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These Citizens? If
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Right Now! We
return you now to
your regularly
scheduled
Peregrine Nations
5.1
April 2005





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This ish is dedicated to Monty Python, “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” and Robin Williams.

peregrination, n., *L.*, A traveling, roaming, or wandering about; a journey. ([The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language](#), Avenel Books, New York: 1980).

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Contributions (LoCs, articles, reviews, art, etc.) can be sent via e-mail to tropicsf@earthlink.net (please use Peregrine Nations in the subject) or via regular mail. **No attachments unless previously arranged.** Clearly scanned artwork is also welcome. Queries welcome. LOCers' addresses intentionally left out (unless otherwise instructed); if you need one, ask me. Fanzines reviewed will have their addresses included from now on, unless I forget again. **Next editorial deadline: July 10, 2005.**



Silent eLOCutions Letters of Comment

[editorial comments here]

Sheryl Birkhead [On the October ish] / Jan. 21, 2005

Frank Wu's art meets the criteria set out for fan art – those of us who spend time in zines tend to think **that** is where fan art should be, and need to take a broader look (or narrow the definition to fit our wants).

My sister gave me a year of Netflix for Christmas – so now I start to try to catch up on about 5 **years** of movies. Same sister let me know it is not Foxfire I actually want – but not sure what to suggest. I want something that goes over basic technology from the ground up, in case of an emergency – how **do** you make matches if you must do it “by hand” (as an example). Obviously these are to go in the emergency stash (hoping to never use!). [Might I suggest Survive Safely Anywhere: The SAS Survival Manual by John Wiseman (Crown Publishers, NY: 1986, 288 pp., tpb)? It doesn't cover making one's own matches, but it does provide tips on how to dry out damp ones, as well as how to start a fire with a magnifying glass or other lens – and tons of other useful information.]

Congratulations to Lyn on her triple.

Some of our barn cats were born in chicken nests, but in general, when a sitting hen saw a cat approach, it was squawk—shriek—wide wings flapping and a rush, so the fur and feather relationship sounds unusual to me.

Lyn McConchie's series sound “comfortable.” I wonder if they are out on books on tape, and if the library has them if they are. [So have you called to ask yet?<grin>]

In response to “What If We Gave A Con,” I **think** my first con was Philcon 1969 or very close to then. A carload of us from Penn State drove to Philly (Prof. Klass was the SF club's advisor).

What's the image on p. 1? [That's Trinlay Khadro's handiwork; Trin', care to enlighten us?]



Ned Brooks

Thanks for the zine. Spectacular **Brad Foster** cover! One of the bugs of the spring season, perhaps. I just vacuumed a bunch of them off the carpet.

I don't recall any mention of the Hobbits keeping cows or goats. But cows are placid animals, I doubt they would be that hard to keep just because of the size. Children in SE Asia herd water buffalo after all. We are specifically told that Bandobras "The Bullroarer" Took was 4 feet tall and could ride a horse – but no details of the available steeds are given. There were also ponies about (unless the one "The Prancing Pony" was named after was mythical, but that was not a Hobbit establishment).

However, when Tolkien says that Bandobras Took was "four feet tall" – what sort of feet are these? Was a Universal Yard engraved on mithril kept for reference at Rivendell or Isengard? Are any other units of measurement mentioned in the text? The maps have a scale in miles but we are not told how many feet there were to a Middle Earth mile. The origin of the word "mile" is in the Latin for 1000, and meant 1000 paces, but there are no Latin roots in the languages of Middle Earth, so we have no idea what "mile" means either.

E. B. Frohvet mentions an employee expected to participate in a conference call at 11 p.m. on Sunday – it is hard to draw the line between abuse of technology and the fact that parts of our technological civilization are expected to run all the time – the electricity, gas, and tap water have to flow, and the Net servers have to be up, etc. When I was a facility safety head at NASA I was on call all the time – even if the facility was not operating, a roving guard might run across something that had to be checked immediately. But common sense generally prevailed, and I wasn't gotten out of bed often enough to be a nuisance.

Thanks for the kind remarks about my zine!



Jack Calvert

I just read PN 4.4 off the screen of my Mac laptop. The horizontal format works nicely for that: no scrolling back and forth or up and down to see the complete page.

There are places in spacetime where all fannish roads seem to cross, and Baycon '68 was certainly one of them. **Chris Garcia**'s piece about re-enacting the SCA event there was great fun. I was at that convention, but have no memory of the joust: sometimes I wonder what my twenty-mumble-year-old self was doing. Of course, it was a large convention for those times.

The Claremont is still part of my familiar, uh, haunts. My house is a couple of miles from there as the crow flies, near the other end of Claremont Avenue. And when I'm feeling ambitious, I jog up into the hills and pass Diane Paxson's house, Greyhaven. It is indeed grey, a rambling old shingled pile.

I enjoyed your fanzine reviews. They give a good picture of what the current fanzine world is like. As you say, there is a lot out there. At Corflu, I overheard someone saying "The Golden Age is now!" Also met your Steam Engine Time co-editor, **Bruce Gillespie**: nice fellow.



Ruth Davidson

The arrival of PN was perfect. It was among junkmail and bills, a bright spot in the dark confines of my mail box.

Sue Bursztinski: I tried to do a search online for "The Pleasures of a Hobbit Table?" and guess what I got? Your LoC. . . I feel highly unloved. If you still have the article do you think you could scan it or retype it up?

Chris Garcia: I remember watching old b-movies and thinking, "Wow, it'd be really cool to live there!" I've never been to the Winchester House even though I lived in San Jose for. . . 15 years? A long time anyway. That was a fabulous story ["Back to the Scene"]. I really enjoyed it. Now I gotta ask, what kind of photo albums are you using? I ask because most photo albums are **terrible** for your photos since they speed up the rate your photos naturally deteriorate (like overclocking your computer).

If you're using the magnetic tape with plastic cover kind, take every photo out ASAP! I have one of those that's only 13 years old and already it's yellow, and doing bad things to my photos and memorabilia. If you're using the plastic sleeves take them out and find an album that uses polypropylene (preferably tested for photo safety). Most plastic is made with PVC which isn't good for photos. You want supplies that will

preserve your photos for generations: polypropylene plastic, acid-free **and** lignin-free products. [*Ruth and I are scrappers, so I echo her advice to anyone with photo albums. If you want to have those photos in another 5-10 years, you have to start protecting them now.*]

If your Dad never wrote down those stories, get him to, or record him on tape. If he's passed on, then write them down yourself, as much as you can remember. I'm really big about preserving your photos and writing down everything that those pictures are about. My great-aunt passed on, and she had so many photos with nothing written on them, it's terribly frustrating, and I find it sad. I personally only use Creative Memories products since theirs have been tested for photo safety in their technology lab. I've been using their products for nearly 5 years now. I refuse to use anything else.

Joe Major: You clearly demonstrated that, for the poor employees, bureaucrazy + technology = bad. Your comments on alien lizard people, PETA and your lovely question had me laughing aloud.

Lyn McConchie: What? No trip to Las Vegas?



