

# ALEXIAD

Today on the AbsoluteWrite board, which is devoted mostly to writers and their works in progress, W.I.P. for short, I found a thread dealing with what would happen if the internet disappeared overnight. I blinked at this. Life without the internet? Without being able to click on links and see what was happening with my favorite horses? Without being able to email someone half a world away and get an answer when that person next logged on? I realized in that instant that I had become an Internet junkie. I reward myself for finishing a page of my messterpiece by allowing myself to log on to Absolute Write (www.absolutewrite.com). Once a day I peek in at the Darley website to see if there is any Bernardini news and at Bloodhorse.com. The internet is how Borders sends us our coupons and Borders bucks. It is how I see if there are worthwhile programs on the history channel or just another stretch of UFOs and/or Adolf. What, do without the internet? No, please, please, no! I know there are people out there who do live without the Internet, not all of them Amish. My father seems quite happy without it. I, however, have learned to love the connections the Internet makes possible.

— Lisa

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February 20, 2008 St.Photini  
 Great Lent begins March 13, 2008  
 Pascha (Orthodox Easter) is April 27, 2008

Printed on February 5, 2008  
 Deadline is April 1, 2008

## Reviewer's Notes

The great wave of Tolkien fandom was a little before my time. But it was, I understand, a great efflorescence of fanac, hundreds of clubs, dozens of fanzines, enthusiasm, energy, a flux of fans. Of Tolkien; almost none went on to read more, to go into fandom in general.

Then it repeated itself with the Harry Potter phenomenon, given greater velocity by the Internet. There are thousands of Potter fan fictions, some of them even readable, much less by the original target audience.

This is outside the vast growth of "media" and its fandom — which, as you will recall, began by and within our fandom. Now it has a life of its own, just as the slackers and Gen-Yers who put out their zines in the nineties were like so new and different, never knowing that there had been such a thing as amateur journalism in the eighteen-nineties.

And now, we are told, all the "action" is in animé. These days, it seems, Alex the droog would speak not Nadsat but Japlish, and he would dress not in the height of fashion, no no no, but in the mode of an animé character, neh? (At least he would still find a basis for the old ultra-violence in the DVDs he would buy, instead of vinyls, for the Home Theatre he would have instead of the old hi-fi.)

But where is all the fanac energy going into? Besides Chris Garcia, I mean. Blogs are now all the rage; but as I saw one far more prolific commentator than I say, there is no core, no focal point as it were. One fan blogs, but another may only comment on others' blogs, and a third uses Facebook, and a fourth . . . It seems ironic, that those seeking useful interaction cannot find it, but as Dale Speirs points out, those who want to search out an old blunder seem able to discover it on the Internet with the greatest of ease.

In days of old, Claude Degler sent out thick sheafs of mimeographed zines describing the fan wars and the cosmic reach of the Cosmic Circle. He was a spammer before there could be spammers.

We made a discovery that shows how interconnected a world we live in. During the trip to Lexington recounted below, Lisa and I had dinner with two relatives of mine, two sisters attending the University of Kentucky. One of them had worked at the Kentucky Horse Park. As a ticket salesperson. On weekends. So we had met long before we met, as it were.

But we met on Facebook. See above about that. So, for those of you from *Alexiad* who are among my Facebook friends, that is what the other group of people are.

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Terence David John Pratchett, O.B.E., better known as **Terry Pratchett**, has been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. **Jerry Pournelle** reports he has a brain tumor; more to follow. And **J. G. Ballard** has an advanced case of prostate cancer. This has not been a good start to the year.

Representative Mary Whittaker Bono [Baxley] (R-CA) married Representative Cornelius Alexander McGillicuddy IV (R-FL) on **December 15, 2007**. Yes, that's right, Sonny Bono's widow married the great-grandson of Baseball Hall of Famer Connie Mack. This puts a whole alternative spin on "I got you, Babe".

While the good news is that Peter Jackson will indeed be doing the movie adaptation of *The Hobbit*, there is the less good news that there will be a sequel to the book involved, both written and filmed. **Eek! Eek! Eek!**

Fred Pohl, the Senior Science Fiction Writer, mentioned in his autobiography *The Way the Future Was* (1978) how his father had managed to make and lose a fortune. The senior Pohl had obtained the rights to a fabulously popular song called "Tubby the Tuba". Trying to diversify (the way that Mel Korshak did at Shasta Publications, and everyone who's read *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* (1971) and can do anagrams knows how that came out), he started producing other records, failed either to sell them or to ship enough copies of "Tubby the Tuba", and lost the rights.

"Tubby the Tuba" is still available, though the history does not mention Fred Pohl, Sr.:

<http://www.tubbythetuba.com/>

Incidentally, anyone wanting to understand "The Day of the Boomer Droogs" (*Alexiad*, V. 4 #2) can now read the original Fred Pohl story, "The Day of the Boomer Dukes" (1956):

<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/22559>

**A Modest Proposal:** J. K. Rowling should receive the award given by the Greek Government to those who have excelled in the arts and literature. Why?

Because it's the **Τάγμα του Φοίνικος** — er, that is, the *Tagma ton Phoinikos* — oh, the **Order of the Phoenix!**

We regret to report the death of **Erich Kästner** on **January 1, 2008** in Hannover, Land Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony), Germany. Born **March 10, 1900**, Kästner entered the Prussian Army in July of 1918. He was the last surviving soldier of the Imperial German Armies.

*Ich hatt' einen Kameraden,  
Einen bessern findest du nit  
Die Trommel schlug zum Streite,  
Er ging an meiner Seite  
In gleichem Schritt und Trit . . .*

We regret to report the death of **Sir Edmund Percival Hillary, K.G., O.N.Z., K.B.E.** on **January 11, 2008** in the Auckland City Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand. Born **July 20, 1919** in Tuakau, New Zealand, Ed (as he preferred to be called), chose a career as a beekeeper because it left time for him to climb in the winter. He served in the RNZAF during the Second World War.

His fame began with the successful ascent of Mount Everest on **May 29, 1953**. He retained links with the Nepalese peoples, being involved in charitable efforts to improve their lives. His first wife, Louise, and daughter Belinda died in 1975 in a plane crash in Nepal while on such work. Their son Peter himself has climbed Mount Everest, including once with Jamling Tenzing Norgay, the son of his father's climbing partner **Tenzing Norgay**.

Afterwards, Hillary was leader of the Ross Sea section of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, reaching the South Pole with his four-man depot party, called "The Firm", on **January 3, 1958**, thereby becoming the leader of the third expedition to reach the Pole, sixteen days before the expedition's leader **Dr. Vivian Fuchs** (later Sir Vivian).

He was created a Knight of the Garter on

**April 23, 1995.**

The funeral was **January 22** at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Auckland. Among the 600 mourners present were the four surviving climbers of the Everest expedition, and several representatives of the Sherpas including Norbu Tenzing Norgay, another son of Tenzing. During the service, the ice-axe which Hillary had carried to the top of the world lay on his coffin, and the coffin was carried from the church under an arch of ice-axes held by members of the New Zealand Alpine Club.

Sir Ed is survived by his second wife, the former June Mulgrew, his son, Peter, daughter, Sarah, and six grandchildren. To paraphrase Bunyan for the place and time:

"Though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My ice-axe I leave to him that shall succeed me in my explorations, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My frostbites and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me, that I have travelled unto His wild places that shall be my Rewarder." So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

## OBITS

We regret to report the death of **George MacDonald Fraser, O.B.E.**, on **January 3, 2008**. Born **April 2, 1925** in Carlisle, Fraser pursued a varied career, beginning as a rifleman in the Border Regiment, assigned to the Fourteenth Army in Burma, as recounted in his memoirs *Quartered Safe Out Here* (1992). He passed a commissioning board and served as an officer in the Gordon Highlanders, amusingly fictionalizing the period for them in *The General Danced At Dawn* (1970) *McAuslan in the Rough* (1974), and *The Sheikh and the Dustbin* (1988); the first stories were published in the Regimental Journal.

After a career in journalism, he became a full-time writer of historical fiction, from such serious works as *Mr. American* (1980) and *Black Ajax* (1997) to comic romps like *The Pyrates* (1983) and the forthcoming-in-the-States *The Reavers* (2007, 2008). Among his nonfiction works was *The Hollywood History of the World* (1988, 1996), a discussion of the attempts at historical fidelity in movies. He had the experience, having been a Hollywood screenwriter for works such as *The Three Musketeers* (1973), its continuation *The Four*

*Musketeers* (1974), the James Bond film *Octopussy* (1983), and the Conan tie-in *Red Sonja* (1985).

He was best known for the Flashman Papers, the most successful theft of a character ever. The tales of the naughty blackguard of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* all grown up and rampant on a world of pious, hypocritical "civilized" people, cruel, unfeeling "savages", and beautiful, passionate women all waiting for the embrace of a real man, were best sellers, combining meticulous historical research with unflinchingly honest presentation and sparkling prose. Bouncing from disaster to disaster, flush with greed, cowardice, lechery, and knavery, Sir Harry P. Flashman, V. C., Congressional Medal of Honor, San Serafino Order of Purity (4<sup>th</sup> Class), etc. has become an inimitable part of history, for all that he . . . well, whatever. Damn your eyes!

## MONARCHIST NEWS

We are pleased to announce the birth of the **Right Honourable James Alexander Philip Theo Mountbatten-Windsor, styled Viscount Severn** (or as some would have it, **HRH Prince James of Wessex**) on **December 17, 2007**, to Their Royal Highnesses **Prince Edward and Sophie, Earl and Countess of Wessex**.

## DINNER

We want to get together in Denver. Anyone got any ideas?

**IT FLYS?**

By Joseph T Major



The attack on Clark Field in the Philippines is considered one of the greater military embarrassments in American history. In spite of the advance warning from Hawaii, the Army Air Force units there still suffered a devastating assault, with the majority of their planes destroyed by a Japanese air raid, thus making a hollow mockery of the advocacy of American air power in the Pacific as the ultimate deterrent and reprisal. And of course, all the fault of Dugout Doug MacArthur.

That the likely targets in Formosa (Taiwan) were poorly known, if that, and weathered in, that the bombers had been launched, but had flown around waiting for targets before returning to the base, and that the Japanese had hit the field when all the planes had landed and were waiting to be refueled hardly seems to matter. Nevertheless, this was a serious loss for the defenders of the Philippines; eighteen out of thirty-five bombers destroyed.

One of the planes that did survive was a B-17D Flying Fortress, serial number 40-3097, one of only forty-two produced. This plane was patched up and served in the remainder of the campaign, running bombing missions, following the retreat from Leyte in the northern Philippines to Mindinao in the south, after that to the then Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia), and finally, after a last bombing mission against Japanese positions in Borneo, to Australia.

There, continuing the policy of make do and mend, 40-3097 was repaired using the tail of

another B-17, 40-3091. The plane's new pilot, Captain Weldon Smith, renamed the plane (it had been called "Old Betsy") after a then-popular song by bandleader Kay Kyser about a bird that was "half swan and half goose". (The next time anyone talks about how so much better music was in the old days, think about this.) And so, B-17 40-3097 became "The Swoose", with nose art to match (no tightly clad (if at all) women for this warbird!), and considering the rather improvised state of the airframe, the decorator added the dubious observation, "It flies?"

The plane was not combat-worthy (indeed, in October of 1942, the surviving B-17D would be redesignated "RB-17D", indicating an obsolete aircraft) but given the dilapidated status of the air forces in Australia, it was good enough to be used as a general's transport plane.

Shortly thereafter, an Olympic medalist, Captain Frank Kurtz (Bronze, 10-meter diving, Los Angeles, 1932: X Olympiad of the Modern Series), was assigned as the new pilot for the plane. Kurtz was the pilot for General George Brett, Deputy Commander in Australia, even when Brett fell out with General MacArthur and was transferred to the Caribbean Defense Command. The general continued to use "The Swoose" as his private transport plane until the end of the war; Kurtz was transferred to the European Theater, where he named his new B-17G "The Swoose". And, as we shall see, something else, too.

Captain Kurtz was assigned to fly a group of visiting inspectors around Australia during a visit in June of 1942. One was a general, another was a congressman, and everyone had to have his turn at the controls. Which meant that the plane went off course, ran very low on fuel, and had to make a very urgent landing on an Australian farm in Queensland. The congressman made the call from the farmhouse and fuel was flown out to them the next morning. For this and other valiant deeds, the congressman, who was also a lieutenant-commander in the Navy Reserve, was awarded the Silver Star. You guessed right, Lyndon B. Johnson.

The plane spent the next few years after the war being passed around from one location to another, deteriorating, never quite worth restoring, never quite getting the display it would seem to merit, as a last survivor of the desperate hours in the Pacific. It flew to its last stop (for now) in 1953, albeit two engines went out on the flight and a third just before landing, making a hair-raising demonstration of flight redundancy.

At present, "The Swoose" is in storage at the National Air and Space Museum's Paul E. Garber Preservation, Restoration, and Storage Facility in Silver Hill, Maryland. Apparently with stress on the latter. Negotiations are under way to have the airplane transferred to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, where we can see it.

The Air Force Museum currently has in its collection and on display the B-17G "Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby", a later model, which served in the campaign against Germany until it was interned in Sweden. How that plane ended up in France is another story. The restoration of "Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby" took ten years, which does not portend well for "The Swoose".

"The Swoose" became well-known as the result of a book by William Lindsay White, a war correspondent, son of famous editor William Allen White, and his father's successor as editor of *The Emporia Gazette*. After writing *They Were Expendable* (1942), the story of the PT Boats in the Philippines, White turned to writing about the aerial campaign, bringing out *Queens Die Proudly* (1943), the story of the air campaign in the Philippines. Not surprisingly, he put the best face on the matter that he could. There is a good bit of material about "The Swoose" in the book. (I read it in high school.)

The bulk of the book is interviews of Kurtz and his initial crew. It begins with a factual description of the bombing mission on Clark Field. This description includes a painful and moving scene where Captain Kurtz describes how he found his crew on the field, lying in a row, all killed in the attack.

Another "debunking" item presented there was a straightforward decision of Colin Kelly's very real heroism in holding his bomber on a straight course so that the rest of the crew could escape, at the sacrifice of his own life. (The mythology was that Kelly had crashed the plane into the battleship *Haruna*, sinking her. The *Haruna* was finally sunk on July 28, 1945, at Kure naval base, in the raids on the last of the Japanese fleet.) Kurtz's description of the incident evokes the difference between real heroism and melodramatic heroism. (Think of the difference between Captain Geary and Captain Falco in John G. Hemry's *The Lost Fleet* series.)

In fact, you may already know of the plane, by extension, so to speak. Frank Kurtz (who rose to the rank of Colonel and died in 1996) had a daughter, born in Omaha on September 6, 1944. She doesn't have a stage name: actress Swoosie Kurtz *is* named "Swoosie

Kurtz" — she was named after the airplane. As she has said about her name: "Change it to what — Tiffany? It's been an advantage. It's unforgettable. I'm the only one."

If the Air Force Museum has any sense of history, if it gets to put the plane on exhibit, she should speak at the dedication.

Boeing B-17D	
Maximum Speed:	323 mph @ 25,000 feet [520 kph @ 7600 m]
Cruising Speed:	227 mph [365 kph]
Service Ceiling:	37,000 feet [11,000 m]
Range:	3400 miles (max) [5400 km]
Span:	103 feet 9 inches [31.62 m]
Length:	67 feet 11 inches [20.7 m]
Height:	15 feet 5 inches [4.7 m]
Weight:	48,500 pounds gross [22,000 kg]
Armament:	4800 lb bombs [2200 kg] 1 .30 caliber & 6 .50 caliber MG
Engines:	Four Wright R-1820-65 radials @ 1200 hp each

Source:  
<http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/>

Swoosie Kurtz:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoosie\\_Kurtz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swoosie_Kurtz)  
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001436/>

The Swoose:  
<http://www.463rd.com/swoose.htm>

**USS ROBIN (R38)**

by Joseph T Major

The year 1943 was a lean and quiet one for the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. The previous year had seen the string of hard-fought carrier battles that had exhausted the Japanese Carrier Striking Force, but at a high cost of its own: USS *Lexington* (CV-2) lost at Coral Sea (May 8), USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) at Midway (June 7), and USS *Hornet* (CV-8) at Santa Cruz (October 16), while USS *Wasp* (CV-7) had been sunk by the extremely lucky *kaigun shosa* Kinashi Takakazu, commander of the boat I-19, on September 15. (The battleship USS *North Carolina* (BB-55) was seriously damaged in the same attack, apparently by

another torpedo from I-19.)

Of the other carriers, USS *Saratoga* (CV-3) had been severely damaged after her second torpedoing of the war on August 25, and was only now returning to service. USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) had also been damaged, at Santa Cruz, and was receiving a long, long-overdue refit. USS *Ranger* (CV-4) was not really up to serving in the Pacific, though she had done good service at the invasion of North Africa.

America's shipbuilding industry was getting into full swing, and indeed the USS *Essex* (CV-9), first of the great flock of carriers that would eventually bring the war to the shores of Japan itself, had been commissioned on the last day of 1942, and she would be joined by six more of that class in 1943, including four carrying on the names of the four carriers sunk in 1942, and the nine *Independence* class light carriers. But that did not help now.

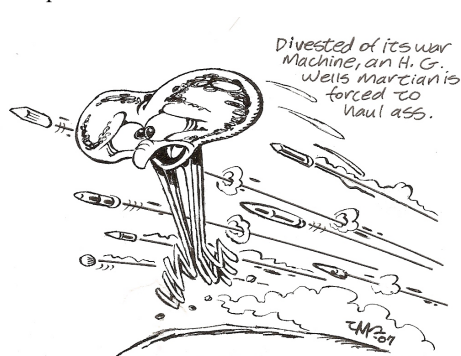
Therefore it was with some relief to the hard-pressed sailors of the Pacific Fleet that the aircraft carrier USS *Robin* arrived in the Pacific in March of 1943. Her air group was small, some fifty F4F Wildcats and TBM Avengers. (By way of contrast, at Midway the *Enterprise*, *Hornet*, and *Yorktown* had each carried some eighty Wildcats, TBD Devastator torpedo bombers, and SBD Dauntless dive bombers.) Indeed, she soon swapped out and took on a group of Wildcats from the *Saratoga*, operating a purely fighter air group.

During this period the *Saratoga* and the *Robin* participated in air strikes against Japanese positions in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea. The Wildcat pilots took part in training in air-direction, a resource that the U.S. Navy had decided was necessary to develop.

As the Essex-class carriers came into service, *Robin* was no longer needed for the moment, and at the end of the year returned home for another refit, after which she would return to the Pacific in 1944, eventually joining Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet in the operations supporting the invasion of Okinawa, during which she sustained a kamakaze strike on May 5. When the fleet command was transferred, *Robin* was assigned to Halsey's Third Fleet (actually, of course, remaining with the same fleet, only the commander changed) and participated in the final attacks on Japan itself.

But you won't find this information in such works as Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison's definitive official history *United States Naval Operations in World War 2* (1947-1962). Not

that it didn't happen, for indeed these events are quite true.



Perhaps Morison was a trifle embarrassed that the U.S. Navy had to borrow a ship. For "USS *Robin*" was an unofficial code name. The ship was actually HMS *Victorious*, already famous for having launched the first airstrike against the *Bismarck* (as the sailors of USCGS *Modoc* could testify, having seen the Swordfish biplane torpedo bombers go in to the attack) after the Battle of the Denmark Straits.

The *Victorious* had also flown off airplanes for an attack on the *Tirpitz* in her Norwegian fjord base in March of 1942, and been part of the covering force for the ill-fated Murmansk convoy PQ-17. In November of that year she participated in the North African landings with the USS *Ranger*. After her initial Pacific excursion, the *Victorious* would participate in yet another airstrike on the *Tirpitz* in April of 1944, which crippled the German ship, making her vulnerable to the fatal air attack by the Lancaster bombers of 617 Squadron, the Dambusters. (An enthusiastic fan has created a YouTube clip of scenes from the movie *The Dam Busters* with the sound track from *Star Wars* [ST IV: A New Hope] of the attack on the Death Star. Where do you think Lucas got the scene from?)

The designed air group of the ship was only thirty-three aircraft, but by such recourses as "deck-parking" (leaving aircraft on the flight deck, instead of keeping them struck down in the hangar), during the Pacific campaigns the *Victorious* was able to operate up to fifty aircraft. Besides the above-mentioned Grumman Wildcats (British designation "Martlet") and Avengers (British designation initially "Tarpon"), and Fairey Swordfish, the *Victorious* at various times operated Fairey Albacore torpedo bombers, Fairey Fulmar

fighters, Hawker Sea Hurricane fighters, Supermarine Seafire fighters (these last two being "navalised" versions of the very successful land-based aircraft), Chance-Vought Corsair fighters, and Fairey Barracuda torpedo bombers.

(Fairey Aviation is now Williams-Fairey Engineering, a maker of portable bridges. Hawker and Supermarine were among the companies merged eventually into BAE Systems. Grumman is now part of Northrop Aircraft. Chance-Vought is now Vought Aircraft.)

After operating in the Indian Ocean, *Victorious* participated in the fighting described above. The actual assignment was with the British Pacific Force, initially designated Task Force 57, and as they became more able to operate with the Americans, Task Group 38.5. *Victorious* was among the BPF ships that withdrew just before the Japanese surrender; the plan had been to have the ships refuel, repair, and refit and then participate in the invasion of Kyushu, and this plan could not be altered for the majority of them. Later, she was employed in the repatriation of prisoners of war and returning soldiers before briefly becoming a training ship.

