlachtschiff* design, for a ship that would displace 129,800 tons, have a length of 1133 feet, beam of 169 feet, full-load draft of 44 feet 4 inches, and mount eight 508-mm (20") guns, with a top speed of thirty knots. And you thought that Jackie Fisher's HMS *Incomparable* was bad. That this ship could not enter any existing German port sounds in keeping with their design philosophy. The book also passes over the Elemag proposal to make electric power unworkable in enemy nations (see Heather Pringle's *The Master Plan* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #5), Pages 282-284 for that). The Nazis had a perverse talent for the grandiose and unusable, not to mention the occult; had the vast time displacement of John Birmingham's *Axis of Time* series taken place, and a laptop with a full library disk fallen into their hands, it would most likely have gone straight to the Ahnenerbe, been searched thoroughly for references to the *Welteislehre*, and then discarded as a Jewish contamination.

Some readers may find what is in there a bit one-sided. Only one Allied project is represented, the ship of ice (Chapter 17 "HMS *Habbakuk*", Pages 185-195) [see Brad Linaweaver's *Moon of Ice* (1982, 1988) for more on this]. OSS researcher Stanley Lovell's *Of Spies and Strategems* (1963) contains enough wacky blip krieg for another book just as big, and N. S. Norway was involved in a Monty-Pythesque device called the Grand Panjandrum, when not writing as "Nevil Shute".

Parsons gives technical details, then follows with stories of the weapons in action. There may not be a space between those last two words, understand. For example, the land weapons descriptions begin with the Maus tank — then its even bigger cousin the Ratte, which would have weighed over two thousand tons and carried two 280 mm (11") guns, lifted from the *Gneisenau* (which, in a typo, is called a "heavy cruiser" [Page 15]; she was rated as a *Schlachtschiff*, "battleship", albeit not a very powerful one). The Ratte couldn't have used any roads, much less bridges, and could well have ended up as immobile as the notorious Snow Cruiser of the 1940 United States

Antarctic Service Expedition, which got off the boat in the Bay of Whales and turned out to have insufficient traction.

Somewhat more feasible weapons include an early wire-guided antitank missile and infrared night-vision devices. Then too, there was the LandKreuzer P150, which was the "Dora" 800mm (31½") artillery piece seen in Turtledove's *Worldwar* series, converted from a railway gun to a self-propelled one. I'm sure that the Lizards would have really appreciated that (for some values of "appreciate"). Truth.

Air vehicles include even more deady (to both sides) fighters such as the Go229 flying wing, comical personal helicopters, and the WP1003, an early version of the V-22 Osprey VTOL aircraft. (Used for an *Eagle Has Landed* mission that climaxes with Churchill safely watching the titanic battle from the Annexe, and ends with everyone's favorite AH villain, Otto Skorzeny, getting picked up in a pub while waiting for a boat to Portugal. I wonder when someone's going to do a book where Skorzeny meets Belisarius?)

Oh yes, space. Parsons emulates the other Parsons (Jack; see *Strange Angel* by George Pendle (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #4) or *Sex and Rockets* by John Carter (2000) for more on that Parsons) in describing the potential super missiles of their space program, including a sea-launched V-2 — with a low-yield nuclear weapon! Launched against New York in April of 1945. John W. Campbell gets to see "Deadline" [*Astounding*, March 1944] in practice, assuming he lives to tell about it.

When he gets into naval matters, Parsons really lets go, even if he doesn't get to the H-44. He describes submarines from the tiny to the huge. The former is the twenty-ton *Seeteufel*, a tracked submarine designed to crawl out of the water and become a land vehicle, as he puts it, "apparently inspired by staring at the sun for too long" [Page 199], though one could point to Robur's *Terror in Maître du monde* [*The Master of the World* (1904)], which also flew.

The latter is the Type XI-B U-boat, 3630 tons displacement (presumably surfaced), two twin 127mm (5") gun turrets, and a crew of 110 with 60 passengers. Now everybody had submarine cruisers that size; the British had the X-1, a successor to the appallingly unlucky K class [see *The K Boats* by Don Everitt (1963) for the history of this series of unfortunate events], the Americans had the V class boats, which were converted to transport boats, and the Japanese built the I-400 class, without having noticed how unsuccessful similar boats were in Hector C. Bywater's *The Great Pacific War* (1925). But Parsons's conclusion regarding the feasibility of the boat is not without merit, if somewhat overwrought: "To put it delicately, the Type XI-B was an appalling mistake dredged from the septic brainpans of syphilitic mongoloids." [Page 179] (What has he got against Down's Syndrome, anyhow?)

A point that Parsons makes repeatedly is that these weapons were at best not yet technically feasible, and most would have been beyond the financial capacity of the Nazis — they could barely afford the V-2, never mind the manned

space rockets or the nuclear weapon. (It's my belief that these "superweapons" were mostly drawn up by research staffs kept together through the need for leaders to keep a large, active-looking staff. Then the fanboys imagine that these ideas were practicable, and so the idea of a superscientific Reich gains currency. Add to that the *Victorious German Arms Syndrome*, where the Allies are inexplicably unable to respond to Nazi initiatives, and the result could well get SF listed as a hate group.)

The fictional sections are tied together, so to speak, by the experiences of a few Everypersons who suffer the consequences of this blip krieg; two German Panzer crewmen, an American reporter, and a Soviet sniper. The world they live in (or don't; two don't survive) is not without its interest, and perhaps Parsons should expand this into a novel.

The spacecraft [Chapter 10 "German Space Program", Pages 103-125, and Chapter 12 "Sänger Silbervogel Antipodal Bomber", Pages 151-160] are of particular interest to this readership, one would hope. Parsons describes the progression. As he makes it out, the A12, the first stage of their space rocket, would have had fifty motors [Page 104]. Shades of Korolev! He includes a very brief history of the German program, with such well-known names as Oberth and von Braun, along with lesser figures such as Herman Noordung (actually Potocnik).



The launch of the first German spaceship turns out to be a failure [Pages 113-116; think Kornbluth's "The Rocket of 1955" (1939)] while fortunately for the *Raumfahrer* ("astronaut"; literally "space-farer") in the cockpit, who could eject, the Silbervogel is not much more workable [Pages 148-150]. (For another approach to this see "Goddard's People" by Allen Steele (*Asimov's*, July 1991), though I doubt Goddard would have cooperated with anyone else at all the way that Steele has him doing.) The *Raumfahrers* turn out to be SS, which sounds like someone read *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1948; NHOL G.048b) and understood what Heinlein was getting at when he had an officer of the Nazi "Elite Guard" on the Moon.

As it is, the book is not technical enough for the techies, and a parody of a technothriller with all its technical detail for the Clancyites. All the same, it is fun to read, though appalling towards the end (that A-bombing), followed by pathos, with a stranded *Raumfahrer*, ignored in space.

**OPERAE DEVOTIONIQUE**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*WORKING IX TO V:*

*Orgy Planners, Funeral Clowns, and other  
Prized Professions of the Ancient World*  
by Vicki León

(Walker and Company; 2007;  
ISBN 978-0-8027-1556-2; \$16.95)

“So, dominus, the uprising of the three slave *librariae*, who fancied they could imprison you and do your work in your place, has ended. What is to be done?”

“Crucify them, of course. What is it, Pullo?”

“Sir. That ‘un. I seen her out east, sittin’ on a Persian catapult.”

“SO! Put her on a higher cross then!”

The author of the *Wicked Women* series has turned her attention to a different matter. Who were all those people in *Rome* around Atia and Caesar, Pullo and Niobe, Brutus, Cassius, and the gang? León describes in a drolly humorous vein many of the different jobs that kept Classical Greece and Rome going.

For example, there is the *nomenclator*, the slave who remembered names for a person of importance. Remember Posca? Caesar’s PDA had to walk.

Some of them are of course peculiar to that time. For example, most gladiatorial fights were not to the death; gladiators were an expensive investment. So were gladiatrices, who weren’t wasted fighting men. (Or why they were looking for guys 5’ 11” or less to appear on *Xena: Warrior Princess*.)

Or to take another example, the “funeral clown” mentioned above. He wore the death mask of the deceased in his funeral procession. León quotes the famous joke about Vespasian’s parsimony uttered by his funeral clown. It was the last chance to satirize the deceased.

Others did such humble tasks as infrastructure or such vain tasks as personal service. It is enlightening to note that construction, for example, was basically so much the same then as it is now. And at the other extreme, there isn’t a specific job for armpit hair plucker today, but just wait until some of those divas hear about it.

The book is spiced up by short biographies of some of these people whose histories have survived the years. While reading this uncovers so many jobs that still exist today, in one form or another, there are others that remind the reader that the past is a different world. The prospective writer, and the better reader, should see the infrastructure of jobs that sustains a society; the traditional fantasy society of castles, convents, and wizards’ dens, with nothing else between, doesn’t make it.

**YOURS TRULY . . .**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*TOO LATE TO SAY GOODBYE:*  
*A True Story of Murder and Betrayal*  
by Ann Rule

(Free Press; 2007;  
ISBN 978-0-7432-3852-6; \$26.00)

Between preparing witty phrases to be later stolen by Stephen King (I’m waiting for King to chuckle, “I haven’t had so much fun since the rats ate my baby sister!”) and having Norman Bates decide to get back at the producers who did his life story and not even give him a credit, much less cash (the novel *Psycho II* (1982) — as opposed to the movie (1983)), Robert Bloch decried a certain bias in professions. One always heard of mad doctors, he declared, but never mad dentists.

Dr. Bart Corbin was facing a personal crisis in 2004; his wife, Jenn, was leaving him. This capped a period of personal and career decline — stresses at home, problems at work. When a patient leaves halfway through a procedure, bleeding uncontrollably, one suspects that the dentist’s grasp of his professional skills is not of the best. And likewise at home.

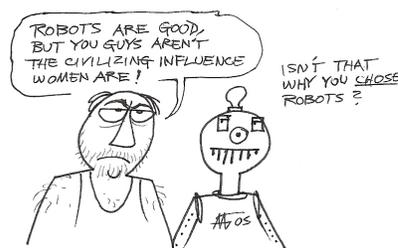
But Jenn left him in a different way, so to speak. On the morning of December 4, 2004, she was found dead in her bedroom, a gunshot wound to her head. What with all the stress, she had killed herself. Or had she?

Criminal investigations can turn up surprising things. Back in 1990, Bart Corbin had had a girlfriend, a fellow dental student named Dolly Hearn. She would have done much better than him at dental school, but things kept on happening to her sample work. Then she was found dead in her living room, a gunshot wound to her head. What with all the stress, she had killed herself. Or had she?

As Auric Goldfinger put it, that could be coincidence. There were too many coincidences there, which was why the police stepped up to Enemy Action. The one case led to the reopening of the other one; it was an example of *modus operandi* in nigh textbook style.

Even when he was arrested, though, the case against Corbin was dicey; there was evidence enough to convince the police, but would it convince a jury? Then, in a legal thriller moment, they found the one key piece of evidence, after a long hunt after leads that vanished, in a coincidental moment — and he broke, pleaded guilty, and got life.

The highlight is not so much the investigation or the portrayal of the criminal as the discussion of the forgotten people — the victims. Rule recounts the lives of Jenn Corbin and of Dolly Hearn. The reader sees what the killer took from them. Sometimes nothing can destroy something.



(Also available on the topic is *The Doctor’s Wife: A True Story of Marriage, Deception, and Two Gruesome Deaths* by John Glatt (St. Martin’s True Crime Library; 2007: ISBN 978-0-312-93428-6; \$6.99).)

**GYPSIES, TRAMPS, AND THIEVES**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*SAXONS, VIKINGS, AND CELTS:*

*The Genetic Roots of Britain and Ireland*  
by Bryan Sykes

(W. W. Norton; 2006;

ISBN 978-0-393-06268-7; \$26.95)

[British title: *BLOOD OF THE ISLES:  
Exploring the Genetic Roots of Our Tribal  
History* (2006)]

John Maybury, an ironworker, was born in the days of Good Queen Bess, and died during the rule of Dour King Jamie, in Shropshire, in the year of our Lord 1618. This is unexceptional — except that thanks to DNA testing, we now know that John Maybury was the ancestor of Francis Maybury of Virginia, and therefore of Francis’s descendant Nancy Katherine Mabry, later Major. That is to say, an ancestor of my grandmother (and so of me).

Sykes, the chronicler of the families of *The Seven Daughters of Eve* (2001; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 1 #3) now turns his attention to this sort of process in a broader (nationwide that is) way. You may be aware of the “Genghis Khan” gene, or the “Niall of the Nine Hostages” gene; surveys showing that disproportionate percentages of Mongolian and Irish (respectively) males have the same male-line ancestor. Since so many of the latter have family names claiming descent from Niall of the Nine Hostages, the famed fourth-century Irish chieftain (not only O’Neill but even O’Rourke — so P.J. could indeed be “The King of Sandusky, Ohio”!), the latter follows but the former is an inference. And then there is the kohenic genetic marker, which shot down the Khazar Theory of Askhenazic descent while demonstrating the Jewishness of the Bene Israel of India.

Sykes’s topic is, though, Britain. His firm has added to its tracking of female-line mitochondrial DNA the tracking of male-line genetic markers. These two tools help establish the patterns of settlement of the island.

In *Puck of Pook’s Hill*, the invading Sir Richard the Norman wooed and eventually won the hand of Lady Ælueva the Saxon (and the rest of her, too, which was why there was Dan and Una), in spite of her eccentric responses to his initial courting. Perhaps somewhat less gently, this pattern of indigenous women and invading men turns up among the current population.

Sykes touches on the different peoples and nations that make up the islands, discussing their ancestries as shown by the two markers he is tracing. As well, he tells about the history of his own profession, which began with researchers travelling around and noting what people generally looked like.

The book has been criticized for stressing Sykes's own business at the expense of others. And similarly, he might well have shown the forensic reconstruction of Cheddar Man along with his relative Adrian Targett, to show the similarities. Genetic markers are a new and potentially valuable research tool for the historian, the genealogist, and the curious. We all came from the same beings, so racism is hating your relatives.

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### **WARRIOR HEIR**

by Cinda Williams Chima

(Hyperion Books for Children; 2006; \$8.99)

Review by Lisa Major

I stumbled on this excellent book on the young adult shelves at Borders. It's an unusual take on the lost prince story with a tie-in to the Wars of the Roses and is set in an alternate world.

It opens in the year 1870 with a short introduction, then goes on to modern times.

Here's the very beginning when I got hooked:

The scent of wood smoke and roses always took him back there, to the boy he was and would never be again.

The first character we encounter is a boy named Lee whose home comes under attack by wizards. He finds his father's body:

His father, who told him stories of castles and manor houses across the ocean. Who could steal fire out of the air with his fingers and spin shields out of sunlight. Who called him wizard heir and had begun to teach him the charms that would shape magic to his use. Who had been powerful enough and smart enough to protect them from anything. Until now.

The transition to modern times could have done with a bit more exposition and explanation at the opening of each transition. Chima does an excellent job of tying the loose things together at the end so the book is well worth reading. At \$8.99, less with Borders discounts, it's well worth the price, if you're looking for a good fantasy, more so if you're also into the Wars of the Roses. It's not a total stand alone. The sequel, *Wizard Heir*, is out now, but *Warrior Heir* does quite nicely as a stand alone. I'm looking forward to reading *Wizard Heir* when and if it comes out in trade paper. If you like a good fantasy don't let the kids be the only ones to have the fun of reading this one.