Brad Foster

Issue 4.4 arrived this week. I loved the idea of the sideways-format on this one. Why restrict yourself to the same layout over and over... so, when do you plan on doing the issue printed as a Mobius strip? [*I strive for clarity, Brad.*] (Nice choice on font for the cover logo, too, that really balanced well with the drawing style!) [*Thanks, that was why I chose it.*]

Good timing on getting this issue with the loc from **Sue Bursztinski** where she wrote, in relation to Hobbits and farming, that "it must be hard, when you're their size, to keep cows, even for milk." I just finished reading John Moore's hilarious fantasy novel Heroics for Beginners, and his Evil Overlord refers to the motion of all evil dictators who raise their clenched fists over their heads as they cackle in evil delight as "Milking the giant cow." Somehow that image popped into mind with Hobbits and cows....



E. B. Frohvet / March 27, 2005

A quick round of applause for the men's basketball team of little Bucknell University out of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; who came into the national tournament and knocked out perennial national power

U/Kansas in the first round. Okay, so they lost in the second round. Doesn't matter. Every guy on that team will remember for the rest of his life the day they beat mighty Kansas. And that's why we play inter-collegiate athletics. [*Shout out for the underdogs!*]

True to form, March has already been a busy month for arriving fanzines with such expected events as *PN*, a *Knarley Knews*, and an *Opuntia*; and less predictable arrivals in a *Tortoise* and a *Banana Wings* from Britain, and **Chaz Baden's** new fanzine, and the return of *Conferring With Earthquakes*. My notes suggest that March-to-May is the most prosperous time of year for getting fanzines.

What are the odds that two faneds should decide to experiment with a horizontal format — and both zines should arrive in my mailbox within a week of each other! (The other was *Tortoise*, **Sue Jones**, Flat 5, 32/33 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2BQ, Great Britain. In case you or anyone else should care to inquire. Which you should, it's a nice little zine.) Having said which, the more usual vertical format offers advantages, as in filing.

Alas for your dedication, I can't even watch figure skating any more, and I used to love it, and went to the "Champions' Tour" every year.

Sue Bursztynski: Well, one milks cows from the bottom, and they're docile enough that a hobbit-lad could lead them around. Then of course, their cows were probably smaller than ours.

Brad Foster: What I tend to note about thrillers, both mystery-thrillers and horror-thrillers, is how many of them are predicated on the characters' absolute refusal to do the sensible thing. Don't separate! Don't go into the haunted house alone at night! If someone dies, call the police and tell the truth! (Being a material witness is much better than being up on a murder rap.)

Chris Garcia: I believe Don Cheadle received an Academy Award (TM) nomination for "Hotel Rwanda." [*He did.*] His role in "The Family Man" was small, but well executed.

Joseph Major: My recollection is that in *The Mysterious Island*, the castaways had already, by virtue of the sweat of their virtuous brows,

established themselves in relative comfort. The chest of goodies proved more a convenience than a necessity. Nice to hear that Tom Sadler is doing okay even if he is not much involved in fandom lately.

Sheryl Birkhead: I would have guessed that horses are both better coordinated and more excitable than cows, therefore more likely to kick a human (and to do it accurately).

Fanzines: I have never sent dues to the Southern Fandom Confederation, just LOCs, and they keep sending me their Bulletin. One could debate whether that's a "clubzine"; it seems one of the few organizational fanzines looking beyond purely local concerns.

Swamp Thing: Either you're a more interesting editor than I was (not unlikely) or your motives are different. I started with much the same hope, that I would do editing and the occasional review; and wound up writing much of my own zine. I would think it self-evident that neat is simply less work, but then I've never had to impose that on a teenager. My cousin and I had an agreement that if anything happened to her and her husband, I would be guardian of her two girls; but fortunately all is well, the girls are grown. Probably just as well I never had to play the parent.

Lyn McConchie advises she will be arriving here on May 11th and leaving to visit some friends in Pennsylvania on the 14th; on from there, and eventually winding up at Wiscon later in the month. I've had limited success planning activities ... apparently the Howard County library cannot agree to a talk from a visiting writer without the consent of some bureau-crat who is never in her office and does not return calls.



Chris Garcia

Another wonderful issue and not just because you mentioned that **Paul Di Filippo** enjoyed my article on the Winchester Mystery Con. I really love your lay-outs. My own work for The Drink Tank is poor indeed. [*You sell yourself short; it's not that bad!*] I enjoy the writing part, but my lay-out wisdom may have to develop with age.

I'm glad to see fanzine reviews. Honestly, just about the only things I read are the fanzines that are posted on efanzines, so I miss a lot. Going to Corflu this year will probably help in that matter, since I'm just now ready to start my own collection to compete with the memory of my Dad's old one. You know, I've never read an issue of Trap Door. [**Robert**

Lichtman, are you paying attention to this?] Odd, as the one time I tried to read the one issue on efanazines, my computer crashed and I never went back. I guess that where I'm headed next. [Not for another crash, I hope – Marty Cantor, get out of my head!]



Alexis Gilliland / March 22, 2005

Thank you for *Peregrine Nations* 4.4, an elegantly produced and generally well-written fanzine. [Coming from you, sir, that's high praise indeed – many thanks.] The **Brad Foster** cover is an elegant piece of design; striking, simple and uncluttered.

Going back to the scene of the '68 **Baycon Tournay** (I was there – it looked like a well-attended panel of some sort) is like going back to Gettysburg, on a smaller scale. All you need is a bronze plaque or two, memorials to the day, but probably contemporary fanzines would do just as well. [Thanks also for the cartoons, at least one of which should appear somewhere in thish.]



John Hertz

Thanks for *Perry* 4/4 [Hey, I kinda like that!] and your kind words. Was it really unclear what happened with the pumpkin bomb, or were you pulling my leg? [Well, the implication was that something happened, but I was all set up for the great explosion and didn't get it. Shall we say I felt like I'd been left holding the pumpkin? <grin>] **B[ruce G[illespie]** waved what looked like a new S[team] E[ngine] T[ime]; but said mine would arrive duly by mail. [You'll get it eventually, I trust.] Swell cover by **B[rad] F[oster]**!



Trinlay Khadro / March 26, 2005

Wow, what a nifty lepidoptera cover. [Take a bow, **Brad**. And I thot **Ruth Davidson** and I were the only people in the world who used the word “nifty.” <grin>]

Chris Garcia: Don Cheadle is finally gaining acclaim, for his work in “Hotel Rwanda.” [Hard luck for him that his film was released in

the same year that Jamie Foxx blew away everyone else for his title-role work in “Ray.” I hope Cheadle keeps getting good parts; his turn at being handed an Oscar will come.]

Joe Major: I imagine a hobbit on a Shire horse would proportionally resemble a human on an elephant as in India, Thailand, etc.

