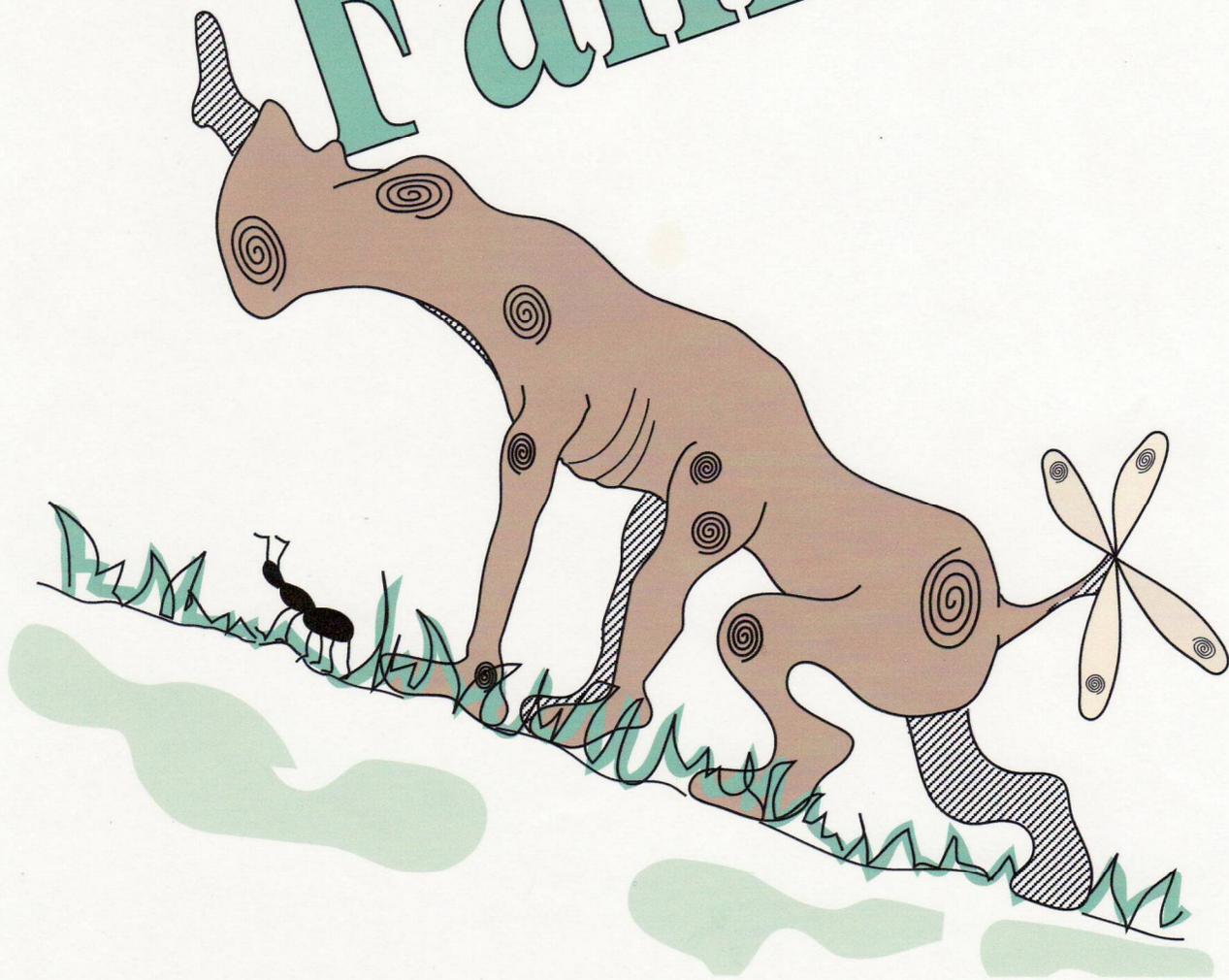


the
Reluctant
Famulus



THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS

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Thomas D. Sadler, Editor/Publisher

305 Gill Branch Road

Owenton, KY 40359

Phone: 1-502-434-3720

E-mail: thomasdsad@copper.net

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The Reluctant Famulus

Curious things I never knew before

One of the unexpected benefits of my genealogical researches has been a renewed interest in history, particularly American history. Way, way back when I was in school history had been one of my favorite subjects and has continued to be since though somewhat dormant for a while. Until I became involved in the family research and my interest in history had been revived I had no idea just how much history was **not** included in the school textbooks. That, I suppose, was necessary in order not to overwhelm to majority of students most of whom, sadly, probably had little or no interest in the subject. At any rate, I quickly realized just how little history I knew and how many interesting and often important things I had missed.

I've been trying to make up for that and have learned a lot though there is still so much more yet to discover. But that's getting away from the intended subject of this article. What I'm trying to pass along is an example of what I've learned because of my family research.

In looking for any information which might relate to my mother's side of the family I was checking through census enumerations for a family named—and a somewhat odd name at that—Tittle. I found one Tittle family in particular and noticed among the children listed a son named Lorenzo Dow Tittle. I didn't think much about it at the time other than to wonder where his parents got the name. Later, searching through other censuses, I found other families with sons upon whom were bestowed the first and middle names of Lorenzo Dow. That really got me to wondering what was going on.

So I did some research online since it was convenient and a variety of information has been posted there, some of which the posters strive to make accurate and found the following which you readers may or may not find interesting or already know. I know it has nothing to do with science fiction or fandom but for those of you whose interests are wide-ranging and are fascinated in the off-beat it may be worth reading. Here is the reason for so many males with that particular name.

Lorenzo Dow was born October 16, 1777 in Coventry, Connecticut. He was a sickly child and troubled in his youth by “religious speculations,” and ultimately joined the Methodist faith. In 1796 he applied for admission into the Connecticut conference but was rejected. Two years later, however, he was received, and in 1798—in spite of objections of his family—he was appointed to be a circuit preacher to the Cambridge circuit in New York, on a probationary basis. During the year he was transferred to Pittsfield, Massachusetts and afterward to Essex, Vermont, but remained there only a brief time.



Lorenzo Dow

In 1799 he answered what he believed was a divine call and crossed the ocean to preach as a missionary to the Catholics of Ireland. Thereafter he was never connected officially with the ministry of the Methodist Church, though he remained essentially a Methodist in doctrine. Everywhere, in America and England, he attracted large crowds to hear and see him but he was often persecuted as well as admired. He made two visits to Ireland and England, in 1799 and 1805 and by his eccentric manners and eloquence drew immense crowds. He introduced camp meetings into England, and the controversy about them resulted in the organization of the Primitive Methodist Society.

In 1802 he preached in the Albany region of New York, against "atheism, deism, Calvinism and Universalism". He spent the years 1803 and 1804 in Alabama, where he delivered the first Protestant sermon within the boundaries of that state. In 1807 he extended his work into Louisiana Territory, following the settlers to the extreme borders of civilization.

Dow's enthusiasm supported him for around 35 years, during which time he preached in almost every part of the United States. His later efforts were aimed mostly against the Jesuits; he was in general a strong opponent of Roman Catholicism.

Because the churches were closed to him, Lorenzo Dow started preaching in town halls, farmers' barns, and even open fields. He would preach any place where he could assemble a crowd. He preached to Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Catholics, and atheists alike. He liked to appear unexpectedly at public events, announcing in a loud voice that exactly one year from that day, Lorenzo Dow would preach on that spot. He never disappointed his audiences and he always appeared exactly 365 days later at the appointed place, where he was usually met by huge crowds.

Dow's public speaking mannerisms were like nothing seen before among the conservative church-goers of the time. He shouted, screamed, cried, begged, flattered, insulted, and challenged

people and their beliefs. He told stories and made jokes. It was recorded that Lorenzo Dow often preached before open-air assemblies of 10,000 people or more and held the audiences spellbound.

As his fame spread, so did his travels. He traveled throughout what was then the United States on foot and occasionally on horseback when someone donated a horse. He also traveled extensively in Canada, three times to England and Ireland, and once to the West Indies. He was usually well-received although there were exceptions. Dow was also a fierce abolitionist and his sermons were often unpopular in the southern United States. He was threatened frequently with personal violence, sometimes forcibly ejected from towns, and pelted with stones, eggs, and rotten vegetables. Such treatment never stopped him; he simply walked to the next town and gave the same sermon again.

Dow was described as unkempt and apparently didn't practice personal hygiene. His long hair and beard were described as "never having met a comb." He usually owned only the clothes on his back. When they became so badly worn and full of holes that they were no longer decently covering him someone in the audience would donate a replacement. The donated clothes often were a poor fit for his skinny body, which apparently didn't bother him; he cared nothing about material possessions. He had no luggage when he traveled, only a box of Bibles to be given away. What little money he collected in his lifetime was either given away to the poor or used to purchase Bibles. Late in life, he did accumulate some money from the sales of his autobiography and religious writings.

His odd manner and dress created prejudices against him, and counteracted the effect of his eloquence. Even so he is said to have preached to more persons than any man of his time.

He was an eccentric minister whose influence and travels throughout the country led to thousands of U.S. children of the early 19th

century to be named after him. The 1850 U.S. census lists Lorenzo as one of the most popular first names in America. His autobiography at one time was the second-best selling book in the United States, exceeded only by the Bible. He was an important figure in the “Second Great Awakening”. He died in Georgetown, District of Columbia on February 2, 1834. His remains now rest in Oak Hill Cemetery, near Georgetown, in Washington, D.C.