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### **WHERE THE RIVERS RUN NORTH**

by Sam Morton

(Sheridan County Historical Press;

July 2007; \$24.95)

Review by Lisa Major

If you like the work of James Michener and/or horses, you will probably like this book. If you don't like either you will hate this book.

It is decidedly short on plot. I liked it but I like both Michener and horses. This is a long slow relaxing read. Morton concentrates on making the horse culture of the West come alive and delves deep into the spirit of the West. Characters appear to be composites of people the author actually knew except for historical characters. I would have liked to see more of the legendary yellow stallion than I actually got to. The only thing I really disliked about the book was reading the description of how Native American horses, such as the Nokotas, were regarded by whites. It was historically accurate, true, and my dislike is a personal thing having nothing to do with the book's quality but with the fact that Nokota Blue Moon Rising has become one of my favorites at the Horse Park

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### **TIPPERARY**

by Frank Delaney

(Random House; November 2007; \$26.95)

Review by Lisa Major

The parts dealing with Irish history are well done and interesting. The love story falls flat on its face. The ending had entirely too much deus ex machina. Final verdict — worth reading if you're interested in Ireland and Irish history. Not worth reading if you aren't.

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### **KNIGHT TENEBRAE**

by Julianne Lee

(Berkeley Publishing Group;

September 2006; \$7.99)

Review by Lisa Major

This is decidedly idealized Scottish history. Its theme is similar to the Gabaldon books but this one is pure escapism good for the times when you just want to be entertained. A jet pilot goes back in time by flying his jet through a hole in time. (I said it was pure escapism.) He and the female journalist he happened to be flying that day meet up with Robert the Bruce and join his cause. I really liked the part where the archeologist found the F-18 jet buried under an old Scottish fishing boat.

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### **BREYERFEST**

Report by Lisa Major

Always fun. This year I only bothered looking at the older models which were more likely to be in my price range. I didn't replace any of the models I lost when I was young this time but found some interesting older pieces. Not all my purchases were Breyers. I bought one Heartland model which reminded me of the Island Stallion and a pinto like the ones my grandfather used to have in his house. I saw Blue Moon Rising again and spoke with Frank Kuntz and Castle McLaughlin, spearheaders of effort to save the Nokotas.

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### **DONATO HANOVER**

by Lisa

This year's Hambletonian was won by favorite Donato Hanover. He outpaced talented filly Pampered Princess and repelled a stretch

challenge by Adrian Hanover. It was his thirteenth race. Curiously one of the races he won as a two-year-old was the Peter Haughton Memorial, which seems to have carried the same jinx the Breeder's Cup Juvenile did before Street Sense went on to win the Derby after winning the Juvenile. Harness racing now has three living Triple Crown winners. Will Donato Hanover make it four? I'll get to watch him race if he makes it to the Futurity in Lexington but I won't get to see the last of the Triple Crown races, the Yonkers Trot.

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### **ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD**

by Johnny Carruthers

I rarely remember what happens in my dreams. Most of the time, even the vaguest memory fades away by the time I am fully awake. Of course, when I have one of those few times when the memory of a dream does stay with me, it's one that I really wish had faded into oblivion.

I was in a twilight fog; nothing visible as far as I could see. Out of the gloom, I saw two figures walking toward me. A boy and a girl; both appeared to be around 13 or 14.

The boy was the first to speak. "Hi, Dad."

"Come on, I don't have any kids." Even as I said this, I noticed that they did bear some resemblance to me. Actually, they reminded me more of my nephew and niece, but with slightly darker hair. But there was something blurry about their features, as if they weren't complete; as if something was missing.

"We know," replied the girl. "We would have been your kids."

(They never said their names, but as the dream went on, Luke and Leia seemed to be appropriate.)

"Would have been?"

Luke said, "Yeah. We came to say goodbye."

"Why goodbye?"

Leia shrugged her shoulders and said, "It's just not going to happen. We're not going to happen. You can call it fate, destiny, karma, or any one of a number of other things, but whatever you call it, we're just never going to exist."

"Why not?" I paused a second, then asked, "What is going to happen to me?"

Luke stifled a laugh, and said, "No, it's nothing like that, Dad. Physically, you're all right. You could be better, but . . ."

As his voice trailed off, Leia said, "There's more to it than that. You've said it yourself on more than one occasion; you don't think you're emotionally or mentally capable of being a parent. You don't think you're even capable of being a good parent. I don't think you realize how close to the truth you really are with that."

"Besides," Luke added, "it's not as if there is anyone leaping at the chance to be our mom, is there?"

"We know how unlucky you have been when it comes to love," Leia said. "And let's face it, since the ex dumped you, your luck has been worse than ever before."

"Not that you were ever that lucky in love in

the first place,” Luke said. I must have flinched, because he added, “Sorry, Dad, but we both know it’s the truth.”

“Maybe there is someone out there for you,” Leia said. “And maybe someday, somehow, you’ll find her. But right now, though, I would have to say that you have a better shot at winning the Powerball jackpot than having us become reality.”

“But there’s always a chance, isn’t there? I mean, I don’t have to worry about a biological clock ticking. Look at James Doohan. He became a father again when he was in his late seventies.”

Luke shrugged his shoulders. “Things happen. You once said that some people had only one shot at finding love, that you were one of those people, and that you blew that chance. Unless something happens to prove you wrong on that point, we will always be what might have been.”

Leia said, “Don’t cry, Dad,” and it is only then that I become aware of the tears threatening to form. “It’s not that we don’t love you; it’s just that we realize that some things were never meant to be. Unfortunately, that includes us.”

Luke said, “It’s time for us to go.” He stuck out his hand, and as I shook it, I was amazed how such a firm grip could also be so strangely ephemeral. “I’m sorry I’ll never get a chance to constantly surprise you with how different we are. And then turn around and surprise you again by how alike we are as well.”

Leia throws her arms around me, almost tackling me as she hugs me. “And I’m sorry that you’ll never get a chance to share your love of reading with me. That I’ll never get a chance to explore a thousand different worlds with you — Oz, Wonderland, Manticore, Sunnydale, the Federation, and much, much more.”

Before I can say anything, they fade away into the fog, leaving me alone. Alone, and realizing that a part of me that I never even knew I had was utterly, irretrievably, irrevocably gone.

“Don’t worry, kids,” I said to the nothingness surrounding me. “After all, we have all the time in the world. All the time in the world.”

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### **CONFESSIONS OF A TEEN SLEUTH**

by Chelsea Cain

(Bloomsbury; 2005;

ISBN 1-58234-511-2; \$16.95)

Review by Johnny Carruthers

There is no such person as Carolyn Keene. “She” is a house name, a creation of the Stratemeyer Syndicate sometime in the 1930s. “Keene” served as a unified authorial voice for the Nancy Drew series of mysteries, alongside other house names such as Franklin W. Dixon (the “author” of the Hardy Boys series) and Victor Appleton (the Tom Swift “author”). And of course, Nancy Drew herself is a fictional character; a complete fabrication of this syndicate.

That’s what the publishers want you to

believe, at least. The truth is, Nancy Drew and Carolyn Keene really did exist. Carolyn was Nancy’s college roommate who, after hearing Nancy tell about some of the mysteries that she had solved, used them as the basis for the Nancy Drew mysteries. In the process, though, Carolyn got a lot of the details wrong. A lot of them.

That is the premise of *Confessions of a Teen Sleuth*. A now-elderly Nancy has finally had enough of the errors, half-truths, and outright lies told about her over the decades. She is mad as hell (well, maybe mad as heck), she isn’t going to take it anymore, and she has decided to set the record straight with a first-person account of what really happened.

*Confessions* begins in 1926, with the first time that Nancy met Frank and Joe Hardy, and hops, skips, and jumps through the subsequent decades. Along the way, she encounters what I suspect is every series character ever created by the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Some, like the Hardy Boys, become good friends. Others are acquaintances, or are mentioned only in passing. And still others, like Cherry Ames . . . well, let’s just say that she and Nancy don’t get along that well, and leave it at that.

When I first started reading *Confessions*, there was something about Chelsea Cain’s writing that was a mystery in itself. I couldn’t quite figure it out until I went by a couple of bookstores. After flipping through a few Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys books, though, it hit me, and hit me hard enough that I had to keep from laughing out loud.

If you have never read any of the Nancy Drew or Hardy Boys mysteries (or if it has been a long time since you have read one), there is a certain . . . clunkiness to the writing style. You might even call the style wooden. Oh, who am I kidding? The writing style in these books is more wooden than the combined casts of every Supermarionation series Gerry Anderson ever made. Ms. Cain manages to emulate that style perfectly, and I think she does so with her tongue firmly planted in her cheek.

Ms. Cain does make one or two mistakes along the way. The most noticeable one to me was her encounter with Encyclopedia Brown (which I don’t think is a Stratemeyer property, but I suppose is similar enough to them that most people wouldn’t notice). She had his parents call him “Encyclopedia,” which they never did. They always called him by his real name, Leroy (and I’ll refrain from any comments on whether or not he was the baddest kid in the whole damn town). But that’s a minor quibble at best.

Cain also manages to throw in more than a few interesting details about the characters along the way. Some of them are subtle, and contain more subtext than the entire run of *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Others are outright surprises. I mean, who knew that Nancy’s friend Bess Marvin would turn out to be a cougar? (And this happened long before that term became popular, by the way.)

I should also mention the interior illustrations by Lia Miterique. She copies the style of the illustrations in the Nancy Drew books with the same aplomb as Cain does the

writing style. It all comes together in a wonderful gestalt.

The only complaint I have with *Confessions of a Teen Sleuth* is that, at 160 pages, it’s way too short. After reading it, I found that I wanted more. I wanted to be able to laugh just a little more with this well-crafted, lovingly written parody.

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### **CANDY BAR REVIEW**

Snickers Dark Mini Mix

Review by Johnny Carruthers

I first saw this limited edition bag of Minis several days before I saw the full size Snickers Dark bar. When I first saw it, my initial thought was, “Dark Snickers, ooooooh!” and I am quite certain that my eyes lit up with delight. That was quickly followed by, “Why couldn’t Mars have released this as a full-size bar?” Of course, a few days later, I did see my first display of the full-size Snickers Dark bars, and I knew it had to be reviewed first.

Like last year’s Twix and 3 Musketeers Minis Mix limited editions, the Snickers Dark Minis Mix has three different variations on the Snickers bar. The name is a slight misnomer, though, because it would suggest that all of them are dark chocolate, and that is not the case. The first selection in the bag is a Mini of the original Snickers bar, covered in milk chocolate. The second is a Mini of the Snickers Dark bar, which I have previously reviewed.

The third selection — that’s the one that, so far, I have encountered only in the Mini size. That third selection is the Snickers Almond Dark. As the name would suggest, this is a dark chocolate version of the Snickers Almond bar. Inside, it does have the vanilla nougat of the regular Snickers Almond bar, and the almond-studded caramel. Outside, the bar is enrobed with dark chocolate.

I described biting into the Snickers Dark bar as being pure bliss. I don’t know if I would apply the same words to biting into the Snickers Almond Dark, but it comes pretty close. There is one definite similarity between the two. The flavor of the dark chocolate gently dominates the other flavors, but gradually gives way to the flavors of the caramel and nougat. The flavor of the almonds is present to some degree, but the almonds make their presence known more by their texture than by their flavor.

There is one big problem with the Mini size, of course. They are just too small. They are intended to be only a single bite, but I manage to get two very small bites out of one Mini. Even then, I had to go through most of the Snickers Almond Dark Minis in a bag just to get a decent impression of the bar. (Which I was really glad when I saw the full size Snickers Dark bars; full-size bars are much easier to review.) I’m really hoping that somewhere down the line, Mars decides to release a full size version of the Snickers Almond Dark bar, just so I can get a better impression of it. Barring that, I would love to see this Minis Mix show up on the shelves from time to time, and not have their appearance be just a one-time thing.

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**CANDY BAR REVIEW**

Hershey Special Dark with Almonds  
 Hershey Special Dark with Mauna Loa  
 Macadamia Pieces  
 Review by Johnny Carruthers

"First red wine. Now dark chocolate. Yes, life is good." That's the tagline on the store display accompanying these two limited editions, referring to how rich a source of antioxidants both red wine and dark chocolate are. Indeed, Hershey is using this information to their best advantage, mentioning in advertising for all of their dark chocolate products that dark chocolate is high in antioxidants.

(They also include the disclaimer — probably at the insistence of some killjoy in their legal department — that chocolate should be enjoyed in moderation. Okay, that might be necessary for Rosemary, my 4-year-old niece, but I am a mature, responsible [allegedly] adult. I find these disclaimers patronizing and an insult to my intelligence. But that's a topic for another entry . . .)

I was a little disappointed when I saw these two bars. Since they do have nuts added, I would have expected Hershey to produce these bars using the molds used for the Hershey Bar With Almonds. Instead, they used the molds used for the original Hershey Bar. It's disappointing, because using the flat molds of the original Hershey Bar restricts the size of the nut pieces in the bars. If they had used the more dome-shaped molds of the Hershey Almond Bar, Hershey would have been able to use larger pieces of macadamia nuts, and even possibly the occasional whole almond.

Now, while I may have been disappointed by the shape of the bar, I was not disappointed by the true test of a candy bar — the taste. Hershey has previously released other products that combined almonds with dark chocolate, so I had a fairly good idea of what to expect. As usual, the dark chocolate becomes a dark, velvety coat on the tastebuds as it melts in your mouth. The chocolate's flavor is quite dominant, and the almond pieces make their presence known more by their crunch than by flavor, although there is a brief glimmer of almond flavor here and there. Usually, this happens when the chocolate is gone, and almond pieces are all that remain in the mouth; just before you take another bite of the bar.

I was slightly surprised by the Special Dark With Macadamia Pieces bar. The pieces of Mauna Loa macadamia nuts weren't the only addition to this bar. The dark chocolate was also raspberry flavored, similar to the Special Dark Raspberry Kisses Hershey released not too long ago. I have no idea why Hershey made this particular combination, but it is an interesting one. The raspberry flavor adds a sweet undertone to the dark chocolate. As is the case with the Special Dark Almond bar, the macadamia pieces add more crunch than flavor, especially since the nuts are competing with both the chocolate and raspberry flavors. This is perhaps compounded by the fact that macadamias have a milder flavor than almonds. Still, there is the occasional brief glimmer of the

macadamia's mild sweetness.

Yes, life is good when you have wonderfully imaginative people in Hershey's R&D department playing around with variations like these. Unfortunately, we don't know how long this particular round of goodness will last. Sooner or later, both the Special Dark Almond and Special Dark Macadamia bars will disappear from the shelves. Of course, when they disappear, they will make way for some new limited edition; something equally interesting. Something else to make you say, "Yes, life is good."

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**MOONCHILD AND OTHERS:  
 Rare Early Cartoons  
 by Nicola Cuti**

Editor & Publisher, Walter J. Wentz  
 Spring 2007, 1817 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Forest Grove  
 OR 97116-2705. \$6 Limited First Edition.  
 32 pages, about 8 by 10 ½, stapled.