Between 1950 and 1958, she was heavily rebuilt in order to be able to operate jet aircraft. This rebuilding gave *Victorious* an angled flight deck, a British development that made it possible for carriers to land and launch airplanes at the same time.

From 1958 to 1967 *Victorious* served in the Home Fleet and Far East Fleet, operating more modern aircraft such as the Phantom jet fighter. Defence cuts led to her decommissioning and disposal in 1969. The announcement of the decision to decommission came on November 23, 1967, the day before the planned recommissioning ceremony. It was not a very happy party.

HMS *Victorious* ["USS *Robin*"]

Built by Vickers Armstrong, Newcastle

Laid down May 4, 1937

Launched September 14, 1939

Commissioned May 15, 1941

Scrapped beginning July 15, 1969

Length:	
Overall:	748 feet 6 inches [228 m]
Waterline:	710 feet [216 m]
Beam:	112 feet [34.1m]
Draught:	29.3 feet [8.93 m]

Displacement:	
Standard:	23,000 tons
Full Load:	28,619 tons

Flight deck	
Length:	742 feet [226 m]
Width:	95 feet [29 m]

Maximum speed:	30.5 knots [56.5 kph]
Endurance:	12,000 nautical miles @ 14 knots [22,000 km @ 26 kph]

Complement:	1286 (peacetime) 1750 (war)
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For further information:

*The Aircraft Carrier Victorious (Anatomy of the Ship)* by Ross Watton (US Naval Institute Press; 2004; ISBN 978-0-85177-996-6; \$45.00)

<http://www.fleetairmarchive.net/Ships/Victorious.html>

[http://www.hazegray.org/navhist/carriers/uk\\_fleet.htm#r38](http://www.hazegray.org/navhist/carriers/uk_fleet.htm#r38)

I liked the Watton book so much I ended up buying it twice. After I couldn't find my first copy (and at \$45, note), I bought a second on sale at Borders (for 30% off), and then, of course, found the first copy. Now the University of Louisville Library has a copy (it also has a copy of Heinlein's Children).

— JTM

## CAR PROBLEMS

by Joe

Sunday, January 27, coming home, Grant's car died. After reviewing our options, he offered to drive Lisa to work if he could use her car. And that went fine for a day.

Tuesday, Dale came by and managed to get the problem solved, but the car's battery was still flat. Thanks to Dale by the way for his constant and helpful assistance.

Tuesday morning had been pretty good, with temperatures in the fifties. But then it got colder and windier. Very windy. Also, it rained most of the day.

At eleven-thirty on Tuesday night Grant called with a little problem. He couldn't get the car doors open. Accordingly, we set out into the chilly night. Lisa thoughtfully brought along the spray can of deicing fluid.

The storm had caused all sorts of damage

to the power net. Areas (including the tunnel on I-64) were dark and traffic signals had gone over to the flashing-red mode. Winds were still making maneuvering tricky; fortunately the roads were hardly used, most people having more sense than to go out at midnight on a night like that.

We got to the Charter building, and Grant got into the car, looking immensely relieved. Part of it was that the car had warmed up by then; though, since the wind couldn't get to us in it, it wasn't as cold as the time in 1989 when my car had frozen up, the coolant hoses had burst, and Grant had pushed the car to the dealers'. Payback takes a while, I guess.

We got to Lisa's car where I sprayed the deicing fluid into the door. After a moment, Lisa pulled and it opened. I think that water had seeped into the door and frozen.

We followed Grant home, just in case something went wrong, but fortunately nothing did. With one thing and another it wasn't until one in the morning that Lisa and I got to bed.

Grant had observed that it did not seem as cold at home as it had at the office. The part of Louisville where we live is built up, a residential neighborhood. Charter is in the East End, an area with abundant green space, where winds can blow unhampered.

He also observed that cell phones have made a substantial difference in how we live. As when, instead of bothering to go around to the other side of the Charter building, I called him and said where we were. (This was almost as interesting at the time in Pensacola last year when we were laggard getting to a banquet and Lisa's father called to see where we were. I got the call just as we went into the hotel where the banquet was and stood behind him to answer the question.)

As Lisa said: "Kentucky — It isn't a climate, it's an experience."

## LEST DARKNESS FALL, AAR AAR

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**PIRATE FREEDOM**

by Gene Wolfe

(Tor; 2007;

ISBN 978-0-7653-1878-7; \$24.95)

When not editing the Flashman Papers, the late George MacDonald Fraser, O.B.E. had discussed history in a broader sense, from his own personal history (*Quartered Safe Out Here* (1992)) to his own historical background (*The Steel Bonnets* (1971), to history in general (*The Hollywood History of the World* (1988, 1996)), and a novel about a topic covered in that last book: *The Pyrates* (1983), a book that

can be described as totally insane.

Christopher, our narrator, has obviously not imbibed the wisdom of Lieutenant (ret.) Fraser, Gordon Highlanders, late Private Fraser, Border Regiment. Just as he obviously hasn't read a certain book by L. Sprague de Camp. But then, they don't go much for secular books at seminary.

This begins in the future: "I was ten, I think, when my father and I moved to Cuba. The communists had lost power, and my father was going to run a casino in Havana." [Page 17]. Christopher, the ten-year-old, is sent to a re-opened Catholic boarding school in Cuba. Gradually, he drifts into becoming a novice. He casually notices that somehow they started doing the Mass in Latin again. Then he decides to take a sabbatical before taking his vows. On the way to Havana, he begins to notice a certain decline in technology.

And so this pirate story begins. Wolfe seems to be inspired by de Camp's argument that time-travel can't really be explained, if not Finney's theory of imagining oneself in the era sufficiently well for it to become real.

The big problem for such stories is that no matter what you need for a decent plot, the traveler is hardly likely to be the man who just happens to know the era and the technological developments needed. Tortha Karf and Verkan Vall came to the conclusion that Calvin Morrison was a profound rarity (*Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (1964)). Martin Padway had his share of faults and failures (*Lest Darkness Fall* (1939)). Heading off to Bronze-Age Greece and becoming Tyrannos Autokrator, thanks to one's indomitable will and well-chosen collection of supremely useful items, is improbable in a hero, and more than a little absurd in a villain, no matter how much it balances the plot.

So Christopher, or Crisóforo, isn't going to become Emperor of the Caribbean. Indeed, his first few days, he barely stays out of trouble. His career from landsman to sailor to buccaneer to pirate (and there was a distinction between the last two, the Buccaneers were a specific group), goes by back and forth.

There is a good bit of adventure in it, the climax being a daring venture across Panama into the South Seas. From references, the story takes place in the last part of the seventeenth century; Christopher's comander Captain Burt knows what a guinea is (the first guinea — 21s or in modern decimal £1.05 — was minted in 1663), but Port Royal has not sunk yet (the big quake was in 1692).

Wolfe uses detail without overwhelming the reader; of course, that he has chosen to

present this novel as Christopher writing down his story and pausing to explain things helps in this regard.

One subplot is the slow and moving development of Christopher's evasion of vows, in a sense. He encounters a woman in a house in Spain, shut away from others; then finds her again, on the run from that life. The development of their relationship and her character builds on the structure of the book.

It's equally clear that piracy is not a romantic thing. While it is realistically presented as a more communal society than other contemporaneous ones, at the same time it's also made clear that it lives on killing and robbing. Christopher says of his recruitment to piracy by Captain Burt: "Here is the thing. The clothes were different, the talk was different, and even the guns and rackets were different, but he wanted me to be a wiseguy." [Page 57] He applies the language and experiences of his own life to this new one, that is. Who you wit'?

In spite of the temptations, Christopher preserves his basic integrity. Which has its own dimensions; when his girlfriend gets pregnant, he tries very hard to ensure they can have a normal life. However, the strictures of time do get in the way . . .

This is not your ordinary time travel story; Christopher does not involve himself in the detail of how, and the how is never presented in the text, it just happens. Neither does he attempt to change the world.

Wolfe's writing style, particularly in *The Book of the New Sun* (1980-1987), was such that he could use obscure and arcane words to convey meaning (but then he used them *correctly*). Here, he employs a more commonplace vocabulary, with the proper terms, explaining them as he goes. I am minded of the note in *Pilgrim Son: A Personal Odyssey* (1971), the third volume of John Masters's autobiography; he was imploring an editor to let him use military terms in a novel, by as example writing a sea adventure without using technical terms for parts of a ship and commands.

There is one digression on a subject of "modern" concern, during one of the future sections, that needs to be said:

If you teach a girl to act like a sheep, you do her a lot of harm. But if you teach a boy to be a sheep, you do a lot more. If the girl is lucky, there will be boys around to protect her. But they

have to be real boys, not sheep. A boy who has been taught to be a sheep will not protect himself or anybody else. If he is molested and does not fight, the people who taught him to be a sheep are at least as much to blame as the molester. Maybe more.

As for encouraging violence, I have to wonder how many of those priests who molested boys thought the boys wanted it and enjoyed it, even if they would not say so. Many of them — maybe all of them — must have thought that if the boy did not like it, he would yell and fight. The boys were the victims of those priests, I am not arguing that they were not. But those priests were the victims of the people who had taught the boys that even a little bit of violence is the worst thing in the world. The priests had only one victim, or that is how it seems to me. Those people had two, because the priest was another.

— *Pirate Freedom*, Pages 210-211

Christopher, fortunately, had a woman to go back to, even if she were centuries agone.

(Speaking of Fraser, his latest novel, *The Reavers*, will be released in the States in April of 2008. It does for the Border Reavers what *The Pyrates* did for pirates. Aar aar aar.)

## THE WAR OF TWO SYSTEMS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE LOST FLEET: COURAGEOUS**  
by "Jack Campbell" [John G. Henry]  
(Ace; 2007, ISBN 978-0-441-01567-2;  
\$7.99)

Sequel to *The Lost Fleet: Dauntless*  
and *The Lost Fleet: Fearless*

When we left Captain John Geary and his fleet, they had learned a lesson the hard way. Since the temporary defection of Captain Falco and those commanders who were tired of — well, tired of strategy and learned the error of their ways the hard way (except for Fighting Falco himself, who has gone comfortingly mad), the captain thrust beyond his own time and into command has at least the obedience of the fleet. The problem that is his greatest concern is that to some extent he also has the *worship* of the fleet, a burden he fears he cannot live up to, and cannot live with.

And then, he's losing the support of the one person in the fleet he can't order around, and so can get involved with because she is not a



subordinate. This is about the last thing he does at this time.

Their operational situation (the area of military operations that lies between strategy and tactics) is deteriorating. The ships are taking casualties, when not being destroyed, and there is never quite enough time to replenish as completely as would be decent. This is a consideration that is all too often overlooked in gallant descriptions of great smashing battles with much carnage and the commander with the hero-light surviving on a battered flagship. There isn't going to be a Decisive Battle here; just survival.

Hemry has done what his pseudonym's namesake would have found eminently commendable; explored the consequences of the technology and used them to further the plot. As when Geary has to consult with Captain Falco, who is under arrest and in confinement, believing that he is still in charge. He can go there virtually, and not have to worry about being taken hostage.

The key problem is becoming not just the survival of the fleet, though. The hints that lie beyond that are darker and more sinister; the irrationality of the conflict may not just be because the leaders of both sides are as daft as Falco and stupider. (Poul Anderson's *The War of Two Worlds* (1959) perhaps?)

The conflict is draining, as said. Geary is taking on a greater and greater burden and his future is darker. Assuming there is one.

*The Lost Fleet: Valiant* is forthcoming, and the series is set for a total of six books . . . [To Be Continued]

(In a conversation with me, Grant McCormick raised the interesting consideration that this might have begun as a *Battlestar Galactica* (current series) tie-in. Hm.)

by Christopher Stires  
(Zumaya Publications; 2005;  
ISBN 978-1-55410-219-8; \$14.99)

The mockumentary *C.S.A.: Confederate States of America* (2004) perhaps takes its premise a little too far; i.e., the opening scene, with its ad for "Confederate Family Insurance" that protects not only the family but their property — and the camera pans past a slave trimming a hedge. While the film is often sloppy, careless, poorly extrapolative, and even hysterical, nevertheless it does touch on a old and ugly tradition of racial denigration, degradation, and discrimination. Many of the advertisements in the film with racially bigoted and crude products and presentations are for items that actually existed, for example.

But most such extrapolations are less driven; the assumption is that an independent Confederacy would find that slavery would prove politically if not economically burdensome, and the Peculiar Institution would be abolished by the end of the century. Less so, the particular attitudes that are attendant upon it.

There had been earlier suppositions, but the work that put Confederate-victory AH on the map was McKinlay Kantor's *If The South Had Won the Civil War* (1960, 1961). Kantor has no racial tension, and a peaceful end of slavery, reflecting the optimism of the early civil-rights era. That attitude changed, and to take an example of a different sort of secession somewhat away from the idea of Confederate survival, if not from secession itself, by the end of that decade we had works like Edwin Corley's *Siege* (1969) which went rather to the other extreme in the racial-harmony department. (And then there came Spider Robinson's *Night of Power* (1985).)

Stires's departure that leads to the survival of the Confederacy is unbalanced. He gives the reader a striking scene where a lucky Reb patrol captures Cump Sherman, then finds an even more significant casualty in the vicinity. However, the description of a Gettysburg-triumphant Army of Northern Virginia (due to the coordination between Lee and Jackson) sacking Washington City seems a bit far-fetched.

Jumping to the present, Stires portrays a Confederacy nervously divided regarding Civil Rights, and worried about its "colored" population. With this promising beginning about a differently-developed society facing real changes, the author pushes it aside in order to run through a standard-issue thriller plot, with huge financial entities plundering,

kidnapping, and killing without restraint, and generally using governments as background. There'll be none of this holding up a mirror to real racial differences and tensions and analyzing them by seeing how it might have been otherwise, of course not.

Oh, and having a character named "Cullen Davis" summons untoward associations for some readers. Texas oil equipment dealer T. Cullen Davis was, until the Simpson trial, the richest man ever put on trial (and acquitted, of course) for murder. (For more, see *Texas v. Davis* by Mike Cochran (1980) and *Blood Will Tell* by Gary Cartwright (1979).)

### DRAGONTWITCH

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*ANNE MCCAFFREY:*

*A Life With Dragons*

by Robin Roberts

(University Press of Mississippi; 2007;  
ISBN 978-1-57806-998-9; \$28.00)

Now one would think that such a work is not necessary, given that there is a biography written with the full assistance and approval of herself by her son and heir, *Dragonholder: The Life and Dreams of Anne McCaffrey* (1999). But, as Anne's friend Isaac Asimov said of his own efforts along that line, there would have to be a biography to correct the inadequacies of his own copious autobiographical output, saying such things as that he graduated from Columbia University night school. (For those who have somehow managed to avoid reading said Asimovian works, he was enrolled in a unit of Columbia that was later folded into the night school.) How else would we have learned, for example, of the amusing offer that Marion Zimmer Bradley made to McCaffrey [Page 164]?

Roberts, author of *Sexual Generations: "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and Gender* (1999), has also done *Anne McCaffrey: A Critical Companion* (1996) and other works using such terms. From which one may guess her perspective. A close reading of this book will uncover an unusual lapse. For all that the title says "Dragons", there is nothing about the composition of the original works: *Dragonflight*

(1968) and *Dragonquest* (1971). Roberts discusses in detail the intimate relationship McCaffrey had with her agent Virginia Kidd, who seems to have midwived these works.

However, as anyone who read *Science Fiction Review*, or the above-mentioned *Dragonholder*, would know, McCaffrey gave due tribute to the one person who went over

the idea and invited her to develop it in more detail, wondering about the consequences of her concept and ordering her to work it out. But then, I am left with the impression Roberts wouldn't be mentioning this person: John W. Campbell, Jr, editor of *Analog*.

Just as she doesn't subject the works to anything more than the lightest of critiques. What comes to mind (but not to those pages) is David Langford's analysis of the lack of both continuity and consistency in *Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern* (1983). For those who haven't access to his brilliant prose, if I may summarize: the story does not fit the background given from "Moreta's Ride". The concept is that Moreta can deliver the latest vaccine to everyone on Pern because she can travel in time as well as teleport; which means that instead of the exhausting nonstop marathon described, she can work an eight-hour day, forty-hour week, take weekend breaks with her friends (or even herself, *The Man Who Folded Himself* fashion), and adjourn in the middle of the campaign for a two-week vacation on a sunny beach on Southern Continent, then go right back to the moment where she left off.

Roberts also mentions McCaffrey's engagement with fandom. Not, however, such debacles as the non-arrival of the Impression stage set for Conadian in 1994; or worse yet, DraConls. Or the peculiar problems of fan fiction (i.e., McCaffrey only permitted it provided it was set in a period long after the main continuity, then in *All The Weyrs of Pern* (1991) zapped them).

It's not altogether without value. The discussion of the disintegration of McCaffrey's marriage to Wayne Johnson (or why the man born "Todd Johnson" now goes by "Todd McCaffrey") is interesting. (There is a basic analysis of the conflict in a letter from John Campbell to Virginia Kidd reprinted in *The Letters of John W. Campbell*. but Roberts hasn't availed herself of this resource.)

This book will be eligible for the Hugo this year, for what it's worth.

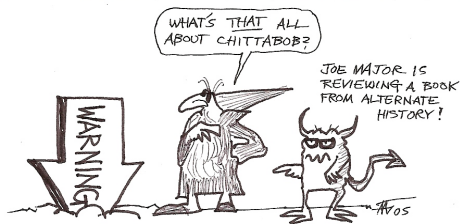
### INVESTIGATIO LOCI DELICTI: BAIAE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*UNDER VESUVIUS*

by John Maddox Roberts  
(St. Martin's Minotaur; 2007;  
ISBN 0-312-37088-6; \$23.95)

"S.P.Q.R. XI"

At the end of our last thrilling adventure, A



### C.S.A. v. DAVIS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*REBEL NATION*

*Point of Law* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. vi #1), D. Caecilius Metellus the Younger, our narrator, Rome's ace criminal investigator (since his competition has retired, as may be implied from this text, not to mention the other guy's stories), has managed to dodge the slingstone and not only beat his own rap, but get elected Praetor. It's not what it was, understand, he could be called upon to take gladius in hand and lead an army against the Gauls, but more likely he would be prosecuting the case of *Populi v. Asterix et Obelix* for getting drunk and throwing a menhir through the roof of the local temple.

That is to say, Decius has the position of *praetor peregrinus*; he judges legal cases involving non-Romans. With what happens to him next, he might wish he were only trying Xena for unauthorized bounty-hunting.

Though this episode in his life begins peaceably enough, with his first stop being in Campania, at the lavish villa of Q. Hortensius Hortalus, someone who would provide an inspiration to Donald Trump. Indeed, his peregrinations (so to speak) are of remarkable ease and lavishness. Them that has, gets, and Decius intends to get.

Until he gets to Baiae. There, he runs into a little problem involving a priestess, who died under very strange circumstances. After which, within a short time people all connected to the prime suspect are being offed in a similar method.

As usual, the greater struggle of Roman politics at the time gets involved. While Decius is, like it or not, in his wife's uncle's faction (er, that's Julius Caesar, amici), there are representatives from the Optimates, including of all people Sextus Pompey (the Great One's younger son), turning up. And there is even a guest appearance from Cicero (*sans* Gordianus the Finder, but I believe Saylor has already written that era in Gordianus's life). Not to mention someone named Norbanus (the name of one of the more interesting characters in Roberts's Alternate History series, of which the final volume is desperately desired).

Roberts has become very familiar with the culture and society of ancient Rome. Those who still miss seeing Vorenus, Pullo, and their betters, well their bosses, scramble about *Rome* ought to like this.

Having conducted the trial and received the judgment, before passing sentence Decius has to take the defendant out for one last investigation, where the case comes to a wrap-up and resolution, and the *praetor peregrinus* will be going on to his province and the tumult

of Roman politics when . . . [Narration Resumatur]

### RECYCLING IN ACTION

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE ARCHIMEDES CODEX:  
How a Medieval Prayer Book Is Revealing  
the True Genius of Antiquity's Greatest  
Scientist**

by Reviel Netz & William Noel  
(Da Capo Press; 2007;  
ISBN 978-0-306-81580-5; \$27.50)

I thought it somewhat pointless to investigate the theft of a manuscript, but if those involved had brought the matter to the attention of the *praetor peregrinus*, I had to act. Even if someone had stolen a manuscript of Archimedes and reused the pages to inscribe a text of some Judean sect . . .

— Not by John Maddox Roberts

In John Maddox Roberts's *Hannibal's Children* (2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. I # iv), Roman envoy Marcus Cornelius Scipio encounters a fascinating albeit derided school of scholars in the Great Library of Alexandria, and in order to keep the Library (and the city) from being burned by the Carthaginians and their Roman auxiliaries (commanded by his rival Titus Norbanus), he deploys an extraordinary array of most un-scholarly advances in the technological field. That might well be dismissed as a wish-fulfillment work; but after reading this story, which is nevertheless quite true, one could well believe that Archimedes could have worked on a submersible and a glider. He discovered infinity after all.

*The Archimedes Codex* is an intriguing story of two levels of scientific investigation, bridged by a complex and fascinating history. In the third century B.C.[E.], we have the research of Archimedes of Syrakuse himself; his thoughts on mathematics and natural philosophy and his application of those to engineering. This work contains two works that had heretofore been lost — “The Method of Mechanical Theorems” and “Stomachion” — and the first known Greek copy of a third — “On Floating Bodies”. “Stomachion” is interesting in that it describes Classical Greek tangrams, getting into the recondite mathematical field of combinatorics. (See Robert van Gulik's Judge Dee mystery *The Chinese Nail Murders* (1956) for another example of using tangrams.) “The Method”, sadly incomplete, is the essay which discusses

infinitesimals — nineteen hundred years before Newton and Leibnitz. There are also copies of the known works “Equilibrium of Planes”, “Spiral Lines”, “The Measurement of the Circle”, and “Sphere and Cylinder”.