His wife, Peggy Dow (1780-1820), was almost as eccentric as her husband. She published her own journal, *Vicissitudes in the Wilderness* (fifth edition, 1833).

Among Dow’s writings are: *Polemical Works* (1814); *The Stranger in Charleston, or the Trial and Confession of Lorenzo Dow* (1822); *A Short Account of a Long Travel; with Beauties of Wesley* (1823); and the *History of a Cosmopolite; or the Four Volumes of the Rev. Lorenzo Dow’s Journal, concentrated in One, containing his Experience and Travels from Childhood to 1814*

Strange though he might have been and less than fastidious in his personal hygiene, Lorenzo Dow left a deep impression on people in that era.

Dow predates another, possibly more famous, evangelical preacher, Billy Sunday, by some thirty years or so and was, one could say, a forerunner of the likes of Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Bakker, and others currently “preaching”. I suspect there will continue to be “Lorenzo Dows” carrying on their religious missions for a long time to come.

Dow could be considered an “odd duck” in view of the way he has been described. I find myself fascinated by the fact that someone could become so dedicated to something like religion that he would devote all his time and energy to his—preoccupation until the day he died. And I find it equally fascinating that so many people would become so influenced by someone so peculiar. Humans are really puzzling creatures.

All the preceding I never learned in history classes nor elsewhere for that matter until my obsession with family genealogy and my interest in

history. I’m relieved that I’m in no way related to Lorenzo Dow even if I do have my own peculiarities. Don’t we all?

Even though I’m fortunate not to be related to Dow in any way or even to have someone in my ancestry named after him I do have minor equivalents. According to family lore my maternal great-grandfather Zeb Morgan was supposedly a Pentecostal preacher, his twin (not identical) brother Sam was a Baptist, and brother John was a Methodist. There were two other brothers but I’ve no idea if they were “preachers” of some sort or not. As for great-grandpa Zeb’s sisters I have no hint of their religious leanings at all. According to a tid-bit contributed by the older of my mother’s sisters, when the family got together the menfolk at least would get together and “talk” religion while indulging in a little “lubrication” to aid in their discussions, much to the displeasure of the womenfolk. How much of that is true I can’t say. It makes for a a bit of interesting family history though. I suspect their father, my great-great grandfather, Marion Morgan might also have dabbled in the ministry, among his other occupations.

On my father’s side there’s another somewhat similar connection through my great-grandmother Sarah C. Sadler. Her maiden name was Mercer. She was a descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier named Jacob Mercer. Two of Jacob’s brothers, Thomas and Silas, were ordained Baptist ministers. Silas was a chaplain during the Revolutionary War. In turn, one of Silas’ sons, Jesse Mercer, was also a prominent Georgia Baptist minister and one of the founders of Mercer University (named in his honor) which is now located in Macon, Georgia.

You’d think that with those sorts of religious strains running through both sides of my family that I’d have religious leanings too. Apparently it’s not something genetic or else I didn’t inherit that particular gene though I do find religions interesting in many ways. {}

The Old Kit Bag #4: The “New Space Opera”

Bob Sabella

When I started reading science fiction in the mid-1960s, “space opera” was still a derogatory term, referring to the lowest form of sf which were little better than westerns (“horse operas”) set in space. Quality sf writers tried to distance themselves from space opera as much as possible, and I avoided reading it for the same reason.

That started to change in the 1960s though when Samuel R. Delany began using space opera tropes for such serious novels as **The Fall of the Towers** trilogy, the Nebula-winning **Babel-17**, and **Nova** (perhaps the high point of that decade’s space operas). Soon other authors followed suit, such as Larry Niven’s *Known Space* stories and Ursula K Le Guin’s three *ansible* novels **Rocannon’s World**, **Planet of Exiles** and **City of Illusions**, all of which were too good, and too popular among “serious” sf fans, to be considered lowly space opera.

The floodgates opened in the 1970s with writers such as C.J. Cherry, Greg Benford, George R.R. Martin, John Varley, Jack Vance, Joe Haldeman and others wrapping their relatively-sophisticated sf in space opera clothing. Gradually the phrase lost its “horse opera” connotations and began to represent all science fiction involving spaceships and planetary adventures, whether good or bad. This reached its zenith in the 1990s when a group of British science fiction writers began championing high-concept space operas which combine traditional tropes with modern quality. This so-called “new space opera” actually ranges all across the far-future, incorporating post-60s space opera, post C.J. Cherryh planetary adventures (another “rebirth” deserving of an entire article itself), and military sf, all ranging from future history on one end of the spectrum to hard science/technology on the other end.

All of this is by way of introduction to a review of Gardner Dozois and Jonathan Strahan’s original anthology **The New Space Opera**. Rather than read the book in chronological order, I decided to read the authors who most appealed to me first.

“Saving Tiamat”, by Gwennyth Jones, is a planetary adventure about a world on which the Ki rose up against their masters the An, nearly rendering the planet uninhabitable. Apparently the An and Ki are subdivisions of the same race, which makes the An cannibalistic since they “raise” some of the Ki for food.

Humans are trying to mediate the war between the Ki and the An. The focus of the story is Pelé and Dubra, two escorts for the An delegates to the negotiations. They are woefully ignorant of An nature though, as a killing by one of the An delegates of--what? An intruder? A suicide bomber trying to wreck the negotiations?--reveals their ignorance. This is a strong story, its primary interest being how Peleé and Dubra try to forward the negotiations while learning the true nature of the An and Ki at the same time.

Robert Silverberg’s “The Emperor And the Maula” is a futuristic “1,000 Arabian Nights” involving an alien race which has conquered most of the galaxy, including Earth, claiming to be benevolent rulers. An Earth woman named Laylah travels to the aliens’ home world where she should be killed since *maula* (non-aliens, barbarians, beings of low intelligence) are forbidden to go there. But, as Laylah anticipated, she is brought to the attention of the emperor where she delays her death by telling him the story of why she came to him, stretching the story out night after night after night, *a la* Sheherazade. Her story both teases and intrigues the emperor, as it does the reader, providing glimpses into life under the alien rulers and an understanding of how such an invasion, peaceful or not, would affect Earth’s inhabitants. This story proves yet again that Silverberg has lost none of his talent over the years, and I wish he would write more fiction than he currently does.

Just as the constant in a Robert Silverberg story is a strong historical foundation, the constant in a Stephen Baxter story is a strong philosophical foundation. I do not recall any Baxter story which

did not leave me thinking about the moral issues he raised, which is why he is one of my favorite current writers. “Remembrance” tells of a group of Earth explorers who find a Squeem colony near Saturn. The Squeem were a hivemind race which conquered Earth several centuries ago, controlling it until a revolution overthrew them. But apparently not everything about their era is known. A self-described Rememberer steps forward, claiming to be the latest in a long line of rememberers who have passed on important secrets about the Squeem dominance of Earth, secrets which might affect how the Earth authorities will deal with the newly-found colony. But there are actually two questions the authorities must consider: is this Rememberer what he claims to be, and does his secret merit consideration? The dual mystery makes the story stronger than either single mystery alone could have done.

Alastair Reynolds is, like Stephen Baxter, a strong storyteller steeped in the hard science tradition. But where Baxter’s short stories often range across space and time, Reynolds generally limits himself to local regions in a moment of time. And where Baxter’s stories are philosophically-thought-provoking, Reynolds’ stories generally raise more emotional issues. “Minla’s Flowers” tells the story of Merlin, a lone space pilot whose ship is damaged. He seeks landfall on the nearest planet where he finds a huge life-supporting shell surrounding it, a shell which has been damaged by alien attack, huge chunks of which have fallen groundward. The people living on the shell are engaged in a brutal, senseless war with a nation on the ground.

Before his ship is repaired and he leaves the planet, Merlin discovers that the cause of his ship’s damage will likely cause worse devastation to the planet’s sun in 70 years. In an attempt to save much of the planet’s population, Merlin shows the shell-bound natives sufficient technology to begin development of jet flight and, eventually, rocket flight to undertake a massive exodus from the planet before the disaster occurs. But he learns that sometimes people are not capable of following their own best interests so, even as the natives prepare for escape, they still engage in petty selfishness which might doom those efforts. While the story is a bit glib, and some events happen too easily, the story is well-told and interesting.

Kage Baker is a delightful storyteller, combining local color, fascinating offbeat characters, and outstanding storytelling. Think of Poul Anderson without the scientific core. While her “Company” stories are universally-acclaimed, I prefer her stories set on newly-colonized Mars, including “Empress of Mars” and “Where the Golden Apples Grow”. “Maelstrom” is another story in that series, which concerns the creation of the first Martian live-performance theater. Its owner is infatuated with Edgar Allan Poe, so the first performance will be a newly-written version of “Descent into the Maelstrom.” The story involves the typical roadblocks a new theater faces, such as seeking suitable talent for the production. Truthfully, most of the story could have been set in some backwater on Earth. But it was still great fun and I was pleased she set it on Mars where characters from the saloon Empress of Mars could participate. Highly-recommended.