Review by Taral Wayne

Back in the Age of Aquarius, when Wally Wood, Vaughan Bodé and other Giants walked the fanzine scene, there was a lesser known mythological figure. Most of his art appeared in professional venues — he worked for years with Charlton Comics and wrote for Warren horror magazines. He was an editor at DC and later worked in animation, doing backgrounds. But what Nicola Cuti will be remembered for in fandom, perhaps, is a creation that appeared in a small number of eponymous undergrounds, scattered fanzine illos, and the program books of comics conventions. Science fiction fans with long memories will remember Cuti's elfin invention — Moonchild.

Cuti, (pronounced Cut-ee), seemed to like 'em cute and busty. This was well before Lolita was politically incorrect and the Flowerchild was a perfectly acceptable part of hippy counterculture. And part of fanzine culture.

The editor and publisher, Walt Wentz, is my old boss from the years I was doing illustrations for a magazine on the West Coast. Now that he's retired (and I'm out of work) it seems Walt still has publishing in his DNA. He's long been a fan of cute and busty elfin-like babes, and that makes him a natural fan of Nicola Cuti. Walt undertook the difficult task of creating a complete bibliography of Cuti's work — from E-Man for Charlton, to serious paintings, to Moonchild — with the ultimate ambition of publishing the whole magilla. But first on his agenda, are a couple of smaller collections of early and very rare cartoons.

This, the first, includes mainly Nicola Cuti's self-published cartoons and short stories that appeared in the three issues of "Moonchild Comics". Also in the collection is "Pussywillow", a similar "Starbabe" that Cuti intended for more adult comics, as well as items from various convention pubs and fanzines; one from *Outworlds* 26 in fact. The cover is full colour and glossy. Introduction and credits by Walt.

The material is, by Walt's admission, early and therefore somewhat naïve. He plans at least a second and perhaps a third collection for more

professional looking Moonchild material from a later date. Assuming, of course, that there is an audience. Apparently the first printing of fifty is going fast enough that Walt intends a second run.

I'd have to say that the main value of this collection is atmospheric. The style is purposefully simplistic and big-eyed, the stories equally simple for the most part. Moonchild is very much a child of her times. Later collections may better repay the more sophisticated and jaded buyer of the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but who would forgive himself for having volumes two and three, but not volume one?

*Moonchild and Others* is a fairly handsome publication, especially considering the modest price. (What independent comic doesn't cost five or six bucks these days?) It has a couple of problems. Walt's files were deliberately large, so that the original Ben Day toning would print properly. Unfortunately, the printer like an idiot *re-screened* the screens, creating unintended moiré effects on a few pages. It doesn't flatter the collection, but I didn't find it to be a spoiler either. (In many cases the original publication in the 60's underground press was no better, and often much worse.)

*Moonchild and Others* may not perhaps be a "must" acquisition for everyone. But any fan whose roots go back to the early days of *Odd*, *Trumpet*, *Outworlds* and other zines of the 60's — especially if that fan had one foot in comics fandom of the time — would likely find this a kindly reminder of the Bell Bottoms era. And those who are merely curious about the ambiance of fandom forty years ago will also find this worth a leisurely look.

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**THE MEMOIRS OF MARTIN  
 SCRIBLERUS**

by Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, John Arbuthnot, John Gay and Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford

Edited by Charles Kerby-Miller (1988).

Reviewed by Richard Dengrove

You can tell, this is a novel written by two lesser lights, and three men known as the greatest writers of the early 18th Century: Swift, Pope and Gay. Another person had a hand in it too. When the colophon says that Kerby-Miller edited it, it understates his role: he introduced it and annotated it as well. And you need an introduction and annotation to get through this book.

Kerby-Miller introduces the novel with an account of Jonathan Swift's life, mostly between 1708-14. The account is overlong but there are some things of interest. In essence, Swift went from being a Whig to being a Tory. Opinions were so strong in those days that a change in politics meant you had to change your friends.

Ultimately, Swift gathered a group with Alexander Pope; John Gay, who was seeking Tory patronage; John Arbuthnot, the Queen's personal physician; and Robert Harley, the Earl of Oxford and a minister in Queen Anne's government. They formed a club that met

mostly in 1714, but camaraderie from the club lasted several decades.

The object of the club, the group decided, was to ridicule false learning. To do this, they would describe the foolish life and the dubious achievements of a fictitious Martinus Scriblerus. Or Martin Scribler; like a lot of learned men then, he latinized his name in a dubious way. Also, the group decided to name their club after him, the Scriblerians.

The member the others regarded as best able to ridicule false learning was not one of the more famous members. No, it was John Arbuthnot, the Queen's physician. He was the most learned generally on all subjects.

Also, he apparently wrote a lot clearer than Pope. You can see that in a work of his that Pope "corrected." Neither did Arbuthnot have a problem with thinking up ideas.

His problem was exploiting them; once he had an idea, he had to go to the next one.

This project was not totally a flash in the pan. The members continued to work on it. Even after a long stay in Ireland, Swift returned to it. Alexander Pope finally had the final product, such as it was, published in his *Works of Mr. Alexander Pope* in 1741.

In doing this, he seems to have acknowledged its collective authorship because no one ever doubted it.

Not all have been happy with the *Memoires*. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84) said that the follies the Scriblerians exposed did not exist. That may have been true for some of the follies in his time, but not in 1714.

Only page 90 to 172 is needed for the novel. Some may call it a novelette. Its first chapters concern Martin's father, Cornelius. Cornelius believes nothing good has happened since Ancient Greece and Rome, and is fanatical about practicing everything the way it was done then. That puts him on a collision course with his wife.

Among his enthusiasms, Cornelius sees all sorts of ridiculous prodigies during Martin's birth. For instance, a kite lands in the house and one knot on the kite suggests to Cornelius that Martin would be logical and another that he would be metaphysical.

Later on, Martin has to eat what the Ancients ate. Apparently nothing because Cornelius cannot make up his mind. Also, Martin has to play the same children's games that the Ancients played. This includes stealing, like the Spartan youths did.

In Chapter III, we see an aspect of Cornelius' veneration for the Ancients that has nothing to do with Martin. A maid cleans a shield that Cornelius believes Ancient and dotes on. Cornelius is livid because he believes it is more valuable with the rust.

This is a parody of John Woodward, an antiquarian who believed a shield to be from Ancient times most other antiquarians have regarded as a worthless modern imitation. In fact, according to the *Memoires*, Cornelius' shield was purchased by John Woodward and he had it re-rusted.

Cornelius is one type of virtuosi that flourished during the 16th and 17th Centuries, a

man who made himself a slave of the ancients. Fittingly, Cornelius was a disciple of Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609), who not only worshiped the Greek and Roman Classics but was searching for Jewish, Egyptian and Persian classics to worship.

Martin is the opposite type of Renaissance virtuosi. Far from being a slave to the Classics, the only thing true are his new fangled ideas. The Scriblerians use his ideas to lampoon ideas that were abroad at the time. For instance,

An investigation of the quantity of real matter in the universe.

To pierce the crust of the Earth down to the next concentric sphere.

A Demonstration of the natural dominion of the inhabitants of the Earth over those of the Moon.

That civilization first arose among the Pygmies of Nubia and spread from there.

These were all speculation; and there was no way to investigate the first three with 18th Century technology.

This is not to say the 18th Century doubted that there were intelligent beings on the Moon. It was a fully respectable idea. However, many objected that when you came down to it, there was no proof for them.

On the other hand, the other ideas may have been outré among the Scriblerians. I don't know whether they found disreputable the idea that within a hollow Earth were other hollow spheres. It certainly was disreputable in the 19th Century among the educated. Also, that all civilization originated with the pygmies would have been considered a perversion of the true order of things.

The chapter on logic and metaphysics parodies how Cornelius and Martin handle logic. Martin has a tendency to think in specifics. Therefore, Cornelius gets him the servant Crambe, who is incapable of thinking in specifics. For instance, he says he can frame a conception of a Lord Mayor without hands, feet or body.

This chapter is one of the more obscure. There are arcane references to John Locke; and references to Jesuit writers on logic, like Suarez, whom we would not know in a million years without Kerby-Miller's notes. Even with the notes, there is not much humor for us moderns.

In the chapter on "free thinking," however, Martin does not prove as befuddled. He is a free thinker, and is praised with faint damning. Kerby-Miller notices Martin's ideas regarding the soul are better stated than those of the "free thinker" Anthony Collins, the best known in England at the time. They are more concrete.

What the Scriblerians' motive was is an enigma. While Pope tended to free thought, Swift was a defender of the Church of England.

In two chapters, Martin is no fool at all. He becomes a doctor, and puts into practice one of his new fangled ideas, that changing the movements of the muscles would change the

emotions behind them. That, I am sure, was open to lampooning even then.

However, his treatment works like a charm, and these chapters are devoted lampooning other's follies. For instance, a nobleman whose disease is he is in love with himself. Martin succeeds in curing him.

Next, Martin goes back to playing the fool again, this time as a lover. Two chapters are devoted to his Double-Mistress. It is meant to burlesque romance novels. Of course, it may be appropriate that the "virtuoso" Martin fall passionately in love with one half of a Siamese twin. Siamese twins were, as now, regarded as Wonders, and one thing Renaissance virtuosi were fascinated by was Wonders.

While visiting an exhibition of Wonders, he falls in love with Lindamira. However, she is bound back to back with Indamora. Also, they apparently share the same rectal and genital orifices. They resembled famous siamese twins who had been touring the country, the Hungarian twins Helena and Judith. These chapters were only one of several works speculating about the love life of such twins.

This melodrama has villains too. One is a Mr. Randall, who owns the siamese twins, and wants to keep them. He sets roadblocks in the way of Martin's love. At one point, he sics on him a Manticore, a very fierce creature with the head of a man. At that point, the action borders on slapstick. Later, Mr Randall sues Martin in court because he regards Lindamora as legally his slave.

Mr. Randall is not the only villain here. Someone else creates a roadblock to Martin's love: it is the black Prince of Monomotapa, who is three feet high. He falls in love with the other twin, Indamora, and she him. He, of course, wants to share Martin's bed.

In the next chapter, the legal ramifications of the whole thing are played out, and, of course, the workings of law are burlesqued. To some extent, the lawyers argue from the rules of marriage put forward by the 16th/17th Century Jesuit, Thomas Sanchez. Ultimately, the marriage is dissolved and, in bitterness, Martin takes to travel.

Because there is much discussion of the twins' genitals and whether Martin's marriage can be consummated, the chapters on the Double Mistress outraged the prudery of the 18th and 19th Centuries, and were often censored.

The same cannot be said of his travels, mostly briefly noted. There is one chapter devoted to Martin's travels and another devoted to his achievements.

However, the most curious of his travels is not here, but in an advertisement at the back of the novelette. It talks about his trip to China with the Bishop of Apamá on top of two Canturs. Cantur means the South American condor, and Apamaea in Syria is now the city of Hama.

In the end, the memoire as it stands is a novel written by a committee; albeit, a committee of greats. It can be erudite and witty, but it is nothing to write home about. The characterization goes from clumsy to

nonexistent, depending on the authors' purpose at the time. We really do not get to meet Martin, Cornelius or Crambe.

Also, the wit can be very obscure. Arbuthnot, who was responsible for the learning, felt he had to shoehorn all his deep knowledge into Martin's tale. You would have expected the great authors in the club to have discouraged him; but, to the contrary, they encouraged him. I gather it is often difficult for someone who has only been well educated to tell what is going on.

Some people believe that this work should not be best known for its own merits, but as an inspiration for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Pope's *Dunciad*. The problem is proof. Kerby-Miller argues plausibly that it inspired *Gulliver's Travels*. That is until you realize he has no proof.

It is true Chapter XVI, when it gives a short summary of Martin's travels, tells how

He was happily shipwreck'd in the Land of the Giants, now the most humane people in the World.

That, in his third Voyage, he discover'd a whole Kingdom of Philosophers, who govern by the Mathematicks; with whose admirable Schemes and Projects he return'd to benefit his own dear Country, but had the misfortune to find them rejected by envious Ministers of Queen Anne, and himself sent treacherously away . . .

And hence it is, that in his fourth Voyage he discovers a Vein of Melancholy proceeding almost to a Disgust of his Species. [The theme of the voyage of the Houyhnhnms.]

Later the novel says that

But if any man shall ever see such very extraordinary Voyages into such very extraordinary Nations, which manifest the most important distinguishing marks of a Philosopher, a Politician, and a Legislator, and can imagine them to belong to a Surgeon of a Ship, or a Captain of a Merchant-man, let him remain in his Ignorance.

In short, the writers insinuate that Gulliver's travels were really Martin Scriblerus' travels.

However, it is obvious these words postdate Gulliver.

The evidence of the inspiration is greater for Pope's *Dunciad*. In the *Dunciad Variorum* part added in 1732, Martinus Scriblerus uses comments by Pope's enemies against each other. This may not be completely out of character. Maybe the idea is that, with all his foolishness, Martin is more sagacious than Pope's enemies.

Still, this lame inspiration is not enough to warrant reading this book. No, the reason to read it is not literary quality or inspiration; it is because of Kerby-Miller's commentary and

footnotes. They allow us to find out about all the nooks and crannies of 18th Century life. From logic and law to the game of Hot-Cockles, where people hit someone lying down.

Yes, the notes include an explanation of Hot-Cockles. It included this curious poem by John Gay.

As at Hot-cockles once I laid me down.  
And felt the weighty hand of many a clown  
Buxoma gave a gentle tap, and I  
Quick rose, and read soft mischief in her eye.

### POTTERY

Review by Martin Morse Wooster of  
**THE END OF HARRY POTTER?**

by David Langford

(Tor; 2007; ISBN 978-0-765-31934-0;  
\$12.95)

I read and enjoyed this book. This is Dave's book about what *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* might be like, as well as lots of speculations on it. There are good parodies in it, such as the "ending" where Harry and Neville Longbottom have to travel to Lord Voldemort's land, Voldemordor, to throw the last Horcrux into . . . well, you get the picture. This book is lots of fun for both Harry Potter fans and Langford fans.

### BONES, ROCKS AND STARS : The Science of When Things Happened

by Chris Turney

(Macmillan, 2006, 182 pages/indexed, \$24.95,

ISBN # 13: 9781403985996 and

ISBN # 10: 1403985995)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

How do scientists tell time? More specifically, how do they determine just how old an object, natural or manmade, is? More often than not, since the item itself has fossilized into stone, other items, charcoal for instance, found in near proximity is what's actually tested and dated. Any of several methods are available for use.

Perhaps best known to the nonscientific community is the so-called Carbon 14, or radiocarbon, method. All living matter has some carbon (C) in it. The amount of that element that has decayed into a particular isotope of Carbon (Carbon 14) determines its age. That's because scientists know the rate at which radiocarbon breaks down, its half-life, from its normal state into one of its isotopes.

But this method is good only for determining the age of items going back no more 60,000 years. And since the Earth and its solar system are over 4 billion years old, other dating tests are needed. Fortunately, there are many others: Potassium-Argon, Argon-Argon, Lead, and on and on. Each has a known half-life or a relationship with another element. Through an interpolation of those known facts, the age for an item can be determined. Of course, each test has its limitations on just how accurate the

results can be. But they are all within known parameters.