The chapters devoted to describing the mathematical theorems explicated in the work are I fancy too recondite for the average reader. Even if the reader is not the mathematician they are aimed at, one can see the methodology. It is as if Archimedes, like Leonardo da Vinci or Isaac Newton, were a man out of his time, thinking in ways that no one else in the world was ready to comprehend.

The biography of Archimedes is difficult. In some ways, we know little about his life. For example, in his treatise “The Sand Reckoner” (source of the title of Gillian Bradshaw's novel of 2001) Archimedes refers to someone called “Phedias Akoupatros”. It is possible that this is a scribal error, a typo, and he was referring to “*Phedia tou amou patros*” — “Phedias, my father” [Page 35]. This is, as the authors note, an example of how much we have to read into how little.

Yet personally, we know a good bit about him. Archimedes was in the habit of sending out false proofs to trick people. He corresponded with an Alexandrian named Dositheus — which was the Greek equivalent of “Matiyahu”, Matthew, and apparently almost everyone named Dositheus was Jewish.

Archimedes also wrote playfully. The famous Cattle Problem, for example, is a poem as well as a word problem for a set of seven equations in eight unknowns. Here the authors make one error; the solution to the second part is a figure of 206,544 digits [Page 58] (for what it's worth, approximately  $7.76 \times 10^{206544}$ ) but the first part had solutions that are integral multiples of 50,389,082. Which goes to show that Helios ran a big spread and probably still didn't eat his own beef unless he had dinner with Xena.

The modern rendering also has problems. Sometime between when it was first discovered that the book was indeed a palsimpest, in 1906, and today, someone decided to enhance the value of the manuscript. Said enhancement involved painting pictures of the Four Evangelists over four pages of the text. The effort required to read what lay beneath this additional labor of work was a triumph of modern science.

Also described is the procedure that unintentionally preserved this work; the making of the palsimpest. The priestly scribe who wrote the prayer book signed it. So, by

recycling this pagan work, on the fourteenth day of April of the year of the world 6737 (i.e., AD 1229) Father John Myronas saved it for later times. A prayer book was something to be saved and treasured, understand.

For the completist, Father John needed more parchment than he had Archimedes. The codex contains pages from works by the orator Hyperides (the defender of Phryne), a commentary on Aristotle, and some Byzantine texts. It seems quite the treasure.

From there, it was picked over by Constantin von Tischendorf, the finder of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, one of the earliest manuscripts of the Christian Bible, who took some pages with him. Thus, as with many ancient manuscripts, it's scattered around.

The last few years of the Codex have been in some ways the most stressful. The authors trace its conveyance from Constantinople to its current residence in New Jersey. In his memoir *King of the Confessors* (1981) Thomas D. Hoving, the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, describes the shadowy underworld of artifacts and collectables. The Archimedes Codex passed through this, which is why among other things we have the painted-over pages.

In the twenty-first century A.D./C.E., we have the analysis of a battered, recycled work that contains, hidden beneath its text, the other text of the 2400-year-old work. The analysis of the battered pages of the Codex employed scientific techniques of amazing detail and interest. Reading those faint words beneath the prayers was done with advanced methods of X-raying, infrared and ultraviolet imaging, and digital analysis. Technology has given us a vast armamentarium of methods with which to recover the lost secrets of the past. Archimedes's children have learned his ways and used them to rescue his works.

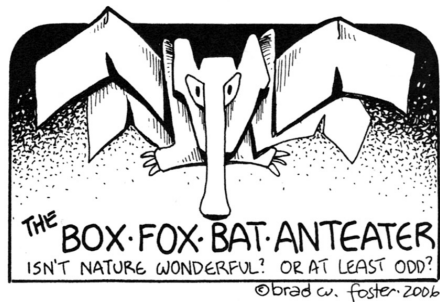
### GONE WITH THE YEARS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE BOOK OF LOST BOOKS:  
An Incomplete History of All the Great  
Books You'll Never Read**  
by Stuart Kelly  
(Random House; 2005;  
ISBN 1-4000-6297-7; \$24.95)

He said it was incomplete, and sure enough he didn't mention Archimedes's “The Method of Mechanical Theorems”.

Kelly got a first at Oxford reading English language and literature. This obviously qualifies him to write epic fantasy, and if anyone approaches him with the eight existing

pages of “The New Shadow” and asks him to complete it, I will be saddened, particularly if he does. (Or worse yet, authoring *The Hobbit II: Arwen, Warrior Princess*.)



This work is a set of briefessays discussing famous lost works; items known to have existed, but no longer available. Earlier works, of course, suffered the many perils of pre-printing assault. Such as the Sack of Constantinople, decried by Netz and Noel in *The Archimedes Codex*. (Dig up the Doge’s bones!)

Later ones were constrained by the hazards of production; for example, Shakespeare’s plays weren’t really meant for anything beyond use at the theater! (Which is why, for example, *Cardenio*, a substantial obstacle to the Oxfordian Theory, was lost. [Pages 143-144])

And finally, once reproduction and storage became easier, there came the problems of individual failing. For example, Charles Dickens offered to tell Queen Victoria the ending of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* [Page 260], but she declined. She didn’t know he hadn’t written down an outline!

*The Book of Lost Books* is a look beyond the edges of what is to the mists of what might have been, what has been lost, and what lies beyond.

### “COUNTERFEIT VALOR”?

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**OPERATION BROKEN REED:**  
*Truman’s Secret North Korean Spy Mission That Averted World War III*  
by Lt. Col. Arthur L. Boyd  
[and Michael Peterson]  
(Carroll & Graf; 2007;  
ISBN 978-0-7867-2086-6; \$26.99)

Colonel Boyd has Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is not uncommon, albeit the assumption of it is also not uncommon. His PTSD comes from an uncommon source.

This book is the simple tale of a complex mission. In 1952, then Lieutenant Boyd was asked to volunteer for a crucial, high-risk mission. If he survived at all, he would get neither honor nor recognition, merely the reward of having supremely served his country.

The mission was to infiltrate North Korea as part of a team of specialists. Their pose would be as the surviving crew of a shot-down B-29 being taken for interrogation. Boyd, being in the Signal Corps, would be the radioman.

The team, ten men all unknown to each other and using pseudonyms, were assembled in Japan and taken to Korea in a submarine, where they went ashore to meet the two other members, two Nationalist Chinese infiltrators who were using specially modified American halftracks, ostensibly as prisoner transport, but able to conceal weapons and equipment.

The team traversed North Korea, picking up intelligence and transmitting it to American stations. Just before they reached their retrieval point, the team was ambushed, killing seven of the Americans and apparently the two Chinese as well. Boyd and two wounded men made their way to the coast, where they were recovered.

The two other men went into surgery, and Boyd was refused information on their fate or even their real identities. He did, however, receive a telephone call from President Truman thanking him for his efforts.

Oh-kay. This book has received effusive reviews from reviewers on Amazon.com and Military.com and Boyd does not seem to have made any military errors. However, there are some problems.

One of the first pops up right away, where Boyd says that the British broke the German codes. This conversation is supposedly taking place in 1952. Er, no, that wasn’t generally known then and if Boyd talked about it he was violating security regulations.

The reason this mission is so secret is that by orders, all records of the mission were destroyed. This does mean that written confirmation need not be pursued. The parallel is with *Op JB* (1995) by “Christopher Creighton”, where it is asserted that a covert effort involving the support of hundreds of Allied military personnel in Berlin in March-April 1945 was kept entirely secret through the destruction of all written records. While the book was not explicitly revealed to be a hoax, its internal contradictions were deeply suggestive of such, and then the behavior of

“Creighton”, the pseudonym of John Creighton Davies, indicated that he was hardly the super-agent he made himself out to be. See *Counterfeit Spies* (1999) by “Nigel West” [Rupert Allason].

Similarly, the “I’m the only survivor” is convenient in that no full confirmation can be asked for. A similar story occurs in *Covert Warrior* (1996, 1998) by Warner Smith, a hair-raising memoir of a naval officer in a CIA reconnaissance team operating behind enemy lines in Laos, destroyed in an ambush of which Smith was the only survivor save for one brain-damaged man. B. G. Burkett analyzed Smith’s claims in *Stolen Valor* (1998) and after picking through the inconsistencies, errors, and implausibilities, concluded that Smith had only been what he said his records had been rewritten to show he was: an officer’s club treasurer in Manila.

The plan as described seems unnecessarily contrived. It sounds like *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) forty years prematurely. Three of the ten infiltrators were Air Force officers posing as the pilots and navigator of the supposed shot-down bomber. The purpose of the other six men seems unclear. Boyd was supposedly the radio operator. This strikes me as a overly large team; but then there have been cases where all the services want to be involved, e.g. Grenada. As for the Chinese agents, it seems rather dubious that two soldiers, even in somewhat chaotic wartime North Korea, could drive around the rear areas of their army for several days without being challenged, made to produce their orders, and the like.

Boyd seems unclear on the subject. He speaks of transmitting reports. Who got them? The other men? But they were supposed to be prisoners. Korean stay-behind agents? Then why imperil them by sending a large mission with many identifiable foreigners to try to meet with them?

While Boyd speaks of all the records being destroyed and he being forbidden to speak until 1998, there would seem to be sufficient other avenues for confirmation. The team was transported to Korea in a submarine and the survivors treated in an Army hospital. It should not be that hard to find confirmation from there.

Until the ambush portion, the book is a rather bland tale of a cog in a giant spy machine. Then, it comes somewhat more to life, describing Boyd’s harrowing last escape across hostile territory, supporting two wounded and helpless comrades, to a place where they could signal for rescue.

One of the other “Counterfeit Spies” cases

Allason describes is that of George du Pré, famous for being *The Man Who Wouldn’t Talk* (by Quentin Reynolds, 1948). From the description Allason gives, du Pré seems to have begun stretching his tales of his nothing wartime experiences bit by bit until he became a covert agent who had had to be broken of his disguise as a mute madman. Did something like this happen in this case?

When works of imagination are accepted as historical revelations, the public perception becomes skewed. People coming to believe that the government has powers and abilities beyond those of mortal men creates the circumstances where unchecked acts of state can be put into action. The Bay of Pigs landing was planned by men who were nurtured on the legend of the triumphant OSS, for example.

(Boyd could have chosen a more reputable ghost writer. Mike Peterson was convicted in 2003 of the murder of his wife Kathleen; see *A Perfect Husband* (2004) by Aphrodite Jones for more details.)





## TO TRASH A LIFE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*SMOKE, MIRRORS, AND MURDER*  
and Other True Cases

by Ann Rule  
(Pocket Books; 2007;  
ISBN 978-1-4165-4160-8; \$7.99)  
“Ann Rule’s Crime Files: Vol. 12”

It is a commonplace of crime investigation that the prime suspect in a domestic murder is the spouse. This attitude worked to different ends in, for example, the Sam Sheppard and the O. J. Simpson cases. More commonly than we would like it to be, the suspicion is valid, though fortunately the law can take its course, and sometimes the crime does not take its.

As in the case of Sue Harris *The Deputy’s Wife*. She had made what one might call a good catch. Bill Jensen, a King County sheriff’s deputy, was a big man with a good future. Then, he took a strange turn for the worse; and just bloating up to 250 pounds (and even later, to 400) was not the biggest part of it.

He was not a batterer, not physically. His domination came from being psychologically abusive, overbearing at home as he was overbearing at work. Sue finally had enough and filed for divorce. Bill’s response was to spend all the money they had, along with the more common responses of harassment and stalking. Authorities are more aware of such matters now; he was picked up and put in jail. At which point he really went over the edge.

You would think that someone with law enforcement experience would be aware of jailhouse snitches, or why that guy who is offering to off your witness on your behalf will be working for the prosecutor, if he isn’t already. But Bill wasn’t, and his elaborate fiendish plot to wipe out his wife and children fell apart before it could come to pass. Bill Jensen is now doing four fifteen-year terms for solicitation of first-degree murder — consecutively. Sue has saved her forgiveness and understanding for someone who actually deserves it, the fellow prisoner who spilled her husband’s murder plan to the guards.

Raoul Guy Rockwell was an international man of mystery in prosaic Fifties Seattle. He set up shop in a run-down part of town, bringing an exotic intrigue to the place with his dealing in antiques of strange and different places. But when *The Antiques Dealer’s Wife* vanished, the subsequent light that fell on him and his life was not very flattering.

Raoul had been married to a woman with the unusual first name of “Manzanita”. In 1960, their marriage came apart under the strains of his unusual hours. But he had already found a new life’s companion, another antiques dealer, who helped him finance his latest deal when he found himself in a cash crunch. They wed, he went off to work the deal — and then he skipped out. Something about romanicing yet another woman at the same time.

And then the police began wondering where Raoul’s ex-wife and her daughter were. After a while they turned up, so to speak. Raoul was arrested in New York for swindling his mother-in-law, and went on to have a shadowy life on the fringes until he died in 2002. The investigation revealed that his exotic story of his unusual and intriguing background was a total fraud. (Were his antiques for real?) Did he kill his wife and her daughter? He was never prosecuted, but the question remained.

Dorothy Jones *The Truck Driver’s Wife* turned out to have a lot of mystery in her life, and one of the least mysterious things was that she died in an inexplicable and profoundly localized fire. The police investigated, clearing the husband unless he had discovered teleportation; but Dorothy turned out to have a lot of suspicious elements in her life. However, nothing could be proven — not even what caused the curiously localized fire. (Rule discusses Spontaneous Human Combustion as a possible cause; does Lexington’s Joe Nickell know about this?)

And this case joins the long list of mysterious deaths that continue to haunt crime investigators.

Doris Mae *The Convict’s Wife* (and small wonder she doesn’t want her last name known) tried to make an honest life, but her husband George Light and his brother Larry Light tended to live that sort of marginal, violent life that some people do. Even going out West to make a new start didn’t make much difference. Then one day George disappeared, not that anyone noticed, and Doris Mae took up with Larry.

Then, as such matters will happen, Larry found himself back in jail in Illinois. Where he unburdened himself of a most dire secret. I’m only surprised that Larry pleaded to murder; a good argument could be made for self-defense. George had never left home in a sense. This is more a sad tale of the effects of living with violence; one life destroyed, others damaged.

*The Chemist’s Wife* was not the victim of a better dying through chemistry act; merely

the old old theme of possessiveness turning into violence — and not even against her, but against her grandparents, who had intervened when her affluent, dominating husband had dragged her across the country and capped his career of abuse with one final attack. This began as a case of too-young, too-lopsided love, and as the older man (he was in his twenties, she in her teens) became more dominant and possessive, the more she died inside. And in the end, the jealous husband got only a waste of a promising career and a good marriage.

*The Painter’s Wife* suffered through a real-life *Desperate Hours*, being taken hostage by a desperate and clever man (he was in his twenties, she in her teens) became more dominant and possessive, the more she died inside. And in the end, the jealous husband got only a waste of a promising career and a good marriage.

(Rule glosses over the difference between the two versions of *Cape Fear*. The 1991 version followed the *Natural Born Killers* theme of having the criminal being superior, the honest natural man confronting and breaking down the lies and self-evasions of the hypocritical, repressed “normal, law-abiding” people. The “painter’s wife” here probably didn’t like those films.)

*The Minister’s Wife* gained notoriety; Mary Winkler became first the grieving widow, then the prime suspect when her husband the Reverend Matthew Winkler was found dead. The trial revealed a sordid underpinning of the pious pastoral life of the couple; but then, Matthew was dead and couldn’t defend himself against the accusations of pornography-collecting, child-smothering, kinky sex, and financial fraud. Or was it all his doing?

Rule thinks that Mary fell into two traps, one of being the subordinate partner in a dominant marriage, and one of Internet fraud. For a change, it was from Canada, with her supposedly depositing checks for a Canadian oil company and paying them on. For her twin problems, then, killing was some kind of a solution.

The common theme in these cases is of loss; someone who had a good life, even a better one, and for whatever reason decided to throw it away. Not understanding the consequences of one’s actions can prove to be destructive.

## CTHONIAN CINEMA

Review by Joseph T Major of

## THE CALL OF CTHULHU

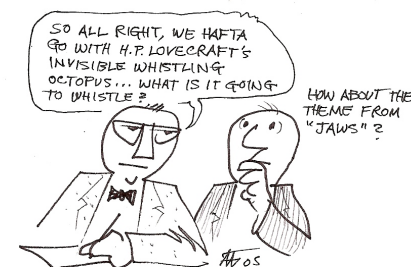
Produced by Sean Branney & Andrew Leman

Directed by Andrew Leman  
Screen Adaptation by Sean Branney  
From HPLHS Motion Pictures; 2005  
(<http://www.cthulhulives.org>)  
(<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0478988/>)

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

— H. P. Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu”

One of the arcane “M. M. Moamrath” stories had to do with his discovery of the cinema; “C’thulablanca and Other Lost Screenplays: Moamrath in Hollywood,” published in the MidAmeriCon Program Book (1976). Having twice the quirks of HPL and none of his talent, when Mortimer Morbius Moamrath went to Hollywood to write movies, he fetched up in Hollywood, Nebraska. But he had been properly astounded after seeing a cinema that discarded that sound thing; he affected to find a solely visual presentation superior.



Pulling away with great effort from in jokes, H. P. Lovecraft’s story “The Call of Cthulhu” (*Weird Tales*, February 1928) is perhaps not surprisingly a key if not the key story of the

Cthulhu Mythos. Lovecraft describes how seemingly unrelated incidents in far-flung parts of the world turn out to have a correlation and a common factor, leading the reader into a realization of the cosmic indifference of the world. There are things out there we had better not know about.

But, Lovecraft works were unfilmable, the conventional wisdom said. And when works were filmed, they turned out to be conventional B-movie horror with a few HPL names, from "The Haunted Palace" (1963) on.

And movies by cultists never work; they focus on getting everything down just like in the original, producing a work that appeals just to the sort of people who, to take a parallel example, have every line in *The Lord of the Rings* down in memory and think a 30-hour adaptation of each volume would be just fine.

*The Call of Cthulhu* is a black and white silent film. The producers decided to be deliberately retro, and the result is, paradoxically, better than how it could be done with millions of dollars worth of CGI — they couldn't get away with filling in lapses in plot with spectacular effects. (And some of the effects were made easier by the simplification imposed by monochrome.)

The film makes some trivial changes in the plot line, mostly having to do with the relationship between Professor Thurston and his great-uncle. Otherwise, the story works in film; surprising, given how a Lovecraft story tends to be very heavy on ratiocination. In the darkness, it is possible to suggest without actually dragging out on the screen such blasphemous, squamous, cthonian, rugose, eldritch abominations. (Well, the stop-motion Cthulhu was not quite up to par.)

For those who fancy extras, the DVD includes not only a long documentary on the making of the film (which you will like or not depending on how much you like to be disabused of the feeling that what you see on the screen is real) but also a .pdf file of the pages from the Sydney, Australia *Bulletin* that figure in the story. There are more such items on the website, including Miskatonic University library cards and records.

The stars are right for you to get *The Call of Cthulhu*. Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.

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### BARBARO

The time you won your town the race  
We chaired you through the market-place;  
Man and boy stood cheering by,  
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

To-day, the road all runners come,  
Shoulder-high we bring you home,  
And set you at your threshold down,  
Townsmen of a stiller town.

— A. E. Housman, "To an Athlete Dying Young"

Roy and Gretchen Jackson, owners of Barbaro, the horse whose agonizing injury in the 2006 Preakness ended an undefeated racing career and long, ultimately unsuccessful struggle for recovery ended on January 29, 2007, announced on the first anniversary of his death that the horse whose stunning six-and-a-half length victory in the 2006 Kentucky Derby energized horseplayers everywhere will be buried at Churchill Downs sometime during 2009. The chosen site is in front of Gate One, the main entrance to the track, next to the Derby Museum entrance.

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### BERNARDINI

by Lisa Major



I finally got to see Bernardini this January 21. People at Darley were very nice. Despite the fierce biting cold an employee showed us over the farm. We also saw Street Sense, Hard Spun and Discreet Cat who beat Bernardini's conqueror Invasor.

Bernardini is no longer the sleek racer who powered down the Preakness stretch but he still remembered that a camera meant he was supposed to strike a good pose. Spark is still strong in his eyes.

Street Sense, breaker of the Juvenile Curse, is very big, impressive and still racing sleek. He is in paddock adjoining Bernardini's. He reminded me strongly of European cup horses. Had I seen him before Bernardini's Preakness

run I might have fallen heavily for him.

Also saw Holy Bull and Quiet American, sire of Derby winner Real Quiet and Cara Rafaela, Bernardini's dam. Holy Bull is one of the last stallions with no trace of Nasrullah or Princequillo blood. His pedigree, being strictly good old-fashioned American blood, is unfashionable these days but it doesn't stop the Bull from siring winners. His distaste for mud cost him the Derby but his son Giacomo got the roses in 2005.

After the tour we were served welcome doses of hot green tea and given Street Sense caps, which we will wear when it gets warmer. Our escort had seen Bernardini's little daughter and told us she was the spitting image of Bernardini. I quelled my exultation at this. One foal does not a crop make. All the foals could pop out as little Bernardini clones and still not have the speed to win the cheapest claiming race. No matter how sternly I reminded myself of these cold facts it did nothing to my conviction that when those foals hit the track they will shake the Thoroughbred world. There is, of course, nothing logical to the way we fall for particular animals.