Dan Simmons is a frustrating author, capable of writing the most wondrous far-future science fiction (such as the *Hyperion* series) but spending more time writing horror and mysteries than sf. “Muse of Fire” is set in a far-future in which humans are under the thumb of a race called the Archons, who themselves are the lowest in a series of three controlling alien races, topped by Abraxas, the ultimate ruler of life. Humans have been reduced to grunt workers doing the Archons’ bidding with no “culture, politics, arts history, hope, and sense of self.” Apparently what they have retained though is a love of Shakespeare, since the story concerns a planet-hopping dramatic troupe Earth’s Men (which includes both men and women) which puts on Shakespearean plays for the workers. It is a bit hard to believe that such a downtrodden race which remembers none of its ancient past would still revere Shakespeare, and that such uneducated grunts would actually understand the bard’s language, much less the plays themselves, but I was able to swallow my disbelief for the sake of the story, especially since stories about artists of any type are right near the top of my personal pyramid of favorite topics.

Somehow Earth’s Men come to the attention of the Archons who demand a private showing themselves, so the troupe performs “the Scottish play” for them (whose real title is never used, a popular affectation about *MacBeth*) which creates a domino effect in which the troupe is shunted up the

line to perform *King Lear* for the next highest alien race, then *Hamlet* for the penultimate aliens, leading to a series of events which culminates with the story's narrator and his unrequited love performing scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* for Abraxas him-it?—self. These events stretch disbelief beyond the breaking point, but it was all wonderful fun and led to some revelations straight out of Isaac Asimov's "The Mule." If you can avoid getting hung up in the logical gaps, this is a fine story to end the book.

At about this point I realized I made a mistake reading **The New Space Opera** in the order I did. Because the next half-dozen stories I tried were all on the science/technological end of the sf spectrum, which is one of the sub-genres I do not particularly enjoy. So I really tried Paul J. McAuley's "Winning Peace," Greg Egan's "Glory," Peter Hamilton's "Blessed By An Angel," and Ken MacLeod's "Who's Afraid of Wolf 359?" all of which were saturated with long descriptions of science and technology which so overwhelmed the stories themselves that I quickly lost interest. While I have no problems with futures far advanced beyond our own level of technology, do I really need to learn every final detail about such futures? Our current world is deeply technological, but I know little about its inner workings, and I don't need detailed descriptions of every marvel I use. The same with the future. Leave the technology in the background and write a story around it, not a story which is almost buried beneath it.

I abandoned both the McAuley and Egan stories midway, finishing both Hamilton's and MacLeod's, but coming away from them convinced both authors were concerned more with pushing an agenda than actually telling stories. Tony Daniels' "The Valley of Gardens" started out more promisingly. It was a love story between two people whose races had descended from and apparently evolved away from a single race. Each one lives on a different side of a stone wall, one in a lush valley, the other in a harsh desert. This interesting story was interwoven with scenes of a war between humans and an alien entity which had conquered most of the human galaxy. It was an unbelievable entity, some mindless evil more in tune with H.P. Lovecraft than space opera, and just as humanity's ultimate defeat seemed inevitable, some incomprehensible *deus ex machina* defeated it. The rest of the story combined the aftermaths of the war with the interlocked love story in a series of

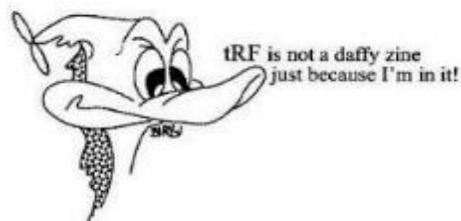
mostly auctorial intervention rather than a coherent story. The ending itself was mostly nonsensical, the main characters seemingly not knowing why they performed the actions they did, and I certainly had no idea how or why it had any effect on the Lovecraftian entity. I am still not sure why the editors accepted this story without considerable revision.

Next came James Patrick Kelly, not my favorite author since he gives me the impression that he tries to jump on every current bandwagon. When cyberpunk was popular, he wrote cyberpunk. Now he has hitched his star to space opera. And the first sentence of the story filled me with politically-correct dread: "Been Watanabe decided to become gay two days before his one-hundred-and-thirty-second birthday." Then followed a page of technobabble which convinced me enough is enough.

Greg Benford's "The Worm Turns" was considerably better. Although a working scientist, even when he writes a science/technology story he never forgets the human element (which Baxter and Reynolds also do very well), and his tale of a struggling spaceship captain trapped at the far end of a wormhole was always interesting, even though its main element was solving the scientific problem of getting back home. But the captain and her ship's AI were interesting enough to carry the story.

So what have I learned from reading this book? Just as science fiction is an umbrella term for numerous sub-genres, some of which I enjoy, others which I do not, then so has "space opera" become a sprawling term rather than defining one specific type of story. Which means that no longer can I damn a story as space opera without even reading it (which was possible in the 1960s), but neither can I decide if a story is my type of space opera until I actually read it. Just as science fiction has always contained "something for everybody," the same can now be said about space opera.

It would be so much easier if my taste ran to everything, of course, but that is probably never going to happen.



RAT STEW: Boiling down whatever I can catch.

What I Write

Gene Stewart

Publishers want marketable traits, preferably one per writer. Variety confuses things and versatility in a writer is a curse for sales.

Knowing this, I wondered what I write.

What fix do you come to Gene Stewart for?

My wife once suggested I call myself the Paladin Prince of Paranoia. She swears she wasn't joking.

My general topics usually include the unseen, the covert, and the occult. My work reveals what's hidden and explores behind the scenes. Much of it deals with espionage in some way, usually indirectly. Gothic Realism is one of the terms I've coined, but that is inadequate to cover all my work. I rarely write straight genre, but Slipstream is too vague. The New Weird isn't even a hint fateful enough. Yes I can be transgressive, but only in flashes. I am a mainstream monster, a literary lark, a genre jerk, yet ineluctable. Call me TETAR: The Exception To All Rules.

Bodes ill for a career, such blurring.

'Jack Ketchum' has that problem. He writes superbly, but if you like one of his books, you may not automatically like another. They vary that much.

On the other hand, Dean Koontz's books vary, too, yet he has something consistent running through all of them that

brings readers back. A voice, a tone, or perhaps just an outlook or viewpoint. I think it's optimism.

In theory, the use of different by-lines solves this problem. Different kinds of books can be sold under different names. Try telling an agent that, though. Or you could pull a Graham Greene and label some works Entertainments, thereby implying the others are Serious. You have to be a writer of status before you can do that with a straight face.

One friend suggested a label for my work: The Bitter Truth Will Set You Free. Much of it is about discovering and facing up to the cold, hard truth, after all. It's an odd quality for fiction with so many imaginary and speculative aspects, but it rings true for the most part.

But who wants the truth? Who can handle it besides Jack Nicholson? Don't most of us spend most of our free time avoiding the truth like roaches dodging light?

Escapism's what sells. Whether it's labeled sf, fantasy, horror, mystery, or romance, or even politics, Fortean, or fringe, it takes people away from their everyday concerns for awhile.

If most readers want escapism, fine, but this writer wants more. I want my work to matter.

Translation: I'm too fucking serious. I need to lighten up, but can't.

Is this a legacy from having begun in mainstream literary fiction, early in both my reading and writing?

I was born on Dickens's birthday and he is my favorite writer, so maybe I got it from his work, all that social conscience.

I once read an encomium from Norman Spinrad, I think it was, about PKD. It said, "He wrote serious fiction in popular form; what higher praise can there be?"

And that's been my ambition. Well, it describes what comes out of me, anyway, I should say it that way. It's not as if I sit and plan to be overbearingly serious.

To me, fiction matters, so I want mine to matter, too. In order to matter it has to address truth, no matter how bitter, inconvenient, or uncomfortable.

Make sense?

And escapism evades truth. It ducks the heavy and goes wide around what's prickly.

I am not referring to factuality. Facts are for nonfiction and the nerdiest hard sf.

Truth is more elusive. It lives, and hides, in stories. Only fiction can reveal truth in its fullest form, by touching upon the ineffable.

To matter, fiction must deal in truth.

I wrote an essay called *Happy Endings: More Than A Cancer?* addressing this very thing. It concluded that happy endings don't like the truth much. They prefer easy lies. They prefer delusions, propaganda, and nonsense to anything like real, pointed truths.

Next time you're confronted with a happy ending, ask yourself why you're not angry about being treated with such contempt? Are you a child who needs protected from anything harsh or upsetting? Must you be lied to in order to be seduced, enticed, or otherwise strung along?

But escapism relaxes us, you cry. It lets us rest from all the important stuff. It offers breathing space.

All true, which is why entertainment is the first principle of all good fiction. Beyond that, though, lies what matters. It is possible to entertain and tell the truth at the same time. In fact, writing that seeks to enlighten without entertaining does neither, as someone once wrote.

In jazz, the best don't play trumpet, sax, piano, or drums, they play "the truth".

You know it when you hear it. If you have to ask, you'll never know.

William S. Burroughs said, "I write reports." He was not kidding. He reported in from where ever his head took him, and did the best he could with difficult material.

What do I write? The truth as I see it. Come to me and I'll tell you bluntly what I see.

If I'm not the type to lie about everything working out okay, what else can I do?



Water Works—or Not

Sheryl Birkhead

When I bought this house, about eight years ago, the only true luxury I allowed myself was a personal sauna. Granted, I did my due diligence and got a super deal on it, but I put that into the financial hopper and went ahead with the project. I will admit (and this is a whole other story) I ended up buying a \$200 footstool—yes that is **not** a typo—to go into the sauna, but other than that this was a great buy and I have used it a lot. You see, I have chronic back pain (more about that later) and knew from gym experience that relaxing in the sauna helped a bit. I also theorized that this way I did not have to keep up the gym membership and that meant this was a good thing and would save me money in the long run. Just go with me on this—that was my rationalization for going with the purchase.