A less chemical method of dating, especially concerning such subjects as weather (for the date of an ice age as a case in point), is the count and study of tree rings. This science is known formally as dendrochronology. Another helpful dating method is the taking of ice core samples. Ice, for example in Greenland, is deeply bored into and the ice is removed and examined to determine conditions during various years and eras. Sometimes tree rings and/or ice cores, along with the chemical tests, are used to help corroborate dates.

The final chapter in this slender volume is an argument against 'Creationism.' Using the various timing methods discussed above, Tumey debunks the creationist's point that the Earth is only 6,000 years old. He also discusses in the rest of the book volcanoes, Darwin, the universe, different people's calendars, the forged Cloth of Turin, and the pyramids, among many other topics.

"During my scientific career," writes the author in his Introduction, "I've been fascinated by the past and communicating its importance but it does seem that there is an ever-widening gulf between enjoying the benefits of science and understanding it. Numbers are thrown about but it's not often clear how they were calculated. In many ways, this is true of countless branches of science. There's a danger that science is seen as too difficult, too boring. And it's not just the perception of time that's becoming an issue."

A geology professor, Chris Tumey teaches at an Australian university. He was involved in 2004 with the dating of the newly found, diminutive hominid (*Homo floresiensis*), on the Island of Flores in Indonesia.

Strongly recommended.

### OUR FIRST REVOLUTION

by Michael Barone

(Crown Books, 337 pp. \$25.95)

Reviewed by Alexis A. Gilliland



This is an account of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-89, in which James II was overthrown and replaced with William and Mary. Since it lacked major battles, and since William of Orange was fourth in line for England's throne while his wife, Mary, was second in line, I had always regarded it as a sort of coup d'état brought on by James's

incompetence. This turns out to be far from the case, although James made it possible by his stubbornness in pursuing a policy, ostensibly one of "religious toleration," which was widely believed to be aimed at the re-Catholicization of England. We also note that James was brave, at least in part because he lacked the intelligence to imagine what could go wrong, and that he dismissed such of his advisors who tried to dissuade him from reckless and unwise policies.

By contrast, William of Orange was pretty much Machiavelli's Compleat Prince, being made Stadholder of the Netherlands at age 21 to oppose Louis XIV's invasion, which occupied five of the seven provinces, only to be frustrated when the dikes were opened to protect the remaining two and William refused the offer of a principality, declaring that he would die in the last ditch rather than surrender. Thereafter, William made it a policy to oppose the hegemonistic aspirations of the Sun King, and his motive for invading England in 1688 was the fear that England, under a Catholic James II, would be persuaded to join France in a war against the Netherlands. Despite getting invitations from many of the Protestant Dukes to come in, William expected very little, and prepared an invasion force capable of defeating James's standing army, even if there were no defections. Once Louis XIV had committed himself to the invasion of the Palatine, meaning that he could no longer invade the Netherlands, William launched his invasion of England, leaving a force of German mercenaries to defend his home base. James II, diligently involved with remaking Parliament into a rubber stamp didn't pay attention to the French ambassador's warning that William was preparing to invade, until the Dutch fleet had actually left port.

Once landed (November 4, 1688, at Brixham and Tor Bay, in the southwest of England) James panicked, and William marched slowly towards London, avoiding a fight as the English officer corps defected to him. He had previously made a declaration that he would support an independent Parliament, the Anglican Church (although he was a dissenter, a Calvinist) and James fled to France, throwing the Great Seal of England into the Thames. At which point, England had no Government, but William was in charge with the Dutch army, and the first thing he did was call for the election of a new Parliament, in which he conspicuously did not interfere. There followed a long, protracted negotiation with Parliament and the House of Lords, in which they were finally persuaded to accept William as King of England on his own terms. (Hey, guys, do it my way or I and my army go home.)

William's aim, of course was opposing Louis XIV, and he conquered England, persuaded Scotland, and eventually crushed the Irish Catholic Army which had James II and French support, at the battle of the Boyne. He was now King of England and Scotland, Stadholder of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange and champion of Protestant Europe. He was a general, and the best way to raise money for his wars (such as the War of Spanish Succession,

1702-13, aimed at keeping Spanish Territories out of French hands) was to have Parliament vote it for him. The cheapest way to raise that money was to establish a national bank similar to the one in Amsterdam (London would be competition for the Amsterdam bankers? William didn't care, since Amsterdam had been minimally supportive of him.) So Parliament has met every year since 1689, and the deal negotiated between King and country: The Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, and Settling the Succession of the Crown, December 16, 1689 was the list of rights which the American colonies wanted, their hard-won rights as Englishmen. The fact that England continued William's antihegemonist foreign policy is not because he was persuasive, but because he was right.

So King Billy, the icon of the Irish Protestants, turned out to be the creator of the modern state, the inspiration of the American revolution, and the inventor of the balance of power which has so far kept Europe from being unified if not at peace. Who'd of thought it?

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## FANZINES

### *Apologetica*

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### *Askance # 3*

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### *Beyond Bree* June 2007, July 2007

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Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15  
in envelope or overseas.

### *Challenger # 26*

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### *The Drink Tank* #129, #130, #131, #132, #133, #134, #135, #136

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**Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee**

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### *The Knarley Knews* #124

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### *MT Void* V. 25 #48 June 1, 2007 — V. 26 #4 July 27, 2007

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### *Opuntia* # 63.1E June 2007 #63.3 July 2007

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta  
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### *Pixel* #15 July 2007, #16 August 2007

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Note: *Pixel* is going on hiatus until the  
end of the year, so the deadline will be  
December 30, 2007.

### *Science Fiction/San Francisco* #46 June 13, 2007, #47 July 18<sup>th</sup>-ish, 2007

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### *Steam Engine Time* #6 August 2007

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### *Vanamonde* # 688-692

John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.  
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### *Visions of Paradise* #116, #117

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<http://visionsofparadise.blogspot.com>

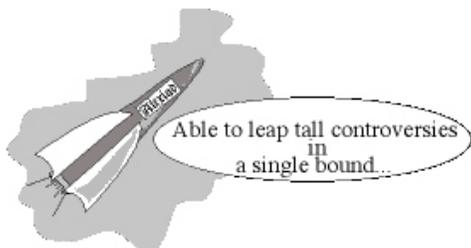
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## THEATRE NEWS

Patrick McCray announces that he is directing a production of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" at the Theatre Knoxville Downtown in Knoxville (D'oh!), Tennessee. Actually it was produced several times before but the thing was always successfully covered up.

Pat is Director of Dramatic Arts at the Webb School of Knoxville. Among his other productions is the famous graphic novel *Elvis Shrugged* (1991, 1993).

## Letters, we get letters



From: **Alexander R. Slate** June 5, 2007  
2014 Columbia Pike #14, Arlington VA  
22204-4613 USA  
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I am now in Washington DC. I will be here for about 2 years. The e-mail being used here [[alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil)] is a good one to use. I will probably also have a personal e-mail, but not yet. I will let you know when I get that.

The address, beginning on 15 June, will be 2014 Columbia Pike #14, Arlington VA 22204.

Also, Knarley, part two of Yes, Virginia, et al is underway. Got about a page and a half typewritten right now. Hope to finish it up this week (we'll see).

From: **Christopher J. Garcia** June 14, 2007  
1401 N. Shoreline Boulevard, Mountain View, CA 94043-1311  
[chris@computerhistory.org](mailto:chris@computerhistory.org)  
**Best Fanzine Hugo Nominee**  
**Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee**

*Alexiad* arrives in my mailbox and makes me smile. I'm always happy to see a new issue and this one's pretty good. Sadly, I've only got a bit, so here's a quick few things.

Are you going to TuckerCon? I'll be there (flying in and everything!) and will be the guy with the crazy hair and beard who's shaking hands and loudin' off.

I love vampire stories — but not a lot of the ones that are hitting the shelves of late. I did rather enjoy *The Blood Confessions* by Alisa Libby. She was a friend of mine in college so I bought it and read it. It was pretty darn good too. On the other hand, I've read a few others recently and in both cases, they were awful. Still, the worst book I've read this year, *The Witch of Cologne* was absolutely awful. I threw it across the room in a fit of cliché.

I just saw *300* and I think that I'm not going to be buying it on DVD. If I had a bigger TV or a projector, I'd get it, but it is a film that has to be experienced in large form. I saw a few episodes of *Rome* and I think much the same. It is a series that is too confined by being a TV series and not getting to use the cinematography available to film crews. It also reminds me of the two articles in the recent *Banana Wings* about Roman films. They should be read!

Will Mary and Fredrik ever become the

reigning couple of Denmark? It's obvious that Charles will either have a tiny reign because of the obvious long-livedness of the females of their family or not be King at all.

I used the rotate feature on the PDF so that I could see the monsters in Alexis' picture on page 6 in proper orientation. It's one of those wonderful pieces that I will think of a lot. I still haven't thought of contacting Alex about getting something for *The Drink Tank*.

I have found that I like *His Majesty's Dragon* more as time goes by. I'm almost at the point where I can pick it up and read it again. The length between first and second reading is a good judge of how much I like a book, even if I don't seem to care for it at first. It was much like my taking to *Iron Council*. Not much at first, but I had to pick it up again.

I love Charlie Stross. I met him at Con José and we both had the same hair at that point. I had no idea who he was. I have to say that what I've read of his has really interested me. He replaced China Miéville as my fave Brit writer. The two of them (along with Tanith Lee and some bloke called Neil Gaimen) are GoH's at Eastercon next year.

I've heard a lot of library kinds (much of my family are Librarians) say that *Land of Lincoln* is good stuff. I haven't gone in on it yet.

I love Kennedy Assassination stuff. I really like the way conspiracies take realistic assertions and then fiddle with them in weird ways. Still, there are crumbs there that do make actual sense. I've done a lot of reading on the subject over the years, and if it weren't the longest book in history, I'd already own *Reclaiming History*. I wonder if Jay Lake is mentioned. I know he's in the JFK literature.

The problem with that methodology is that it erodes social capital, encouraging the "government is all villany anyhow" thesis. Which leaves governance to the real villains. Like every other conspiracy theory, from the Bellis Affair to Irving v. Lipstadt, when Kennedy Conspiracies get into a forum where all the evidence has to be considered (e.g., the BBC mock trial of Oswald, where Bugliosi successfully prosecuted), they can't be sustained.

— JTM

I made 348 dollars on the Triple Crown. As always, I bet on the 6, 7 and 8 horses. That's my way. It paid off this time.

100 Grand with Coconut sounds very interesting, though I'm very much interested in the concept of coconut as the hot new addition. True, it's always been around, but it seems to be entering new arenas. I am rediscovering my love for Snickers. Recently, I've discovered that the PB Snickers of the 1990s were great, but the regular ones are just magical. Now, I did go to the Sonoma Valley Film Festival and got a mess load of the new Cocoa Reserve stuff, roughly eight pounds, for free. It was good stuff, especially with all the free wine. Did I mention

it was free?

I totally disagree with your Handicapping the Hugos. *Plokta's* a very flashy zine and in many ways it's the inverse *Banana Wings*. Both are so good at what they do that you could go either way and I wouldn't bat an unappreciative eye. *Challenger* is a solid zine and it's always going to be a favorite of mine and it's got my vote. SFFY is another of the legends of fandom and it's the last one so it might just win. There's no way *The Drink Tank* is better than any of the other ones listed. I'll be lucky to outpace No Award, and if Marty Cantor's *No Award* was on the ballot, I'd certainly trail that one too! On Fan Writer, I'd love to see Hertz win. I don't think it'll happen, but it would be so awesome. Scalzi or Langford will win. Putting me above John and No Award (and Dave) is quite flattering. I totally agree with you about Brad Foster. I love Frank Wu, I love his stuff, I usually vote for him, but the change in Brad's art, which you can see on the cover of *The Drink Tank* issue 100 and in my Chris For TAFF zine *PrintZine*, is just fantastic.

To George Price, I gotta say that saying that Western European culture is the dominant one is certainly true, but there was a culture, fairly advanced in many areas especially in politics, and I still have a problem with calling it a discovery. It brings up Everest. If Mallory had made it to the top, and there's an argument that's waiting to happen, then I'd say he was the first to Summit and change the books. Now completing the climb, that's always going to be Hillary and Norgay because they made it back. I still wanna know if the Chinese made it here before the Vikings. I did discover that I kinda like the term First Nations. I'm not even sure why. I guess it just rolls off the tongue better.

Good issue as always. I've come to expect such from y'all! It's a weighty cross to bear, the expectation of quality. I've been lucky enough to shrug it off . . .

From: **Joy V. Smith** June 20, 2007  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA  
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<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

I agree re: the sexy vampire stories; I'm amazed at how many there are in the SF Book Club mailings and various writing newsletters. Thanks for the Madeline L'Engle mention. And for the anecdote about the submarine S-80. What a shame! I see WWII AH books are proliferating also.

Lisa, I enjoyed your review of *Ghostwalk*. It would be nice if it did as well as *Da Vinci Code*. It sounds more deserving. And I'd love to see a Marwari horse. Thanks for the background. I wonder if it's in my horse encyclopedia. Yes. See India and Pakistan. It's listed, but no photos; I see that the Kathi has ears (the tips) that touch each other. And thanks too for the information on the purseweb spider, which I'd never heard of. (I keep a clear glass jar on hand for removing critters.)

*The Foundation Trilogy*, A Gnostic Allegory by Taral Wayne, was impressive. All that and a

cryptic rebuttal of *The Immortal Storm* to come!

The fanzine and awards listings are appreciated. Re: Jack McDevitt's Nebula award for *Seeker*: he was a guest at Oasis 20 in Orlando, and my sister got to congratulate him on his win. (Drat! I forgot to put that in my con report!)

LOCs: Joe, thanks for the mention of *Counterfeit Spies* (hoaxes) and *Stolen Valor* (Vietnam vet fakers). Exposés are needed. Taral Wayne, thanks for the background on battlecruisers, flash doors, and caching charges. I can see why they'd do it . . . Did they ever come up with a more efficient and safer idea?

Ah, I see the Germans did. And thanks for the info about "that sucks."

Interesting history on Canada's hidden Arrow.

Thanks to Alexis Gilliland for the info about the Nazi rule about Jewish grandparents. (You only need one to be Jewish.) I watched part of an fascinating documentary on Jewish immigrants on WEDU earlier tonight, btw. (I was on the computer, but I'd run in the living room and look at it periodically.) I had no idea they'd had such an influence on American music; and apparently their music fused with jazz. (Some of that narration was a real stretch.)

And then I learned about the postage increase on the 8.5"x11" envelopes. Now that was a shock and a surprise! I'm so used to tossing those on my postage scale.

I thought 6"x9" envelopes would beat the limit, but the post office said otherwise. It's an impetus for fanzines to go internet. At which point it will be so easy to pub your ish that everyone will be doing it RealSoonNow.

Re: my LOC: I loved the additional Narnia dialogue, Joe! Lisa, I knew about Dalmatians (they've refused to try outbreeding — Pointers, which are in their background, as I recall — to improve the breed). I hadn't heard about Jack Russells. I shan't rant more about GSDs. Oh, heck. Yes, I will! They're breeding them into triangles! They're down on their hocks!! Ah, now I feel better.