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### SEAN CLARKE

(May 1, 1974 — December 17, 2007)

by Lisa Major

In mid December I got a shocking call from my father. Aunt Mildred's grandson Sean had been murdered by a man he had fired from the store he managed in his small-town. The man had then turned the gun on himself. Sean's girlfriend called 911. Things like this are not supposed to happen in small towns and especially not to my family. In my mind Graves County, Kentucky is an idyllic haven of tranquility. Things like this are supposed to happen in big cities. I've accepted the risks for myself. I wasn't prepared for something like this to happen in my family and in Graves County. Grant says that big cities have mechanisms to prevent such. I am still finding it hard to deal with more than a month later. Sean was only thirty-three. I didn't know him very well but I'm close to his grandmother. I have grieved with her over the sword in her heart. Grandchildren aren't supposed to die first.

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### LLOYD TUCKER

(February 2, 1927 — January 22, 2008)

by Lisa Major

In mid January I get the call; Mildred's husband Lloyd died from the cancer he had

been fighting for some time. I hung up and sat back, remembering many mornings spent on their farm in Graves County Kentucky. Cold ones, warm ones. Sunny ones, foggy mornings. Nights driving the short distance from my grandparents to Mildred's and the dark all around. I used to stare out into the darkness and wonder what lurked beyond the car's headlights? Perhaps the Headless Horseman, maybe just rabbits and squirrels? Lloyd was a dark taciturn man, his Native American ancestry clearly visible unlike mine. We shared an interest in horses, though Lloyd was not the talker Aunt Delta's husband was. He liked to read also, chiefly Westerns and I would not come to appreciate them until later. He was always there, dark, quiet but with an inner warmth.

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### ESCAPING PLATO'S CAVE: How America's Blindness to the Rest of the World Threatens Our Survival

by Mort Rosenblum

(St. Martin's Press, 2007, 272 pp.,  
ISBN 9780312364403, \$25.95)

Reviewed by Jim Sullivan

The title alludes to the way that Americans seem only to be interested in themselves. In Plato's book, *The Republic*, chapter (or book) seven talks of prisoners in a cave. They have been facing an interior wall while being tightly bound their whole lives. In this manner, they couldn't turn around and, hence, were unable to see what, if anything, was going on behind them outside the cave. Oh, they did see shadows on their wall and thought it reality.

When one prisoner finally escaped the cave, however, he found reality: the world, the sun, the night sky, the free men, etc. He wanted to tell his fellow prisoners what he had discovered. But he feared doing so because they would think he was deluded. Therefore, they would likely kill him, for he surely must be wrong. After all, they thought they already knew the truth. It was the shadows on the wall that they saw, not the unmeat things their friend had seen outside the cave. In short, the prisoners were blind.

Escaping the cave totally exposed the real world. Getting out of the cave takes away the blindness to what's going on. Sadly, most Americans have been blind in the cave for far too long.

That's caused today by the lack of, or minimal, media coverage in the U.S. of news from and/or about other parts of the globe. It's not only the media to blame for this, but also

the American people. Though this circumstance has always been somewhat the case in the U.S., it appears to be a worsening situation. Just witness the closing down completely, or the thinning ranks, of foreign news bureaus. And along with that, notice the reduction in the numbers of veteran professional foreign correspondents.

Such only reflects the diminishing world news gathering personnel. Also one should note the domestic decrease in American newspaper, TV and radio newsmen and women. News coverage of foreign events has been the first thing to suffer.

Unsurprisingly, the print media is losing readership, TV is losing viewers, and radio is losing listeners. Only the Internet is gaining in usage for news with its numerous blogs. But the Internet bloggers are not being edited. Consequently, what's being purveyed is incomplete and unreliable. It's like what the prisoners in Plato's cave saw—nothing much!

Regular news organizations' owners today, increasingly corporations with little or no experience or connection with the original purpose of media, want increased profitability. So, something has to be jettisoned to increase profits. Foreign news and correspondents are the first to be let go to reap more profit.

Certainly media's bottom lines must be looked to. But profitability of a news organization was seldom a criteria for its existence in the past. Sure, a profit was desired; it was even necessary to continue publishing. But informing the public took precedence.

Of course, the other excuse for the precipitous drop in regular media usage is that Internet news blogging is getting all the attention. It's the wave of the future, especially for young Americans. Alas, the poor newsreader!

The author, a foreign correspondent for decades on the Associated Press payroll, has traveled the world extensively, gathering news, employing established, lifelong, individual, and reliable contacts to verify what he's reporting on. This isn't the case with the vast majority of Internet bloggers. Indeed, Rosenblum adds, most TV talking heads, many of today's newspaper reporters, and, even, some of his old AP unit's journalists are untutored novices. Naturally, the new reporters are less expensive to hire than the experienced ones. And that benefits the bottom line.

The author praises the legitimate, courageous reporters and news organizations he admires. Dana Priest of the *Washington Post* and Bill Moyers, among many, are two

fine examples who come in for high praise. Of course, *The New York Times* gets saluted, also. But even that bastion of propriety, and many other formerly reliable publications and news gathering organizations, come in for harsh criticism. That's especially true of TV, which Rosenblum has little use for. Perhaps radio, after print, comes in for the highest kudos for news gathering and reporting. At least it did until recent times. It's gone bad for the same reasons he knocks print and TV.

Despite the apparent growth of blogging, the veteran journalist feels strongly that the best way to get news is still by reading a reputable newspaper. Avoid blogs for news coverage, with a few choice exceptions, such as [HuffmgtonPost.com](http://HuffmgtonPost.com), at all cost.

The bulk of this volume, not unlike what the prisoner who escaped from the cave found, is composed of the reality of political, cultural, and societal facts and scenes from around the world today. From Iraq to the White House, from Russia to Iran, and beyond, the reader is treated to what's factually happening in the world. And it's told from the viewpoint of an experienced foreign correspondent. His coverage spares no one and nothing out there. Consequently, it's an eyeopener.

The author concludes with, "In the end, it is up to each of us to see reality and to act. If twenty-three centuries after Plato we stay in our cave, blind to reality, we may well perish inside. Perhaps I am wrong, part of an off-key Greek chorus that wandered into the wrong play. I sure hope so. But let's not bet our children's lives on it."

Interestingly, throughout this tome, Rosenblum uses the literary device of allusion to its fullest extent. Knowledgeable readers should take great delight in knowing or learning what's being hinted at.

Besides working for the Associated Press for many years, Rosenblum was also at one time editor of the *International Herald Tribune*. He's written numerous books, too. This is his twelfth. Two-thirds of them have been nominated for Pulitzer Prizes. He currently lives on a river in Paris parttime and on an olive farm in southern France during the balance of the year.

Highly recommended.

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## FANZINES

### *Argentus* # 7

Steven H Silver  
[s.hsilver@comcast.net](mailto:s.hsilver@comcast.net)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>  
<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>

### *Askance* #6

John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle,  
 College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA  
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<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *Beyond Bree* December 2007, January 2008

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,  
 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA  
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 Not available for The Usual; \$12/year, \$15  
 in envelope or overseas.

### *Challenger* #27

Guy H. Lillian III, 8700 Millicent Way  
 #1501, Shreveport, LA 71115-2264 USA  
[ghlilliii@yahoo.com](mailto:ghlilliii@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.challzine.net>

### *The Drink Tank* #153, #154, #155, #156, #157, #158, #159

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### *eI* #35

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 Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 USA  
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<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *File 770:151*

Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Avenue,  
 Monrovia, CA 91016- USA  
[Mikeglyer@cs.com](mailto:Mikeglyer@cs.com)

### *The Knarley Knews* # 127 December 2007

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

### *MT Void V. 26* #23 December 7, 2007 — V

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

### *Opuntia* #64B November 2007, #64.1A December 2007, #64.1B January 2008

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta  
 T2P 2E7 CANADA  
 Dale also sent the Fall/Winter 2007  
 (V. 21 #2) issue of *The Nanton  
 Lancaster Society Newsletter*, the  
 publication of a dedicated group of  
 Canadian warbird restorers. Thanks.

*The Reluctant Famulus* #63 Summer 2007  
 Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road,  
 Owenton, KY 40359-8611 USA  
[thomasdsad@copper.net](mailto:thomasdsad@copper.net)  
 New address, old title.

*Science Fiction/San Francisco* #56 December  
 5, 2007, #57 December 26, 2007, #58  
 January 23, 2008  
 Christopher J. Garcia and Jean Martin  
[SFinSF@gmail.com](mailto:SFinSF@gmail.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *Vanamonde* #713-722

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

### *Visions of Paradise* # 124

Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court,  
 Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023 USA  
[bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *WCSFAzine* #5 January 2008, #6 February 2008

R. Graeme Cameron, Apt 72G – 13315  
 104th Avenue, Surrey, B.C., V3T 1V5  
 CANADA  
[rgraeme@shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme@shaw.ca)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

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## SH/ACD SYMPOSIUM NEWS

Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle  
 Symposium Chairman Cathy Gill announces:

Mark your calendars!

The 2008 Sherlock Holmes/Arthur  
 Conan Doyle Symposium will take  
 place **March 7-9, 2008**, at the Holiday  
 Inn, Dayton Mall (same location as  
 2007)

Cathy Gill  
 4661 Hamilton Ave.  
 Cincinnati OH 45223-1502  
[chirpsworth@fuse.net](mailto:chirpsworth@fuse.net)

Registration is \$45 until February 21, \$50  
 until March 1, and \$55 at the door.  
 Elementary.

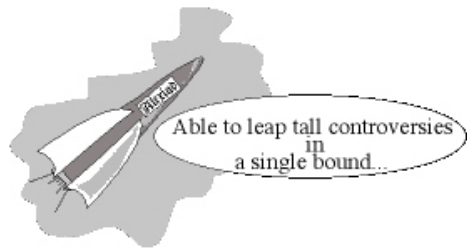
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## HUGOS

We take the common point of  
 recommending the redoubtable **Dale Speirs** for  
 Best Fan Writer and the oft-nominated  
**Challenger** for Best Fanzine.



## Letters, we get letters



From: **Christopher J. Garcia** Dec. 9, 2007  
1401 N. Shoreline Boulevard,  
Mountain View, CA 94043-1311  
[chris@computerhistory.org](mailto:chris@computerhistory.org)

I was hoping this'd make its way to me sometime soon. I'm always glad to read *Alexiad* and there's never a bad time for LoCing.

I'm one of those folks who really believes that bigger is better. I'm also one of those really weird people that doesn't care if I get LoCs or anything in response to what I put out. It makes me a very rare bird in this particular part of fandom. I really do believe that fandom should grow as much as possible to bring in as many different people as possible with all of their different viewpoints. WorldCon will never be as big as Comic-Con, the crowds are all sorts of different and it's impossible for an entirely volunteer-run group to deal with that many attendees. The sad thing is if we don't reach out, we'll dry up and die altogether. If we keep expecting the kinds of reactions we've gotten from folks in the past, we'll never be able to accept what things seem to be changing into for the future. It's rough, I can understand, but things naturally change.

I had no idea Ira Levin wrote *The Stepford Wives*. I knew *Rosemary's Baby* and *Deathtrap*, but not *Stepford*. I also had no idea that he had passed. That's what I rely on the *Alexiad* for.

Once again, a fanzine goes beyond what one would expect and puts out an article that is important beyond just fandom. The *Utah* is often forgotten in the tales of that fateful day (My Grandfather was on assignment to Hawaii at the time, but as a part of the Army and was nowhere near Pearl Harbor) and it was amazing to hear the stories. We've still got a couple of thousand WWII survivors left, but less than a dozen World War I survivors. The recording of all the stories of the wars of the

20th century is an important task that should be done soon.

I'm really glad you liked the article. I think, though, that there are more than just two thousand living World War II survivors. There are at least fifteen off my father's ship alone. If you know any WW I veterans, by all means record their stories. Mr. Robley fortunately never experienced combat.

—LTM

There are fifteen surviving veterans of WWI (when I first wrote this, it was twenty) and six more "WWI-era" veterans, including Mr. Robley.

*Until Proven Innocent* is an interesting book. I've not read it all the way yet (I got a review copy not that long ago) and I think there are some interesting points, but I have to disagree with one thing: The McMartin Case. I know a fair bit about it by being well-acquainted with three different children who were there and the stories they tell are much different (and worse) than the ones that came out in the media. I will also say that there was a lot of 'work' done to make sure that the Duke lacrosse team was deemed guilty immediately.

The Scots witch-hunters had a technique called the "Awaken" that produced confessions of witchcraft. When the NKVD used it, they called it the "Conveyor". Kee McFarlane, the lead investigator of the McMartin case, used the same techniques to obtain confessions of having been molested.

— JTM



There is no question in my mind what the best series should be: The James Bond books.

I maintain that they're science fiction and there's nothing more readable than those wonderful books.

I've discovered that modern animation that is not meant for 5 to 9 year olds is geared almost exclusively towards me. Take almost all of the popular Adult Swim stuff. It's all geared towards media-savvy 20/30-somethings who love media referencing other media. Incredible Hare sounds interesting, but where's the targeting of me?

I want Razzberry M&Ms right now! I want and I shall have! Mr. Carruthers, you shall share!

I have massive problems with *The Cult of the Amateur*. I heard Mr. Keen talking on Fresh Air (or something like it. Forum, maybe?) and I completely disagreed with almost everything he said. Steve Savitski makes a similar claim in one of his songs on his album *Coffee, Computers and Song*. Internet is redefining what Culture is and killing off the crap that came before. Maybe I'm a radical, which I think is a stretch, but Wikipedia is 100 times better than any encyclopedia. There's a way to improve it, which hardly exists with any other system. I've tried for years to get several things in the World Book changed, all about computers, and they've not only never made the changes, they've never even contacted any of the experts in the field to see if they're right. Amateur journalists are a rare breed, but frankly I have trouble reading modern newspaper reporters. Bloggers often present their material with much easier to read methods and using far more depth and accessibility to outside information. The death of the paper, and maybe the professional journalist given enough time, isn't a bad thing, just a change that we need to expect.

Good stuff as always, but nothing I saw on who I should be looking for to win the Derby next year! I gotta put my money down so I can get the mystery odds in addition to the win!

I've never picked out a Derby horse this soon but I'll consider the possibilities if I can find them out. There are two colts by Vindication, at least one by Bernardini's sire, A.P. Indy. Vindication, a son of Slew, looked just like his old man when he won the Breeder's Juvenile but came up lame before the Derby and never raced again. Mind now, I'm listing these colts for sentimental reasons alone.

—LTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Nov. 27, 2007  
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* 35. I offer the following anecdote about faanish fen. I spent part of my vacation this year in Seattle (it was my consolation prize for not going to Japan) and spent an enjoyable afternoon at Fans With Beers, a local fannish group. I spent some time chatting with prominent Seattle fen, including Eleanor Busby, Suzle Tompkins, and Ulrike O'Brien and her husband. Andrew Hooper and Randy Byers, however, deliberately snubbed me. They couldn't be bothered to ask what I was doing in Seattle (which is, of course, a rather long way from home). Such is the fate of the faanish fan, nose perpetually up in the air, constantly sneering at the masses that just don't understand the *burden* of carrying on fannish traditions.

You say the Duke of Monmouth "claimed to have evidence" that he was the illegitimate son of Charles II. I thought his claim was stronger than that and that during the machinations of the Glorious Revolution everyone thought he was Charles II's kid. In fact, one of the bits of monarchist trivia I thought I knew was that the Duke of Buccleuch was a closer descendant of Elizabeth I than Elizabeth II was.

I have no idea who **Martin Arbagi** is or why he gripes about *Alexiad*. But he should know that the best fanzines are "about" whatever the editor is interested in. One of the reasons I was attracted to *Fosfax* when it began to get Hugo nominations in the late 1980s was that the editors were interested in all sorts of things. Fannish fanzines, by contrast, are less interesting to me. I'm much more interested in zines that argue about books and ideas than zines who are solely concerned with their editors' lives.

Joe's review of *Settling Accounts: In at the Death* leads me to ask: how many volumes are there in this Turtledove series? We're talking about what, 15 books with 500 pages in each volume? That's 7500 pages! How can Turtledove sustain interest for such a huge series? We're talking six times the length of *The Lord of the Rings*! How can Turtledove possibly sustain interest over such a huge series? Look, *The Guns of the South* was an important book, but it was a singleton. I enjoyed *How Few Remain* and the first volume of the Great War series, but I can't imagine how Turtledove would keep being entertaining for 12 or 13 more thunderous volumes.



Only eleven: How Few Remain, three Great War, three American Empire, and four Settling Accounts.

As for *300*: yes, the film believes in “something.” But it also throws in war rhinos, depicts Xerxes as a giant gay dude who wears far too much eye shadow and chains, and shows the Spartans wore no armor in battle so they could display their seven-pack abs. *300* was pretty darn silly, and I’m looking forward to the parody, *Meet the Spartans*.

December 21, 2007

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 36. But do you really want 120,000 fanzine fans? That would mean you’d have to mail 6,000 copies an issue, and each issue would probably have to be 100 pages an ish to accommodate the letterhacks. Not to mention the Huge Crush of Fans you’d have to face at every convention. Maybe you’d have to start charging for your autograph! I don’t think fanzine fandom is dying off, but there were probably about 300 hardcore fanzine fans when I started writing to fanzines in 1975, and there are probably about 300 hardcore fanzine fans today. This month, I’ve written two LoCs to you, one to *Fosfax*, one to *Challenger*, and one to *Banana Wings*. That’s a lot for a “dying” field.

As for Lady Katherine Brandram — how was she related to Prince Philip and Lord Louis Mountbatten?

She was Philip's first cousin and Dicky's second cousin.

**Johnny Carruthers** might be surprised to know that I agree with him for having a oneshot Hugo for “all-time series.” As long as this is a special Hugo awarded by Denvention and is not a permanent addition to the Hugo awards (which already have too many awards) this special award makes sense to me. I think it’s fair that Hugo voters once a generation should have the chance to pick their favorite series. I wouldn’t, however, have this award more than once every 20 years or so.

I also thought of **Johnny Carruthers** when reading in *Geek Monthly* the reviews of fine journalist Marcus Alexander Hart, who reviews really strange and disgusting snack foods. Hart ended up reviewing Snickers With Green Shrek Filling, which apparently replaced the stodge in the middle of a regular Snickers with special minty stodge. This doesn’t sound very appealing to me. (However, I thought that

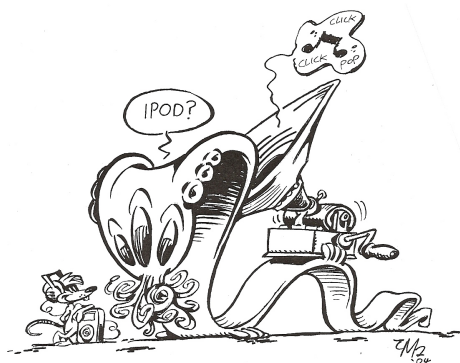
Baskin-Robbins Shrek ice cream, which was also vaguely minty, was pretty good.)

**Marty Helgesen** is right that copyrights are far too long, and hopefully Congress will not succumb to Disney pressure and extend copyrights again. However, I find it hard to believe that Disney won’t make *The Star Beast* unless they obtain all rights. I can’t believe that the Heinlein estate would sell an all rights to Disney for any Heinlein book.

According to James Gifford, they did indeed ask Virginia for “all rights” and she turned them down flat. He had her side of that.

— JTM

I did learn from Kristin Thompson’s *The Frodo Franchise*, that the problem with the *Lord of the Rings* rights is that when Tolkien sold the movie rights to LotR in 1969, the contract he signed was badly worded and it’s not really clear what rights Tolkien actually sold. This ambiguous contract has given Saul Zaentz the opportunity to make LotR products the world might not necessarily want (like Lord of the Rings toy trains).



From: **Darrell Schweitzer** Dec. 13, 2007  
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Johnny Carruthers’s piece on Best All Time Series Hugos brings me to the conclusion that maybe we should just leave well enough alone. An All Time award tells not just fandom but the general literary world what we consider to be the pinnacle of achievement in our field. The 1966 ballot only reminds us how close SF

came to serious embarrassment then. The fans made the right choice, or one of two right choices, but we were teetering on the edge of absurdity with the possibility of the Lensman books being labelled the Best All Time Series, which surely would have made a significant contribution to branding science fiction as a field of junk for semi-literate juveniles for a long time to come. Asimov at least commanded some respect in the outside world.

Heinlein would have been a possible choice to avoid acute embarrassment. *The Lord of the Rings* is of course one of the great works of the 20th century and perhaps the most widely read piece of fantastic fiction ever, but it is not science fiction, so voting this “Best All Time Science Fiction Series” would send the message that science fiction is that stuff with wizards and magic in it, having nothing necessarily to do with science or extrapolation or reason. As you well know, this issue has become more acute in recent times. Just ask Greg Benford.

One of the most significant people in the history of fantasy is the anonymous editor at George Allen & Unwin in 1954 who decided that £3 10s (then \$9.80) was too much to expect anyone to pay for a book, so he split The Lord of the Rings into three one-guinea (\$2.94) volumes. And that is why there are so many fantasy trilogies, and LotR is considered a “series”.

I don’t think it would do the field well to have the Barsoom books proclaimed the best of all time either. What does that say to intelligent outsiders who might want to investigate science fiction, or to new, ambitious writers?