The more I thought about things that would—or even *might*—help with the back pain, the more I wondered about a hot tub. True, I had only been in one once and the novelty was more for the fact it was outside in freezing weather and not as an aid in pain relief, but the more I thought about it, the more I faunched after one.

The first thing I found out was that I really wanted a *whirlpool* rather than a true hot tub. Who would have thought that they now even make small hot tubs for bathrooms? But they would require shoring up the sub-flooring and putting the cost into the stratosphere. Someone asked why I didn't put it in the basement to remove the weight bearing problem, but there simply isn't any appropriate space in the heated rooms (please refer to hot tubs in cold weather above). Okay, making progress.

This put me about two years into home ownership and all the biggies were paid off. It was prime time to think about going into debt again. Right.

I called around to ask about installing a whirlpool bath where the bathtub is. I figured that the tub was a standard size, so a whirlpool ought to be a similar standard size. The handful of home improvement companies I called were no help at all. According to them, it was my job to simply tell them what model I wanted and their job to get paid for putting it in. As luck would have it, the existing tub was small (true, it was a standard size, but small all the same; I was used to the claw footed cast iron small swimming pool sized tub—not the kiddie pool version). All

right. Next problem: to fit in any whirlpool. If it was not the identical size of the existing tub, it would require tearing out the built-in cabinets and re-configuring the whole room. Can we say National debt? As an interesting aside—the bathroom is located directly across from the front door, so the first thing you see as you enter is a good look at the facilities, currently in a straight line, so the tub is actually hidden behind the cabinets. This could make for an interesting view.

The best suggestion anyone could give me was to visit plumbing supply stores (hint: call first; many do not carry whirlpool baths at all). I got out the phone book and started (over the next year) to visit places I thought would have a tremendous selection of nice small whirlpool baths that would **just** fit my needs. Wrong.

All the high-end stores only carry the high-end (read solid gold price tags) models. So, I spent a few visits climbing into and out of (hey—these tubs are mini-swimming pools!) the 6-7 foot 1-2 person tubs. I asked if they carried any of the smaller (in this case 5') tubs and got looks down the nose. Grudgingly, they said yes—but only in their catalog. If I actually **wanted** one of these . . . compact models, I would have to order it (i.e. purchase it). Of course, if I didn't like it after it was delivered, I could ship it back and they would refund my price—less a 30% re-stocking fee and all delivery charges. Lightning like calculations told me that I would be paying about half the price just for the opportunity to say I did not like the tub. So much for that idea.

I went to Home shows. Again, all I found was platinum coated monsters that I probably would have loved if I had an acre or two to play with and unlimited funds. At this point I gave up. I did not forget, but all I did for the next year or so was to think and dream.

Ah, refreshed by a year without people telling my project was impossible, I started looking again. This time I began with *Internet* searches and getting knowledge about the tubs in general. I climbed into the existing bathtub with a meterstick and tried to figure out the actual size of the tub I had. I found out that the published spec dimensions to tubs are not always what they sound to be (i.e. height is not **really** height and so on). I guessed at how much of the tub was tucked into the drywall and tiled areas and settled on

a simple 5' as still being the size I needed.

The *Internet* helped a lot: I could *Google* to my heart's delight. I could change parameters, depth, color (who knew that beige or biscuit was at least \$400 more than white; white was looking very attractive), number of jets, heater, and manufacturer. I started to accumulate a sheaf of papers, but I still had not seen, let alone sat in, a 5' whirlpool bath.

Next step was to visit the Home Improvement stores. *Home Depot* had floor models that were securely riveted to the wall about ten feet off the ground. *Lowe's* actually had a 5 1/2' floor model to try out. Floor being the operative word. It was hilarious (at least in retrospect). The tub **was** on the floor—but under a shelf that held the boxed tubs. This meant there was about 18" of space for a prospective buyer to maneuver in to get into the space; both ends were encased in the same shelving. I called an employee over to ask if I could really just . . . uh. . . er. . .

"Sure," he replied, "just take off your shoes." He stood there and awkwardly looked anywhere else. He finally admitted that he felt as if he ought to be closing his eyes as I struggled into the tub and then had twice the trouble climbing back out.

Ah, no longer a whirlpool virgin! I had now at least sat in a tub closer to one for which I actually had the space. I was not overly impressed. Maybe, after all this, a whirlpool was not what I ~~needed~~ wanted. Give it a rest. So I did—for another 6 months.

The next innovative research I did was to make a list of the manufacturers I felt were the most reputable, assemble their phone numbers, and ask if they made any of the five footers since I did not seem to be able to locate any. Yes. Okay, progress. Now, since I have never actually **used** any of the tubs, were there any, say, hotel chains that offered their tubs to patrons much in the same way *Select Comfort* beds are available in some hotels? Nice try, but no.

Hmm....

That was the make or break point. Each year the projected cost for installing the tub was increasing. I was not any closer to seeing or using a tub similar to what I thought I wanted, so either I was going to blindly go ahead, or stop hoping.

I decided to stop hoping. That made things so much easier. All this takes us up to September 2007. I asked the Home Improvement guy to come back out and give me an estimate for a deeper tub instead of the whirlpool. I selected a *Kohler* 5' tub that was merely 7 inches deeper than the original tub. It was still my responsibility to locate the tub I wanted, but yes they could tear out the old tub, trying not to damage the 30 year old

tile, but build in a charge to match the tile and redo all the edges. No guarantees, but they would try not to break any more tiles than absolutely needed to get the new tub in. All right—drum roll—with **me** purchasing the tub and having it delivered here, the estimate was \$6800. Adding in the cost of the tub, make that about \$8500.

I almost got away from the estimate unscathed. As the estimator got ready to leave he innocently mentioned "You do know, they make whirlpool baths the same size . . ."

So close. I asked him to come back in and talk a bit more. Under intense grilling he had to admit he did not know any **specific** manufacturers or models, but he was sure . . . Sigh—back to square one. No, I could not go back to dreaming of the perfect tub. I would settle for a deeper tub and that was that. I signed the estimate and my dream of a whirlpool simply evaporated.

In preparation of the construction (I shuddered each time they called it demolition) I went over to *Home Depot* and took a look at the tub (*Bancroft* by *Kohler*—sounds like the bloodlines of a racehorse) I had selected from both the *Kohler* and *Home Depot* websites. But—**what was this?** Leaning up against the boxed *Bancrofts* was one tub and the box said *Devonshire* whirlpool and 5' and . . . Gone were the plans to purchase it on the spot. I could barely contain myself. My spirits soared!!

I was ecstatic. Maybe, just maybe . . . In an attempt not to re-invent the wheel, I simply picked up the phone and called *Kohler*.

"Sure," the young lady assured me, "the *Devonshire* and *Bancroft* are the same frame; one is a whirlpool and the other is a traditional tub. If the *Bancroft* will fit your area, the *Devonshire* will fit."

I was saved. I had my tub—or almost.

The next step was to have the estimate re-done since the whirlpool needs an electric circuit and, hence, also an electrician. Okay, I'll cut to the chase: the estimate was now up to \$9600. Then I asked around and friends who had actually used a whirlpool said I really wanted a heated tub to help with that back pain. So I had to up my costs again. Uh oh. I forgot to mention that I had given myself a ceiling of \$10,000 for this project; if it could not be done for that I would stay with the shallow plain tub. We had just passed the magic number.

All that work and dreaming, down the drain.

Ah, but where there is life there's hope. I had credit card points that I could redeem for gift cards at *Home Depot*. Done.

So close . . . The contractor said he did not hire an electrician, but worked closely with a local company and I needed to call them to set up a visit and get an estimate

directly from them. Oops. There went the estimate again.

The electrician showed up and innocently mentioned, as we headed down the basement stairs to check out the circuit box, that he hoped I had not chosen a *Kohler*. Uh oh. When I asked for clarification, he explained to me that all their heated tubs required 2 240 lines and he was fairly sure the house did not have that many free lines. Of course I could add in an auxiliary box and . . . When he stopped talking I tentatively asked if he wanted to see the spec sheets I had gotten off the Internet, that it didn't **look** as if it needed . . . Tut tut—he didn't need to see them.

Drat.

Not to be thwarted, as soon as he left I got on the phone to *Kohler* and asked for technical assistance. The very nice guy listened to my question and then left the line quiet for a moment. "Um?" I prompted intelligently. I could tell by the way he cleared his throat that he was trying to figure out how to phrase his reply.

Finally, "Let me put it this way: you are buying a Volkswagen, and only our Cadillacs require the 2 240 lines." Oh.

I immediately called the electrician (who had left for the weekend) and left the message that I would fax him the specs and that *Kohler* said the tub only took 2 120 lines. Please send the estimate!

Bright and early Monday morning I had the estimate: \$300 for each line for a total of \$600. Right. The game is afoot!

Once more I called the contractor. He said to buy the tub, have it delivered, and then let him come over to check it out to be sure everything was in the box. Only **then** would he schedule the job, including the plumber and the electrician.

I called *Home Depot* to order the tub and was put on hold. Half an hour later I went out and got my emergency cell phone and held it up to my other ear. I got a second "*Hold please*" and got to hear the muzak in stereo and waited another 15 minutes before giving up. All I wanted to do was spend money. It shouldn't be **that** difficult—should it?