What they're doing to Siamese cats nowadays — they look like you could shave with them, all edges.

— JTM

From: **John Hertz** June 19, 2007  
"Juneteenth"  
236 S. Coronado Street No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA  
**Best Fan Writer Hugo Nominee**

Thanks for the endorsement in *Alexiad* 6/3 (p. 17).

That's "vanity"! Not "enmity" (p. 31). Although your reading is interesting, too.

July 14, 2007

"In thirty years of reading, only fifty books come to mind." That's almost two memorable books a year! What do you want, egg in your beer?

On another tentacle, have you looked in your *Vanamonde* for candidates?

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** June 21, 2007  
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD 20907-8093 USA  
[mmwooster@yahoo.com](mailto:mmwooster@yahoo.com)

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 33. Are you mourning the death of Sir Wally Herbert?

On the subject of cons being bounced because of sports events, I think Balticon at least partially belongs in this category. Balticon periodically rotates between a downtown hotel and the suburban Hunt Valley Inn, which has Free Parking. The switch is usually because one group of Hunt Valley managers decides they don't like fans, so the convention moves downtown until a new group of managers move in. But one reason why Balticon moved from the city to the suburbs is because the national lacrosse championships are often held in Baltimore, and the downtown hotels are packed with lacrosse fans. The Sunday night of the last downtown Balticon, some of these lacrosse fans crashed the con suite, helped themselves to free food and drink, and couldn't understand why everyone was shunning them.

On Vincent Bugliosi: Joe, did you read this entire book? All 1,612 pages? Just wondering.

No; but then, it's a reference book.

In his comment to Dainis Bisenieks, Joe says there was a Graustark novel that was written after Eastern Europe became Communist. Tell us more. How did the Graustarkians adapt to World War II?

Probably not very well. The novel in question is *East of the Setting Sun* (1924) and *Prince Robin, son of Princess Yevite and Grenfall Lorry*, has to deal with the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution and a Communist regime in the former principality of Axfhain. Of course, the interesting one is *The Prince of Graustark* (1914), which features Donald Trump. Well, predicts him.

On the subject of Francis Urquhart: No, there was no "trilogy" called *House of Cards*. The series was based on three novels by Andrew Davies, which formed three separate series. And let's remember Ian Richardson for his fine acting in this and other series, as well as being the original Rich Dude who opens the window of the Rolls-Royce and says, "Pardon me, do you have any Grey Poupon?" (I love saying that line. And Grey Poupon is pretty good mustard, as mustards go.)

I thought Joe's review of Taylor Caldwell's *The Devil's Advocate* was pretty interesting,

except for this unanswered question: Is the novel worth reading? Is it still a good story?

As a novel, not really; it's a fifties Old Right version of *It Can't Happen Here*.

—JTM

From: **E. B. Frohvet** June 21, 2007  
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City MD 21042-5988 USA

Wild doves are common around here, "mourning doves" they're called, from their plaintive cry. The other day I was walking across the parking lot to the dumpster. Hearing a dove, I glanced up, the merest reflex. Never saw it coming. One second the dove was flying peacefully along, the next WHOP! And the hawk spread its wings and flew off clutching the dead dove. The strike was so eye-blink fast, if I hadn't been looking right at it, I would have missed it.

For some reason I thought the "Earl of Ulster" was the title of the son of Edward, Duke of Kent. If Earl of Ulster is the son of the Duke of Gloucester, then what is the title of the son of the Duke of Kent? I quite enjoyed Sue Burke's account of the toddler Princess who waved to the crowd.

The older son, George Philip Nicholas Windsor (b. 1962) is styled Earl of St. Andrews. The younger son is Lord Nicholas Charles Edward Jonathan Windsor.

I had not read any of the books reviewed this issue. With regard to your description of "a planet where the inhabitants have the power to create illusions; they live in a place where nothing is necessarily real." — see Adrienne Martine-Barnes, *The Dragon Rises*, Ace pb 1983. Describes a world where everyone lives in a collective fantasy, "the Dream"; the principal character has left mainly because he sees reality denied by everyone else.

I looked briefly at the Triple Crown races, but horse racing is just not my sport. The Governor of Maryland is now willing to support slot machines at Maryland tracks, as the "only way" to save Maryland racing. Insects that come into my home get a scenic tour of the Howard County sewerage system. The only insects I really like are bumblebees; though I have a grudging respect for wasps: they have attitude, and they're hard to kill.

"Handicapping the Hugos": I get only two of the nominated fanzines, and one of those months late when the editors get around to mailing copies to mere Americans; were I voting, my vote would have to go by default to *Banana Wings*.

Lloyd Penney: I keep a pen on my nightstand, mainly for correcting typos in published books while reading in bed. In fairness, such typos seem to have declined somewhat, which may be attributable to spellcheck programs. The commonest error still involves quotation marks.

Martin Morse Wooster: I like to look at pretty girls. Actresses like Ms. Hewitt expect to be looked at, it's their stock in trade.

The last line of Milt Stevens' LoC: Yes.

Robert Kennedy: I vaguely recall seeing the TV series *Salvage 1* at the time (1979 if you say so). It was probably a summer replacement series, watched for lack of anything better to watch.

Dainis Bisenieks: Not believing your theory that a common word like "geas" was not in the dictionary, I looked in both of mine — and it's not. Well, that's one on me.

Trinlay Khadro: I don't think the people on the "Dr.Phil" show are actors, they're not convincing enough. The voice-bot of the Social Security Administration is NOT programmed to recognize the phrase "change of address". The problem is not you. The main purpose of such things is to make the caller so angry he hangs up, and then no one has to deal with the problem.

Taras Wolansky: I would never refer to people who believe in the perfect inerrancy of the "King James Bible" as "low grade morons". Naive, badly educated, having an insufficient grasp of both history and linguistics, yes.

Sheryl Birkhead is within her rights to be relieved at not having won a Hugo; but there's a proverb: "Nobody remembers who finished second." (An interesting paraphrase occurred in the case of Pete Sampras, who went on to a legendary career in professional tennis. As a teenager, he won his first pro event at the Philadelphia indoor event. Reporters asked him if he was thrilled with his first title, and he replied, "Nobody remembers who won in Philadelphia." Even then, his focus was on the major titles.)

From: **John Purcell** June 28, 2007  
3744 Marielene Circle, College Station,  
TX 77845-3926 USA  
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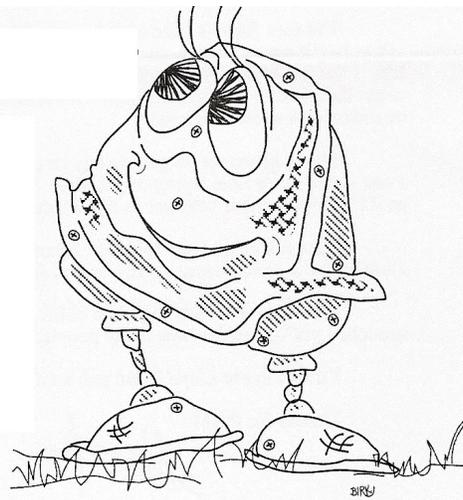
Once again, a fun issue to read, but I really didn't find many comment hooks therein. Lisa's brief opening bit about books reminds me that I need to check out a couple thrift stores up in Bryan to see if there are any rare or fun books waiting to be discovered. Thanks for the prompt. It will have to wait, though, until I get some more disposable income — whatever the heck that is.

All of the history and alternative history book reviews are quite interesting, especially the novels *MacArthur's War*, *Pearl Harbor*, and *1945*. For a long time I have had a strong interest in history; my minor in college was Russian history, and since I have this "thing" for science fiction . . . well, one of these days I am going to have to start reading some of these current alternative history novels that seem to be proliferating like a turd of hurtles. It definitely sounds like a genre that would appeal to me. And I see there are the Sidewise Awards to honor the best of these books. Yep. Lots of catch-up reading to do once I finish my dissertation. It makes me feel like Burgess Meredith in that classic *Twilight Zone* episode,

"Time Enough at Last." But at least I have two pairs of eye glasses, Just In Case.

I thank you for the Hugo nominee reviews, even though I'm not voting this year (not a member at any level). Based on what you and many other folks have written about this year's nominees, none of the novels — or shorter fiction works, even the "dramatic" categories, for that matter — seem to have generated any special spark in fandom. This happens once in a while. Who knows? In the next year or so there may be a novel that everyone and their alien cousin can't stop talking about. We shall see that when it happens.

The Children of Húrin will be eligible at Denver.



Egoboo is the currency of fandom . . .  
be a Bhig Spender!

Two things from the lettercolumn need commentary. First off, E.B. Frohvet's comment to me about getting kids excited about Shakespeare by taking them to an actual performance is a point well taken. Ideally, I agree completely. When I was in 10th grade up in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, the English classes went to see the Guthrie Theater's production of *Julius Caesar*, and I was actually looking forward to seeing it, togas and all. Imagine my surprise when the Artistic Director, Michael Langham (I believe), updated the setting to early 20th century South America, turning the play into a military coup, which is indeed what the play turns on. Instead of classical Roman togas and laurel leaves, we were treated to camouflage fatigues, helmets, machine guns, and bullet belts. Oh, and short swords, explosions, and rifle shots! But the AD didn't change a whit of dialog, so you can imagine the WTF feeling I had. Didn't care for the production at all. In fact, I thought it stunk on ice, and said so in the review I wrote as my assignment. I recall that I got an 'A' on that, mainly since I supported my argument with quotes and everything.

Remember the version in Kornbluth's *The Syndic* (1953)? Interesting novel, even if he did forget about the Noahide Laws.

— JTM

At any rate, here in SouthCentralEastern Texas, it's all about school budgets and there is no proximity to a performance of Shakespearean drama. As a result, we're stuck with videotapes, DVDs, and reading the text. \*sigh\* What can you do?

I also realized when reading my loc that I really need to proof-read these suckers before I hit "send." Danged embarrassing, especially considering that I'm a college English teacher. Guess this means that a loc doesn't get as much attention as my school work, does it? Even so, I promise to do better, starting with this loc.

Fun issue. Thank you for sending it, and I know that I am going to have to watch out for the postage costs of *Askance* #3. Right now it looks like it's going to hit 40 pages. Eep! Time to sell one of the kids to afford the postage.

Take care, and I look forward to the next issue.

From: **Lloyd Penney** June 29, 2007  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON M9C  
2B2 CANADA  
[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)

Many thanks for the latest *Alexiad*, no. 33. I'm well ahead of time . . . I guess it's too hot for a lot of people to compose zines, so that gives me the chance to get caught up a little.

I know what you mean about sudden books . . . I picked up a copy of George Turner's *Yesterday's Men* for just a dollar at a used book shop on my way to work. I will enjoy that, as soon as I can get through a stack of other SF books. I have been reading a lot of e-books lately, so the paper pile is not getting any smaller. What a hobby . . . keeps us off the streets, hm?

I have been reading an assortment of webcomics lately, like Namir Deiter and Wapsi Square, just to name two. I believe the artist behind Pibgorn and 9 Chickweed Lane, Brooke McEldowney, may have converted these two comic strips into webcomics. Not sure how that happened.

Grant told me that he had first seen 9 Chickweed Lane in a Toronto newspaper, and so had thought that Brooke McEldowney was a Canadian.

Ah, the "new" Tolkien book is out. I had wondered if it was delayed; I'd heard nothing about it, except for an initial press blurb about this novel. It's possible it might not have been released in Canada. I had to wonder if it would receive the same confused reaction when Guy Kay helped to put out *The Silmarillion*. The story sounds vaguely interesting, but also vaguely soap-opera-ish. I hope I may yet have the chance to read it, perhaps more for being a completist.

It's possible Huey Long was more of a prophet than any of us knew. In several places have I seen America under Bush referred to as a fascist regime, yet of course, Bush would deny it. If America would ever annex Canada, as has been a deep-down fear of many here over the past 40 years or so, I'd leave for Britain. Interesting that what started this conversation was a book published in 1952. Perhaps Caldwell is the prophet, as well.

As horse people, you probably know that Emma Jayne Wilson became the first female jockey in the 147 years of The Queen's Plate to win the event, on a horse named Mike Fox. She exulted in being the first female to win, and then scolded us for making gender-related differentiations. Congratulations, but make up your mind . . .

I've seen Gordon Ramsey in action on television lately. . . when they do the casting for his so-called reality shows, they must look for passive types who will cry if Ramsey so much as raises his voice. Has no one taken a swing at Ramsey, or clanged a frying pan off his noggin? The ISDC was fun, and evidently fan-run, but it was low in celebrity and high in scholarly interest. For many others, it was a little dull. We did see Buzz Aldrin and Ben Bova, and we saw Dr. Steven Squyers receive the Wernher von Braun Award from the National Space Society for his enormous successes with the Mars rover programme.

Joe, you have the same complaint about LiveJournal that I have . . . it's tough to see through the pseudonyms to see who these people are. Of course, the pseudonyms are there for a reason. I suggested online a registry of fans and their LJ handles, and just about got lynched for my efforts. Voluntary, of course, sheesh . . .

Congrats on surviving your 40th birthday, Jeff! I survived my 48th, and except for an increasing balding pate, I am no more the worse for wear. Yvonne's high school recently marked its 200th anniversary, and the committee in charge of the reunion did a very poor job of promotion . . . it came and went with little or no fanfare. This was unlike its 175th . . . Yvonne and I were on the committee, and it was in the papers everywhere. Jeff, looking forward to seeing your new zine.

I took my niece, pregnant with her first child, to meet our cousin and my old friend Breck, who is about her father's age. Breck has a white beard. (And he told us the story of the woman who found out his last name, and asked if she could touch him; it has to do with his first cousin twice removed.)

— JTM

Rich Dengrove probably knows that Apogee Books has reprinted the Garrett Serviss book *Edison's Conquest of Mars*. They've taken on the task of bringing some classics (or un-classics) back to light, and the response to this programme has been largely positive.

I know of some local environmentalists who

would rip some of the letter writers apart in the area of global warming and pollution, but I will let that lay for now. Check out David Suzuki's website for more information and topics of discussion. Suzuki has become the voice of power conservation and preventing global warming here.

And, I'm done. Off it goes to you and my LJ, and I thank you kindly for your hard work. Good luck with the Hugos!

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** June 17-28, 2007  
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,  
PA 19143-3310 USA

Only about fifty prime favorites, Lisa? But, hmm, yeah, it's about that order of magnitude for me. I'd make that a count of authors, some of whom are represented by only one book, others by a greater or lesser number, not all of which might be liked equally. There are several sequences or compilations of graphic art, and some words-and-pictures books like Barbara Ninde Byfield's *The Glass Harmonia* (a.k.a. *The Book of Weird*). Of all but a few on my list, I've managed to get at least one extra on the cheap, to give to friends or to serve as a lending copy. Why cheap? Too much one-way traffic can be embarrassing to both parties, and the choice — unless shinningly right and not to be delayed — becomes burdensome. This way, my friends can feel themselves to be co-winners in an ongoing lottery.