Re: cmt me: ...and parents often get penalized/threatened/scolded by employers for such things like having to take off suddenly for a child calling sick from school, let alone taking time to stay home with said sick child. This is especially difficult for single parents. [What makes such discrimination – and that's exactly what it is – even more odious is that, in corporate culture, many companies once looked for “family types” for employees since such workers were seen as more reliable than singles (viewed as rootless). So, while they hired “family types” for their built-in longevity (being less likely to seek other work as quickly as singles since they had a family to feed), these companies didn't provide family support for them until fairly recently. Today, it seems to me, most companies are hiring single and/or just-out-of-college people because a) their skills are still moldable, b) they're unattached and so can be relocated with a minimum of expense, and c) they're easier to fire or lay off than those with seniority. If one finds an employer who not only understands the needs of families but supports its employees who are parents or caregivers, one is very lucky; there are still very few of them.] When KT was in grade and middle school, I was fortunate to have elderly, helpful and available relatives in the neighborhood who were happy to help. I also believe that some of the asocialization is because there's so much distance (physical and often emotional) from extended family. Families have not only gotten smaller and further from aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents but more engaged with TV/Internet/video games. [Those with extended families in the same or nearby states would benefit from a family compound, wherein each basic family has its own house and property, but lives close enough to relatives that someone will always be available to help out in a pinch or an emergency. Artistic families could make a serious go of this idea, as they could all have their shops and homes on the same land or in the same structure (reuse former manufacturing or military structures, for instance). Farming families have done this to an extent in the past, but the family farm's demise has severely reduced the frequency and viability of such arrangements.]

Re: David Icke and lizard people – nah – lizards would be brighter. <grin>

One of the Milwaukee fans living at Lytheria has gained some fame from dressing up as a wolfman or the Big Bad Wolf for Halloween and fully enchanting the neighborhood dogs. I have a bit of digital footage of him, in costume playing, as a dog, with a neighborhood Malamute. There's always a moment of "Huh? Smells like Human but looks like a Canine..." and then a doggie "Cool! Play with me!"



Lyn McConchie: I don't know about the trolls but Mt. Horeb has a mustard museum well appreciated by some of Milwaukee-area fandom.

Hopefully I'll not only make it to Wiscon, I'll also have several things for the art show (Harry Potter and Dr. Who scarves, origami dragons, cozies (for cellphones, iPods and Palm Pilots), and journals.

We went to see "Robots" (cute movie) and yesterday I joined a friend to catch "Steamboy" at the Oriental. We enjoyed it.

Monday afternoon we'll be at the art museum to see the visiting Degas exhibit. There were posters all over but it hadn't opened yet last month when we were there with KT's class.



Joe Major / February 7, 2005
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

Silent eLOCutions: So **Sue Burstzinski** is writing a children's book on spies and spying. I suppose it won't include why Dusko Popov's British code name was TRICYCLE. It's probably just as well that I didn't know about it beforehand, or I would have been bursting with suggestions. The story of Juan Pujol Garcia, for example, and how he started fooling the Germans on his own before being taken up by the British.

Brad W. Foster decries inadequate creepiness in horror movies. The house in "The Vampyres" isn't all that creepy until the two women start showing their true selves. (They became vampires after being

killed during a love affair and now go out on the road to pick up men for drinks, so to speak.)

Trinlay Khadro draws a striking picture of a cat forcing a mother to bargain for the lives of her chicks. Talking about Reader's Digest's Wolf Editor, one of their Heartwarming Wolf stories featured a cute little girl and a wounded wolf. After she begged daddy to come see her poor thirsty hurt doggy, and then suckered him into getting the vet to fix him up, the wolf became territorial. That is to say, "This is my place, and you other folks [feral dogs, coyotes, and I suppose, other wolves] buzz off now." They figured that the chickens they might lose to him were far fewer than those animals he was keeping off would have taken. *[I hope that little girl survived to adulthood; not every wolf taken in by humans is biddable, and I've heard some real horror stories about hybrids that weren't respected for their wildness. Anyone involved in raising rescued wolves or wolf-dog hybrids ought to have to pass a written and hands-on wolf behavior exam and be licensed to keep such animals only for rescue purposes. Wolves are not domesticated animals, and one generation is not long enough to make them so. And I love wolves.]*

Lyn McConchie will miss Xanadu in Nashville, it looks like, that being April 8-10 this year. If she had only shifted her vacation back a month . . .

Sheryl Birkhead speaks of "giving the rear ends of the respective species a certain amount of room based on their firing power." As Lisa puts it, "one end kicks, the other bites". For John Henry, at the Horse Park, one doubles the room. At thirty he's still dangerous. But we will see for sure this summer.

"When hit, the shining, flying purple wolfhounds . . ." Whatever was that fellow taking? I want to make sure I never get anywhere near it.

"The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins" by Will: Shakspur? All right:

The Tragedie of Frodo Baggins by Will: Shakspur

Rendering by J. Major

*Prologue: The blasted heath of Wilderland.
Thunder and lightning.*

Enter three NAZGUL [Gothmog and two NAZGUL]

Goth. When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
2 Naz. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
3 Naz. That will be ere the set of sun. 5
Goth. Where the place?
2 Naz. Upon the heath.
3 Naz. There to meet with Bolg.
Goth. I come, Great Sauron.
All He calls. Anon! 10
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air.
Exeunt.

Act I Scene i:
The Royal Hall of King Dain.

*Enter a Sewer and divers Servants with dishes and service,
who pass over the stage.
Then enter KING DAIN, GANDALF, and BILBO with a train.*

Dain Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of the North.
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths; 5
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front

Not to mention the famous scene where Bilbo persuades Lobelia
and Frodo to make up:

Bil. Lobelia, an thou wilt be friends, be friends;
An thou wilt not, why then be enemies with me too.
Prithee put up.

Lob. So be it. Frodo, give me thy hand,
Yoke-fellows shall we be
And pious sharers of our patrimony!

Fro. So be it.
They shake hands.
What ho! A spoon? Is aught else up thy sleeve?
And a fork! A knife! Marry, behold!

Bil. Certes, she is prepared to dine.

Fro. More spoons! A veritable case!
Let me shake the more. Oh my!
A ladle! And the carving-knife!
Take care that you not cut yourself.
And how now! Behold! A kettle!
Could not you wait, dearest coz,
Upon the assumption of your legacy?

[Joe, I think you have at least two clones; how else could you get all
that reading and writing done in such a short time? You **must** have that
entire "Tragedie" written already since you pubbed Act IV Scene ix in
Alexiad and then sent me the Prologue and Act I Scene i in your loc.
What I want to know is if you sent the whole thing to that site you
mentioned, and whether you've gotten any comments on it yet if you did.]

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Lyn McConchie

My trip is now firm, flights booked and paid for and I'll be in LA
the nights of May 6th to 10th inclusive, then in Lancaster (PA) three
nights, Ellicott City (out of Baltimore) three nights, on to four nights in
the UK (Brighton and London), and back home via two nights in Athens,
GA, one night in Murfreesboro, and then Wednesday to Monday nights at
Wiscon before flying home midday Tuesday. I'm really hoping to make it
to Mt. Horeb this time, raid hell out of all the secondhand and new books
shops, maybe help with the con bag collating Thursday evening, and see
quite a list of friends who will be at the con. It'll be a great trip, and as

each one could be the final one I can afford, I'll be making the most of it.

Tiger my Ocicat is not going to be pleased about this longer than usual absence of his human either. I was becattd very energetically when I got home for 6 days after our Natcon over Easter, he hurled himself at me, and I wore a large fur ankle bracelet all the evening and most of the next day. So my vanishing for four weeks is going to have him attached to me like velcro for days once I'm back. Dancer won't care. Several friends will be in feeding and watering her (and keeping Tiger company,) and being fed etc. is all she cares about. Tiger will like the friends' company, but he'll miss me and last time (in 2001) it took him a couple of months to get over my absence completely.