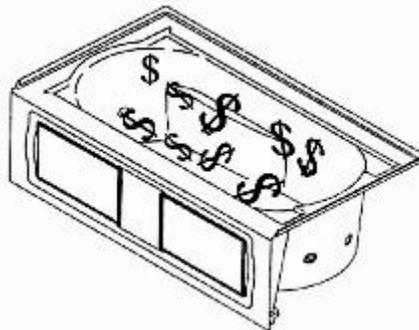


I called *Home Depot* to order the tub and was put on hold. Half an hour later I went out and got my emergency cell phone and held it up to my other ear. I got a second "*Hold please*" and got to hear the muzak in stereo and waited another 15 minutes before giving up. All I wanted to do was spend money. It shouldn't be **that** difficult—should it?

local store, but to make the half hour trip to another store; that it was worth the time and saved aggravation. Done and done. The clerk there had my welfare in mind and said there was a rebate for this size purchase of *Kohler* products and if I would open a credit card that was a 10% discount on the first purchase. Fantastic! Success was almost within my grasp!

We totaled everything up and I added in the contractor's estimate—and I had it made! Triumphant I went to the checkout to become the proud owner (well, ordered) of a heated whirlpool. The clerk looked at me with a strange expression when I pulled out the gift cards I had accumulated. Sorry but gift cards cannot be used for credit card payments. By now I had a full head of steam going and was not going to let the mere overrun of the budget stop me! With a flourish I signed on the line(s) marked with an x. A lack of money wasn't going to stop me now.

The deed was done. I called the contractor to give him the tentative delivery date and break the news about the budget. Will wonders never cease? He told me to give him a few days and let him see if he could re-work the estimate with some creative numbers and see if he could get the total back under the magic number. I had to sacrifice the touch up on the bathroom windows but, yes, it would all come in under budget. Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead! (Ah, it takes so little to make me happy!)



Readers' Riposte

PO Pox 69
Barrington IL 60011
1/1/08

Dear Tom,

Thank you for TRF! Double thanks for those kind comments on page 1.

There's a story idea in your delivery problems, and I'm working on it. What is to be delivered? If I were Jennifer Stevenson (THE BRASS BED), it would certainly be a bed. Or at least a sleep sofa. I'm not. A bookcase? A computer desk? A roomful of antique furniture? How about a doghouse? I've got to mull on it.

If you'd asked them to bring in the item at the front of the truck first, they'd have unloaded the works, setting things on the lawn, then carried in what you wanted first. This isn't imaginative, I realize; I'm just telling you.

I'm glad you got everything at last, and are settled in your new Kentucky home.

Faithfully,
Gene Wolfe

[[I hope you're able to figure out a story line. I, for one, will be very interested to read the story should you finish it and publish it. I can't help but wonder, though—a doghouse? Well why not? //I confess that the two movers very likely would have removed everything from their truck and set it all outside. Fortunately for them the only things in the truck were what we had ordered. Because of their earlier screw-up, our furniture was their only delivery--at least that we know of, and I have to presume so since they called to tell us the truck was being loaded and called again to let us know it was on its way and when it would arrive and the time-frame was short enough to indicate a single delivery.//We're settling into our new home just fine and gradually becoming used to living in a different state after so many years,

the peace and quiet and the night skies relatively free of so much ambient light. A better location for seeing the stars at night especially if I buy a good telescope.]]

1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, KY 40204-2040
January 2, 2008

Dear Tom:

Welcome to the Commonwealth.

I don't know if I'd ever mentioned to you that "writing a review about a book written by someone you know places the review in a very uncomfortable and divided position," but it's something I've felt often enough. Yet writers need first readers, precisely because having no feedback produces, well, monsters. Compare the works Heinlein wrote when he was edited, in spite of the trouble he had with editors, with the ones he wrote when he wasn't edited.

Mother Nature finally woke up and listened to you. December had all the rain we had been missing during the summer. The Elvis song "Kentucky Rain" highlights the issue so perfectly that I am convinced he himself must have been here during one of our December rainy seasons.

You are south of *Millenicon*, *OctoCon*, and *MidWestCon* and east of *ConGlomeration*. Going a little farther afield, there is *ConCave* in southern Kentucky, and *ChattaCon* and *Hypericon* in Tennessee, *InConJunction* in Indiana, and . . . Not that any, except perhaps *MidWestCon*, are all that hospitable to fanzine fans, but . . .

Well, "The Last Mimzy" got **The Best of Henry Kuttner** reissued. I wish someone would do a version of the Gallagher stories, though his drinking might not go over well these days.

In short, historical fiction, like science fiction, must evoke a different society without keeping from telling a story. L. Sprague de Camp did some good works, and H. N. Turtletaub's works, set in the Byzantine and the Classical Greek eras, keep up that theme. (The latter author bears a certain resemblance to Harry Turtledove.)

“A Science Fiction World?": Bob Tucker's website had a similar lament by him. 2001 started out a disappointment though I was amusingly piqued by HBO's showing the movie beginning at midnight on New Year's Day, and the FoxTrot cartoon for December 31, 2000 (Jason in a monkey suit throwing bones at a snow Monolith) was amusing and then got horribly worse.

H. G. Wells may have been a writer of clunky unreadable serious novels in his later years, but that was also the period of "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" and "Things to Come". Moreover, by then he was The Futurist Commentator that was the period of **The Outline of History** (1920).

Yes, the Columbia Steak House Columbia Special is steak. Our Editor might well drive on down to Lexington and sample it.

Naturally, I found out I did have a picture of my maternal grandfather, admittedly as a dapper young man in the first years of the twentieth century. Oh well.

Yes, it's The General Society of the Cincinnati (www.thecincinnati.org). Membership is limited to descendants of Revolutionary War officers; originally it was the heir-male and they developed some means for when such lines die out, but I think it is still one descendant per officer. They played a role in the founding of Cincinnati, Ohio, and there is a family story that my ancestor Beverly Stubblefield, late Captain, Continental Line (i.e., he could have joined, probably did, and could have a descendant as a member but he has a lot of them) was offered a large land grant in the Northwest Territory but declined it, which area was the future site of Cincinnati.

The area north of Frankfort is not very good for cell phone reception.

Namarie,
Joseph T Major

[[It's slightly strange—now living in a "commonwealth" state; one of only 4 states so termed, Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania being the other three. Interestingly, one of the "questions" on Jeopardy was about the only states calling themselves commonwealths. At any rate the use of commonwealth by those states appears to be more some sort of affectation than anything else. Maybe an attempt to make those states seem a little better

than the others somehow?//According to General Washington's Christmas Farewell by Stanley Weintraub some of George Washington's officers—"Baron von Steuben initiating the idea" had already started a Society of Cincinnati, "to be open to former officers in the war and their eldest male descendants in cases of need . . .". But apparently a lot of prominent people objected to such an organization, fearing it might ". . . Suggest a self-appointed aristocracy . . .". Even Benjamin Franklin raised a mild objection--but then he accepted an honorary membership in the organization. Eventually the furor died out and the society sort of faded away.// Actually, the cell phone service isn't too bad north of Frankfort; we can get a good signal in Owenton and on US-127. Our problem is that we live in a sort of "hollow" or lowland downslope from US-127 and that I think affects reception somewhat.]]

Dear Tom

If you very much enjoyed a book there is no shame in saying so. A review is intended to be your honest opinion of a book.

Bob Sabella has an interesting list of historical fiction. I'll have to look into those when I have time, which won't be for a while. I've started a series of nonfiction articles about WW II which will take up a fair chunk of time in the doing.

I'm glad to hear you finally got your furniture.

As regards a "science fiction world", I suspect that when it comes it will be "a continually evolving version of the worlds in which" our "ancestors lived." When my father served in the South Pacific, he saw Stone Age peoples learn to handle bulldozers in only a few weeks.

Regarding flatness, I understand completely. I remember visiting Arkansas and being made uneasy there. It took me a while to realize it was the sheer flatness. When you grow up in river country, floods are a way of life. So is a subconscious noting of where high ground is. When there is no high ground, it registers in your mind.

Concerning Birkhead's mention of floppies, I've had to go back to them. My CD drive on the desktop is kaput. Not even Grant could get it to work. I would rather use floppies than not have any backups for my messterpieces.

Now that you live so close to Louisville perhaps we could get together some time. If you have any

liking for horses perhaps we could get together when we're visiting the Horse Park.

As always I enjoyed the Reluctant Famulus.

Sincerely, Lisa Major

[[Well I've decided that when I do review a book I'll just have to take my chances and not worry if some reader thinks I'm currying an author's favor or not. //As regards the flatness of my surroundings, it was the monotony of the scenery that got to me; hills and valleys were few and far between where we were living in Michigan. I'm not sure I'd want to live in one of the Great Plains states.//I'm hoping to get around to exploring more of Kentucky as time goes by even to the point of visiting Louisville, which we haven't really seen since the last Rivercon we attended]]

428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, N. J. 07666-2626

January 3, 2008

Dear Tom:

TRF Summer 2007 received with pleasure. Especially because you printed my little sketch. I received a catalog of fanzine items from Bob Madle, and you'd better be careful or you'll end up in it for 10 or 20 bucks a copy. Anyway, if I remember I shall enclose a business card printed free (!) by Staples on which I used this sketch. I have a good friend who insists that in the sketch, I am wearing a Tevye-style cap and holding a pretzel! The nerve! I am driving and Janet is thrilled to be using her (then-) new cell-phone. I drew it on the p/c.