Many have remained unmentioned in this forum: but here's a little list of books that have charmed me by their portrayal of people:

Alexander Lenard, *The Valley of the Latin Bear*  
Sybille Bedford, *The Faces of Justice*  
Rebecca West, *The New Meaning of Treason*  
Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece*  
E. F. Benson, *As We Were*  
C. M. Bowra, *Memories*

A cortical-thalamic pause will help you to spell Morison. Good man, good writer, he became (as Patrick Leigh Fermor still is) one of the grand old men whose git-up-and-go did not silently steal away, as mine has been doing.

He was an embedded reporter, and better than S. L. A. Marshall. Speaking of Sir Patrick, I just read Stanley Moss's *Ill Met by Moonlight* (1950), the story of their little do in Crete.

The most recent retro reprint for proofing here has been *Beyond the Stars* by Ray Cummings, credited in the Ace pb to *Argosy-All Story* of unspecified date. Before the discovery of fission, certainly. I was a bit startled to find that, on the sentence and paragraph level, Cummings wrote quite well; but his characters are, as ever, cardboard. We have a professorial lecture and a goshwow cosmic journey; and then our heroes and heroines intervene decisively in a conflict between a world's

human-like natives and ugly and nasty interlopers.

George C. Willick's on-line bibliography dates it 1928. He agrees with you about the literary quality of Cummings's oeuvre.

Some emendation of the reprint was called for; beyond the slightest doubt, a "sea-like" marine creature was really "seal-like".

Are there readers today who would take the work of Cummings "straight" and not as "camp"? Certainly there were enough such in the 1960s, when Ace under Wollheim issued a lot of it; keeping, no doubt, a sharp eye on the bottom line, as all successful editors must. Which involved putting out a great bulk of routine skiffy, doomed to be forgotten. How many books by John Brunner can you name? In Vilnius, where I sent them all this cheaply got skiffy, they have about twenty, including *Into the Slave Nebula* and *Interstellar Empire*. They have twice that number by Poul Anderson; ditto by Gordon R. Dickson. I have wondered all along how many of them will ever be read.

No, Don never published anything that was caviare to the general. Such as Ballantine's original Adult Fantasy series with Lin Carter edited. E. R. Eddison's works were in it and can't have done *too* badly, as they had several printings. Now after the Ace Tolkien appeared, I wrote to Don, proposing *The Worm Ouroboros* and giving my opinion of it, particularly of its language and style. He replied, saying that he decided against it; the decision was, in his terms, entirely correct. No problem; soon came the Ballantine edition. I had once before written to an editor proposing this same; the short-lived Xanadu Library of trade paperbacks. I was thanked for my information, and the book did in fact appear; though I doubt if I was the first or only informant. The one reissue I can take full credit for is *The Fates of the Princes of Dyfed* by Kenneth Morris, from Newcastle — for which I even wrote an introduction.

Naming no names in the case of original publications under the Juno Press imprint, I met with yet another set of bad moons, beginning with a "sickle moon" that was evidently rising, as the sleepless p-o-v kept seeing it for most of the night. I offered the following sentence: "The early-setting moon soon ceased to mark the hours, and she had never learned to read the book of the constellations." How's that for novelese? The final moon rose at midnight, and the viewers could not possibly have watched its rise *and* decline without being overtaken by dawn.

Another book had a vaguely Central Asian setting and seemed to be in a world elsewhere, until a black slave girl was asked where she was from. Africa. No, no, I remarked, such a one would not know if Africa was a man or a horse. The reply could be: "I don't know. We had many cattle. The sun was always hot. At mid-day I had no shadow." Furthermore, if this were a world elsewhere, a niggler would not have to nigger about vanilla, a product of the New

World. In worlds elsewhere, a Swiss Family Robinson mix of flora and fauna is the norm.

In an undoubted world elsewhere, I observed the author avoiding the term “french windows”. I offered, additionally, synonyms for “china” and “ottoman”. Neither could you, in a world elsewhere, have english on the ball, Dutch treat, welshing on a bet, a Chinaman’s chance . . . What eponyms would pass is an interesting question. Could you be galvanized into action, or mesmerized?

In reprints I fix mere editorial errors: I was rather pleased to recognize one in “sired by madness, damned by hate” — which, indeed, no *Alexiad* reader should fail to spot.

And if you don't, the more fool you.

*Newsweek* reports that in titles of best-selling books, the words most frequently found are Diet, Sex, Man, Woman, and House. I’m sure I don’t have any of the first two in my entire library. Only a few of the others. Some thought, with a cursory scan (not reaching the back rows), reveals that (counting plurals and possessives) the top two are certainly War and World. Beyond these, I would not try to fix exact places. Moon ranks fairly high, so does Time. I will not included stereotyped titles of story or poetry collections, but Year is somewhere up there. Would the obviously fantastical words like Wizard (*So You Want to Be a*) make the top ten? Dunno. Sword, likely enough. Silver is somewhere up there (*Metal Lover, on the Tree. Unicorn with S. Shoes, etc.*), possibly exceeding Gold (*Crock of, Poseidon’s*).

How about Antarctica?

— JTM

*The Afternoon Tea Book* by Michael Smith may not remain a permanent part of my library, but I learned one or two things from it, including the reason why yo’ sticks out yo’ pinky when yo’ lifts the cup. “. . . English and European ladies found it uncomfortable to hold the (hot) handleless cup with the forefinger on the top rim, the thumb forming the base of a pincerlike grip by supporting the bottom ‘under rim’ of the bowl. It is said, and not without logic, that this method of holding the tea ‘can’ give rise to the ‘refined’ upward soaring of the little finger . . .”

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** June 30, 2007  
4030 8<sup>th</sup> Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA

Thank you for *Alexiad* 6.3 which arrived a couple of weeks ago. My course of treatment is progressing in an orderly fashion, first a little chemo (a 4-month shot to be repeated as needed), then the CAT scan to create a computer model of my prostate (to computer control the radiation machine), then the “before” pictures (so they can see how things are progressing), and finally the radiation treatments which began on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Since prostate cancer is common (1 in 6 men will get it) the radiation

oncology department has the procedure down pat. My standing appointment is five days a week at 2:30, and when I go in a few minutes early there is no waiting; at 2:30 the nurse takes me to the machine, I drop my pants, and get on the table for five minutes of getting lined up and five minutes of radiation. The machine goes bzzz, I don’t feel a thing, and I’m done for the day. Will there be after effects? Maybe, but after the first week they haven’t shown up.

The weekend before Independence Day, Lisa and I went to a get-together of her mother’s family, and I met one aunt who is far far far worse off than I in the Crohn’s Disease department.

— JTM

Even the things-as in material objects, in my life are also getting old and breaking down. As, for instance, our two cars were a 2000 Mazda and a 1993 Subaru, the car Lee drives. I recently had occasion to use the Subaru, which might have made it through another year without major repairs, but it was time to trade it in. Since I was happy with the Mazda, I gave Lee a limit and told her to pick a car she liked. She liked a red Mustang convertible, and my comment was: “Surely you jest!” But she went over the limit, and calls her car Shirley, taking delivery on May 30.

A couple of days after my computer (a 4-year-old eMachine) went belly up. I took it to the shop, and they said it needed a new motherboard, a repair which would cost about as much as the computer new, and I said, okay, because I didn’t want to get a new computer. In due time they called back. The motherboard they got didn’t work, but this other company could sell me one, for about twice what the computer cost new. So I said no, I’ll get a new computer instead. My son has an Apple which he really likes, and my wife loathes and despises Vista, which is all that is on offer in the Microsoft universe, so I took their advice and went to the Apple Store, where I bought a Mac mini. Which didn’t interface with my mouse, keyboard, or printer, so I needed to replace them, too. Fortunately the Mac mini came with an adapter for my nice flat screen monitor so I didn’t have that to replace.

Cut to June 19, when the new computer is up and running, and I go down into the basement to see a leak under my gas water heater — which is after all, 18 or 19 years old. Remembering what worked last time I call C.W. Fields, my long time plumber, and a guy comes out that afternoon to install a new heater, for about what the computer cost. The difference was, I didn’t have to read a manual to figure out how to get hot water. After a little hissing to get the air out, the hot water worked just like always.

We also went to the Steinberg exhibit, where I bought “Saul Steinberg Illuminations,” giving me four books out of his 19, and I really liked the back cover, “I Do, I Have, I Am.” So I went to Kinkos and before they would make a copy of copyrighted material, I had to sign a waiver.

They enlarged the back cover to 23.5 x 14.5 inches, about the size of the original, and I had it matted and framed to hang in my study.

Taras Wolansky invokes the law of supply and demand, saying that wage rates were kept artificially high during the Depression, (when the 1935 unemployment rate was 20.3 percent) thereby causing the under demand for labor. What was the mechanism that kept wages perniciously high? The Smoot-Hawley minimum wage law, perhaps? For a variety of reasons-which Taras should google, the economy went into shock, but artificially high wage rates were not one of them, because the Government screwed up differently in those days.

On page 19 Christopher Garcia says he would like some my art for *The Drink Tank*. My address is on page 22, Chris, if you’re serious.

From: **Henry L. Welch** July 2, 2007  
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[welch@msoe.edu](mailto:welch@msoe.edu)  
<http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad*. Read and enjoyed even if I don’t have many comments.

I would, however, point out to Christopher Garcia that it is not possible to copyright “scenes a faire”. This means that you can’t copyright stock characters, scenes, and situations. e.g. You can’t copyright a meeting with a long-lost eccentric uncle. You need more overlap than that to find copyright infringement. If it were otherwise, almost any work would be infringing on some other work.

Example, Nancy Stouffer’s list of alleged infringements of her work by the Harry Potter books, which list was so broad and general that just about any fantasy novel would have infringed her work.

— JTM

From: **Jim Stumm** June 29, 2007  
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223-0029 USA

JTM: I reviewed *Back to the Moon* by Horner H. Hickam, Jr. in LIVING FREE 130, Feb OS. I noticed technical errors and plot implausibilities. But Hickam led me to think about a feasible plan for flying a Space Shuttle (hereafter SS) to the Moon. He spills much ink describing replacing the SS’s rocket engines with a new super-duper engine, ridiculous to think that could be done while the SS is in orbit, and unnecessary anyway. The SS’s engines are perfectly capable of powering the ship from Earth orbit to the Moon and back. What’s really needed is more fuel.

I suppose the SS carries a margin of extra fuel during a normal orbital mission. But I doubt whether this extra fuel would be enough to power the SS to the Moon and back as Hickam describes. While I was reading the book, I kept expecting him to describe refueling the SS while

it was in Earth orbit, but he never did. I like the SF I read to be technically plausible, not just some gosh-wow nonsense.

Mars Direct: I read 2 of Robert Zubrin's books and wrote short reviews, of *The Case for Mars* in LF 127, Jan 04, and of his novel *First Landing* in LF 135, Jan D7. My considered opinion is that his plan might work, but he's in too much of a hurry. The go-for-broke way he wants to do it is too high-risk. Instead, his ideas should be implemented in stages to prove the concept and test the hardware. In his writing, machines always work perfectly unless sabotaged. It's often not like that in real life.

His plan to make fuel from Mars' atmosphere for the return flight should be tested in a robotic sample return mission. Meanwhile, we need a permanently manned station on the Moon where humans can learn to live long term on another planet/moon in a place that's only 3 days from Earth, in case something goes terribly wrong. NASA won't take big risks with astronauts lives unless we get into a space race with another country, like China. I wouldn't be surprised if the next human on the Moon is Chinese. Humans to Mars would be a lot easier if we developed nuclear space ships, which would shorten the passage time considerably. But I suppose politics forbids it.

**Which is why the design constraints for the Mars Lander will include a landing ramp wide enough for the thirty-seven representatives of all races and genders who will make up the diverse crew to all make the "first step" simultaneously.**

Christopher J. Garcia: Millard Fillmore is buried in Forest Lawn cemetery in Buffalo NY. Every year on his birthday, Jan 7th, a small group gathers at his grave for a half-joking memorial ceremony. Speeches are kept short by the often vile weather at that time of year. Then they adjourn the meeting to someplace warmer, for toasts and extended boozing, which is the real purpose of the gathering.

The other President with a Buffalo connection is Grover Cleveland, who was neither born nor died here, but he was a practicing lawyer here for 20 years, was Sheriff of Erie County, Mayor of Buffalo, and Governor of NY State, before being elected to 2 non-consecutive terms as President. Active in the Democratic Party, he ran for mayor as an anti-corruption reform candidate. We could use someone like him in Buffalo today, or in DC for that matter.

A locally prominent libertarian lawyer, James Ostrowski, wants to establish a Grover Cleveland Presidential Library in Buffalo. Online see: [groverclevelandlibrary.org](http://groverclevelandlibrary.org)

Robert S. Kennedy: Polygamy was the first public issue that really got my dander up. Back in the 1950s, I read about Federal agents raiding some peaceful, harmless polygamists and I was outraged. What harm were these people doing to anyone? And why was this any business of the Federal Government? In 50 some years since, I

haven't changed my mind at all about this issue. Except today I would add: Where in the Constitution, in which of the enumerated powers, is the Federal Government given any authority at all over marriage relations? It's not that I think polygamy is that good an idea, but it's the private business of the people involved.

On top of that, as customs have evolved, it becomes increasingly bizarre for the government to be persecuting men who openly marry too many women, set up stable households, and support their wives and children. The real social scourge is caused by men who irresponsibly father many children by many women, without marrying at all, or supporting any of them.

**You might want to read Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven* (2003; reviewed in Alexiad V. 2 #4).**

— JTM

Taras Wolansky: The oversupply of labor in the US in the 1930s was "cured" by WW2 when millions of men were drafted into the military and removed from the labor market. Some 300,000 of them were removed permanently by being killed in the War.

From: **Robert M. Sabella** July 10, 2007  
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Thanks for the recent three issues of *Alexiad*. Lots of comment hooks scattered through them.

As an amateur student of Chinese history, I deliberately avoided the book *1421: The Year China Discovered America*, because the reviews pretty much castigated the book as a polemic rather than as objective history. Apparently, the author was trying desperately to prove his predetermined point rather than beginning with the facts and then reaching a logical conclusion. No thanks.

**The inscription in Malayalam in the Cape Verde Islands (not that he bothered to give the text so someone could read it) is on a par with the guy Barry Fell found who wrote a Latin name in Greek letters according to the English pronunciation of Roman letters.**

Similarly, I've read both good and bad things about *Mao: The Unknown Story*. Jung Chang is the author of one of my all-time favorite Chinese books, *Wild Swans*, so that alone predisposes me to want to read her take on Mao. Some reviews claim she too is trying to make a predetermined point in the book, but since Mao was one of the worst villains of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and considering how it affected her own family (as told in *Wild Swans*), perhaps that point is understandable. Recently, Fei Fei read *Mao* and recommends it; since she was the person who originally recommended *Wild*

*Swans* to me, I have added the book to my *Recommended Reading* black hole, from which it will hopefully emerge someday.

Living on the edge of the woods, as I do, periodically creates situations involving roaming animals disrupting our calm suburban life. Your incident with the opossum in the house brings back memories, not necessarily pleasant ones. I guess our worst incident was the bat trapped in the house. Even when the animal is not dangerous, merely frightened, it can cause considerable damage to self and property.