As for the Lensman books, by a funny coincidence I am at least trying to reread *First Lensman* for a book discussion group. In my callow youth I proclaimed this the very worst science fiction novel of all time. Now of course I know that Richard Shaver’s *I Remember Lemuria* is worse, as are any number of serials in the later T. O’Conor Sloane *Amazing*, but it’s still a sound choice for the worst SF novel currently in print as a “classic.” The first two paragraphs are actually pretty good, but it descends into near gibberish by the end of the first page and does not recover. As I kid I gave up on the series after *Galactic Patrol*, having discovered more adult SF (or even better pulp) by then. If you want good space opera, read

Edmond Hamilton. He not only invented the form a couple years before anyone had ever heard of Smith, but later on, by the ‘40s certainly, he actually learned how to write, something Smith never achieved.

Somehow I don’t think we’re going to be seeing Doc Smith in Library of America any time soon. We won’t be seeing Hamilton there either, but he and Jack Williamson and Jack Vance and Charles Harness and a host of others are infinitely better than the Lensman series.

Carruthers’s subsequent choices are a minefield of embarrassments:

*Dune*. The first novel is a classic. The last few, certainly, are entirely unnecessary, motivated by the publishers hurling huge amounts of money at Herbert to keep the franchise going. Not that Herbert was wrong for taking the money — we all should face such temptations — but a Best of All Time Award is not in order.

*The Chronicles of Narnia*. See remarks above on Tolkien. This would again establish considerable doubt as to whether the fan electorate has any idea of what science fiction is. Cutesy Christian apologetics. Not badly written, but absurdly patronizing to its readers. Once I knew where precisely in the Gospels we were in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (“Oh, this is Gethsemene . . .”) that was it, for me.

*The Dragonriders of Pern?* I confess I never got further than the original novelet, which is one of those embarrassments among the Hugo winners. Shockingly badly written. I don’t think very many people would seriously claim that the subsequent series is the field’s best.

*Amber?* Well, I remember a prominent fantasy writer (no names, since I didn’t ask for permission to quote) telling on a panel how he “wept” over the later books, not because they moved him deeply, but because Zelazny had screwed up the series so badly.

Ender? Well, the first book is a pretty good juvenile that, interestingly, tries to ascend to greater moral complexity in the last quarter. *Speaker for the Dead* was the first Hugo winning novel I could not read, although admittedly this is only because I never tried to read Cherryh’s *Cyteen* (which was described to me by someone who read it for a vote-recommending panel as “A punishment from God.”) Is this really the best that SF has produced?

I could go on. Going down the list I come to the conclusion that maybe SF is not at its best in series. The real classics, the books you

can show to an outsider without embarrassment or excuses, tend not to be serious. Think of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Martian Chronicles* (not a series once you see the stories as a fix-up into a single work), *The Demolished Man*, *The Stars My Destination*, *Earth Abides*, *More than Human*, *The Space Merchants*, any number of Philip K. Dick novels, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, *Childhood's End*, etc.

Well, there is *The Book of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe, and sequels. You could make a case for *The Left Hand of Darkness* being part of a series, though it is more of a matter of shared settings, rather than a series with continuing characters or even continuing themes. You could make a case for *The Dying Earth* and sequels, again skirting the fantasy issue. You might be able to argue for *Gateway* and sequels, though I am not sure the later books are at the level of the first or constitute the best of all time.

You know, if you put it to a vote, somebody probably would nominate William Shatner's *Tekwar* series. But to whom would the award actually be given . . . ?

So let's just not go there.

Your Pearl Harbor material is vivid and historically interesting, but it is necessary to read this stuff without thoughts of revenge. Yes, the Japanese were paid back for their aggression, and present-day enemies of the United States (particularly the Taliban) should pay some attention to the relentless element in the American character, but wars should not be fought for revenge. They must be fought to eliminating the cause of the war. Once the Japanese Empire was destroyed, there was no need for revenge.

It was not my Pearl Harbor material. Most of it belongs to the survivors of the Utah. I only borrowed it and heavily edited it. I'm glad, however, that you think I did a good job of editing. I didn't do the piece for revenge. I did it to honor the Pearl Harbor veterans.

— LTM

At times like this I do drift to the thorny alternate-historical issue of whether or not Japan would still exist today at all as a nation if it were not for the atomic bomb. Did the mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki actually save the Japanese, as a nation and a people? The bomb gave the militarists (or most of them) a face-saving excuse for surrender. Otherwise we can

envison a scenario in which they did not surrender, but decided that the whole nation should fight to the death. (We have the testimony of, among others, the film-maker Akira Kurosawa, who was a teenager at the time, that this is precisely what they were preparing to do. Young Kurosawa assumed he would die soon. When the bomb dropped and Japan surrendered, he felt that he had just gotten his life back, and would again have a future.)

There were something like 300,000 allied prisoners (including the future writer J.G. Ballard) in Japanese hands. All of them would have been murdered by their captors, which would not have put the eventual victors in a very forgiving frame of mind. There were several million Japanese soldiers still overseas in China and Malaysia in the summer of 1945. If the war had gone on for a couple more years, most of those soldiers would have been killed. We got a preview of how they'd fight at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Then, as the Japanese home islands were invaded and — very likely — the invasion plan did not work very well and casualties mounted to astronomical levels, and as American soldiers were being attacked by women and children armed with bamboo spears, I don't think the Americans would have made much distinction between civilian and combatant.

Plans were under consideration to use chemical poisons to destroy Japanese rice crop. We may assume that with continued bombings of the sort that had already been visited on Tokyo launched upon all Japanese cities, non-stop, for a year and a half, and with all communications and transportation links cut, not much of then population would have survived. The emperor wouldn't have been able to surrender even if he wanted to. He would no longer have been able to communicate with the people. It would have been like Okinawa over and over again. Not many defenders of Okinawa survived. I think it was less than one in four. I am sure many of the Japanese would have died bravely, but they would have died. The aftermath would include hordes of starving people roaming the ruined countryside in search of food, mass-starvation, perhaps cannibalism.

In the Ken Burns series *The War* there was a flash of something which is of fannish relevance. In the '40s there was a slogan for a California worldcon: "South Gate in '48." In the Burns film I saw that on a sign put up by GIs on Okinawa. In other words, the troops did not think they'd be home again for another 3 years. The phrase takes on a much darker

resonance.

But if the war had been fought to its conclusion and (quite frankly) the frenzy of loathing and hatred the Americans felt toward the "Japs" reached an even higher pitch after perhaps 500,000 American casualties, would the Japanese nation gone the way of Carthage? If most Japanese men of military (and reproductive) age perished, either overseas or at home, and the general population faced starvation or massacre — or mass-suicide at the end — I can well imagine how, in 2007 one could visit the American Pacific Territories and even live in the capital of Roosevelt City (the former site of Tokyo) for many years without ever meeting a Japanese, the same way many people in the United States today have never met a Native American. If, after such a catastrophic defeat, the remnants of the Japanese population fell into despair, I wonder if they could have repopulated the islands, particularly if there was a large influx of refugees from Korea.

I would assume in this scenario that the Americans would be too distracted and the Soviets would have conquered all of Korea, which would condemn all Koreans to live as those in the North have lived all these years. This would have caused a tremendous refugee problem. Large numbers of Koreans might well have escaped to the "empty" Japanese islands, which would be, of course, a front line of defense in the Cold War, and heavily defended by the American military. Very likely there would also be a unified, Communist Vietnam as early as about 1947 or so, which again would have caused a huge outflow of refugees, who might well have gone to Japan. The Japanese, in Japan, could well have become a minority even among the Asian population, a despised underclass.



Only very rarely (as in the case of Carthage) has a nation actually been erased from the map. I think it could have happened to Japan, but for what Winston Churchill called

"a miracle of deliverance," which actually delivered both sides.

I am sure that Americans, by about 1950, would not have had much sympathy for what was left of the Japanese. Too many would be like the man interviewed by Burns, a Pearl Harbor survivor who was strafed by a plane flying so low that he could see the Japanese pilot *smiling*.

Not just the Americans.  
Remember Nanking? Or Manila?  
Most of the prisoners on the  
Death March were Filipino. Many  
of the workers on the Railway of  
Death were Indian or Burmese.

— JTM

From: **Thomas D. Sadler** Dec. 14, 2007  
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Just a quick little note to apologize for the thundering loud silence from my end and to assure you (if you care) that I have **not** fallen off the face of the Earth, as the old saying goes, nor have I permanently withdrawn from fandom. I have no good explanations for my inactivity but I hope you'll forgive me and be patient with me. I **am** striving to get back into the fannish life and determined to succeed. I hope to have a majority of the latest issue of *TRF* mailed out by the end of December, and after the first of 2008 will begin my return in earnest. Life can be difficult at times, as I'm sure you know, but somehow we always prevail in the end. Things will get better — they **have** to.

Welcome to the  
Commonwealth.

— JTM

December 26, 2007

This is to let those who may be interested know that I have not dropped out of fandom for good nor off the face of the earth. My main problem, I think, has been that inertia (and the wonderful luxurious feeling of being able to do only what I wanted of had to do) had set in and there was no outside force to counteract it. Then, gradually but with intensifying strength, guilt became the necessary overpowering force that acted on my damned inertia. So here, for what it's worth, is an issue of *TRF*.

For those who hadn't received the previous couple of issues if you'd like them please let

me know. I can provide either print copies or for those with computers and the Adobe Acrobat Reader a pdf file since I now have the capability of saving things to that format.

And with that I wish you all a **Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year.**

May you know peace, joy, love, and happiness.

From: **Trinlay Khadro** December 11, 2007  
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<http://www.trinlayk.etsy.com>  
<http://stores.ebay.com/Silly-Kitty>

I know I owe you a few LoCs at this point: I'll try to catch up.

Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of Seimei's adoption. He sure is a well loved and spoiled kitty. Though I think last night they were playing "Stampede" on my bed!

Oh our cats would **NEVER** do anything like that.



TRINLAY KHADRO

Last night and today we've been getting snow by the bucketful. I shoveled about an hour and a half ago and now you can hardly tell I was ever out there!

Mentioning shoveling: we've moved to a house. We're currently renting it from a fannish friend and intend to purchase it outright over the

next few years. So now I have snow removal to be responsible for. I'm delighted but wish it would let up a bit.

The kitties are enjoying exploring ("Ohh, linen closet!") and climbing on and peering into boxes as I unpack.

I've got so much to do it's overwhelming. The living room and kitchen are still so full of boxes that we can hardly move. I'd better get back to work: I volunteered to host the January Milwapa collation and at least need to clear places for people to sit.

From: **Brad W. Foster** December 18, 2007

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<http://www.jabberwockygraphix.com>

Okay, so you've given me not just one, but two more books to the "must find" list. Though, a minor complaint here, I had to do a bit of searching on my own for these. Unlike your usual review opening giving title, author, publisher, date, ISBN, etc., etc, your quick note (less a review) of *City of Dreaming Books* meant I had to go looking on the web on my own. (Poor little me.) Then stuck in the quick reference to *Remarkable Millard Fillmore* to find there was, indeed, another book to be had here! I have GOT to either win a lottery, or try to actually get some work that pays more than enough to cover the bills, so I can get books I want, rather than those I can afford!

Since it's been just about a year now since I had any sort of contribution to the zine, and with the big "Warning" up front this issue about doing something, I'm including new scans of two fillos I sent earlier. Possibly they never got there the first time out. Anyway, certainly do want to pay my way here beyond these irregular pitiful little locs, so try to send you some art you can use!

I have the world's smallest violin playing just for you. I am now researching Doolittle's Raiders and the big thing I have learned is that the *Utah* survivors spoiled me in terms of easy access to materials for research. With the Raiders, this student of World War II history has actually had to do some digging for facts and material (this is where you can tell me you have the world's smallest violin playing just for me). If anyone out there has any interest in aviation history I strongly suggest an immediate purchase of the paperback of Doolittle's *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* [Bantam Books; 1991, 1992; ISBN 0-553-58464-2; \$7.99] Many classic source books are out of print and one, even on Abebooks, is far out of my budget. *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* has much interesting material on aviation history, not just the Doolittle Raid. Buy it before it too goes out of print.

I also got an updated edition of Captain Ted Lawson's *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* [Pocket Star Books; 1943, 2002, 2004; ISBN 0-7434-7433-3;

\$6.99], the first story of the Raid.

— LTM

From: **E. B. Frohvet** December 15, 2007  
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Happy birthday, Joe. My cousin's birthday is December 26. I don't have one.

If you're going to buy saltines, pay the few extra cents for the national brand. Trust me.

Disappointments of the fanzine year: Well, the Lost Causes, of course, but that's a regular and expected disappointment. To my knowledge *Plokta*, *No Award*, and *Zoo Nation* have not published at all in 2007. I canname at least six "active" fanzines which produced only one issue in the year. *Challenger* and *Askance* led the parade of those who arbitrarily dropped me from their mailing list. Congratulations, all.

Under American jurisprudence, if one was convicted of having murdered someone, and it turned out you did murder someone, but not the person you were tried for murdering, the conviction would be quickly voided. However you could then be tried for having murdered the person you did murder, and this would not violate double jeopardy. Right?

I suspect few would class Ira Levin as an SF, or even "sci-fi", writer. *Stepford Wives* is a good example of a mainstream story borrowing from SF tropes, but not SF.

Good journalism lets the facts speak for themselves. Lisa's tribute to the officers and men of USS *Utah* is good journalism.

Thank you. However, I really think of myself more as a student of World War II history in the South Pacific, not as a journalist.

— LTM

I had always thought the reason Thorin & Company didn't stay at the inn in Bree, was because Tolkien simply hadn't thought of Bree at the time. (There's a real place named Bree, in Belgium. Coincidence?)

That was why he was revising it to say that. As for Bree, it is possible he might have heard the name, but he almost certainly got it from his own languages; think Lin Carter's "Gondar" thesis.

I have not read *The Android's Dream*. Based on your review, I am not likely to. Although I have thought of doing a survey of

all possible SF references to sheep, for my sheep-farming friend Lyn McConchie. Probably not worth the effort.

One of the TV newsmagazines, ABC's 20/20 or one similar, did a story which was either the Kissell case or one eerily like it in details.

Johnny Carruthers throws out an intriguing idea (not to mention one exceedingly rare, actually discussing SF). Of the original five nominated for "best all-time series", I suspect only *Lord of the Rings* would make the cut today. Having said which, I disagree eagerly with some of Johnny's suggestions. *Dune* was a great stand-alone novel diminished by an endless series of sequels.

The *Narnia* books are children's classics; I am less sure what they have to offer the adult reader. (My similar feeling about "Harry Potter", your actual likely winner, is the basis for a long and argumentative correspondence with one fan.) Most admirers of Pern and Darkover would concede them to be first-rate entertainment rather than great SF — and in the interest of fairness I would have to level the same charge against some of my favorites, as Andre Norton's *Witch World* or Miller & Lee's *Liaden Universe*™. Okay, here's a serious nomination: C.J. Cherryh's *Union/Alliance Space* sequence. Start with *Downbelow Station*.

Richard Dengrove: I, a gentile, should not have to explain this to a Jew; but klezmer refers to a class of music, common among European Jews, borrowing from folk, dance-band, and jazz aspects; played on existing instruments, as fiddles, clarinets, accordions, etc.

Joy V. Smith: If you like urban fantasy, try Tanya Huff's *Keeper* series; the first title is *Summon the Keeper*.

Alex Slate: Discusses a book about what would happen to Earth if all the humans disappeared. SF has done that repeatedly; see among many George R. Stewart, *Earth Abides*; David Palmer, *Emergence*; I did a whole article on the topic a few years back for *Peregrine Nations*, perhaps Janine can run you off a copy.

Is it on the [Peregrine Nations](http://efanzines.com) page on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com)?

I didn't say I approved of Tom Cruise playing Claus von Stauffenberg; but it's a film I might actually pay to see, and there are few of those. It was the title that appealed to me: "Valkyrie" is usually rendered as "choosers of the slain".



You've heard the latest rumor about Suri Mapother? It's being denounced as mere gossip but it's the sort of thing I wouldn't put past the clams.

— JTM

The colors of the Order of the Archangel are: red and silver. Ohio State fans, please take note.

John Purcell: I once saw The Scottish Play (unlucky by theater lore to mention the title) done by an all-female cast, a feminist theater group. Gave some interesting subtext to the idea. For the record, they used the script verbatim, male pronouns where male pronouns appeared, etc.

Jim Stumm: I believe the acceleration experienced in the shuttle launches as they actually happen, does not exceed 3.5-G, and that only for a short period; certainly nothing any reasonably fit adult, let alone an elite athlete, could not tolerate. In the fictional launch, no figure is given, but it obviously does not exceed the abilities of the characters.

Marty Helgesen: If you want to badly enough, you can find a verse in the Bible to refer to ANYTHING. On changing the oil, isn't there the account of the virgins and their lamps which miraculously burned a very long time? I think there's a holiday based on that miracle; applying it to Jiffy-Lube is, by comparison, a minor problem.



From: **Patrick McCray** December 20, 2007  
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I don't know how long the story will last, but the show on which I'm a producer, *Star Trek: the Continuing Mission*, is a top story on the entertainment page of the CNN website! The show debuts on Christmas day. It's been a

great ride, and my promotion to producer has been a blast. Anyway, forward this to pals!

The show's website is:

<http://www.continuingmission.com>

You can listen to the pilot there on the 25th.

From: **John Purcell** December 21, 2007  
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Lots of very interesting material this time around, Joe and Lisa, especially Lisa's account of the story of the USS *Utah*. I will be getting to that article in a bit. First off, I do need to say something about Joseph's opening salvo about the potential dying off of the fannish community we know and love.

When most "fans" of science fiction and fantasy are mostly media fans — as the 120,000 membership limit at the San Diego Comic Con accurately attests — it should not be surprising that the literary bent of old-time fans like thee and me are literally a dying breed. That is to say, we are not becoming extinct, but neither are we doing much in a proactive way to further the cause of what could be called traditional fandom: that community of fanzine and convention fans who know each other and actively correspond back and forth. That's the stfnal community I grew up with back in the early and mid-1970s, and it's still going strong. Unfortunately, as our society has become so multi-media oriented (television, movies, comics, music, DVDs, gaming, Internet, etc.), so has grown the general fan-base. There is an awful lot of stuff going on out there, and probably the only thing that we fannish old pharts can do is show how producing fanzines and all their attendant aspects can be a lot of fun. If I get the chance to actually run a fanzine lounge at the next AggieCon, that is going to be my goal. This is what Chris Garcia does with the fanzine lounges he maintains at various cons. The more interactive and fun we can make it, the better it will be. There really are new bodies trickling into fanzine fandom, but it is just that: a trickle. If some of us can get more proactive, maybe we can turn the spigot open a bit more. I'm gonna try to do my part.

Now onto Lisa's wonderful collection of first-hand accounts of the last day of the USS *Utah*. The attack on Pearl Harbor has been well-documented and fictionalized (to say nothing of over-glorified) over the years, so it was enlightening to read about another of the

ships sunk during that battle. It never ceases to amaze me at how these young men rose to the occasion and did what they had to do that morning. It really is astonishing. The stories that Lisa collected here really make the chaos of that morning come alive, and the matter of fact way that these survivors tell their tales speaks volumes about their senses of duty to their country and shipmates. Phenomenal. Simply phenomenal, and I salute each and every last one of the *Utah* survivors and their comrades who lost their lives that day. Some day I would really like to visit the Pearl Harbor memorials to pay my respects to these brave men and women.

A few weeks after that attack, my father enlisted in the Navy (one month before his 18th birthday), eventually spending four-plus years in the service on what he called "an all-expense paid trip to the South Pacific." Dad saw some heavy-duty action: Guadalcanal, the Solomons, Saipan, Leyte Gulf 1 & 2, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, and all points in between. Dad was a radioman, but still, he saw more than his fair share of death and destruction. I will never forget what he said to me one night as we were walking along the beach at Avalon, New Jersey in the summer of 1969. As the waves were breaking, the phosphorescence in the foam sparkling in the dark, and we stepped around tiny jelly-fish glistening on the sand, I looked out at the lights of a ship way off on the horizon and said, "It's so beautiful." Dad glanced out, and said quietly, "All I can see is death." That stopped me cold and made me think of what he had been through during the war. Whenever I read of Pearl Harbor or any other war story, that's what comes back to my mind. Those memories will always be carried by our servicemen and women, and they can be very long and painful indeed.

I did not collect the stories. The *Utah* survivors did all that work for me. I merely chose the details I thought told the story best. I am very pleased, however, that you think I did such a good job of choosing details.

What ships did your father serve on?

— LTM

Ah, me. Back to the present day.

Johnny Carruthers' musings about the "Best All-Time Series" Hugos of the 1966 WorldCon and what recent series can be included in this discussion was interesting. Personally, I do agree that the Foundation Trilogy is probably the best of all, although

strong cases can be made for Tolkien, Heinlein, and others. I have read most of the Ender novels by Orson Scott Card, and they are wonderful. Not as good as the Foundation books, but still eminently readable, thoughtful, and entertaining. They are very good books. I haven't read many of the other series Johnny mentions, although the Pern books are good, and I have always enjoyed Zelazny's Amber novels, plus the Fafhrd and Gray Mouser stories. It is all good and wonderful stuff. Steven Brust's Vlad books are grand fun, too, and I have now enjoyed reading the stuff in Alastair Reynolds's milieu. As for the Hitchhiker's books . . . well, I can't add anything that hasn't been said already. However, the tendency of recent writers to write simply in a series or in a related universe kind of bothers me. It is good to have consistency, I must admit, but I like it when a writer can bounce around in a bunch of different settings and styles, in a sense showing off their capabilities. Oh, well. The bottom line is still whether or not it is an entertaining read, and that's what really matters to me.