Yes, last quarter was a tough one. I believe I neglected to list on that catalog of loss, the death of my dear friend, especially in fantasy, Paul Walker, only 65. He went in for a hospital check up and called me, telling me he was going to die. I responded cheerfully that everyone was going to die, but that was eventually, like him. But he meant it literally. He was gone in a few weeks, and I have missed him since. My brother, a widower now, lives in an assisted-care home near San Francisco, where his son and the latter's family live. They visit him often, and a while back he flew out here to visit us. I miss him, as I miss his late wife. I did mention that my

prostate cancer had apparently returned, as shown by rising PSA scores. I underwent 40 radiation treatments and the PSA returned to negligibility. For now anyway. However, for whatever cause, on the very last I fell against the uneven table, and actually broke a few ribs! Well, they healed and I am as ok as I can be. And Janet is fine too. We go to the theatre and God is in his proper heaven.

Some ignoble history!

Getting back to TRF, I was happy to see it, a fine and handsome issue, and a ringing endorsement of your state against those who accuse it of rampant hillbillyism. In my dotage I still keep busy with my apazines, and those I receive. I do far too little reading, especially since the magazine that had me reviewing books has dropped my services. I buy very few books, since I have no space and I should be, although I am not, getting rid of books. I love them all, and will allow my heirs to do what they want with them. It is not like my wife, who has large sculptures. She gave one to the Kilmer Library, a magnificent new building at Rutgers University here in NJ. They were utterly delighted to receive it. She is preparing a complete archive as well of documents. She is after me to do so also, but my son does not like me to sell books off, and my daughter as well says that she wants any archival material. Tom, I have to confess that it is nice to hear the kids say this. Even a young whippersnapper like you should keep it in mind. I shall see if I can append a photo of Janet and her sculpture. Yes, I have made one, showing her (in black pants suit, and wearing a silver sculptural medallion she made) next to ARK, the sculpture, with two librarians.

Your words about Gene Wolfe are well-deserved by that fine writer. I believe it was on your recommendation that I first read him. I am certain that, as always, your modesty is overstated, and that whatever you have said was properly thought out and worthy of reading.

Be well, Tom, and a happy new year to you and your family!

– Ben

[[I do indeed think that Gene Wolfe's books are well worth reading and recommend them to readers with a love of good writing. Every time I start a Gene Wolfe novel I do so with the intent of seeing how he

does it (even though I'm certain I could never hope to emulate him)—and than damned if I don't get caught up in the story instead. So I still don't know how he does it. Maybe I'm not supposed to.//Any place south of the Mason-Dixon got the bad reputation of being the land of hillbillies. Which is rather strange since all the states so considered were settled by people from the original 13 colonies and and, I think, some who came directly to those southern states from overseas. While there is still evidence of what could be considered hillbillyism in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama—in particular—these days not only the greater metropolitan areas but even some of the more rural parts contain some very beautiful, luxurious, expensive homes. There are several homes along US-127 north and south of where we're located that match anything one could find in the North. There are still, of course, so-called hillbilly shacks here and there but then in our travels through other states in the North one can find comparable homes. My late mother's "hometown" of Huntsville, Alabama once was a fairly small city. But time and World War II and the construction of what was called Redstone Arsenal, among other factors, changed all that.]]

01/09/08

It's been a long time since I've seen a copy of your zine - somehow I thought you'd ceased publication. I see that not only was I wrong, I've also managed to miss a whole middle period of your publishing in which you used a mostly-different title. (You kept the initials; so considerate to your readers.)

Nice selection of postcards from your new state on the cover. Are you a postcard collector? There's a collectors' club that meets a few times a year at our neighborhood community center. I dropped in once to have a look-see, and found the range of interests there (not just postcards but all sorts of paper ephemera) quite impressive.

While you're feeling sorry for authors, feel sorry for Phil Dick. More of his stories and novels have been turned into movies than any other SF writer, yet hardly any have done more than snatched the skeletons of his ideas. I think the most Dickian movie I've seen has been *The Truman Show*, definitely not based on a Phil Dick Story.

Bob Sabella got me thinking about historical fiction I've enjoyed. There was Dorothy Dunnett's six-book series, "The Lymond Chronicles," which sprawls from Scotland to Turkey during the sixteenth century; Neal Stephenson's trilogy, "The Baroque Cycle," which sprawls even further during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; and James Clavell's *Shogun*. I believe a lot of other fantasy and science fiction fans like these. (I think the fantasy fans tend to favor Dunnett, sf fans like Stephenson, and both like Clavell, but this is based on vague impressions and I have no hard evidence for these perceptions.)

E.B. Frohvet asks if there are any significant faneds under 45, and I am hard pressed to think of any US or Canadian publishers that fit this requirement. Andy Hooper may be, but I've just reviewed the birthdates of some of my publishing friends as shown in their Live Journal profiles, and find that Randy Byers is a couple of years over. There are more in Britain, though perhaps they don't meet EB's requirement that they be significant. For instance, I am sure that Claire Brialey is under 45, but I am not sure about Mark Plummer. (I think *Banana Wings* is significant.) Alison Scott of *Plokta* is 42, and other members of the cabal are younger. (Flick has published three issues of *Shiny!*) Max and Ang Rosin are both well under 45, and both have published zines. Youngest is John Coxon, who has published at least four issues of *Procrastinations* to date, and he is under twenty. (I hope I remembered his zine title correctly.)

I hope you have settled into your new Kentucky home, and that flights of banjos are singing you to your well-earned rest.

Yours,

Jerry Kaufman

[[I've been extremely bad about keeping a regular publishing schedule over the past few years and there's no real good reason for it. I'm so ashamed. And it didn't help any that I had got so screwed up with my mailing list that I couldn't remember to whom I had sent copies and to whom I hadn't. I'm fighting an uphill battle to do something positive about that if I can. I hope.//No, I'm not a postcard collector. I was hunting around for an idea for a

cover for that issue and thought a sampling of postcards from Kentucky might be an appropriate touch.//I forgot about movie versions of Philip K. Dick's works. Considering the way he wrote it must have been a challenge to the Hollywood morons--er moguls to turn his stories into movies.//I don't know about a "well-earned rest" but I'm trying to enjoy our new surroundings as much as possible.]]

Thu 01/17/08 06:43 PM

1710 Diane Avenue
Bellevue, NE 68005
stews9@cox.net

COVER - The picture of Frankfort from across the river fascinates me. Looks exactly like Bedford, PA, which I used to pass twice a weekend going to and from my parents' house. I imagine towns repeat like that across the world, shaping themselves to geographical circumstances.

INTRO - Yes, MIMZY sucked, for the reasons you specified. Hollywood can be vampiric in sucking the life out of source material. In part it changes things in order to allow them to control "their" version, thus creating "new" intellectual property. It's cynical and stupid, how they go about this. The Disney version comes to mind; that's why it exists. The other reason Hollywood pretty thoroughly destroys good source material is stupidity. As Michael Crichton once said on Larry King's show, and I paraphrase like a mofo: Anyone with half a brain who goes to Hollywood and isn't rich must not want to be rich, because the people there are so incredibly stupid that they throw money at anyone who can halfway think, and simply being able to read and write coherently puts them in awe. Incompetence and not conspiracy, in short.

I respectfully disagree that reviewing a book written by a friend or acquaintance puts the reviewer in a tough spot. Just tell the truth about the book. I have recently had the pleasure to review a book by my friend Mark Ferrari, *The Book of Joby*, his first, out now from Tor. If it had sucked I would not have written a review. When it proved excellent, I said so, and why. Simply by talking about what I had found in the book, I avoided any conflict there might be in

talking about him. And yes, it was a relief that I liked it, I admit that.

If a friend writes something I don't like, I tell them why I don't like it. I do not write scathing reviews, though. Since I read only those books I wish, and since I'm under no obligation to offer reviews of books I can't finish or didn't like, being churlish never comes up.

Were I a paid reviewer assigned books, I'd recuse myself from books by friends.

Still, Tom, you choose to read, say, a Gene Wolfe book, so your take on it is perfectly valid, whether you know him or not. All writers have plenty of friends who neither read nor like what they write. Hell, we have family like that, so don't worry that someone might think you're sucking up. Mr. Wolfe knows better and those of us who count themselves lucky enough to be your friends know better, too.

The rest can go gag.

OLD KIT BAG 3 by Bob Sabella - I agree with your assessment of your reading as probably par for the course in being varied, even in fandom. Probably especially in fandom. My own reading covers such a wide range as to be catholic without the masses. Meaning I avoid their bigotries. And I'm not about to count or figure percentages, either, so that's as far as I'm going on this.

You are exactly right to braid sf with history. It is inevitable. You're also right that sf is not the only source of sense of wonder.

I'm glad you also made the point that market labels are not universally reliable. Genre is as genre does and it varies widely.

CONTINUING TROUBLES by Ye Olde Editor - My wife and kids and I moved 13 times in 15 years during 21 years of military service on my wife's part. It was traumatic every time and never got easier. In fact, I'm where I am now because we did not want to face another move, which is common for military careerists. They hit a wall.