However I love the neat little cattoon Trinlay did, and yes, Fluff the barn cat at Farside continues to have hen problems. In fact, considering what is currently happening, I suspect that it isn't her running a protection racket, but the hens marching up these past few weeks, chicks in tow, and eating her cat biscuits while Fluff sits disconsolately on the sideline. Must start thawing mince now I have the next lot (Poppy the heifer) and feeding her after dark when they've all gone to bed.

[*And here's Lyn again...*]

Going slightly mad currently with only a week before I leave for America and a stack of work to clear before I fly out. My Word Processor 1450DS went to be fixed, and to my fury it came back worse off. I rang and howled with ire at the place which does the repairs. The repair firm in Hastings are now CLAIMING that the extra problem was the fault of the courier whom they say must have dropped it and tried to fix the damage himself – and if you'll believe that I have a nice bridge in Auckland I can sell you. Louder howls this time of disbelief from me, sent it back, whence it is now supposedly fixed and on the way back for the second time. Sigh. Of course all this goes on when I need it urgently to clean up stuff before I go. What about the other one I have as back-up? Well, that's also gone wrong and leaves for the firm as soon as I get the first one home and working again.

And to add to that, I decided while I was buried in problem machinery, that it was time to buy a new fax machine. That arrived yesterday delivered by a kid from the company which sold it to me, to hook it up, first time he'd ever done that apparently. He completed the work and left again. The mail got in and I found Tor had sent me my latest ms.; would I please answer a list of queries? etc., so I spent several hours

working on my computer, went to e-mail results back to my editor there – to find I had no Internet connection. Fault, I thought, of an incorrectly connected fax. Howled again. Andrew, who normally fixes my computer but who also does fax machines, was rung by the company I bought the fax from and sent out as a sub-contracted job. Andrew fixed the problem in ten minutes, cuddled Tiger, checked the fax and computer were now okay, and departed to bill the fax sellers. I was left wondering what goes wrong next.

I didn't have to wonder long. Currently I have four geese on the front lawn. Stroppey (a slang word here for aggressive) the spare gander is back with my two geese and a gander until spring. He got lonely on his own and has been temporarily returned. That's fine except that all ganders are paranoid, mine are convinced that anyone on the lawn is a putative burglar, and the two ganders are now having fun out-doing each other in aggression towards visitors they don't know. And whoever it was who came sneaking up my lawn to plunder the sheds at 3 a.m., the ganders were positive they didn't know them - nor did they approve.

The things with geese is that after dark is when they spread out to graze, and I suspect that someone walked right into one in the dark. The feathered commandos went up like a air raid system, starting the kids three dogs off. I hobbled out of the back door with a large and powerful lantern in one hand, and a stick in the other, shedding much light, and yelling threats. (Not that I needed to, the ganders were making threats enough for anyone.) In the darkness there was a pained human yelp by the side fence. Someone hadn't been fast enough. The noise redoubled on a triumphant note.

In the end we saw no one and nothing was stolen. But I'm still snickering. It's a comfort to know that while I'm away in the USA/UK for four weeks, the geese are on patrol, presenting beaks and scouting for infiltrators. I was bitten by one of my ganders some years ago. I'd be sorry for the infiltrators – if I didn't think they'd be getting what they probably deserve. [*“Budding Burglar Beaked by Bold Birds” sounds like a great headline to me.*]



Lloyd Penney / March 5, 2005

1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2

Time is not my own these days – I am working, but not at the job I

last told you about. In the meantime, I am far behind in my loccing, but here is something on *Peregrine Nations* Vol. 4 No. 4, whole number 16.

Joe Major: I am pleased to know that Tom Sadler is okay. We'd conferred a few times at conventions in the Detroit area some time ago, and it seemed he just faded away. I think money problems get us all eventually. It must be getting tough to be an active fan; why else would Worldcons offer memberships to be paid on the installment plan?

Hi, **Lyn**, it would be great to see you in Toronto, but it's some distance away from the states you plan to be in when May comes around.

The job at Canada NewsWire lasted exactly five weeks. Their reason was that I wasn't learning the job quite as fast as they would have liked. Not long after that came a daytime part-time job at Tourism Toronto

(finished a few days ago) and a fact-checker, and a permanent part-time night-time job at *The Globe and Mail* as a data-entry clerk for their website. The hours suck, but it's money until something full-time daytime comes along. I just don't know why it's been so difficult to find that full-time job, but it has been fairly easy just lately to find the part-timers.

Again, thank you for the Bloch book! I have read the first seven essays, and as Bloch was, the book is superb. Mike Glicksohn highly recommends it, and I will certainly trust his judgment.

Well, this issue is a little small compared to past issues, so this loc is, too. One bit of news I can pass along, and I can smile a little as I can say the whole results have been assembled.

2005 FAAn Awards results, given out at Corflu Titanium in San Francisco February 27, 2005 -- Best Fanzine: Chunga, Andy Hooper, Randy Byers & carl juarez; Best Fanzine Design: Chunga, Andy Hooper, Randy Byers & carl juarez; Best Fanwriter: Claire Brialey; Best Fan Artist: Steve Stiles; Best Letterhack: Lloyd Penney (Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Fan Correspondent)

So, I will smile my little smile, and keep writing.



Curt Phillips

19310 Pleasant View Dr. Abingdon, VA 24211

Just now having a read through PN 4.4 and I'm very impressed with the new layout. It reads very smoothly. You're giving away great

prizes like the Jack Dann collection and that Robert Bloch collection that Lloyd won [in the Free Book Deal]. Go ahead; give us a **hard** question...

I like that you run the lettercol up front like that since I tend to skim to the locs in a fanzine first thing.

Chris Garcia's article is very enjoyable. I just spent this morning reading and loccing all five issues of his new zine *The Drink Tank* so I was certainly in the mood for a longer article. On finding the locations of old fannish haunts: what Chris needs is access to an old City Directory and a vintage map of the area in question. City Directories (*Not* a Telephone Directory, a City Directory; Lists every business and residence within the city) might not be published anymore – I'm not sure – but major libraries like the New York City Public Library certainly have a collection of the old ones. Find the volume for 1939, look up Caravan Hall, and you have the address. If luck rides on your shoulder like the cloak of the Avenging Angel, the address will still be on a street that hasn't changed or been moved. "135 West 35th Street" might not still be called that today. It might be "26982 Avenue of the Conquering Martian Hoard" or something like that. The Post Office sometimes re-numbers buildings, blocks, and entire streets to facilitate their unfathomable desires, and so a vintage map is needed to locate where the address in question was at the time you're interested in. Then just correlate that with a modern map and you're in business. I'm pretty sure that Caravan Hall was reduced to rubble long ago, but I fully understand and approve of the desire to find those places and at least go there and make an acknowledgment of what had happened there. I hope to attend the Worldcon in Glascow this year and if I get to go I intend – if at all possible – to at least drive by Oblique House, where Irish Fandom staked its claim to glory. Walt Willis doesn't live there any more and the non-fans who reside there now probably wouldn't approve, but I still feel the need to go there just as Chris felt the need to find the very spot where the SCA got started.

Good fanzine reviews and a well-written editorial that makes me want to go back and read the previous issues of PN that I've managed to miss (sorry...) from being too busy with distractions like doing surgery on people and driving fire engines and stuff. Well, we all have our hobbies..