There is a lot that should be considered. One fan's series is another's mess. And now we have the matter of "continued by" series. It's getting back to the days of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, he said retroactively.

And so since I really don't find myself moved to comment on much in the lettercolumn — even though that was still a lot of fun — I do want to thank you for that Duck Dodgers in the 24th-1/2 Century reference on your last page. Nice touch.

Ooo, isn't it lovely.

— JTM

All the best.

From: **Earl Kemp** December 23, 2007  
 Post Office Box 6642, Kingman, AZ  
 86402-6642 USA  
[earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net)

Joe, 6/6 arrived, read, and much appreciated.

However I didn't know it was your birthday tomorrow. That's too bad. Not that getting older is too bad but the coincidence of the date is too bad.

My second daughter was born on New Year's eve, shortly before midnight, just



making it for the year's tax deduction. For all her life she has been plagued with bad feelings of neglect because of that coincidence of birthdate. Everyone always handed her one present saying, "This is for Christmas and for your birthday too."

It was always difficult trying to make her feel good throughout the holiday season.

I hope you get at least two presents and have the ability to walk on water . . .

I did, and in addition I got to meet with the girl who had been my first date. (My father had taken us to see "Son of Flubber", back when Carolyn and I were in second grade; she is my fourth cousin.) Not the water thing, though . . .

I gave my niece (who, recall, shares my birthday) two presents, and I gave my cousin whose birthday is Christmas Day a birthday card with nothing at all about Christmas.

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** December 28, 2007  
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL  
60690-3228 USA  
[price4418@comcast.net](mailto:price4418@comcast.net)

December *Alexiad*:

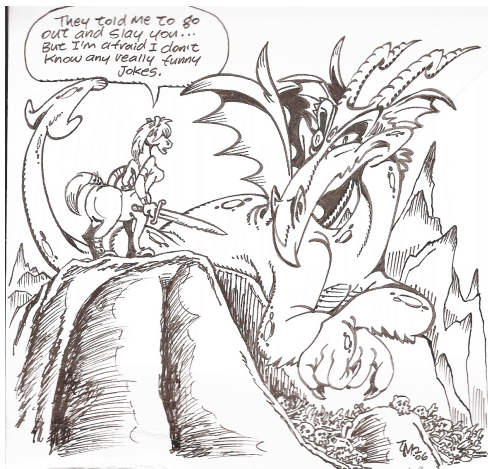
Alexis Gilliland continues the argument over whether letting wages fall would have shortened the Great Depression, as Taras Wolansky and I have argued.

First he cites several other major factors that helped cause or prolong the agony, such as World War I reparations that Germany couldn't possibly pay; President Hoover trying to keep farm prices high, resulting in "a price-depressing glut of wheat and cotton"; and the Smoot-Hawley tariff that "essentially choked off foreign trade." All true; no argument there.

(By the way, in what looked like an effect happening before its putative cause, the evil results of the Smoot-Hawley tariff began well before it was passed and went into effect. The Republican platform of 1928 was so highly protectionist that Hoover's election made it obvious that a crippling tariff would soon be imposed. Seeing which, many businessmen began retrenching to meet the predictable cutback in foreign trade, and that became one of the causes of the slump in business. No paradox, really; it was more like people running for high ground as soon as they hear

that a flood is on the way — they don't wait until they actually see the water rising. By the time Smoot-Hawley was actually passed in 1930, its economy-crushing effects were already in full spate.)

I note in passing that Mr. Gilliland blames Hoover for keeping farm prices high, which is essentially the same point I am making about workers' wages, since farm prices are farmers' wages.



Mr. Gilliland also doubts that "low wages would have pulled the country out of the Depression," pointing out that by 1932 many wage rates had fallen to very low rates; "Industrial wages had fallen from \$25 a week to \$17 a week."

(He also says that "in Tennessee female mill workers were earning less than 5 cents an hour, while in Connecticut women were earning 2 to 3 cents an hour." That's extremely hard to believe unless there were some very peculiar special circumstances, such as the workers living in company barracks and having bed and board deducted from their wages so that they netted only 2 to 3 cents an hour after basic living costs. The rates as cited are quite literally starvation wages, and I never heard that any women workers in Tennessee and Connecticut starved.)

I see I have to go into the economic theory a little more deeply.

First, I did not and do not claim that keeping wages high was the only thing that prolonged the Depression, though it was perhaps the single most important factor.

Second, I do not claim that all wage rates were too high. Far from it. It would have been

impossible to keep all rates up; the deflation caused by widespread bank failures meant that the money simply wasn't there. When unions or the government forced some rates to stay above the market-clearing level, that soaked up so much of the money in circulation that too little was left for paying other wages, so those other rates had to fall even more. So some lucky workers had their wages maintained close to pre-Depression levels, while others — many, many others — got their wages cut back even more than the reduced money supply would have required if everyone had been cut more or less proportionately.

To be sure, workers in lines whose wages were artificially kept up did not all escape unscathed. Because their wages were held above market-clearing levels, fewer of them could be hired. So those lines of work suffered unusually high unemployment. A book by Norman Thomas, circa 1932, approvingly cited a union leader who boasted that his union was so strong that it had prevented wages from falling, even though a quarter of the brothers were unemployed. It never occurred to that leader, or to Thomas, that the union's success in keeping wages up was precisely why a quarter of them were out of work.

Richard Dengrove says that "what got us out of the Depression was World War II." Very true, and the primary reason was that the government used the war as an excuse to seriously inflate the money supply by "deficit financing." That pumped enough new money into the economy to validate the high wage levels that the government and unions were already maintaining. But of course, real wages were falling — workers got more dollars, but each dollar bought less. As real wages thus fell, employers could afford to hire more and more workers, until full employment was reached.

Mr. Dengrove is halfway to the truth when he says that "the problem was lack of markets, and not wages that were too high." Yes, but the lack of markets for labor was precisely because wages (some wages, that is) were too high. Presumably the Depression could have been cured much sooner if the government had inflated the currency sooner — but inflation brings its own problems, usually an inflationary boom followed by a recession and here we go again. The so-called "business cycle" is usually an inflation cycle.

From: **Roger & Pat Sims** December 26, 2007  
12-A Sweetgum Drive Orange City, FL  
32763- USA  
[Roger.SimS@att.net](mailto:Roger.SimS@att.net)

[Note new address.]

Christmas, 2007 Seasons Greetings to All

This has been a roller coaster year for us, but as you can see, we finally moved to John Knox Village (JVK), the Continuing Care Retirement Community, on 10/26/07. Last Christmas, we told you we already had a buyer for our house and expected to move to JKV in May. Unfortunately, our buyers experienced health problems and voided the contract at the end of March. We got their escrow, but we had to put the house on the market in early April. Six months later, after probably a hundred or more lookers and eight unacceptable offers, an offer was made that we could live with. Although 10% less than we hoped to sell for, we were happy to get it sold, given the state of the housing market. We had many problems with the buyer who made impossible demands, culminating in our moving out a week earlier than the contract called for. It was an unbelievable stressful situation, but we made it with the assistance of friends.

We are almost settled, but still must deal with the excess. Despite our efforts at down sizing via garage sales, private buyers and donations, we have too much for our now 1000+ 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom cottage with no garage. A storage facility has our excess possessions. Hopefully, by this time next year, we will no longer need it.

JKV has about 675 residents with 457 staff! It is in a lovely setting with lots of trees, two lakes with eight resident sand hill cranes who wander the grounds at will. We have great neighbors and everyone has been most welcoming and helpful. We're getting used to being taken care of with all maintenance (they will even change light bulbs if you want), yard work and regular housekeeping being provided.

We've been to two Christmas concerts on JKV transportation and like the door to door service! We're provided our dinner daily, but after January we will go to a scaled down meal plan of 20 meals a month to allow for eating out and at home. The cats, Callie and Sassy, seem to have adapted well to their new home, but we suspect they miss their open air atrium. They are officially registered residents! They have met two neighborhood dogs without incident.

When we were in Hopkinsville on Christmas Eve, we went to see my cousin who is married to Lisa's aunt; they live in a similar place there. My cousin who ran the

beauty parlor around the corner from our house is moving there. Then when we went to see the cousin and her husband who lived down the street from Mother, we found out they were thinking of moving there.

We're participating in a weekly Parkinson Disease exercise program and a monthly support group meeting that includes dinner and a speaker. The program was established about seven years ago by a resident whose husband had PD. We are pleased to see that the exercise program is almost identical to Roger's physical therapy sessions! Roger is holding his own with only a slight increase in medication.

While most of the last year was focused on preparing to move, we did do some fun things. We celebrated Pat's 70th birthday with our friends, Don and Kathy Wells, with a great four day trip to St. Augustine. We attended SF conventions in Mammoth Cave, KY and Midwestcon in Cincinnati as well as our local Orlando con. In September with five other friends, we did a week's cruise to Alaska out of Seattle. We has planned to spend a week after the cruise to see Pat's family in Bellingham, especially her brother Bob, who had been ill for a long time and was under Hospice care. However he died in late August so we switched and went there before the cruise. The visit was a bittersweet, one while sad at his passing, it was great to spend time with family, some of whom we hadn't seen in several years.

The cruise took us to Ketchikan, Sitka, Glacier Bay, Juneau and Victoria, RC. Canada. Weather and traveling companions were excellent. It was on the last day of the cruise that our agent called with the offer that led to the sale of our house!

We had other visitors during the year as well. Our friend, Carolyn Doyle, from Indianapolis came down in March and spent a week with us helping us put on our big garage sale. Could never have done it without her

Over Thanksgiving, we had our first overnight guests: Pat's niece Clara and her husband Joe who live in Mississippi. Than a week later Clara's brother, Walter and his wife, Mary, who live in Denver, came by for a few hours visit while on a trip to Disney. And we'll have more over New Year's as we're doing a little party and a friend from Melbourne, Florida will be staying with us.

Our good friend Dick Spelman moved to JVK in last August and is only a street away. Together, we've been getting acquainted with

our new life. While it's different, we feel very positive about our future here.

We send all of you our best wishes for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2008.

Best wishes to you two too.  
We hope to see you in Denver.

— JTM

From: **Henry L. Welch** December 31, 2007  
1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI  
53024-2017 USA  
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<http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad*. Congrats on making it through 6 years.

Get rid of Windows Vista and do it before it is too late. I have almost nothing good about



it.

Some of the riddles used in *The Hobbit* appeared in slightly different form in *The Exeter Book*. (Especially the one about teeth.) This is no surprise given Tolkien's speciality of Old English Literature. Thus, I am not surprised that they remained relatively similar between the original drafts and the final version.

From: **Jim Stumm** December 28, 2007  
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223-0029 USA

George W. Price: I heard on TV that the person who was responsible for the Fall of Communism was Pope John Paul II. This was on a PBS program about making him a saint.

It seems to me that Gorbachev was the last Russian ruler who really believed in Communism. All others in the ruling elite seemed to realize that the ideology was a crock, but they had to keep up the pretense in order to hang on to power. But Gorby seemed to really believe in the possibility of a more humane Communism. He didn't realize that the

Reign of Terror, the GULAG, and all that was the only thing keeping the system from collapsing. To the West, Gorby was a useful idiot. Putin, on the other hand, is a crafty devil; nobody's fool.

Do you have any proof that the Founders meant "freedom of speech" as a term of art with notable exceptions? I could accept this if there's sufficient evidence, but without proof, I have to take the words at their literal meaning. If you don't have such proof, it looks to me like you're reading into the phrase the limitations that you wish were in there.

The editor of the 1963 edition of *Fanny Hill* may only have been aware that the book had been banned for many decades before that time, and he assumed that the prohibition had been in place since the founding of the Republic. This is a common assumption about many prohibitions, drugs too. History-ignorant people don't know that many of these repressive regulations date only from the end of the 19th century. For example, all drugs were freely available before the last quarter of the 19th century.

Taras Wolansky: Re the Fall of the Roman Empire, or more narrowly, why couldn't the later Empire find Romans willing to enlist in the army? It seems to me that changing from offense to defense may have had a lot to do with it. From the beginning, Rome was a warrior society. Every year or so a Roman army would go off to attack the enemy (which in the early years was the town next door), and if they won, they'd return to Rome loaded down with loot. Potential recruits found this an attractive opportunity. Plenty of young bucks were willing to leave the farm and join in the fighting in hopes of coming back rich. But after expansion of the Empire was blocked by Germans in the north, and Parthians in the east, they went over to defense. After that, even if the Roman legions were victorious, they were protecting home territory. There were no barbarians to loot when the battles were inside the Empire. So then the only reward for military service was the miserable pay, and a donative each time a new Emperor came to power, which may be a factor in there having been so many short-lived Emperors in those days. This was not attractive enough to induce young men to leave their farms or shops. Military service became a burden to be avoided at all costs. Whether there were prospects of loot or not seems like an important factor.

I've seen a description of a surviving "legionary bank" record.

The soldiers apparently did not need to draw on their deposited pay; make of that what you will.

— JTM

A lunar return vehicle skipping off Earth's atmosphere would probably go into a long elliptical orbit, eventually coming around for another bite at the atmosphere, then back out again, slowing with each pass. All this would take time. I recall an orbiter sent to Mars that took about a year aerobraking to circularize its orbit. That's no problem for a robot. But a human crew is limited by its supply of life support consumables (air, water, food). A quick burn of retro-rockets is preferable to spending many months aerobraking.

You get a distorted picture comparing wages and prices across decades if you don't adjust for inflation. In the 1950s, I paid 10¢ for admission to the Saturday matinee at the movie theater on the corner. It may have been even cheaper decades earlier. The low wages paid in the 1930s don't tell us much unless we also know what prices people had to pay. We do know the New Deal made great efforts to prevent prices from falling.

From: **Joy V. Smith** January 3, 2008  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA  
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<http://journals.aol.com/pagadan/JoysJournal/>

I really enjoyed the *Utah*/Pearl Harbor background and excerpts; and I shared it with the family, who appreciated it also. No offense, Joe, but I think this is my favorite *Alexiad* issue ever. Thanks for all your hard work, Lisa.

I did enjoy your reviews too, Joe, especially Terry Pratchett's *Making Money*. (I really don't like the cover though.) And I loved your lawyer quote. Btw, I got to see *Hogfather* (2006) twice during the holidays. It was very faithful to the book, but I enjoyed the book more. Re: your review of *The Android's Dream*. I was intrigued by the mention of the sheep every time I saw a mention of the book.

I enjoyed Taral Wayne's *Splitting Hares*. Interesting background.

LOCs: I've never heard of gourmet Moonpies. Sort of scary. (I don't eat Moonpies; I may never have eaten one.) Thank you for the link to the Sons of Hercules theme song. (I hadn't thought of that in a long time.) Btw, Joe, you mentioned in an insert in Lloyd Penney's LOC that you miss Scott Patri. Has he passed away?

No, at least I hope not, but he has been fafiated, apparently.  
— JTM

Thanks for your nice comments on the Pearl Harbor piece.  
— LTM

I enjoyed your tale of the battling explorers, The Empire Strikes Back. (And pushes and shoves.)

From: **Alexander R. Slate** January 4, 2008  
2014 Columbia Pike #14, Arlington VA 22204-4613 USA  
[alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:alexander.slate@pentagon.af.mil)

You think that I could write locs more regularly to a fanzine obviously named in tribute to me, but no . . . here I am again with no letter in the referenced issue and over a month after the deadline to get locs in for this one.

I notice the death of Robert Jordan in this issue. Wonder how far along he got finishing up the Wheel of Time series? Does anyone think we'll see the end of the series? Will someone finish it off?

They've announced someone who will finish the next book. Perhaps we shall yet live to see those nigh-inconceivable words:  
THE END OF THE WHEEL OF TIME

I also notice mention of colonoscopies in the issue. I just had my first on 18 Dec. Unlike Jeffrey Boman, they decided to wait till 50 for mine. They did find (and cut out) 4 polyps – 1 large, 1 medium and 2 small. The doctor doesn't think that they pose any problem, but I won't get the biopsy reports for at least another week, yet. I also need to go back next year, since they couldn't see everything they wanted to.

First winter back in the north. 20 years plus in San Antonio have really thinned my blood. It's not been as bad as it might be, but its bad enough.

Spent Christmas/New Years with Laurel and the girls in Dayton. Had to shovel 4 inches of snow on the 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to get out of the driveway to drive back to DC. Fortunately, it was very light and fluffy snow, so it did not take very long. Been spending a lot of my time in Dayton working on tiling the kitchen floor. Almost done, my next trip up to Dayton should see it done. Then comes the front hall, but that won't take long at all.

Laurel is still recovering from elective surgery, but doing well. I'll be glad when she is fully healed.

Well, that's going to be it for now.

From: **Gina Teh** January 11, 2008  
Singapore  
[lone\\_hammy@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:lone_hammy@yahoo.com.sg)

Previously I had requested a copy of *Alexiad* (Vol 6 No.5) and I took a while to read it. The date of sending an LoC is long past since I got the zine just a day before the deadline and I am sure that I read in another zine that No.6 was already out. So, I just like to mention that I am totally impressed at your books collection. My own book collection is not even 5% of what you have! And I have the biggest collection among all my friends. But after all, I am still young (really!) so I have plenty of time to build up on my book collection . . . once I can just find the place to store them!

Hope to read more reviews soon and thanks for the zine!

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



You are welcome, and we also hope you join in our discussions.  
— JTM

From: **R-Lauraine Tutihasi** Jan. 12, 2008  
2173 Rio Vistoso Lane, Oro Valley, AZ 85755-1912 USA  
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<http://www.weasner.com/>  
[Note new address.]

I enjoyed your latest issue.

Lisa, you certainly did a lot of work on the U. S. S. *Utah*. I think the History Channel showed some programming about WWII recently, too.

Great reviews as usual.

It's been just over a month that we've been in our Oro Valley (suburb of Tucson, AZ) home, and we're more or less settled in. Most of the boxes have been unpacked. I have to sort stuff out before I can finish unpacking.

Our house back in LA is still not back on the market. Because of lots of rain back there, the repainting has been going very slowly. Our painter has to dry the primer before he can do the finishing coat. However the end finally looks to be in sight. Mike will return to LA next week to let the carpet people in. After that the house will be back on the market.

We're official AZ residents now. The car is registered here, and we both got our driver's licences. It couldn't have been easier. The whole procedure, including a cursory inspection of the car, took just over two hours. At the same time, we registered to vote. We've also found a vet and a dentist. I will be looking for a family doctor later today. Mike needs to see a doctor to get a new prescription for his thyroid medication.

As soon as our LA house is back on the market, I hope we can start really living here, like going on short outings to see sights.

I got a look at the neighborhood on Google Maps. Your house is one of those without a pool, isn't it? But it's near a golf course and looks like it has some splendid mountain views.  
— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Jan. 18, 2008  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

Thank you for Vol. 6, No. 6 representing completion of six years of *ALEXIAD*. Where has the time gone?

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday after Thanksgiving I attended *Loscon 34* at the LAX Marriott. Very enjoyable as usual. My spending was kept under control and my only purchases were *1812: The Rivers of War* and *1824: The Arkansas War* by Eric Flint. I had just one problem with the second book. The election of the President is thrown into the House of Representatives and Henry Clay is elected President. However, there is no mention of a Vice President who would have been selected by the Senate. Yes, in those days the Vice President was considered rather unimportant; but, as the saying goes, he is just one heartbeat away from becoming President. It would have been good of Flint to have mentioned who was chosen as Vice President. I look forward to the next book in the series.

At the end of my letter in the previous issue, Joe made a rather cryptic comment thanking me for my help in having the

battlecruisers articles by Rod and Joe republished. A further explanation may be in order. I am a member of the U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association. I asked Joe if he and Rod would be interested in my seeing if the editor of the Association magazine might be interested in publishing the articles. Joe responded yes, the editor said yes, and the articles were published in the Fall 2007 (Vol. 16 No. 4) issue. The Association had 4,150 members as of the magazine's publication and it is an outstanding magazine.

I was in the process of reading *Making Money* by Terry Pratchett (someone very carefully converted English punctuation to U.S.) when *LOCUS* arrived with the news that Pratchett “. . . has a rare form of early Alzheimer's.” I almost cried. To lose the mind that writes as Pratchett does will be truly a tragedy.

In his latest novel, *The Darkest Evening of the Year*, Dean Koontz has one of the bad guys use the pseudonym Billie Pilgrim. The character was a reader so he had probably read *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. Well, obviously Koontz has read it.

On January 12<sup>th</sup> I donated my 1984 Buick Century to *Cars 4 Causes*. I had said to myself that if it ever failed Smog Check for whatever reason I would get rid of it. It only failed the timing check that would have cost a bit less than \$200 to fix. But, once things start causing problems it always seems to be the start of other problems. Also, the engine had an oil leak and the air conditioning didn't work very well. The car had only 105,861 miles on it, a full tank of gas, almost new tires, had just been washed, so they are getting a basically good car for its age. For the first time in 20 years or so I am down to one car.

Joe makes comment (p. 2) about Betamax VCR and how that turned out. My first VCR was a Zenith Betamax (obvious copy of Sony) purchased in 1980 at the cost almost \$1000.00. It was a real marvel. But, it was nothing compared to what would be available in only a few short years. Not too many years later I donated it to a thrift store and purchased a VHS.

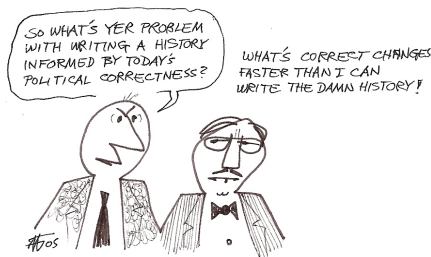
And now it looks as if Blu-Ray has taken a big lead over HD DVD.