Specifically, we've had belongings lost, furniture smashed, and valuables stolen. When we moved from Germany the movers were downstairs pushing corks into bottles with their thumbs and guzzling my wine. CDs vanished, and my beautiful antique oak desk was pulled apart and smashed during shipping.

So I can and do empathize.

AN SF WORLD by TDS - I'd heard Wm. Gibson discussing writing sf. He said one can no longer write sf because events outstrip speculation before the book can be published. This is as much because publishers still operate in 1800 mode as due to technology's rapid pace of change.

As to us living in an sf'nal world, well, depends. You're right, no flying cars clutter the air, (thank heavens; there aren't helmets enough to cover what would rain down upon us), but there are sexbots in Germany and Idoru, to borrow a very old Gibson example, in Japan.

And yes, the ISS is a letdown but then our politics has made even facing up to global warming impossible, so space travel is simply not on the slate. That is sf'nal, and quite dystopian.

Your opinion is well taken and well presented; we live largely in the same mess we've always lived in. Science fictional world is more a gloss than a concrete reality, but there are aspects of it, even so.

I would advise reading Gibson's superb novels **Pattern Recognition** and **Spook Country** to see what he means about it being impossible to write what was once called science fiction anymore. Things are too weird now, in many aspects.

Other aspects never change. The poor will be with us always, as some hippie said.

FROM THE READERS - Knarley, hey. Yes, reading Potter is better than watching, as the reformed voyeur found.

BEN INDICK - Yes, aging sucks. This is my main impetus for promoting Machine Intelligence. If only we can break the mind/brain barrier and upload our

actual selves seamlessly. Roger Penrose's nanotubules hold promise.

E..B. FROHNET - Some writers are deservedly forgotten, most even. Good ones can always hope for discovery, or rediscovery.

I was with you about Potter, had Rowling killed him off it would not have mattered. There is always a way around it. She ended the sequence simply because that's the plan she'd followed all along.

The TV show LOST should have stuck with its original plan. When it proved to be a hit, ABC demanded the writers "stretch" the middle. This destroyed interest in what had been a fascinating developing plot. They should have followed through, finished it, then dealt with the implications later.

Same with TWIN PEAKS, by the way, although in that case Lynch should have had an ending to shoot for, regardless what it was. Then it would've been a triumph.

This underscores the importance of shape to a work of fiction. Endless strings of cliffhangers or other stretching techniques don't work nearly as well as a sequence of endings / renewals. Sherlock Holmes fell off Reichenbach Falls, then came back not even wet. it works.

If you want books filmed faithfully, meaning, I suppose, each plot point covered on screen, then the mini-series is the way to go. Movies, at 30,000 words tops, simply don't have room for more than short story or novella plots. This means one main plot and one subplot, maybe three main characters. More than that and a movie can quickly be cluttered.

MAJOR JOE - My middle son is digging into our genealogy. I'll let you know if we end up related.

TOM - Your response to Joe pined for editors who work with writers to improve stories. Try Lane Adamson at Permuted Press. He is Campellian & hands-on.

As for Max Perkins & Thurber's Ross and all those, to hell with 'em. Meddlesome bluenose editors are not for me.

BOB KENNEDY - But is the Declaration of Independence pertinent or even legal these days?

SHERYL BIRKHEAD - The Mormon Church has some of the finest genealogy archives on the planet and yes, they're open at least to inquiry, if not examination. And if you Google, say, Mormon Genealogy Archives, you get a list of sites through which you can access LDS church records.

TOM - Apropos your reply to Sheryl, please define "evil" for us, hm?

CONCLUSION - To be continued, eh? I rest the case I was whittling earlier.

--OLD 815

[[After reading your "horror tales" about your various moves over the years, all our problems associated with moving to Kentucky seem trivial. I don't know how my wife and I would have coped with the things you went through. I think you're justified in any reluctance ever to move again.

*If I remember correctly from something I read once about the writer Thomas Wolfe and book editor Maxwell Perkins Wolfe actually supposedly benefited from the association. When Wolfe sought publication of his first novel, **Look Homeward, Angel**, the manuscript was of mammoth proportions; far larger than the end product. Perkins worked with Wolfe and they got the manuscript into a more manageable size for publication. That story may or may not be true.//I'm not saying I'd like to see the original book or story followed 100 percent faithfully but it would be nice to see a movie where once could recognize the book or story from which it was made, one that did not change genders, races, and so on simply, seemingly, as a starring vehicle for some particular actor or actress. But I'd better quit expecting so much from Hollywood.//". . . define "evil" for us . . ." Oh no!—you're **not** luring me into **that** trap. I wouldn't dare speculate on how many thousands of words have been written on that subject, and by minds far smarter than my puny one. I'll leave defining evil to theologians and psychiatrists—and the maybe semanticists.*

Tom:

Thanks for the latest TRF and updates on your move to Kentucky. I have always been distressed by businesses that provide such wide time slots for both delivery and/or installation.

I think the electronics revolution is, in many ways, science fictional. Many of the great authors failed to predict the personal computer and calculator and one look at an iPhone shows how fantastically far we've come. OK, there are no aircars or space stations, but

...

Until next issue...

Henry L. Welch

Editor, The Knarley Knews

welch@msoe.edu

*[[Admittedly computers are fantastic in some ways and can do a lot, but they are only tools, after all, intended to make certain tasks much easier for us humans. The fact remains that the sort of science fictional world most writers did envision has still not come to pass. But will mankind **ever** make its way into space and to other planets; will we **ever** meet other intelligent life forms? Or are we humans fated to live out our existence on the same planet, surrounded by virtual realities created by computers, yakking on iPhones, and listening to our MP3 players, never to experience the awesome vastness of the universe and its endless possibilities? Somehow, iPhones and MP3 players don't seem quite enough.]]*

Dear Tom,

In *The Reluctant Famulus* (Summer 2007), you claim to be retired but say you still have spare time. This is unheard of for fans. Fans always think of more things to do than they have time to do. Before people start calling you a fakefan, let me help you with this embarrassing problem. You may have heard of FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. It looks like you must have already heard of FAPA, since you were a member from August 1997 to May 2000. You really ought to join again before idleness turns your brain into cottage cheese.

After I retired, it didn't take long for me to fill up my spare time. Of course, I sleep more than I did when I

was working full time, but that only accounted for some time. I joined a couple of spas and started locking as many fanzines as I received. Then I started going to LASFS every week, and I took over doing their monthly newzine. There were also the Friday night card games down at LASFS. I also started working on concoms again after a fifteen year lapse. Which all goes to explain why I'm just a stressed out now as I ever was when I was working. Ain't fandom great?

I deal with movies differently than you do. I don't demand that a movie be identical to the story on which it was based. I don't mind if the movie resembles the book closely, but I don't require it. The Russian version of *War and Peace* was the closest resemblance I have ever encountered between a movie and a book. Even at that, there were some odd aspects to the movie. One of the battles in the movie was actually longer than the original battle, and there were more soldiers on the battlefield in the movie than in the battle. Those Russians really went all out for their great national epic.

As far as SF movies are concerned, *I Robot* is the only recent case of a movie I didn't see, because I can't accept killer robots in a work of that title. "The Last Mimsy" was based on a story I read about fifty years ago and didn't remember all that clearly. However, I enjoyed the movie by itself. The same is true of *Puppet Masters* which I only saw recently. I thought it was a little strange that the female scientist thought she could detect aliens as males who didn't ogle her. She had never encountered any gay or asexual males? I read *Starship Troopers* much later than the other two works, so I was much clearer on the published story. I've seen the movie version three times, and I've enjoyed it more with each viewing.

Do I think I'm living in a scientific world? I dunno, but I sure have more gadgets than I used to. The bad stuff in SF is just as much a part of the genre as the good stuff, so maybe I don't really want to live in a scientific world.

Yours truly,
Milt Stevens
6325 Keystone St.
Simi Valley, CA 93063

*[[I suppose it could be argued that I have spare time because I'm not trying to keep busy every minute of the day doing something productive or constructive. In other words, it could be said that if I don't feel like doing anything—I don't do anything. I confess, however, that that practice is becoming somewhat boring and so eventually I may indeed end up having little or no spare time. Then, too, so far I don't sleep more than I used to. A good while back I got into the habit of doing what Thomas Edison and others did and take an hour or so nap to recharge my batteries. // "from August 1997 to May 2000". Ot's hard to believe I was in FAPA so long ago now. While it is tempting to re-join (And that fine gentleman Ben Indick has also suggested that also.) these days I've started to wonder if I'd be able to think of enough interesting things to write about. Which is a strange thing considering my conceit of years ago that I could produce an endless (or nearly so) stream of writing. //I don't expect a movie to be identical to the book or story on which it is based but it should at least have a protagonist who actually follows the race or gender of the one in the book and be recognizable enough in relation to the original story. Of course a movie can never faithfully follow the original for the simple fact that books view the world from an internal point of view and a movie from an external one. I hope that doesn't sound obscure or confusing.//I never saw the Russian version of **War and Peace** but if it's the one I read about once, it lasted something like eight hours and was shown in four parts. Now **that** would be a little too faithful to the original.//An interesting thing about your comment regarding the movie of **The Puppet Masters**, that you thought it "was a little strange that the female scientist thought she could detect aliens as males who didn't ogle her. She had never encountered any gay or asexual males?" These days that would seem odd. But consider when Heinlein wrote the story, back in the 40s. While it's true that there were such things as gays, lesbians, and asexual males isn't it also true that, euphemistically speaking, such things were kept in the closet. Also, Heinlein was writing for a specific audience that consisted, probably as far as he was concerned, of heterosexual males. Would the gay or asexual angle would have even occurred to him? It would be interesting to know. Of course the movie maker could have altered that bit to reflect the times. That they didn't could be considered odd.]]*

Conclusion

Odds and Ends

Some of the readers of this fanzine have occasionally mentioned the genealogy archives owned and maintained by the Church of Latter Day Saints, or LDS, and what a great resource it can be for people searching for information on their ancestors. For the most part the LDS archives are very valuable and helpful. But from what I've learned and have discovered that isn't 100% true. The archives are somewhat flawed.