Impressive butterfly on the cover; it must be highly evolved.

Brad Foster: Yes, I also think, "Hey, this is a lovely house; a little paint, a new roof, etc." I've never seen a creepy house. Maybe it's because I've been exploring old houses since I was a youngster – with my mother, by the way. That was fun. And I love remodeling shows – unless they're remuddling.

Lyn McConchie, thanks for the info about your fun farm tales; the books are going on my To Get list. I like the titles, and look forward to learning what the title of the third will be.

Lloyd Penney, I hope your last job panned out. (Hard keeping track of how things are with you because of the varying publishing times of zines.) Thanks for sharing the story about the barn cat.

I enjoyed **Christopher Garcia's** article, "Back to the Scene." Sounds like he's having fun, and I think it's great that he's sharing history with so many people.

I'm not really aware of Yes, but I scanned your notes. They look just like the notes I take at cons except they're more comprehensive.

Thanks for the zine and APA reviews. I remember something about Fluff, the Plush Cthulhu; nifty idea about the photo ops with Fluff. I'd love to see *The Unnameable 2*. [I think it's at efanzines.com, but if not, just do a search on the title and that should turn it up.]



Helen Spiral

I'm one of the anonymous downloaders via efanzines. Thanks for the computer friendly PDF page formatting.

"There is an Internet theorist named David Icke who claims that humanity is secretly controlled by alien lizard people." The online tech news service "The Register" is also a fan (irony) of Mr. Icke as you can see from this article which you might enjoy (if you have time ha ha): http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/01/27/lizard_army_atacks_scotland/ [Anonymous no longer, Helen has kindly written a few things for thish.]



The Fanzine Reviews were interesting, but the lack of information on how to get said fanzines was droll and dragged the whole thing closer to pointless than it should have been. Keeping readers' addresses secret is sad enough but too often requested by the readers themselves. Keeping the addresses of fanzine editors secret is crossing over into a different dimension altogether. [Because PN is available for download from a Website, I decided to provide blanket protection from spammers and junk-mailers to readers by not including addresses at all. In the last ish, I forgot to include the fanned contact information, so I'll include it this time – as a list at the end of the review column.]

I was about to say that my health has been holding up, but I know it's risky to make such a statement.

You think it's notable that you haven't been to a con in five years? I've not been to one in two decades. [And not for lack of availability; I understand there are at least two cons annually in your state, and possibly more. One goes to cons because one wants to; once the motivation fades, what point? From that perspective, if you'd wanted to attend a con and had the wherewithal to do so, there you would have gone. In recent times, the expenses involved have kept some percentage of fen from attending even local cons; distance is also a factor, for those who cannot drive too long at one time or don't own a car.]

Colossus was the basis of a motion picture a few decades ago. [For the unaware, the film is "Colossus: The Forbin Project," starring a no-name cast headed by Eric Braeden (who was first seen on U.S. TV on the WWII action-drama "The Rat Patrol" as the German Capt. Hauptman – with two stage name changes before settling on his current one – and who later became a cast member for the American soap opera "The Young and the Restless," which is still his current acting gig) and Susan Clark (a Canadian actor who had parts in "Madigan" and "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" as well as several U.S. and U.K TV roles), with a screenplay written by James Bridges ("The Paper Chase," "The China Syndrome," "Mike's Murder," "Perfect," "Urban Cowboy," etc.) and based on the D. F. Jones novel. The film was initially released in 1970 and gets aired a few times a year on channels like Turner Classic Movies and American Movie Classics, among others. This is one of my favorite SF movies, and I'd love a DVD of it if it exists.]

A Plea for Higher Volumes

by Jim Sullivan

The public libraries I frequent are my favorite places to visit (not counting my own little beddy that is). I've been going to these great institutions and their branches for decades. If you guessed that I'm an avid reader, you'd be correct.

Until recently, I've had nothing but kudos and hosannas for the libraries. I still feel that way. But something has come up (actually down) at these facilities that has caused me and, I imagine, others pain. Maybe I just never noticed it before when I was younger, but books are being shelved and stacked, almost at floor level. It's obvious why: space is at a premium. But that location isn't working out for many of us. That's especially true for those with aging eyesight, bad backs, balancing problems, out-of-flex hips and knees, etc. I'd guess that half the libraries' patrons (perhaps an even larger number, though few of them would care to own up to it) fall into one of those physically-failing categories. I sure do.

Even healthy, spry youngsters don't bend over, squat down on their legs, or get on their knees to see, perchance to read, the book titles shelved near the floor. Few of those volumes, therefore, are being checked out, in both senses of those words. And having more books circulate, I would suppose, is something librarians desire.

Thus, why don't these professional book (okay, information) people raise the volumes to a new level, like one that is at least as high as their knees? If that were done, library patrons' death and



disability rates would certainly go down, and the library's book circulation would go up.

A month ago, while making a valiant effort to see if any books on the lowest shelf would be of interest, I bent down and ripped the rear seam of my trousers. Luckily, I had been warned by Mother, years before, to always wear clean underwear because you never know when an accident might happen. Well, I had taken her advice. But it didn't matter this time because no one else was around (certainly not anywhere near the bottom shelf where few library patrons dare to go).

Two weeks after that experience, though I should have known better, I again bent down to the hook shelf near the floor. My pants, this time, held up well, I'm pleased to report (thanks to the missus who had reinforced my rear). But on this occasion, I got vertigo. The library wouldn't stop spinning until I sat for a spell on a hard, wooden library stool. Such platforms are always sobering.

Ten minutes later, I had regained my balance. My red face, however – a not-uncommon condition on library patron's mugs after they've been gawking at hooks on shelves below their waist level – took longer than usual to return to its normal, sickly pale hue. My nose, of course, would stay red (that's its natural color as my spouse enjoys pointing out to passersby).

One other recent time, I bent over to see books at floor-level. That's when my back gave out. I had to lean against a library wall, bite my knuckles one after the other, and push myself to a standing position. For several minutes, I stood there frozen in place while I whimpered. Finally, I dried my eyes and mustered the courage to move on. But I could do so only with baby steps.

Since then, I've been unable, or afraid, to bend down to look at books. Oh, sure, some folks might point out that I could very well have squatted down on my legs to see the bottom rack. All I can say to them is that since age 45, or thereabouts, I've lost my flexibility to do that. I could also have gotten down on my knees, but they're shot (probably old sports injuries from tripping so often in the parking lot after football games).

Though I've noticed some recent improvement at the libraries, there's still lots of book raising to be done yet. Please, librarians, in the name of all reading humanity, shelve your books, videos, and music at a higher level. After all, a library patron's body is a terrible thing to waste!

We were just breathing sighs of relief when a horrible, deafening drone filled the room and there, rising up slowly and then hovering in mid-air, was another enormous bee and all I could think of were the helicopters in "Apocalypse Now."

---Eric Mayer, *In A Prior Lifetime 4* (John Purcell, editor)

Icke Me To Your Leader or, The Resistance Is Useless

by Helen Spiral

When I warned Jan Stinson about *The Rise of the Machines* (tm) and tried to recruit her into the Neo-Luddite Resistance Army she responded by asking me to write about conspiracy theorist David Icke. Later the same day I was fooling around with thesurrealist.co.uk website when it knowingly informed me that I was "a Collosal Lizard that shoots Electricity from its Eyes, and has Heavy Metal Armour." Do you ever get the feeling the universe might be trying to tell you something?