In the OBITS, Joe notes the death of Ira Levin and lists some of his novels, including *This Perfect Day* (1970) that was, and probably still is, one of my favorite novels.

Outstanding coverage of the USS *Utah* by Lisa.



Excellent review by Joe of *Until Proven Innocent: Political Correctness and the Shameful Injustices of the Duke Lacrosse Case* (p. 11). I have written about this case elsewhere, but would still like to make some comments. Mike Nifong, the Durham County (North Carolina) District Attorney, resigned and has been disbarred. Nifong got what he deserved. But, what about the lacrosse players he tried to railroad? Of course Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton jumped in early and played the Race Card. (The case rather reminds me of Sharpton and Tawana Brawley. Either Sharpton has learned nothing or doesn't give a damn. Probably both.) The New York Times had the boys pictures on its front page, but put Nifong's disbarment on page 16. I wonder if Nifong, Jackson, Sharpton, the 88 Duke University faculty members, the scumbag police officers involved, and the New York Times will now render an apology (well, Nifong offered an apology after he got caught) and help reimburse the boys and their families for their legal expenses that I understand are in excess of \$1 million. I will not hold my breath. I highly recommend the book.



It would be interesting if a Nifong Award could be established. No limit on the number of awards that could be given in a year. The first award should go to Nifong himself. Awards could be given for the past and the prosecutors and therapists involved in the McMartin case should receive the award. Also, the police officers (not the good one) and prosecutors involved in the Michael Crowe case.

Then there is the recent case of the two 13-year old boys in McMinnville, Oregon who were charged with sexual harassment, felony sex abuse, and anything else the prosecutors could think of for slapping some girls on the butt. Basically, the students at their school had a slap the butt day so most everyone was slapping butts. (I know that sounds a bit silly. But, these were only 13-year olds.) For some reason the Assistant Principal called the police

on these two boys. The boys were interrogated by a police officer, arrested, hauled off in handcuffs, stripped searched and placed in juvenile jail for five days. If convicted they would be required to register as sex offenders for a lifetime. Like Nifong, the District Attorney, Bradley Berry, keep saying wait until you see the evidence. Each time they came into court another charge was dropped. The girls involved said they wanted all charges dropped. Finally all charges were dropped and the judge dismissed the case. Apparently the boys will have to go through some of the usual therapy crap. The Assistant District Attorney said that under the same circumstances they would bring the same charges. The Assistant Principal, District Attorney Berry, and the Assistant District Attorney are well deserving of the Nifong Award. The Assistant Principal should be fired. District Attorney Berry and the Assistant District Attorney should be fired and disbarred, just like the punishment of Nifong.

Joe is correct—"The justice system is badly broken, and there seems to be no way to fix it."

**Richard Dengrove:** I am taking part in the National Geographic's genetics project and have received my reports for both male and female. Interesting comment that "... there have been pre-Columbian Japanese artifacts found not only in North America but in South America as well." The history of human travel and migration is much more complicated than was thought in the past. You are absolutely correct — "... what got us out of the Depression was World War II." Nothing that FDR did had any effect in getting us out of the Depression (his actions actually extended the Depression) until he had the country start gearing up for entry into WW II.

**Sue Burke:** When I read how King Juan Carlos I told Hugo Chávez—"Why don't you shut up?"—I shouted out loud "good for the King" and laughed so hard that I almost fell out of my chair. After reading your comments about the positive reaction in Spain I e-mailed you in an attempt to obtain one of the t-shirts you mentioned. Thanks to you I ordered the t-shirt you recommended from CafePress.com and let my friend Barry (who while stationed in Germany in the Army spent as much time as he could in Spain) know about the shirt. The t-shirt has arrived and is great. I am now giving you public thanks for your help. By the way, do you think that we might be able to borrow the King? There are a number of people here to whom he could say shut-up.

**Marty Helgesen:** Thank you for saying that I am correct about the radio usage of the

phrase "over and out". The correct usage of "over and out" was pounded into our heads in a class that I took in the Navy in 1955. The first time that I remember seeing it used incorrectly in a novel was one by John Dalmas and I wrote him bout it. However, I first confirmed it with my friend Barry who was a radio operator in the Army. He told me that they had a Colonel who used it incorrectly. They didn't correct him. Most of us probably have things that we know are incorrect and bring our reading to a sudden halt. This is one of mine. My friend Tom says that I am a picker of nits. So be it.

I've become accustomed to such errors. One has to decide at what point it's the characters not knowing or the author not knowing.

— JTM

From: **Rodney Leighton** December 20, 2007  
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CANADA

Winter has arrived with a vengeance, much earlier than normal.

Hey, one of my sisters with whom I exchange some books from time to time informed me some time ago that one of her friends was a Stephen King fan. Took her a couple of King books to give or lend said friend. Not long ago I finished *One Door Away from Heaven* by Dean Koontz and figured I would donate it to the book table at the bank next time I am there but I wondered if my sister's friend who likes King also likes Koontz. Wrote and asked her to find out; she called me one night and when I mentioned this, she said: "I don't see her that much; when I do, she is always complaining." I said: "Sounds just like me."

I could mention the pages which were cropped short and blank on one side but these things happen.

I was interested in your comment about Patri's statement that what passes for "fans" are consumers, not participants; I recall a time when I stated, somewhere, my belief that I was not a fan and Lisa wrote in proclaiming that I qualified as one. Now, well, I suspect you will get some pages from Tim to scan into the next *FOSFAX* written by me and I suppose this constitutes a loc. But I think I have finally, truly, come to the end of my active participation in sf fanzines.

As you note I took the photocopied thing

off the Internet; took the title off it . . . I am planning to carry on with it, like this one is. Make up your own title if you want to list it in the fanzines. I think that I will mail a copy to any fanzine publisher who sends me a copy of his/her/their fanzine. They can extract some of it to print if they want to print something written by me. Does this constitute being a fan? Or a consumer?



You're publishing a fanzine.

— JTM

Of course, if no one sends me any, then my time in sf fandom will completely cease, right?

*The Hockey News* used to be fairly large and contain all kinds of material; used to take me days to finish an issue. Now, it is mostly crap. Read everything . . . about 40% . . . that I wanted to in the issue that came yesterday at noon before 7 p.m. Sigh.

From: **Nancy Martsch** January 20, 2008  
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The article about USS *Utah* at Pearl Harbor was very interesting. Good work. But why the (bleeping) censorship?

I didn't care for the word used so I bleeped it and rephrased it in terms I found more acceptable. I also made sure to post the link to the unbleeped website so that anyone who wanted to could visit the website and see it for themselves. Is that really censorship?

— LTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** January 15, 2008



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Who knows when I will actually have to seek to purchase a typewriter ribbon? Junked typers, even when useless to me, have now and then yielded serviceable ones. Some years ago I spotted in trash a typewriter case of familiar design; no typer was inside but instead, more usefully, a couple of oversize spools of ribbon, each holding twice the usual quota. As I recall, Ned Brooks could not tell me what machine might have used these. I have just put into service the first half of the last of these, making a surrogate grommet with needle and thread. Ah, thrift.

A new novel that recently came to me for proofing had a mind-boggling kind of bolonium, a substance with negative weight. It is as if the well-known rubber sheet was upside-down, and it sought a region where space was flat. Formerly used for aerial boats, since banned because of their military capabilities, it is at the time of the story used to enable flight with arm-powered wings . . . at least it was not clear to me how the muscles of the legs were harnessed for this. The stuff does seem to have inertial mass, else it would not serve, in one episode, to slug an adversary.

As with balloons, there are tricky problems with equilibrium' the stuff is precious (how any stayed around to be mined is a puzzle) and you don't want to valve any of it off. More boggling is violation of the Einsteinian equivalence between thwarted gravitational pull, acceleration, and centrifugal force. Not that skiffy doesn't violate the laws of Newton and Einstein all the time. But I have been able to take Doc Smith's inertialess drive and suchlike things without a twitch. Ansibles do presuppose an absolute space and time, don't they?

**Game Designers' Workshop's game Space: 1889 had a Martian tree that grew lighter-than-air, called "liftwood". It also had the luminiferous ether, so it obviously wasn't our science there.**

The other day I saw where, in the aftermath of a party, a large bag of ice cubes had been stuffed into a trash bin. What kind of person would do that, and what (if anything) could one trust him with? No, I wouldn't even throw old potting soil into the trash, as long as there's unpaved ground in sight.

Good ol' Ivan T. Sanderson, in a book now half a century old, admits that "there is no true

distinction between hares and rabbits" — though we Europeans, having one of each, could readily tell the March Hare from the White Rabbit. A characteristic posture of the hare is sitting up, with its huge ears pointing upwards. Bugs Bunny is a hare. The Easter Bunny, as any German could tell you, is a hare. A distinction I was taught in childhood is that the young of the hare are not born blind and helpless but I won't cite in as fact until I read it in an authoritative book.

Niven's "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex" is also in *N-Space*, newly in a 2007 Tor trade paperback.

I can readily see why a corporation like Disney would want to buy the rights that would let it exploit a property in every possible way. *Star Beast* coloring books? Why not? If buyer and seller can agree on a price . . . No, I would have no truck, for myself or any kids favored with presents, of endless serialization of Winnie-the-Pooh, or the Tove Jansson characters, or the hidden years of Sméagol (Sméagol's diary: "Another meal of raw fish and orc. Can't remember what steak and pork taste like.")

Having bought *The History of Middle-earth* to the very last volume, I do *not* want even to see *The History of The Hobbit*. But perhaps somebody can tell me if any extant text had the reading "with scarcely a snore nor more than a whiff of unseen steam." The lost of "nor" between one draft and the next is exactly the sort of thing that can happen. As subeditor, I'm constantly fixing little omissions like this.

Still, the most welcome Christmas present of all was *Hobitas* (1985 edition) from my present contact person in Vilnius. I aim to find out, some day when I don't feel like doing anything more serious, if I can find even one sentence of at least five words with matching syntax and cognates, as actually seen in the Latvian edition.

Exotic found money has lately included 50 tonge of Kazakhstan; I know a child who will happily take such things. Canadian cents had accumulated so much that I gave them to a visitor from upstate N.Y., who crosses the border now and then. Canada is melting its copper, nickel, and cupro-nickel coins, replacing them with the cheaper recent stuff. In the U.S., how long will argle-bargle and shilly-shallying continue. Yeah, yeah, only furriners have scalloped, squarish, or holed coins, but it's time for the nickel to be replaced with something like that and little larger than the cent, which shall be abolished. What Scandanavian country now has nothing smaller than the half krone? Other countries are

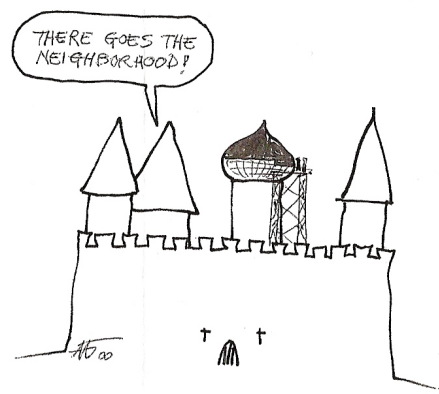
calling in their most picayune coins.

**Maybe the Mint could revive the half-dime; but it would probably be as succesful as the various dollar coins (which used to commemorate the Moon Landing).**

— JTM

In a Jack Vance universe the minimum wage was, in effect, fixed at *one* SVU; but can this in itself prevent the emission of a fiat currency? Payable, like, in *real* dollars after the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the CSA and the USA?

From: **Lloyd Penney** January 24, 2008  
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Thank you for *Alexiad* Vol. 6 No.6, WN 36. Looks like lots to comment on with a cursory glance through it. Time to do more than just glance...

Now that we can look through the lens of time, six years and more, I think we'll find that like Pearl Harbor, the assassination of JFK and the shuttle disasters, 9/11 is quickly becoming a great myth. I think a lot of that mythologizing comes from the desire to find out all the facts. The only question I never hear . . . Why? What did we do that would cause them to think of this and actually do it?

**We're not Muslim.**

Hope your Christmas Eve birthday was a

good time, Joe . . . our Christmastime was especially good, in spite of . . . well, the great job at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind went away. It's frustrating when you learn the job, enjoy doing it, start getting good at it, and they let you go anyway. I think they let me go to balance the budget for 2008, but if I screwed up, they haven't let me know. I have been told that many non-profit organizations will let people go just before their three-month trial period to get the job done and save on benefits.

A limit at the San Diego Comic Con of 120,000? Any Worldcon would be ecstatic to have memberships in the five figures. That shows me that the SDCC is not a comic con any more, but a popculture display for the masses. There is a similar convention in Toronto in the fall called fanXpo, and there is a monster comic con in the Detroit suburb of Novi called the Motor City Comic Con. I think that's the number 2 comic con in the US.

True, our fanzine numbers are dwindling, and those who arrive to see what we're doing are outnumbered by those leave or pass away. I can see this enjoyable activity dying away, but if we all bust our chops to keep it alive, it will last that much longer. I'll keep hacking away if you and many others keep pubbing your ish.

I would like to explore Christopher Tolkien's *History of Middle-Earth*, but probably not at the expense you hint at. *The History of The Hobbit* may be more within my reach. I would expect there to be some changes in the drafts of *The Hobbit*, but it looks like there's been so many drafts and changes, the book itself might not even resemble the original idea the professor might have had.

The best series of all time? There are so many now, and so many of them are good. As said, it is impossible to read all SF today. I must think that the number of people who are reading SF is getting smaller, so how do we make such an objective preference a subjective decision? The discussion of the various series that could be considered the best may be the best we can do.

The Internet is changing the world's culture, to be sure. I find it allows introverts to participate without necessarily having to deal directly with people. It allows you to work hard without much visible gain, in the form of blogs, Facebook and MySpace pages, etc. Even the biggest users of these pages will say they are enormous time-wasters, but that doesn't stop them from spending that time on them, and inviting others to play Pirates or Vampyres or Scrabulous, or other applications

designed to waste even more time.

As Mike Weasner, Yvonne is also seeing an allergist, and has been diagnosed with extensive food allergies. She cannot eat anything containing wheat, corn, oats, tomatoes, and many more common foods. We have found substitutes for some of these foods, like ancient grains for wheat. Quinoa, amaranth, spelt . . . she makes spelt pancakes, and while they are thicker and coarser, they have much more nutrition than plain wheat pancakes.

Al du Pisani changes jobs like I do. There has to be an easier way to make a living, so I keep sending out resumes, and hope that the lotteries I play might cash in one fine day.

My loc . . . my used book store has stopped accepting books for credit, and now just sells. The store is quite full, so I can't blame him. I need to do a little research to see what other used book stores in my area might be taking in books for credit. Scott Patri is still around, and was spotted at the last VCon in Vancouver this past October.

And now, I think I'm done. The new job is doing well, but I am still working 45- to 50-hour weeks, and frankly, I need a vacation from it all. I'd probably spend most of it sleeping. Take care, and see you next time.

**We hope to see you in Montreal, but given the job problems, it might be better to generically wish for the best.**

— JTM

From: **Richard Dengrove** January 27, 2008  
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*Alexiad*, December 2007, was another bang up issue. Again too many things to respond to, and I don't know how to limit myself. Here is my attempt.

About Lisa's article on the USS *Utah*, I enjoyed the accounts of the men who tried to keep her from sinking, who helped with the evacuation, who buried the dead, and who described those efforts.

However, I kept wondering something while I was reading. Are we heroic or do we have heroism foisted on us? One could say that outer heroism was foisted on them because, without Pearl Harbor, the heroes might not have gotten a chance to show heroism. About their inner heroism, we can never know much about it. Because their accounts concentrate so exclusively on events, they spare very little

comment on their motives and fears.

Undeniably heroism was forced on them but they rose to the occasion. Tomich, who sacrificed himself for his fellow sailors, never got the chance to write out his account.

— LTM

Nonetheless, I am willing, without reservations, to grant them overflowing heroism, both of the outer and inner kind.

I found Taral Wayne's article on "Splitting hairs," hilarious. I am sure that kids these days would appreciate the message of speaking good English and not mangling the language with rap talk. Riiiiigggghhhttt!!!

However, I disagree that heroes can't be given a complex origin. I can see where saying nothing in circles would be a dud. With an origin tale with lots of interesting things, though, the more complex the merrier.

In fact, I had the idea that the Incredible Hare not get hare powers from a radioactive rabbit, but a radioactive dog instead. You can't see how he could have gotten his powers from a dog? You mean you have never heard of the Hare of the Dog that Bit Him.

About your comments about me, Joe, you have me convinced on two points. First, Neville Chamberlain should have been raising ground nuts. He had to have known that giving the Skoda plants to the Germans would have brought Britain farther from catchup, not closer. Also, I gather he knew about the Oster Conspiracy. There the generals would have overthrown Hitler if Germany went to war over Czechoslovakia. Since Winston Churchill knew, he did. Of course, what you make of such conspiracies at the time is another thing. There is such a thing as counterespionage.

A second point you have convinced, of Joe, is that you weren't, like Gibbon, claiming that Christianity helped bring about the Fall of the Roman Empire. I apologize. Perhaps I should have been faster on the uptake.

About George Price's comments when I challenged him and Taras to prove that Reagan's tough policy caused the fall of the Soviet Union. At first, he says two Soviet Generals agreed that Star Wars "triggered" the fall. His source is not much worse than mine. However, since a cause needs an explanation, either he or the generals should have given one. Having given me an OK source, he thinks better of it. He feels he would have to write a history of the period, which he balks at doing. I am frankly puzzled by this. I wasn't

giving detailed proof just the best that came to mind, and in a nutshell.

Also, I feel a little frustrated. I was hoping he would give me some fodder for thought.

Of course, although he is reluctant to articulate a proof, it is obvious as day to him that Reagan's toughness brought about the fall of the Soviet Union. He claims it was obvious from Day One.

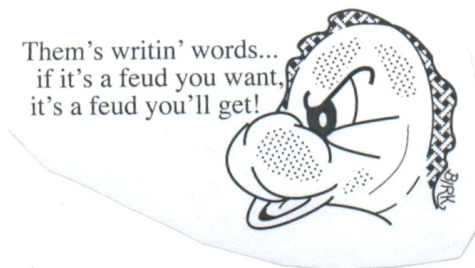
For Taras Wolansky, I have another reply. I am sure he considers me very confused because I got wrong his explanations for how the Soviet Union and Rome fell.

I gave his letters and my letters a good reading. I don't really see where I got his explanations wrong. My emphasis might not be his but I can't see where I got them wrong. What I do see is that he failed to give me the slightest bit of proof that Reagan's toughness destroyed the Soviet Union. I don't buy that merely detailing the theory again should convince me.

On the Fall of Rome, similarly, he failed to answer my objection to lack of patriotism having caused it. In addition, he misunderstood one of my theories. I am sure when I gave crop failure as a reason for Rome's Fall, it must have screamed out that I had made a foolish mistake. Crop failure for one season wouldn't cause the Fall of Rome.

I agree. However, I say nowhere that the crop failure was for one season. In fact, I meant there was crop failure for centuries. Climate change is not just for one season; cycles can happen over years, decades, centuries, etc.

Having said this, I am sure he will conclude that my reply shows, more than ever, I am either a dolt or evil.



Sheryl Birkhead reports about an owner who has a mare with navicular disease, who should never be raced or bred. However, he is intent on seeing it raced and bred.

My wife Heidi, an old horsewoman, has pointed out to me how horse people delude

themselves that way. We knew about a wealthy owner, at one time, who thought so much of his 'racehorse' that he paid a jockey to ride her. Once, my wife asked him how the horse was doing. He said it was consistent: it always came in last.

She also knew a fellow who bragged about his horse. Why? I have no idea. One leg was lame. However, I doubt he deluded himself he was going to race him or breed him. I doubt he even deluded himself he was going to ride him.

Two comments for Marty Helgesen. First, about the Ancient Mystic Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), which used to advertise so much in the old science fiction magazines. Last time I heard, the AMORC Imperator was a Frenchman, Christian Bernard, after it had been run by a series of people of Scottish ancestry: the Lewises, father and son and Gary L. Stewart. The changeover has not happened without several schisms.

Second, about Disney's lobbying, the last time Congress extended the term of copyright, many referred to it as the Steamboat Willy Law. While Disney made Steamboat Willy, an early Mickey Mouse cartoon, in 1928, its copyright has kept getting extended and it is still protected.

Joe, Uncle Wiggly a goat? I thought he was a rabbit. In fact, a 70 year old rabbit with rheumatism. I remember there was the Skillery Skallery Alligator and the Creepy Crawly Crocodile, whose appearance veered awfully close to the early 20th Century stereotype of Southern Blacks. They wanted to give Uncle Wiggly ear nibbles. At three or four, my mother used to play she was the Skillery or Creepy, and out to give me ear nibbles. When she finally caught me, it was more like having my ear tickled.

You're right. It was the Billy Whiskers series by Frances Trego Montgomery that had the goat. She also wrote [On A Lark to the Planets](#) (1904) about a journey through the Solar System.

"Oh my ears and whiskers! said Uncle Wiggly extremittally."

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** January 29, 2008  
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*Alexiad*, December 2007:

I read Bruce Russett's *No Clear and Present Danger* back when it was first



published. As I recall, his argument was that, by the time the US entered World War II, Great Britain was no longer in danger of falling, and that US assistance, short of actually entering the war, would have prevented a German victory. Well, I've seen much more implausible alternate histories (like Terry Bisson's *Fire on the Mountain*)!