It seems that for a long time professional genealogists and serious researchers have been aware of the forgeries and frauds committed by a man who called himself Gustave Anjou, who lived from 1863-1942. Gustave Anjou isn't the man's real name, however, and he was originally from Sweden. The man who called himself by that name was, among other things, an expert forger and, I suppose, could be considered a con man. Apparently, when things got to hot for him in Europe he came to the United States sometime around or slightly before 1900. After arriving here he looked around for some way of making money and ended up presenting himself as a professional genealogist. For a price of around \$9,000 Gustave Anjou produced "genealogies" for wealthy clients, and the client always received what they wanted. The genealogies were long and detailed and impressive, to say the least.

But the fact is that Gustave Anjou wasn't a genealogist at all. He was a forger of genealogical records that have been passed on for years to unwary clients and then through researchers who believed, or wanted to believe, they had a true lineage. They in turn republished the material in their own works and the cycle continues even today.

According to research done by real, honest genealogists a typical Anjou pedigree displayed four recognizable features:

1. A dazzling range of connections between dozens of immigrants to New England; for example, connections far beyond what may be seen in pedigrees produced by anyone else.

2. Many wild geographical leaps, outside the normal range of migration patterns.

3. An overwhelming number of citations to documents that actually exist, and actually include what Anjou says they include.

4. Here and there an invented document, without citation, which appears to support the many connections noted under item 1 above.

Anjou produced possibly hundreds of these spurious genealogies. They were originally intended solely for his clients' use but copies of some in one way or another and ended up in various genealogical libraries and repositories and later family researchers unintentionally spread those genealogies further.

Various professional genealogists who had learned about Anjou's fakes have over the years endeavored to identify and trace these false genealogies, with much success. Wait for it—

In the process they discovered that among the many vast genealogical records in the LDS archives are one hundred and nine of Anjou's genealogies and possibly more¹. The LDS library isn't alone, of course, in possessing those fakes. There are other archives around the country that also have them. (Or maybe had them if it was discovered the genealogies were flawed.) But the point is that the people who acquired the various documents and are responsible for the LDS archives evidently were not careful about verifying the authenticity of what they received and included in their "vast" collection. They were apparently like most amateur genealogists and were more interested in building the largest genealogy library in the world. Of course the fact that the people responsible for the archives also relied on volunteers inside and outside the LDS Church to collect and provide information doesn't help matters.

Admittedly, Anjou's fake genealogies are only a very small portion of the LDS's collection but it should serve to show prospective users of the archives that they need to be **very** careful about what they find there. As is often stressed by professional and experienced genealogists it's a very good idea to verify as much as possible the information one finds by trying whenever possible to consult original documents (which does **not** include what Gustave Anjou produced). Even more important, new family

genealogists also should not take at face value the “family trees” they find posted online either.

I found the preceding information on Gustave Anjou interesting and a good reminder that I—and other researchers—must always be careful about what is found online and in genealogy libraries and not take everything at face value. We're all human and we all make mistakes, which is understandable. It's not the unintentional, inadvertent mistakes we make that one should worry about but the intentional garbage created by crooks like Gustave Anjou who are solely interested in making money off people and unconcerned about the damage they do. It's difficult enough to find good, accurate information on one's ancestors without having some unscrupulous person making it worse with faked information. And one last thing to note" Anjou wasn't the only one producing specious genealogies; there were at least six others² though they, fortunately, weren't quite as prolific as Anjou. Anjou is only the better known.

I've been fortunate so far in that the family lines which relate to me and which I've been tracing aren't among the Anjou fakes. At least according to the list of known fraudulent lines. Also, what information I've found online about the lines with which I'm concerned appears to have been provided by people who strove for accuracy and tried to provide solid supporting evidence whenever they could. (Actual and legitimate marriage records, wills, property tax records, land transactions and Bible records in particular in addition to census records.) Even so, I approach it all with caution and care.

1. So far, some 305 genealogies have been found suspect and experts estimate that maybe as many as 2,000 lines have been tainted by Anjou's "genealogy".

2. The others are: Charles H. Browning, Orra E. Monnette, Frederick A. Viris, C. A. Hoppin, Horatio Gates Somerby, and John S. Wurts. I've seen nothing to indicate how many fake genealogies those people made but it does cause me to wonder.

But do you really think the wheels should go in **that** direction? Isn't it a bit—unnatural?

And that's enough of that. Now to something a little bit different.

Here's something that might be of slightly more interest to you readers and only peripherally (if at all) involves genealogy. It also demonstrates the sometimes unexpected results when doing an online search of one's surname. I discovered that there is, in England, a family business known as Windsor Castle Brewery which features—Sadler Ales.

The following information comes from the brewery's web site:

"The award winning Windsor Castle Brewery is situated in the heart of England's famous and mighty industrial 'Black Country'. First opened in 1900 by Thomas Alexander Sadler, the brewery supplied its twelve tied public houses run by the Sadler family, the most famous being the Windsor Castle Inn, Oldbury.

The popularity of the Sadler 'incomparable ale' was such that it led to the brewery supplying numerous public houses throughout the Black Country. The Brewery was always very much a local, family based affair as it is today, gaining a strong following and many loyal Sadler's drinkers throughout the Black Country.

Though brewing stopped in 1927, Thomas Alexander's son, John Caleb Nathaniel (known as Jack), was brought up in the Brew house, he passed on both his passion and knowledge of brewing to his son and grandson John and Chris.

The Brewery was historically re-opened by the Sadler Family during the winter of 2004, 77 years after Thomas Sadler brewed the last pint in 1927.

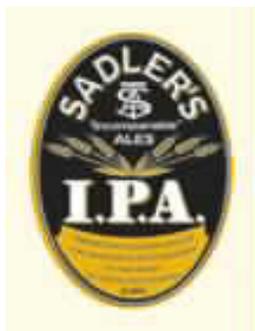
Now situated in Lye, near Stourbridge, the Brewery has once again become a thriving family run microbrewery, supplying public houses with Sadler's award winning ale throughout the Black Country and across the country. The Brewery now produces a selection of full time ales and a series of distinctive specials.

The Windsor Castle Inn, in its new location in Lye adjacent to the Brewery is now open, creating the ideal place to enjoy the perfect pint of Sadler's 'incomparable ale'."

I was already aware of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, of course, but never gave that organization much thought in spite of its world-wide reputation. And there is also a company in England, Sadler's, that makes fine quality teapots. I have a teapot with the company's name stamped on it and which I found in a store in Michigan. But the discovery of a brewery that makes a product with my last name

produces a curious sensation. I've long wished I could tour England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland if it ever became at all possible to do so. The discovery of this brewery makes that wish even stronger. If my wife and I were fortunate enough ever to get to England, I know one of the places we'd visit in particular. And, you know, I'm getting thirsty just thinking about it. Now if only there was a restaurant in that vicinity with the name Sadler that also dispensed ale I'd have a good place to stop for a bite to eat and a pint.

As you can see from the following illustrations, the brewery produces some interesting beverages.



So . . . Is anybody else getting thirsty?

Oh—and by the way: As far as I know, I'm not related to ex-Green Beret/singer/songwriter Barry Sadler, the Sadlers who drive race cars, or the actor William Sadler.

Just as I was finish up this issue a comment my wife made reminded me—yet again—just how quickly time passes. Toward the end of March an event will take place that's of importance to only a few people and those within our family. On March 24th our oldest grandchild (grandson Robby) will turn 15. 15! It's hard to believe that that small bundle who was our first grandchild is a decade and a half old. I can still recall holding and talking to the little guy who couldn't possibly have understood a word I was saying but who filled me—and probably his grandmother even more—with such pride, love, and, yes, joy.

15 years. It seems incredible that so many years have passed—it doesn't seem that long. But now, here he is, becoming much closer to being an adult. He's no longer that small, cuddly little person but a fine, growing boy. And I do mean growing boy. Much to his mother's and grandmother's consternation he had gotten taller than they (And, I think, having a hard time concealing his glee over that but in a somewhat loving way.) He's pretty close to my height, or at least was when we saw him in late February; at the rate kids grow at his age he may be as tall as me or a bit more when we see him on his birthday. Of course I have two sons who are both taller than I and so our grandson's height won't bother me much. (Well I may be somewhat bemused about it but that's life.) I just wonder what his dad will feel like when when he has to look up to his son when talking to him. I hope his dad can cope with it all right.

All in all, Robby's a good ~~kid~~ teenager whose been through a lot in his life and he's a pretty smart ~~kid~~ teenager when you get right down to it. I very much hope I can be around another fifteen years at the least, to see how well he turns out as an adult.

Well that does it for this issue—such as it is. See you again soon—if all goes well. And I hope to hear from more of you as well. Until then—

Full thrusters!