☞ *I suppose there's a penalty for being ahead of one's time.* Yeah, the penalty is that a lot of what is hailed as "cutting-edge" sf is actually so old conceptually that those dwindling few of us who are still familiar with the history of sf cannot enjoy the stuff like other people do in their blissful ignorance. I'm not totally sure who loses out here.

☞ *Central Asia . . . contains all the fourteen peaks over eight thousand meters in height.* I guess that does not include underseas peaks. Presumably water pressure at those depths will prevent humans from scaling the Marianas Trench from bottom to top anytime soon, but it sure would make the basis of an exciting sf story. Maybe somebody should suggest it to Kim Stanley Robinson; it seems like his cup of tea.

*Slan Hunter*, by Kevin J. Anderson and A.E. van Vogt is interesting considering Anderson has been writing *Dune* books with Brian Herbert as well. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a writer spending most of his career writing novelizations (mostly *Star Wars*, but a few *X-Files* as well), but it seems a bit ghoulish when he spends so much time expanding dead writers' notes into bestselling novels. Maybe I'm just too cynical. Anderson is probably a very nice guy.

I try not to read the reviews of novels that I definitely intend to read myself, partially because of fear of spoilers, but also because I do not want the entire plot laid out for me before reading it. So I avoided your long review of *Eifelheim*. Hopefully you liked it. I did read your reviews of the other Hugo nominees, since I've already read *His Majesty's Dragon*, and I don't generally enjoy either Vernor Vinge or Charles Stross. Your review of Vinge did nothing to change my mind about reading *Rainbow's End*. In the case of Stross, his stories tend to overload on thrills and spills at the expense of character development. Of course, it is possible he has grown as an author since his early *Accelerando* stories, so I really should try him again. It's just getting a little confusing telling all his series apart (which is why the website *Fantastic Fiction* is useful). Maybe *Glasshouse* would be a good re-entry point.

**Since Vinge discovered that there's no point to SF any more, thanks to the Singularity, his writing has lost interest.**

— JTM

Thanks for all the entertainment

From: **George W. Price** July 11, 2007  
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June *Alexiad*:

Harrumph! My name is missing from the list of letter writers in the Table of Contents, though the letter itself got published. Oh well, at least I wasn't the only victim: Trinlay Khadro didn't get listed either.

\* \* \* \* \*

Random Jottings notes that "the DVD of *300* will be released July 31." I just couldn't bring myself to go see that movie, I was so completely turned off by the publicity photos showing the Spartans fighting without armor. And I didn't see even one movie review that picked up on this absurdity. How long do you suppose the real Three Hundred could have held back the Persians if they had actually gone into battle that way? The Spartans were tough, but not that tough! I saw it suggested that showing all those muscular bare chests was to make the movie appealing to homosexuals, which makes about as much sense as any other explanation.

Victor Davis Hanson points out that the movie is following there the conventions of Greek art, where heroes fought similarly unarmored.

\* \* \* \* \*

Joe's review of Flynn's *Eifelheim* quotes a passage to the effect that the most important part of developing a star drive was knowing that it could be done. This started me wondering. I'd like to see a story combining the different FTL drives popular in science fiction. After all, the existence of one type need not preclude the possibility of others. Say, humanity comes up with Doc Smith's inertialess drive, another race uses Asimov's hyperspace in which the "jump" takes zero time, and yet another has H. Beam Piper's version where voyages in hyperspace take hundreds of hours. And maybe throw in a race with the system in Heinlein's juveniles in which a ship accelerates to near light speed and then slides through an "anomaly."

What would military tactics be like if the two sides used wildly different drives? Once it was realized that more than one kind of FTL drive is possible, presumably everybody would adopt the best one. And which would that be? My guess is the Smithian inertialess drive, because it lets you see where you're going. However, that depends on the existence of the "ultrawave" (an order of radiation Doc invented that propagates enormously faster than light). What if there's no ultrawave and inertialess ships are blind until they go inert? That should add some interesting complications!

\* \* \* \* \*

In his review of Bugliosi's *Reclaiming*

*History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy*, Joe notes that "conspiratorialists are not constrained by ordinary laws of reality." The most convincing explanation of the conspiracist mindset that I've come across is in *Condominium*, a 1978 novel by John D. MacDonald. As I remember — I'm not looking this up — MacDonald has a character explain that some people need a belief in conspiracies in order to make sense of the world. It is just too frightening to believe that world-shattering events can have random or trivial causes. They don't want to live in a world where a worthless sack of shit like Lee Harvey Oswald can bring down the most important ruler on the planet. There just has to be more to it than that. It is scary to believe that there are secret masters who run the world — but it is even scarier to believe that nobody is running the world, and horrible things "just happen." To revise the old saying, belief in conspiracies is a crutch for people who can't handle reality.

And then, of course, there are those who just want to believe that they "are in the know" and are aware of things that the common herd doesn't know. Which is a form of snobbery. This is the mentality that embraces those ideas that are "so stupid that only an intellectual could believe them."

The gnostic urge, that is. Remember those little ads for the A.M.O.R.C. that could be found in the back pages of magazines?

— JTM

\* \* \* \* \*

Robert S. Kennedy, discussing the Mormons, thinks that "the LDS practice of polygamy was protected under the First Amendment." I presume he means that it falls under the "free exercise" of religion. I'm afraid that's not good enough. By that rule, human sacrifice would also have to be tolerated, at least if the victim was willing. I would say that the Founders took for granted that all the rights they protected had certain limits. For example, freedom of speech and press did not include libel, slander, and pornography. Thus, the free exercise of religion would automatically be limited to the practices generally acceptable to the Christians of the Founders' time, which definitely did not include polygamy.

The Bill of Rights — and indeed the entire Constitution — was intended to conserve the kind of society which already existed. It was never intended to open the gates to just any kind of weird practice that anybody might come up with. It is well said that the American Revolution, unlike the French and Russian revolutions, was conservative, not radical. It was not intended to create a new and theoretically perfect utopian society; it was a reaction to the attempts of Parliament and King George to change the society that the colonists had already developed.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** July 6-12, 2007  
 22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD

20882-3422 USA  
[catsmeouch@yahoo.com](mailto:catsmeouch@yahoo.com)

Ah yes, didn't the USPS become creative in their rates increase and re-classification system?! It looks as if I will be visiting the PO more frequently until I have the kinks worked out of the descriptions.

The local (veterinary) orthopedists are using the new *Dasuquin* — I bought some for a client and a bottle for my own cat, but she is still in the *Cosequin* (which she does not like). There is another joint health product called *Seraquin* — see the name recognition play? — which does not have the new additives of the *Dasuquin*, but my own cat was begging for more of the tablets. This is unusual in a cat — these tablets are not soft chewables — but really crunchy. Since she likes it so much, I tried breaking it into four pieces and mixing it in with her medication "cocktail" in the morning and . . . she ate it all with gusto. Now that I have the *Dasuquin* I may try it out too since the added ingredients sound effective (but how effective is the best medication if the animal will **not** eat it?) — then make a decision.

I listen to a lot of books on tape/cd and like George Guidall as the narrator. On the strength of that, I haunted the library catalog and took out one of the sf books he read. Unfortunately, I did not look at the book itself (very poor decision) and it turned out to be the third in a series of seven. I only lasted three chapters. I surrendered completely and returned the book. When I have more time I will do a better job of research and, perhaps, try another.

My cousin the Rev. James E. Major is in his nineties and has had a stroke, so while he can see, he prefers to listen to books. He'd read/heard one that had been read by someone named Fred Major, and wanted to thank the man (and ask if he were related, of course). I called the Printing House for the Blind (here in Louisville), which produced and distributed the book, but they didn't return my call. More recently, I emailed them, and got a quick response. Says something about old and new forms of communication, I guess.

Currently I am listening to a series on *Bookmen* (last one was *Bookwomen*) by John Dunning. Interesting to listen to the titles, authors and collecting — all put into whodunit format (the Bookman is a former cop who sells rare books).

I remembered to fill out both the Hugo ballot and site selection. All set for another year.

When I was little, my father liked to have us help put up the corn in shocks (I never thought of the actual words for this — hope I have it right). Once the cornstalks were dry he would cut them off at the base and wrap a long rope around it — and have us help pull it tight . . . then wrap baling twine around, giving the transitional Halloween corn shocks. I recall that

there were several local farmers that had problems with black widows — but nothing more than swelling and fever ensued . . . at least in these cases. I was surprised that the few I saw, with their neat little red hourglasses, were quite small.

While E.B.'s VCR seems to have handled the Daylight Savings time — mine did the opposite. Despite my having programmed a manual programming, the time kept reverting until the usual date for the change arrived. I wonder if it will all happen again next year? I thought that the option of automatic (from a station) time changing would work — but it didn't, so I stuck with manual and that didn't work either. We'll see.

Agh, not sure where it is, but I did get a CoA from Tom Sadler — so, in essence, they are moved. I am not at all certain what that means . . . maybe their kids have the house and they will be travelling back and forth for a while? Again, not sure what essentially moved means. At least part of that is that any zines should be to the new address, I presume.

Ongoing Photoshop saga — I managed to buy a copy of Version 4 for the Mac . . . this is a Mac thing — but cannot do much since most of what I run is in OSX (but not all) — and v.4 requires Classic. Unfortunately my scanner was used in Classic — but when I went to OSX, I got a new driver and now it cannot be used at all (in Classic, that is). I have no idea what to do. Knarley suggested I utilized the preview mode and I am not sure what or how??? I found preview with the scanner — but that was a deadend — it is only to preview (period) before doing anything. I cannot find preview as an option in any software or how to save as preview. It all means that, if I ever figure it out, anything I manage will be all that sweeter! I continue to continue. I'll get there eventually, just not sure when.

But, as all the Mac people will tell you, this only happens under MicroSludge Windoze.

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** July 20, 2007  
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In *Alexiad* V6#3, Joseph mentions the way the image of vampires has changed in the last few decades. I suspect it is part of the overall change in our attitudes regarding sex. There was always something sexual about vampires. Dracula always had a whole bunch of women hanging around. They were euphemistically referred to as "brides," but it seems likely they were really just shacked-up. To keep that many women happy, Dracula must have been doing something right.

In these more enlightened times, we can admit we enjoy biting members of the opposite sex. Being bitten in return is sort of fun too. We usually engage in most of our biting activity after sundown. That may be significant.

I can see a potential problem in reading lots

of alternate history. What if you wake up one morning and can't remember which is the more-or-less real history? Did Cuba enter the Union before or after Puerto Rico? Who won the War of 1812? For that matter, who won the War of 1811? What if the vast majority of the population don't know the answer to any of these questions either?

That was the point made in H. Beam Piper's story "Crossroads of Destiny"; most people don't know the real history. It would end up like the Saturday Night Live skit, "What If?", or Sliders.

I didn't get around to reading the Hugo nominees this year. Or at least, I didn't get around to reading them before the voting deadline. I did buy all the nominated novels, and I will get around to reading them eventually. It was just that a few other things got in the way. Like quarterly FAPA mailings, monthly LASFS newszines, and doing the program on Loscon 34. I even still write letters to a few people.

In the letter column, Joseph mentions the problem of LiveJournal where everyone operates under an assumed name. I've never found much of anything in either Blogs or LiveJournal. Of course, I've never made much of an effort to look. I already know all of that stuff is garbage, so any effort expended on it is effort wasted. I've heard the rationale that people use assumed names to hide their opinions from their employers and the world in general. There is a much better way to hide those sorts of opinions. You don't put them on paper at all. Only a complete idiot would do otherwise.

My niece has noted how so many of the girls she supervises at Big Brothers/Big Sisters put personal details on their MySpace sites.

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** July 20, 2007  
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Thank you for Vol. 6, No. 3.

In my previous letter I forgot to mention some items concerning destroyers. At the naval and Servicemen's Park (Museum) in Buffalo, New York there is a Fletcher Class destroyer — *The Sullivans* (DD-537). My brother John went with me to several of my ship reunions. In 2005 the reunion was in Niagara Falls, New York. We stayed a couple of extra days and on the first extra day we went to Buffalo. He was able to crawl all over *The Sullivans* and bring back memories of when he was on the USS *Ammen* (DD-527). In the meantime, one of my shipmates and I toured the USS *Little Rock* (CL-92), a Light Cruiser that was later converted to a Guided Missile Cruiser (CG-4). Although it is a Light Cruiser, it is nothing like my Light Cruiser, the USS *Worcester* (CL-144). It was

good that John was able to tour *The Sullivans* because a few months later he died in his sleep from a heart attack. Several years earlier we took a trip through Western Washington and Oregon. In Bremerton, Washington there is a destroyer, the USS *Turner Joy* (DD-951). John toured it, but it is a Forrest Sherman Class and larger than the ship on which he served. In 1998 my ship reunion was in Worcester, Massachusetts. One of our tours was to Boston and the USS *Constitution* ("Old Ironsides") that is still a commissioned Navy ship. Across from the *Constitution* was a destroyer. However, it only allowed limited access and I'm not sure of its class.

USS *Cassin Young* (DD-793), a Fletcher Class ship. We saw the *Little Rock* and *The Sullivans* in Buffalo, but it was just before closing time and we couldn't board them.

So, *Veronica Mars* has been cancelled. Shame on the CW network.

I purchased and read *The Little Book of Plagiarism* by Richard A. Posner (2007) that was reviewed by Jim Sullivan in Vol. 6 No. 2. A "little book" it is, measuring only 4 3/4" by 6 1/2" and just 116 pages. Quite interesting is Posner's admission that law clerks write judges opinions even though the judges sign off on the opinions. That's probably fairly common knowledge. But, it's good to see it in print. He comments (p. 25) on Hillary Clinton and "her" book *It Takes a Village* (1996), for which she received a Grammy, not giving credit to the actual ghostwriter. Posner correctly states that it was not plagiarism and "cannot imagine the public caring". Well, some of us did care. Hillary pretended that she herself wrote the book. That's deceit. I remember being in a bookstore when a woman purchased Hillary's book. The clerk mentioned that apparently Hillary didn't actually write the book. The woman said that she didn't care. JFK received a Pulitzer for his *Profiles in Courage* (1956) that was actually written by a ghostwriter. But, things were different then. By the time of Hillary's book, ghostwriters were given credit, usually by having the word "with" followed by the name of the ghostwriter. Posner's commentary on Doris Kearns Goodwin, Kaavya Viswanathan, Stephen Ambrose, Martin Luther King, Jr., Laurence Tribe, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. was very much appreciated. Posner (p. 94) states that the Left "dominates intellectual circles in the United States and is soft on plagiarism." Apparently, what happens to a plagiarist depends on the person's politics. I thank Jim for reviewing *The Little Book of Plagiarism* and add my recommendation to his.

So we should say, "Theodore Sorenson, author (under the pseudonym of 'John F. Kennedy') of the Pulitzer Prize winning *Profiles in Courage*."

So, *Stargate SG-1* is gone for good and

*Stargate Atlantis* will be back. I'm not quite sure that I liked (maybe didn't quite understand) the end of *Stargate SG-1*. But, what the heck. The season finale of *Stargate Atlantis* was great — City in Flight!