Johnny Carruthers: On nominations for a projected series Hugo, I would consider the "Honor Harrington" series subliterary. Well, so was Doc Smith's "Lensman" series, but that at least was innovative in its time.

Weber's series is an argument for computer generated print on demand, where the purchaser can specify the length — 200 pages instead of 800 — and delete all references to trectats.

Weber must write from a strict outline. In one of his recent books, he spends a ten-page chapter on: Honor Harrington changing her estate attorney.

Richard Dengrove: During World War II, labor shortages developed because the government did not permit wages to rise to the market level, i.e., where supply and demand matched. See, for example: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/cwc/cm20030124ar04p1.htm> The official inflation rate was 35%, but I don't think that takes into account the fact that goods were rationed or unavailable.

Alexis Gilliland: In her new book about the Depression, Amity Shlaes puts her finger on a big factor: uncertainty. FDR is often praised for being willing to experiment — but experimentation and planning are diametrically opposed.

Let's say I'm a business man and figure I can manufacture widgets for 15 cents and sell them for 20 cents. A good investment? Not so fast. To help the poor, FDR might set a maximum price of 10 cents on widgets, wiping me out. Or, to help the poor widgetmakers, he might increase their wages so that it costs 25 cents to make a widget, wiping me out. Or, to help out the suffering widget tools industry, he might slap a tariff on foreign widget tools, raising my costs and wiping me out. (Now you know why business hires so many lobbyists. The Federal government could easily destroy an industry by accident.)

Shlaes also reminds us that the New Deal was financed through taxes and borrowing. (As a percentage of GDP, the worst deficits of the last 80 years, except for World War II.) The New Deal programs stand out even more because the private economy around them was crushed.

If the money supply goes down by, say,

50%, then wages have to go down by about the same to prevent unemployment. If they go down by less than 50%, then that is in effect a raise above the level at which supply and demand are in synch. Thus, economists often speak of the "downwards stickiness of wages" as a problem in a deflationary economy, which is what we had in the Great Depression.

Review of Naomi Novik's *Empire of Ivory*: In this book we see political correctness finally doing serious harm to the Temeraire books. For example, I can easily see an African empire going to war over the slave trade — but, from my knowledge of real African history, it would be to take over the trade, not end it! To expect different African nations to love each other, purely on the basis of skin color, is as preposterous as assuming the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are natural allies and friends.

Or different tribes of American Indians — which Novik is probably going to misrepresent in her next book. The Sioux tried to exterminate the Pawnee, for example; while Blackfoot scouts helped the long knives against the Sioux. In *Comanche Moon*, for another example, Larry McMurtry tells us the Comanche felt an obligation to kill any Kickapoo they encountered.



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

Indeed. For another example, Tashunkewitko ("Crazy Horse") was about to sign up with the Long

Knives to fight the Nez Perce when he was killed, due to an apparently malicious translation error.

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** January 30, 2008  
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His Majesty King Juan Carlos de Borbón turned 70 years old on January 5, having spent 32 of those years on the throne. The quiet celebrations included an official state dinner at which political enemies were forced to sit together and be pleasant — royal fun. During the speeches, the Prince let protocol slip and mentioned that within the family, his father is called "el Patrón": the Patron.

Guests included Communist leaders. They're fond of the King because, when he brought democracy to Spain, he insisted that the Communists be legal. "I want to be King for everyone in Spain," he says often. His is an inclusive reign, and he uses his position to try to keep the kingdom united in spite of itself. Meanwhile, talk radio commentators on the network run by the Catholic bishops are calling for His Majesty to abdicate. The Spanish Catholic Church still prefers exclusion. The Church has also led several rallies against the incumbent government — with worrisome tinges of Fascism in its pronouncements.

Spain will go to the polls on March 9 to elect a new Congress and president (as they call their prime minister). Political parties chose their candidates behind closed doors (no primary hoopla), leaving the rest of us to wonder what they were thinking. Campaign promises have grown so excessive that the Communists, a noisy minor party, have become the fiscal conservatives — and they've created animated cartoons of their candidate as a superhero solving Spain's problems. At least he's not depicted wearing tights. Another party is giving out air fresheners in its campaign, claiming that the scent embodies "confidence, future, efficiency, equality, progress, and work," just like them. Sure.

Undecided voters will decide the election. Spain has two main parties, one called "Popular" and the other "Socialist Workers" (the incumbents), though their ideologies have nothing to do with their names. No matter which one wins, everyone knows there will be big changes. And everyone knows that

terrorists of one kind or another may try to alter the outcome again.

Still, the front page news is all about American politics. The prospect of a black U.S. president has shocked the world. (And many people here speculate that if Obama is nominated, he will be assassinated.) The American election would be news anyway because no matter what Spain's voters do (the King always votes, and like everyone must present his ID to get his ballot), in many ways the U.S. president will make a bigger difference in Spaniards' lives. American voters hold immense power. They will change the world, and the whole world is watching. Closely.

¿But when H.M. signs for the ballot, does he sign it, "Yo el Rey"?

— José

Meanwhile, thanks, Lisa, for the spellbinding article on the *Utah*. And watch for my short story, "Spiders," in the March issue of *Asimov's*.

...faster than a speeding e-loc...  
able to leap cyberspace  
in a single keystroke...and who,  
disguised as a mild mannered fan...



From: **Milt Stevens** January 30, 2008  
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In *Alexiad* V6#6, you mention the issue was printed on the 66th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. I always remember Pearl Harbor, because it's a date that is very important in my life. You see, the Japanese attacked, and it was announced that men with children would be deferred from the draft. I was born 11 months later. There must have been a couple of months where my parents were giving it a good effort, but I didn't manage to arrive in time. Everyone in my class in high school was aware of the situation around the time we were born. That was why there were so many of us (1100) in the class. Guys who were a couple of months older than I was did get their dads' deferments. As far as my father was concerned, things were looking up after some

really dry times. He had become a policeman in early 1941 and married my mother. He personally liked the Japanese he had met as a police officer in Hollywood. He would have been willing to accept and apology for the whole Pearl Harbor thing. Unfortunately, the Japanese government didn't offer one.

The Japanese government also proceeded to aggressively swarm through the South Pacific until Spruance stopped their advance at Midway.

— LTM

Joseph has become aware that the San Diego Comiccon has 120,000 members. I've heard they have ten fulltime employees to stage an event of that size. They have been going for quite a few years, but I've never attended one myself. A fair number of LASFSians attend them for one reason or another. The people who do attend them seem to like them quite well. I don't like crowds in general, and 120,000 sounds like far more of a crowd than I would care to deal with. With worldcons, I've been graduated into 5,000 person events. The earliest worldcons I attended were about 1500 people.

Late sixties, in other words, just at the beginning of the STAR TREK surge, but before Star Wars made it profitable. There was still some connection to the Elder Days then.

— JTM

Speaking of other fandoms, I heard recently that there are over 3000 anime clubs in the United States. This is based on an estimate of one of the anime production companies. The company had been sending CDs previewing their forthcoming productions to all the anime clubs they could locate. They stopped doing it when the number of clubs passed 3000. By comparison, I doubt there are more than 300 science fiction clubs in the United States even if you include college clubs. (College clubs usually come and go rapidly and don't have any influence on outside fandom.) Of course, many of those anime clubs may be both small and short lived. Among the clublets that are hosted by LASFS, there are two anime clubs; CFO (Cartoon Fantasy Organization) and Cinema Anime. The former has a monthly attendance of 20 or 30 people while the latter has a monthly attendance around a dozen. This is in

comparison with LASFS which has a weekly attendance around 70 or 80.

I think I would seriously disagree with the ideas in the book *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture*. For one thing, I'm a big fan of amateurism, and I think people doing things rather than just consuming things prevents early brain rot. I don't think amateurism has anything to do with pirating music or films. Every technological change since the beginning of the world has thrown somebody or other out of work. Recorded music began by throwing lots of musicians out of work, and printed books weren't good news for copyists. Not all changes are bad. Automation has eliminated lots of dirty, dangerous jobs in coal mines and steel mills. And more liberal sexual attitudes have eliminated a lot of jobs in prostitution.

From: **AL du Pisani** January 31, 2008  
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I am still well, and still glad I left my old job. Not always so sure that it was an unalloyed good to get the new job, but I suppose such ambivalence is a matter of life.

I did not plan to take leave over Christmas, as I only had one day's worth of leave to my name, and the company is not known for a generous policy towards leave. But they closed up offices for fumigation, the day before Christmas. And so I managed to have a long weekend away, with my family.

A very nice time, even though it rained almost the entire time I was with them. Not that the rain stayed away, once I got home: After a week of sunshine we had three weeks of rain, with the occasional cloudy day in between.

At which time the chickens came home to roost: Our dearly beloved electricity supply monopoly ran out of electricity. For a variety of reasons: They did not pay for coal; managed to get a bunch of new people to transport for them, most of which companies went out of business due to lack of managerial skills; did not start building new power stations early enough; managed to let the power stations moth-balled be stolen bare; applied a policy of affirmative action, in a field where there is not a lot of non-White trained personnel; failed to do regular maintenance; and in general to manage things poorly. For which the CEO and Board of Directors were compensated to the tune of nearly R100 million, last year.

Government also contributed: Setting a (low) electricity price; not listening ten years ago when people told them we will run out of electricity this year; and in general mismanaging the sector of the economy. All of them kept on claiming that they were not to blame, until documents proving their complicity came to light

And so, today, South African mines are shut down, until a policy of rationing can be implemented. But Government will not let the electricity price rise too high, too fast, because The Poor would be adversely affected. And our electricity supply monopoly are also not willing to buy electricity from private companies, unless they make 100% profit.

I never wanted to live in a third world county, that aspires to be a third world country. I had hoped for a place that aimed high. Too much of that is only talk, when they see how much money they can make out of the crises.

This has been so bad, that talking about electricity have replaced the previous number one topic, Crime, in ordinary conversation. And that not because something was done about Crime, but because something worse has taken its place.

**And we thought Bloody Harlan County was bad. But at least they kept the generators running.**

At least I have SF, and even Fantasy. So that I can travel to place that are better and offer more hope.

That is why I am glad to receive *Alexiad*, and keep in contact with other places, where there are still hope.

Enjoy what you have, and keep the light burning.

Good luck.

— JTM

From: **Jeffrey Allan Boman** Feb. 1, 2008  
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Hi this is Jeff from Jacksonville... (No Republicans for me, thank you — even if I was American.

I just realized: I just violated the 'rule' of no politics in polite conversation. Now I just need to produce talk of religion, and I'll be 2 for 2!)

Thanks for *Alexiad* Vol. 6 No. 6. I've misplaced 5 so I can't really comment on it now, other than to comment how opening the

zine up online has brought us our first troll. Don't feed them folks. Ignore them, and they'll leave.

It's been a hectic few months for me. My other cat Squeaky may not remember her buddy specifically, but after 12 years with a companion she is lonely; she steps into other rooms I'm not in and cries for attention.

**On that dreadful morning when my old cat Sulla died, Elfing, the second cat, came into our bedroom and saw the body. For a moment he just stood there, uncomprehending . . . and then knowing all too much.**

— JTM

Between losing Boots, bad weather and logistic problems I just mailed out issue 3 of my zine January 31st — almost 2 months late. At least I got my master copy printed out on time: after more than 2 years, my printer needs a black toner replacement. Not a bad break: in better weather I'll get it refilled. Until then I can print at work . . . the advantage of working in tech support in a room full of computers.

SDCC having more than 120 K attendees makes me even more reluctant to go to it someday. / I haven't yet got any nibbles from outreach on my zine either. Comic fandom has less active zines than SF too . . . hopefully that'll change. After 3 issues it is too soon to tell. / As soon as I saw mention of the Korean War here I thought of **M\*A\*S\*H** too. / Re: Random Jottings . . . I've known Jo Walton for years. I was just with her on several panels at Con\*Cept 2007 too. / I'm actually saving up for a noahpad linux laptop, when it gets here from Japan. / Re: And They Were There . . . you and Lisa produced a very detailed piece on this, as the veterans deserve. / Re: Never Enough . . . I thought *Pretty Woman* was made happier the same way a Robert Redford film about a newscaster couple with Jessica Savage was changed: the real story was too grim. I never knew Richard Gere had a hand in it!

Re: Cat Pains . . . I'm relieved your cats will be okay. I've heard too many sad stories lately. / Re: Time to Reconsider? . . . I'm a little biased due to knowing Spider Robinson, but I'd add the Callahan's series to that list. / The Amber novels by Zelazny are one of my all-time favorites too. / Re: Afterword . . . the "Tek" series winning any award would bug me! They have too much of a 'Shatner stink' on them. / Re: Splitting Hares . . . I graduated from University in Animation, so I found this descent into a flashback fascinating. I could



see the ethnic stereotype here (Ebonics) making this an impossible sell though. / Re: The Man From Krypton . . . I want to track down this book now. I'm not a big Superman fan granted (I read comicbooks, but Supes doesn't appeal to me), but essays on any hero interest me. Especially to finally have Larry Niven's essay now. / Re: The Cult of the Amateur . . . as an Inter-nut myself, this is another book that interests me. I don't believe piracy has hurt music sales though; after the RIAA clamped down on it, sales slumped to a major way anyway. The expense of a CD and the lack of quality music on them has hurt more.

#### Letters

**Richard Dengrove:** Mac's do come with graphics editing, though Sherryl will know better if the programs can be transferred or not. / One of my friends is a Jew in London. I couldn't tell by the name though because I don't know the culture in the UK. If he hadn't told me, I wouldn't have known by his family name Barnett. / With cousins and a Great Aunt and Uncle in Israel (my cousin there's sons were old enough last year to join the army) I have the same dilemma. They are all religious too.

**Joy V. Smith:** Tanya Huff was a GoH at Con\*Cept this year. I hadn't seen her sine Primedia 1988 in Toronto.

**R-Laurainne Tutihasi:** Referring to me by my family name . . . that's how I chose my pen name of Boman Allan Jeffries a few years ago (a nurse called me that the same way). / *Blood Ties* as a TV show has the actress portraying Vicki as the on-screen heat.

**E. B. Frohvet:** Pity that you won't be at the Worldcon here in Montreal in 2009. I'm hoping to meet as many of my fellow LOC'ers as I can.

**John Hertz:** my friends at our Worldcon have already started to organize for it two years early (Lloyd and Yvonne Penney included, as he mentioned). I'm hoping it helps. That René Walling (Con Chair) is a very organized person will help too.

**Marty Hegelsen:** Friends in Furry fandom have compared me more to a Mephit (A very timid skunk-type) in the past.

**Lloyd Penney:** Oops! You already mentioned your involvement in the Montreal Worldcon. I'm really looking forward to it, less than 2 years away now! / I haven't had surgery since just after I was born (I had a double hernia then). I hope to avoid surgery for the rest of my life — but the fact that you had some, even over a year ago, brings it home to me that it may happen anyway.

Time to send this one off. Read everyone soon.

#### WAHF:

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

**William Hughes**, of the USS *Utah* Association, with thanks for the credit.

To the Great Huangdi, Lord of Ten Thousand Years . . .

From Zhuan Qingfu, Mandarin of the First Rank

Your Imperial Majesty's August Predecessor had granted your humble servant the privilege of traveling into the far barbarian East, to determine and ascertain the nature and form of the people and countries there. Your humble servant knocks his head nine times before the Imperial Throne in performance of this task.

Your humble servant traveled into the east by way of merchant ships, stopping among the Indian and Arab barbarians. As the report of Zheng He, recovered by your humble servant, covers this in massive detail, your humble servant will spare Your Imperial Majesty the tedious labor of reprising it.

Your humble servant arrived in the barbarian land of Lou-bao-ran-dai, which is occupied by a folk called Lou-bao-ran-dan. As common belief would have it, these are indeed red-haired and blue-eyed people, albeit many have hair of the color of wheat, while others are more normal. Similarly, their eyes are sometimes also brown.

They even have writing, after a fashion, and have kept records, though nowhere near those of the Imperial secretariat.

Upon examining the Imperial records, your humble servant learned that in the reign of the Lingdi Huangdi, two emissaries of the barbarian chief An-Dun made submission to Your August Predecessor, proffering tribute. Your humble servant made it his foremost responsibility to seek out the heirs of An-Dun, to collect the arrears of tribute and to reaffirm their tributary status.

The Lou-ban-ran-dan, they explained, conquered this land from another band of barbarians, styled Ou-rou-gou. The Ou-rou-gou, in turn, entered this land upon the demise of its former lords, who appear to have been the heirs of king An-Dun. The land had

become depopulated, making this not so much a conquest as a relocation.

It appears that about a hundred and fifty years before king An-Dun, a new religion had arisen in the Arab lands, promulgated by a man named Ya-Xua or Sau -- the records vary. This religion echoed the more unsavory beliefs of the Daoists, populating the world with demons, and promising its followers a life in the afterworld, under the dominion of the Heavenly Emperor, founder of the cult, that would be free of demons.

Within a mere three hundred years, this cult succeeded in dominating the realm, finally triumphing under a king Gon-San-Din. King Gon-San-Din imposed his religion upon all the people of the kingdom.

About a hundred years after Gon-San-Din, an abbot of one of the foremost monasteries of the kingdom proposed a method for depriving the demons of their prey: all the people of the kingdom should renounce marriage and the conception of children. Once the world was empty, he said, the Heavenly Emperor would return and slay the demons with a sword of fire.

The kings of the realm set about enforcing this decree. Within half a century, the cult had died out, as the last of its adherents had been slain by other barbarians, not affected by this belief. Having no young men to become soldiers, they had become prey to the remaining adherents of the former faiths, and to those from without.

The Lou-ban-ran-dan accept no responsibility for the due tribute, and spurned your humble servant's proffer of protection under Your Imperial Majesty's benevolent auspices. Such folk have nothing worthy of interest, and can be ignored.

**“How the Brigadier Met the English Colonel”, or: *Flashman and the Frog***  
(Part Six)

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café.

Your pardon, friends, for the tiredness of an old man. You saw, I believe, the review of the Quatorzième Juillet, when the soldiers from Indochina returned, and how the women of the Code Rose so assailed them. When I remonstrated, for these were brave men, even if ill-led, one of them said — but I will not sully your ears with the vulgarities of one so lacking in the charm and gentleness of a true woman.

There were braver women in those days. So many of those resistants who died before Boche firing squads, or in the camps, were of the gentler sex. They lived well and quickly, for as with all soldiers they knew they might perish in the morn. But a gentleman speaks not of such things. He does, however, give thanks for this splendid Cointreau, sir.

You must know, then, that after my daring escape from Greece through Turkey to Syria, I was dispatched to the motherland herself. You will remember how this very café was occupied by the Boches, singing their vulgar songs, as they had done in Casablanca the time I and a few other brave men drowned out their singing of their vulgar song with our National Hymn. But this time I slunk about the familiar places, disguised and disgusted.

The messages I had for our brave fighters in the motherland carried hope, but it was my privilege to carry back hope. Nevertheless, the surveillance of the Boche was wide-spread and devilish. Even I could not remain on guard without cease.

Thus it was that I found myself on the boulevard, one painfully devoid of the charming boulevardiers who made the traditional life of this city so light and pleasant, when I beheld a party of Boches coming the other way, checking cards and otherwise enforcing their iron dream of rule upon France. I prepared myself for a glorious resistance followed by a noble death, but fate as ever saved me.

When Bill Slim was chief, after the war, he delivered a stirring denunciation of elite corps. No doubt it was based on his having been drained of all his best men and the necessaries by that prating mountebank Wingate, who had been making a cartoonish fool of himself from Abyssinia to Canada before he won a much-longed for demise in Burmah, when his plane flew into a cloud full of rocks.

I could have told him a thing or two about elite corps, particularly after my old school chum Scud East had left me on the beach in France, dashing off with his party of Commandos because the Huns were pressing him so hard. I crawled into a basement, presenting a proper yellow streak, and while the brave Commandos sailed away with their dead and wounded, retained my hide intact.

The centre of the escape parties was in Paris, so I dragged myself there with all due speed. Not all the maisons de plaisir were reserved for the vile Hun, fortunately, and it was the day I went to visit one which I recalled well from happier days when it happened. When that blue-nose Marthe Richard got them all closed down, Paris was never the same again, but that was yet to come.

The Huns had set up a flying roadblock, as it were, checking identification cards — of which I had none. Turning and running would be an invitation to get caught, and for a moment I wondered if I had finally come to something I couldn't get out of.

Then my luck turned, as it sometimes does, even occasionally for the better. I saw a familiar face, and in a moment latched on to the man, grabbing him and staggering off down the street towards the Huns. When we reached the line, and the one man said, “Ihre Karte!” I said, “Une boisson, mon ami?” and hiccuped.

The playing the utterly soused toper, something I've had a bit of practice at, utterly baffled the soldiers, and they gave up. I dragged Gerard down the street, singing some rowdy songs I'd remembered well from the Folies — not to mention the little chanteuse who sang them for me when her mouth was interestingly full — and we staggered around the corner, headed for a more secure venue.

The resolute Flashman had been dispatched to rescue me, and his quickness of thought and wit had utterly confounded the slow-minded Boches. When we were safe from their prying eyes, he immediately led me to a place of safety.

The young ladies there made us most welcome, tending to our needs with a forward and resolute energy. Regrettably, one among them was less than honest, for all my money disappeared that night, but one does not put the ladies under question when such comes to pass.

In the morn, ere the Boche patrols could find us, we set out to a house of safety, from which we could be taken to a rescue that would return us to England, there to report to our chiefs on our two several experiences.

Thus our noble partnership of bravery achieved another stunning success.

— Not edited (or “edited”) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or George Macdonald Fraser

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