That night I spent time on the Internet researching Mr. Icke's activities. The next day a man claiming to be a telephone engineer arrived on my doorstep without an appointment and insisted on being allowed indoors to interfere with my telephone. In an attempt to evade further mind control I immediately fashioned a protective hat out of my collection of 1970s foil milk-bottle tops and then constructed this article by sewing together the remnants of various leftover fairy-tales which happened to be lying around.

Once upon a time there was a young man called David Icke who played 37 professional football matches (with normal shaped

balls) as goalkeeper for Hereford United in the English football league. He grew up to be a spokesman for the U.K. Green Party and a mid-ranking TV sports presenter at a British Broadcasting Corporation not a million light years from here. Then one day the BBC encouraged Mr. Icke to take what I'll refer to, for legal reasons, as a "compulsory sabbatical" from his job so he could spend more time with his mental health.

David Icke developed some, erm, "interesting" personal beliefs. He publicly stated that he was "the son of godhead", a claim which he later altered to "a son of Godhead", and compared himself to Jesus. He wore a turquoise track suit and suggested we should all do likewise. He and his followers took to running clockwise, while wearing head-to-toe turquoise, around the insides of crop circles*. Mr. Icke also claimed that he was from another planet. You might think the idea that David Icke is from another planet, or perhaps a parallel universe, is something which we could all agree on but, alas, no. His mother publicly and repeatedly insisted, to the tabloid newspaper reporters who besieged her home, that her son David was in fact born in a hospital in Leicestershire, England.

If he was an American cult leader then David Icke and his followers would probably have armed themselves to the teeth and set up a "compound" in one of the less developed states before attempting to provoke a third world war. But Mr. Icke, whatever he might claim, is English so instead in 1991 he was invited onto the country's most popular prime-time chat show "Wogan". The host Terry Wogan appeared to be trying to treat David Icke as gently as possible. The studio audience, who had obviously dismissed Icke as an entertaining but insignificant eccentric, began laughing. Mr. Icke said, "The best way of removing negativity is to laugh and be joyous, Terry, so I'm glad that there's been so much laughter in the audience tonight." To which Terry Wogan replied, "But they're laughing at you. They're not laughing with you."

David Icke's profitable, and indeed prophetable, career as a celebrity conspiracy theorist and international man of mystify has continued ever since. His opinions seem to change depending on

whatever he's been reading recently. He currently believes that a species of lizard people are attempting to, mwahahaha, take over the earth! Some Jewish defence groups have been misled by Mr. Icke's misuse of the word race (instead of species) and they choose to believe that "our" David's references to a conspiracy of lizard people are coded euphemisms intended to imply a Jewish conspiracy but I can reassure them that he really, seriously, does mean actual, physical, lizard people (whatever some of his more dangerous, right-wing extremist, American "followers" might wrongly choose to believe).

Many of David Icke's other beliefs are standard issue for middle-aged English males. He appears to support individual freedoms including the right of any combination of consenting adults to express their sexuality between themselves however they please. He also appears to support the legal permissibility of abortion with every woman having the right to choose for herself. Mr. Icke's thoroughly recorded words have been subjected to deliberate misrepresentation by both right-wing militants and paranoid left-wingers.

If right-wing extremists can't find a more compatible hero to support than David Icke, and Jewish defence organisations don't have more urgent business than denigrating him, then 21st century western society is in far better shape than I'd dared to hope.

The only thing you really need-to-know about David Icke is that no one can explain him, not even David Icke.

It's good to keep an open mind but not so open that your brain drops out.

* Definition of crop circles: 'mysterious' patterns of flattened crops which appear overnight in places where young men don't have enough to occupy their time.

The Department of Further Reading

1. Jon Ronson, "Them: Adventures with Extremists". Alas we

Brits have failed to produce enough home grown talent to fill an entire book on conspiracy theorists so Mr. Ronson had to resort to the substitutes bench in the U.S.

2. Anyone who doubts that the Rise of the Machines (tm) is upon us might like to consult "The Register" which publishes the latest news of suicide fridges, AI toilets, and rat-brain robots:

www.theregister.co.uk/2005/01/27/lizard_army_attacks_scotland/

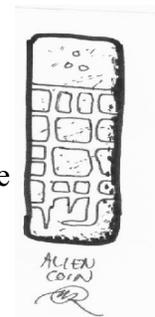


They Pubbed An Ish

Fanzine Reviews

Despite the positive reactions to my last column of this ilk, I ran out of time to do another one for this. This time, I'm noting one fanzine in particular partly because I liked it a great deal and partly because it's the only one I actually reviewed. **Buz** (Victor Gonzalez, ed.) is a memorialzine for well-known writer and fan F. M. Busby (who died in February 2005), whose title is what all his friends used to refer to him. Gonzalez has formed an elegant and spare tribute to the author of the Rissa Kerguelen and Demu books, and I'm not just saying this because my brief note to the CaringBridge website was included in this fanzine (a pleasant sur-prise for me). Photos of Mr. Busby are thoughtfully scattered through the pages of remembrances and notes of condolence to Elinor Busby. It's nice to know he liked all kinds of animals. If you haven't seen this fanzine yet, do please go read it or get a copy from someone who can print out a download for you. I'm going to go hunt for my Rissa omnibus book, and if I can't find it, I'll get another copy (and copies of his other books). Why do I call him Mr. Busby? I never had the privilege of meeting him. Wail on, Mr. B.

And now, for those who persist in thinking the age of fanzines is closing, here's what's currently available for onscreen reading or download from



efanzines.com. Some of them are no longer in publication, and not all issues of a fanzine are available at the site, but one can at least find copies of some of them a bit easier. Editors are listed in parentheses.

A Propos de Rien (Jim Caughran)
All Sinking, No Power & Placeholder (Jason K. Burnett)
Apparatchik (Andy Hooper, Carl Juarez and Victor Gonzalez)
Argentus and the Argentus Guide to Gameshows (Steven Silver)
Attitude (Michael Abbott, John Dallman, and Pam Wells)
Back Numbers (Warren Harris)
Black Cat (Alan & DeDee White)
Bring Bruce Bayside Bulletin (Arnie & Joyce Katz) .
Catchpenny Gazette (David Burton)
Chunga (Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, and Carl Juarez)
Conversations and Spangled Course (Douglas Spencer)
Corflatche Oneshot - Corflu 2000 Report (Arnie Katz)
Cosplay (Warren Harris)
Crazy From The Heat (the Trufan Ten)
Crifanac (Ken Forman)
Don't Shake Me (Warren Harris)
The Drink Tank (Christopher J. Garcia)

Derogatory Reference (Arthur D. Hlavaty)
eI and SaFari (Earl Kemp)
eFNAC (John Foyster)
Flicker (Arnie Katz)
The Gay Blade (Woody Bernardi)
Gnat's Testicles (Max & Ang)
Hard Science Tales (Joyce Worley Katz)
Hyphen (Walt Willis) Issue 37, Autumn 1987
Idea (Geri Sullivan)
In a Prior Lifetime (John Purcell)
Jackpot! (Arnie Katz)
Lightning Round (Alexander Bouchard)
Littlebrook (Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins)