Interesting commentary on *The Devil's Advocate* by Taylor Caldwell (1952). Back in the 80's I was having a conversation at work with my friend Joan McCormick. I mentioned how much I enjoyed Taylor Caldwell's novels. I think *Captains and the Kings* (1972) was mentioned. It might have been *The Devil's Advocate*. Well, probably it was the former. Anyway, Joan was surprised because she considered Caldwell to be a Catholic writer and I'm not a Catholic. She asked me why I liked Caldwell's novels. Despite never thought about it previously, my instant response was—"because she believes in the existence of evil." (This is also probably a reason I like novels by Dean Koontz.) On further thought I might have also mentioned that Caldwell believed in the existence of conspiracies. At the end of *Captains and the Kings*, Caldwell has a rather interesting Bibliography.

I have requested a copy of *Reclaiming History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy* by Vincent Bugliosi from the Camarillo Library and am 8<sup>th</sup> in line. You may remember, however, that Bugliosi believes that the McMartins were guilty. As I recall it was a comment that he made in *Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O. J. Simpson Got Away With Murder* (1996). I wrote him a letter taking issue with his conclusion on the McMartins. A copy of my letter no longer exists. Bugliosi is one of only a few authors who have not responded to letters that I have sent.

Jim Sullivan's review of *The Making of the Fittest: DNA and the Ultimate Forensic Record of Evolution* by Sean B. Carroll (2006) caused me to obtain the book from the library. Unlike Jim I was more than a tad challenged. Nevertheless, it was found to be incredibly interesting and my recommendation is added to Jim's. The author (p. 14) makes comment about how DNA assists in the guilt or innocence of persons by judges and juries. Well, not if you are the O. J. Simpson jury. Later (p. 167) the author says that "we are the descendants of the fittest who have survived . . ." I think that we could do without a number of the survivors. I especially enjoyed the commentary about the eye. Apparently, the author believes in human caused global warming (p. 263). No mention is made of the Sun. While at a Genealogy Jamboree in June, I purchased two books—*DNA & Genealogy* by Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD & Andrew Yeiser (2005) and *Forensic Genealogy* by Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD (2005).

Remember how excited they all were when DNA testing was going to posthumously exonerate Roger Keith Coleman? And then, instead, it incriminated him?

— JTM

Thanks for the HUGO recommendations.  
E. B. Frohvet: I'm with you on Daylight

Saving Time.

**Jim Stumm:** OK – So under the conditions you mention the space shuttle could fly to the moon. My now rather shaky memory of the Sci-Fi Channel movie *Earthstorm* is that the space shuttle just took off and went to the Moon.

**Sue Burke:** Thank you for responding to my query re the Reconquista. I should point out that none of the other groups that you mentioned have the goal of returning Spain to Islam.

From: **Sue Burke** July 26, 2007  
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Summer is fiesta time in Spain, and the bulls ran in Pamplona every morning from July 7 to 14, televised live, with few serious incidents except for a bull named Universal who gored seven people on July 12. Lots of other towns run bulls, too, but none with the efficiency and international fame of Pamplona, or with such fierce bulls (which might be good). The second-best running of the bulls will be in San Sebastian de los Reyes, a suburb of Madrid, from August 26 to September 2. I might ride out there on the subway and watch. (But not run; I can fulfill my suicidal tendencies by crossing Madrid thoroughfares during rush hour traffic.)

Most towns follow the pattern of Pamplona, running all six bulls at once, but a few let them out one at a time. In other towns, rather than a run, the bulls are released in a pasture where daredevils practice "recorte," a sort of game of chicken with a charging bull. Sometimes bulls are penned on a seaside pier, and a charge can end with man, beast, or both in the water. (Bulls can swim just fine.) But when you get into "deep" Spain, the places not mentioned in the tourist guides, things get bizarre. My friend Eugenio says that in his hometown, the little main square is blocked off with a bull inside. Glasses of liquor on a table in the center await anyone brave enough to run out there and chug. (Pamplona doesn't allow drunk runners. It has an international reputation to protect.)

Another friend, León, knows of a little town that still has its medieval walls intact. The gates are closed with a bull inside, and people play dodgeball in the old streets. However, in a balcony at a designated street corner, a man with a rifle shoots at the bull as it goes by. When the bull is dead, the run is over. In central and southern Spain, at midnight, a "bull of fire" forms part of the fiesta fun. It's a man wearing sparkler-like fireworks on a harness that fits over his head and back. He chases people, throwing firecrackers, in a game considered appropriate for all ages. (Spanish children stay up really late during fiestas.) In Catalonia in northeastern Spain, however, the bulls of fire are real bulls with flaming torches tied to their horns. Runners practice recorte as the bulls dash around, panicked, and burning pitch sometimes injures the animal's head and

eyes. These fiestas aren't in the standard packaged tours or mentioned in the official guides for obvious reasons.

Alternate History writers have been aware of this. See Livy's [T. Livius Patavinus], *History of Rome, Book 22, Chapters 16-17* or *Turtledove's An Emperor for the Legion* (1987) Pages 39-45: "Every veteran's known that trick since Hannibal used it, and known his head would answer if he fell for it."

— Iosephus

My husband and I are going to Rome in August, where the only animals we expect to dodge are alley cats. I hear they're fierce, and legally protected.

P.S. I succumbed to peer pressure and got a colonoscopy too. Estoy perfectamente. (I'm fine.)

From: **Taras Wolansky** July 30, 2007  
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*Alexiad*, June 2007:

Jack McDevitt's *Seeker* won the Nebula? I liked the book, but I did not see it as Nebula Award material. It's what I call "sociologically improbably SF": a future world that is, roughly, the 1950s with spaceships.

**"The [Roman] Empire was expanding during its era of decadence"**. Wasn't most of the expansion during the Republic? In any case, you're using the C.B. Demille definition of decadence — divergence from Judeo-Christian norms — not what the Romans would consider decadence (e.g., foreign mercenaries replacing citizen soldiers).

**Review of *Eifelheim***: "[H. Beam] Piper and [David] Weber set their heroes in conflict with the local religious authorities". In *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*, probably Piper's most influential book, the hero works with the traditional polytheistic priests and priestesses against the upstart Church of Styphon. Indeed, he makes a point of establishing a reputation for piety! Piper was a rational atheist, who recognized that religions should be judged as separate sociological entities, some with beneficial effects, some harmful.

The cult of Styphon was the dominant religious body there and then. And Kalvan privately disdains religion, while adhering as policy. Not to mention what "Colonel Verkan" and his people think.

**"Assuming that low tech means dumb can be a fatal assumption."** A couple of books I've been reading recently about Colonial America underline that point. Goodbye, Indian as Noble Savage, as well as Indian as Helpless Victim. The Indians were at least as devious and conniving as the whites. For example, in

the early years of the Plymouth Colony, certain Indian chiefs and shamans tried to manipulate the whites, with their high military technology and access to trade goods, against their rivals for power among the native communities. And a recent history of the French and Indian War points out that this was a war involving, not two empires, but three: the French, the English, and the Iroquois. The war was started by the chief of a tribe subject to the Iroquois, who hoped to free his tribe. (Though other historians may differ.)

But back to Michael Flynn's *Eifelheim*: The story suffers from requiring too many simultaneous extraordinary events. The aliens land next to a German village. And the parish priest happens to be a refugee radical intellectual in hiding, a friend and colleague of William of Ockham. And the Black Death comes just in time to cover the traces. And the historian who tracks down the story is living with a physicist, who just happens to be doing research which will permit her to recognize a potential star drive in what everyone thought was an abstract illumination.

Flynn should have left that last piece of fanboy wish fulfillment out of what was otherwise an impressive work of literature. (Though not as good as his *The Wreck of The River of Stars*.)

Review of *Reclaiming History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy*: "It is a tragedy that this . . . book . . . is in a sense ultimately pointless" because conspiracy theories will merely work it into their theories. That's true of the hard core types; but there are tens of millions more who are merely misinformed. And even the hard core types will back off, to some extent, if they are made to look foolish.

*George W. Price, Christopher J. Garcia*: We talk about somebody "discovering" the ruins of Troy or King Tut's tomb, even though these were built by human beings, because something hidden is brought into the mainstream of human knowledge. Thus, we don't talk about ancient tomb robbers — or Paleo-Indians — as being discoverers.

*Richard Dengrove*: "While I agree . . . about [the] warming part of the Global Warming, I may disagree about its consequences and its cure." I call it the "trouble in River City" ploy: yes, there are pool halls in town; and yes, they do occasionally tempt young men to a dangerous course of life — but even so, Prof. Hill, we don't necessarily agree that buying an orchestra from you is the best response!

How about an arcade game?  
"The Last Starfighter," maybe?

— JTM

Review of *His Majesty's Dragon*: "The reason the Frogs were getting a lizard was that they already had some". Not sure what that means. Temeraire's egg was shipped out of China for domestic political reasons; to France because a) it was far away, and b) it had an Emperor. But we learn this in the second book,

come to think of it.

From: **Marty Helgesen** July 30, 2007  
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I have fallen shamefully behind so I'm going to start with comments on the most recent (June) issue and work my way backwards until I run out of time.

I was not aware of the genre (subgenre?) of Sexy Vampire stories when I saw one on a rack in a local drug store a while ago. (Just like in the old days before numerous bookstore chains.) It looked funny so I bought it. I decided the humorous bits were not funny enough and the sexy bits were excessive so I threw it away when I finished it. I will not bother with any others.

**Given how those seem to be crowding out other horror, not to mention fantasy and SF, your reading choices may be becoming severely constrained.**

Robert S. Kennedy says he thinks the Mormon practice of polygamy was protected by the First Amendment. So far as I know, the Mormon religion did not require polygamy but only permitted it, so that a legal ban on polygamy did not interfere with their practice of their religion. But that aside, a right of free exercise cannot be absolute. So far as I know Thuggee did not merely permit robbing and murdering travelers, it required it as a religious act. Also, I think that at least some Hindus considered Suttee a requirement of their religion. Certainly some religions required human sacrifice. Of course restrictions on activities like that should be limited to extreme cases. In some places people have been prosecuted for hate crimes for quoting the Bible's teachings on homosexual acts. (I oppose laws against "hate crimes" in general both, because hate crime laws are really thought crime laws and because where hate crime laws exist they are applied selectively, but that's a different question.)

I agree with George W. Price on the meaning of the statement that Columbus discovered America. I don't recall having had occasion to use it, but my answer to the question, "How could Columbus discover America when there were people living there?" is "By sailing west." (I assume that everyone (almost everyone?) reading *Alexiad* knows that the idea the people thought the Earth was flat and Columbus would sail off the edge is an urban legend. Every educated man knew it was round. In the first article of the *Summa Theologica*, written about 200 years before Columbus was born, St. Thomas Aquinas used the fact that the Earth is round as part of a discussion of something else. He took it for granted that everyone knew it.)

Joe comments to Rodney Leighton that paperbacks used to be 75 cents. In the late forties and early fifties they were 25 cents. I think that price was so close to being universal

that some publishers didn't bother printing it on the covers. Many if not all Mentor Books were 35 cents, but that was a quality, literary line.

Jeffrey Alan Boman's mention of his "old stomping grounds" reminded me that some years ago in MINNEAPPA Gordon Miller mentioned that a newspaper in Wisconsin that referred to the "stomping grounds" of a particular species of snake.

**Stomping Ground is between Frankfort and Georgetown.**

— JTM

Trinlay Khadro mentions a vague early childhood memory. Years ago I had a clear but puzzling memory from when I was much younger of playing in the vacant lot next to my house when neighbors came out of their houses and shouting and ringing bells. The memory came back to me from time to time but I couldn't figure it out. Eventually I realized that it must have been either V-E Day or V-J Day and they had just heard the news on the radio.

Taras Wolansky says, "Anyway, we're lucky that the distinguished former surveyor was named George Everest, not George Murgatroyd." Heavens to Everest, he's right!

Taras also is correct about the word "Fundamentalist". Many people today use it as a smear term for anyone who takes his religion more seriously than the speaker thinks appropriate. Originally Fundamentalists were a subset of Protestants who had specific beliefs that were known as The Fundamentals.

Moving on, err back, to the April 2007 issue, Richard Dengrove says in his letter that conservative Christians have to say that the Bible is the final authority on all subjects even though they don't believe it. I don't think I've ever heard anyone say or seen anyone write that the Bible is the final authority on all subjects. It is possible that because of careless wording some may have given that impression, but I am sure they meant that the Bible is the final authority on all the subjects it discusses to the extent that it discusses them.

Lloyd Penney says, "We've both been in fandom about 30 years now." I started getting fanzines early in 1957 so I've been here about 50 years. That's not too many.

Commenting on a letter, Joe mentions a comic strip in which a little girl concluded that Rip van Winkle must have had a big diaper. However, if he slept for twenty years without starving or dehydrating to death magic was involved, and magic could have taken care of that problem, too.

#### WAHF:

**Carl Aschmann**, with DVDs of interest.  
**Lloyd Daub**, with various items of interest.

**Taral Wayne**, commenting on a comment.

**Alexei Panshin**, as above.

**DRIVE SAFELY**

by Paul Gadzikowski

**THE RING RELOADED**

If the Wachowski Brothers (*Matrix* Trilogy) had done *The Lord of the Rings* . . .

Gandalf's eyes bored into Frodo's. "Do you believe in Fate, Frodo?"

Frodo felt very small and very surrounded. "No," he said, forcing the word out.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life."

"I know *exactly* what you mean." The Wizard paused for a few, tremulous moments. "Let me tell you why you're here. You're here because you know something. What you know you can't explain, but you feel it. You've felt it your entire life, that there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is, but it's there, like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought me to you. Do you know what I'm talking about?"

"The Ring."

"Do you want to know what it is?"

"Yes."

Frodo looked out over the great flet, high in the trees of Lórien. The breeze blew through the leaves with a scent of the original Elvenhome, beyond the circles of the world, across the sundered sea. The voice of Galadriel broke into his thoughts. "Do not try and bend the spoon."

He looked, dreamily, as he had felt ever since he and the rest of the Fellowship had entered into the Elven land, at the metal spoon he held in his hand. The Elven Lady, beautiful and terrible, spoke yet more: "That is impossible. Instead . . . only try to realise the truth."

"What truth?" Frodo asked.

"There is no spoon."

Dazed, Frodo repeated, "There is no spoon."

"Then you will see, that it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself."

He looked down at his hand and observed that he no longer held a spoon, but a fork, a strange item that had three tines at the end but two where they reached the handle. The sight made his head swim and his eyes ache; he felt as if he were going mad . . .

The tunnel bored into the heart of the great volcano, its passage twisted and riven by the mighty turnings of the earth. The power of the Ring called to Frodo, now more than ever, in the heart of the world where it was forged. His will buckled, and he drew out the chain to put it on . . .

A mass struck him, knocking him down to his knees. The heavy body lay on top of his, and then came the insidious voice. "Masster? Yes, Preciousss callssss! Do you hear that, Masster? That iss the ssssound of inevitability! It iss the ssssound of your death! Goodbye, massster . . ."

"MY NAME IS FRODO!" he cried, but he felt his hand being pulled on and then the pain shot through his body, the loss through his spirit . . .

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**Art:** What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

**Contributions:** This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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