The Mentor and Watt's Out (Ron Clarke)
More Balls (Ang)
Neither Rain, Noir Murder... (Bill Bowers)
Nice Distinctions (Arthur D. Hlavaty)
No Award (Marty Cantor)
No Time, No Energy & Not Much To Say (Dwain Kaiser)
Number One (Mike McInerney)
Peregrine Nations (Jan Stinson)
The Personville Evening Herald-Argus (Jack Avery)
Rain on Cherry-Blossoms (Eloise [Beltz-Decker] Mason)
Royal Swiss Navy Gazette (Garth Spencer)
Sardine Tin Gods (Erika Maria Lacey)
Scopus:3007 (Alexander Bouchard)
Scratch Pad and SF Commentary (Bruce Gillespie)
Smokin' Rockets (Joyce Worley Katz)
Smooth Active Badgers (Eloise [Beltz-Decker] Mason)
Spotch (Arnie Katz)
Steam Engine Time (Bruce Gillespie, Paul Kincaid and Maureen Kincaid Speller; #4, Bruce Gillespie and Jan Stinson)
Taboo Science Fiction and Taboo Opinions (Richard E. Geis)
Taciturn (Kurt Erichsen)
Taste Not The Pierian Spring (Erika Maria Lacey)
The View From Entropy Hall (Ed Meskys)
They Made Me/Us Do It (Max)
Trap Door (Robert Lichtman) Issue 22
The Unnamable (Feorag NicBhríde)
Vegas Fandom Weekly (Arnie Katz)
Vojo de Vivo (Michael J. Lowrey)
Wabe (Jae Leslie Adams, Bill Bodden, and Tracy Benton)
Western Romance (Joyce Worley Katz)
Whistlestar (Lenny Bailes)
Xenolith (Bill Bowers)

That list is at least a few weeks old; given the rate of new fanzine additions at efanazines.com, there could be two or three new

ones there by now. If you're interested in seeing any of these (most of the new ones are perzines, for those interested in the specifics) and lack computer access, try your local library (some will allow printouts for a fee) or ask a computer-equipped fan or friend to print out a copy for you. You Have No Excuses Now!



Publication News

Joy Smith reports her short story, "Seedlings," is in the fantasy anthology Magistria: Realm of the Sorcerer, available from Fictionwise: <http://fictionwise.com/eBooks/eBook30034.htm>. The anthology is also available as a POD paperback.



"any fule kno that..."

by Helen Spiral

The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year. - Mark Twain

The All Fools' Day custom of playing pranks and making mischief began in France or Germany from whence it was imported to England, where it was first noted by antiquarian John Aubrey in the 1680s.

In Britain an April fool victim would once have been called a gowk, gawby, gooby, or gob, which are all dialect words meaning cuckoo. In France the fool is called "poisson d'Avril" (April fish) and the French particularly prize any prank involving fish or piscine puns. Apprentices have traditionally been sent on fool's errands to fetch items such as: a long weight, a biography of Eve's mother, a bottle of pigeon's milk, a jar of elbow grease, a packet of sky hooks, a left-handed screw driver, or a tin of tartan paint.

Jonathan Swift, poet, satirist, and clergyman, was a keen practical joker who enjoyed several notable successes. In February 1708 he published an almanac under the pseudonym Isaac Bicker-

staff in which he predicted the death from fever on 29th March of famous astrologer John Partridge. On 30th and 31st March an elegy for Partridge and a letter describing his death were printed and circulated. On the morning of 1st April Partridge was woken by a sexton who had arrived to arrange the details of his funeral. Swift had managed to convince most of London that Partridge was dead.

On April 1, 1778 New Orleans businessman Oliver Pollock created the dollar sign. The jury is still deliberating on precisely how funny his joke will turn out to be.

BBC TV documentary programme "Panorama" broadcast on the first of April 1957 an item presented by journalist Richard Dimbleby about the Swiss spaghetti harvest, complete with film of people picking spaghetti from trees. The item went on to explain that the Swiss farms were smaller than their Italian equivalents but they'd had a bumper harvest that year because of the "virtual disappearance of the spaghetti weevil." The BBC received hundreds of calls enquiring about the veracity of the item and even a few asking where the callers could obtain spaghetti trees for their gardens. The item was a figment of the imagination of Charles De Jaeger. If you have suitable superfluous technology (and the free version of Realplayer) you can point your browser at this BBC website and click the link to watch the video: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid_2819000/2819261.stm

On 1st April 1970 Swedish television began transmitting in colour. On the same date in 1962, when Sweden's only TVchannel still broadcast in black and white, it was announced on the news that technological developments meant viewers could convert their black and white TVsets to colour by stretching a nylon stocking over the screen using the method demonstrated by engineer Kjell Stensson. Thousands of Swedes admit to having been fooled.

British newspaper *The Guardian* printed a seven-page supplement about the islands of San Seriffe on the first of April 1977. The two islands, named Caisse Superiore (Upper Caisse) and Caisse Inferiore (Lower Caisse), had a capital called Bodoni and their president was supposedly named General Maria-Jesu Pica. The

main languages spoken were said to be English, Caslon and Kiflong. *The Guardian* even persuaded its advertisers to play along and the supplement included an invitation from Kodak for readers to send in their pictures of San Seriffe and a competition to win a two-week holiday on the islands courtesy of Texaco.

On April 1, 1984, when the Internet was still in its infancy, a message was posted to Usenet stating that the Soviet Union was joining the net as "an open discussion forum with the American and European people." The message was signed with the name of reformist Soviet leader K. Chernenko and the address on the message was chernenko@kremvax.UUCP. After two weeks, during which the message had been deluged with replies, it was confirmed as a fake by its Dutch poster Piet Beertema. Moscow eventually joined the net in 1990 and senior Demos programmer Vadim Antonov arranged to use the domain name kremvax to commemorate the Internet's first successful practical joke.

German car makers BMW were the first company to publish annual spoof adverts. The ads detail technological innovations which according to BMW "teeter on the verge of credibility" in order to fool "less vigilant readers". Over the years they've advertised: a self-washing and wiping BMW badge, a car horn supposedly designed to calm other drivers and reduce road-rage incidents, and an insect-repelling windscreen.

In the first week of April 1985, U.S. magazine *Sports Illustrated* published an article by George Plimpton about baseball super-rookie, Buddhist uber-pitcher and french horn player Sidd (short for Siddhartha) Finch. The sub-heading of the article was, "He's a pitcher, part yogi and part recluse. Impressively liberated from our opulent life-style, Sidd's deciding about yoga – and his future in baseball." Fans of cryptography or cruciverbalism will already have noticed that the first letter of each word reads: happy april fools day – ah fib.

In 1997 an email purporting to be from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced that the Internet would be closed for spring cleaning for 24 hours from 31st March to 2nd April, and warned people to disconnect their computers because "five very

powerful Japanese-built multi-lingual Internet-crawling robots (Toshiba ML-2274) situated around the world will search the Internet and delete any data that they find."

The April 1998 newsletter from New Mexicans for Science and Reason included an article which claimed the Alabama state legislature had voted to alter the value of the mathematical constant pi from 3.14159 to the "Biblical value" of 3.0. The byline credited April Holiday of the "Associmated Press". The article, written by physicist Mark Boslough as a parody of attempts to circumscribe the teaching of evolution, spread via the Internet and the Alabama legislature received hundreds of phone calls protesting against the fictional legislation.

In 2001 Muslim cleric and scholar Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez Aal ash-Shaykh, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, issued a fatwa (legal ruling based on the Koran) which condemned April Fool's Day as "a time for lies" and warned Muslims against "imitation of the unbelievers" which was described as "sinful". He went on to detail the three situations in which Muslims are permitted to tell lies: "during wars", to "bring about reconciliation between people", and to protect "the honour of a wife or husband." Anyone planning to visit Saudi Arabia for the beginning of April might be wise to leave their handshake buzzer and whoopee cushion collection at home.

While writing this article, I discovered that even history professors seem unable to resist the temptation to include at least one fib in works about All Fools' Day customs. Caveat lector.

My own favourite April Fool involves wearing a navy blue top and preparing a two yard length of white button thread so that a couple of inches of the thread sticks through the fabric of my top and lays on my right shoulder (with the remainder inside my top). Most people who spot the thread are instinctively prompted to remove it. The victim leans forward intent on picking off the thread. Their facial expression changes to surprise as they pull and the thread lengthens, followed by a worried look as it occurs to them that they might be pulling my top to pieces, and then a wry look as they realise they've been had.

There's an English folk rhyme popular among children as a rejoinder to anyone who plays a practical joke which fails to conform to the unwritten rules, "April Fool is gone and past. You're the biggest fool at last."

Salutations and Peergrinations to you all.



The Free Book Deal

Our query for Contest #11 muttered, "Who won the first Grand Master Nebula ever awarded by the Science Fiction Writers of America? Hint: It's the same person who made a famous comment about lunch." Those who answered "Robert A. Heinlein" may now have their cookie.

There were no regular-mail entries which qualified for the drawing, but I did get regular-mail entries. Qualifying for the drawing means one sent in the correct answer. Condolences to those who got it wrong.

The Jack Dann collection will go back into the prize pool. The online winner is Ruth Davidson. Congratulations and thanks for participating!

Contest 13 Is Announced: In honor of my trip to Wiscon this year, here's a feminist SF question: "What is the collective title for the tetralogy written by Suzy McKee Charnas which begins with Walk to the End of the World?"

Oh, you want to know what the prizes are, do you? Heh heh...

The online prize is Judith Tarr's excellent historical fantasy novel, Queen of the Amazons (Tor, 2004). The regular-mail prize is Future Sports, an anthology edited by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois (Ace, 1998) and featuring "The Wind from the Sun" (Clarke), "Arthur Sternbach Brings the Curveball to Mars" (K.S. Robinson), "Man-Mountain Gentian" (Waldrop), "Winning" (Ian McDonald), "The Dead" (Swanwick), "Game of the Century" (R. Reed), "Streak" (A. Weiner), "The Holy Stomper vs. the Alien

Barrel of Death" (R. Neube), "Stroboscopic" (A. Reynolds), and "Vanilla Dunk" (Lethem).

Deadline for all responses to both contests is midnight (EDT) July 10, 2005.

If you don't believe that I actually mail these books out, ask Lloyd Penney; better yet, read his loc in thish.

You can't win if you don't enter the contest.



Will the Real Swamp Thing Please Stand Up? editorial

I told Chris Garcia I'd review his short film "The Chick Magnet" for thish, but as with the fanzine reviews, I ran out of time. Next ish, Chris, I promise!

As of St. Patrick's Day here in Michigan (that's March 17 for those who aren't familiar with it), there was still snow on the ground, but the temperatures

were mod-ulating up every week. The occasional cold wave from the Arctic via Canada will not be unusual for a while longer. We've had 112 inches of snow already for total snowfall this winter, and that sounds like a lot to me, though I doubt if it's a record. I am already thinking of what I might sow in the way of flowers and vegetables, but that can't be done until early June. A short growing season tends to focus the gardening mind on what might be termed the biggest bang for the buck: if one is a flower lover, one concentrates on plants that will bloom heavily and for the longest period of the growing season. I sowed only wildflowers the last two springs here, so perhaps it's time to start some other species and see

what I get.

My birthday this year was quite fun. My mother took me clothes shopping and I found some items that will fill out my wardrobe. She tells me I should have some "nice things" to wear to Wiscon, even though I've told her it's not a fancy-dress con (except for the banquet, which I'll miss since I'm leaving the Sunday morning of the con weekend). My favorite local store (the one where I found three pairs of pants that actually fit me without cutting off my circulation at the waist) has on display the most ghastly spring colors: pink and black and seafoam green. Yick. The pink and green remind me too much of South Beach, that trendy mecca in Miami that is to barf at, where so many of the buildings are Art Deco (which I like) in those colors (which I loathe). I don't know where my aversion to pink originated; all I know is that it looks hideous on me and I can't stand it on anything else.

Birthday Event Number 2 was when I went with my friend Meg and her mother up to Interlochen Arts Academy to hear Ladysmith Black Mambazo. This 8-man, South African a capella group sings a version of Zulu men's choral music which originated in the work camps before 1960. Joseph Shabalala, the group's founder and leader, is reported to have had a dream in which he heard children singing and dancing in a particular way, and he spent several years trying to put a group together to bring this dream into reality, but in 1960 LBM was finally formed.

There's more than that to the history of the group and its music, of course, and those with access can find it by googling the group's name – they have an official Website. Their 90-minute-plus concert left me wondering how they kept their voices while on tour, and amazed that even Joseph Shabalala, who must be over 65 now, can still kick his legs high enough to get his foot over his head. "They must have a ferocious workout," I said to Meg as we left Corson Auditorium. "Then again, I guess if you've been doing that your entire life, it's easier than it would be otherwise."

They all looked like they were having fun and, I suppose, like pubbing one's ish, if any of them ever stopped having fun being in the group, they'd retire and make a space for a younger person to

carry on this tradition of South African musical culture. It is beautiful music, and the rest of us are very fortunate that Joseph S. paid attention to that dream.

There are structural elements to their music which can be discerned upon careful listening, which satisfies the music-theory part of my brain, but this is secondary to the seamless harmonies and absolutely solid rhythms of every song; if they made any mistakes last night, there was no way to tell. The song structure also allows for improvisation, usually during a long stretch of a repeated phrase or brief chorus, and this is where the dancing that LBM is also known for is usually featured.

There's a visual component to their performance as well, since they all wear a kind of uniform on stage (choral groups in many parts of the world follow this custom) that one could call a Westernized version of traditional dress. But it is the white canvas shoes they all wear that is the visual feature, because the shoes are the physical punctuation to the music that they sing. It's also now a trademark by which they are known worldwide, thanks to the generous musical mind of Paul Simon and others.

If one knows even the least little bit about South African music, one will probably think of LBM and Miriam Makeba (and not necessarily in that order; Makeba has been performing and recording even longer than LBM) when asked who the most well-known South African musicians are, and that's very good company indeed. I'm glad this was the birthday present I gave to myself this year; I found it to be a very balancing experience and, for me, that's always A Good Thing.

