

REVENANT #5

Revenant #5, March 2001 produced for SFPA mailing #220 by Sheila Strickland
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March is here, the trees are leafing out, the azaleas are blooming, the pollen is everywhere. I don't know if this sore throat is from the pollen allergies or the after effects of the virus I just went through. But here's another issue, short as it is.

My apologies, first up, for missing last mailing. I had no good reason for missing, just couldn't get it together in time. For a week or so, I was dithering back and forth, trying to decide whether to send in a page or so of excusing myself or to skip the mailing and do a proper job this time. Procrastination won out and the deadline came and went. I hope it was just coincidence that I came down with the flu about the time the mailing went out! It didn't last long, but for the first day, all I wanted to do was sleep, progressing to lying on the couch the second day watching TV in a fog.

December was a fun month. Work was busy, busy as usual, but I had two days holiday at Christmas and two more at New Year's. Christmas Day I spent in New Orleans with my brother and his family. With most of my sister-in-law Carla's family, plus assorted friends and neighbors there was a house full of people. Instead of traditional turkey and fixings, Bill made a chicken, andouille sausage, and mushroom gumbo based on a recipe from Commander's Palace he got from the newspaper. It was wonderful. Carla made a couple of cakes and a chocolate pie. Someone brought a smoked, sliced salmon; others brought "pick-up" food and it was all excellent. I brought some gumbo home and had it for lunch for the next two days.

My favorite Christmas gift was one I got that day---the new CD from The New Leviathan Oriental Foxtrot Orchestra. I discovered last summer that Carla has been playing with them and she's on this CD. If you want to rush right out and buy it, the title is "Favorites" and it's a collection of (surprise!) their and their audience's favorites. Carla is in the back cover photo at the top right.

Continuing in the holiday theme; I pretty much passed up Mardi Gras this year. Baton Rouge has only a few parades and I missed them all. There was one in Baker, for I think the first time, but it was on a Saturday I had to work. The Saturday before Mardi Gras, when I had planned to go to one in downtown Baton Rouge, I woke up feeling ill and not inclined to cope with the crowds. It had been a hectic week at work; so I went back to bed and tried to catch up on sleep. I didn't try to go anywhere on Mardi Gras itself, even though I had the day off; but hung around the house working on this and watched a little of the coverage on the Travel Channel. It was interesting to read the news accounts of the problems with Mardi Gras celebrations elsewhere---Seattle and several other cities. Apparently, some people in those places thought Mardi Gras translated as, "get drunk and smash windows and loot."

Next big event is Jazz Fest in New Orleans. I'll go part of the first weekend (the second weekend will be DeepSouth Con). In the past, I've gone only one day, but with the line-up for the first Sunday, I want to go back. I have to work that first Saturday, or I'd likely go all three days. Jazz Fest is always a lot of fun; with lots of music for all tastes plus the arts and crafts for sale are all good stuff.

Speaking of DeepSouthCon, I am planning to attend and hope to see many of you there. I have a membership, but haven't heard directly from the con at all. I have hotel info somewhere (I think), so I suppose I'd better go ahead and get a room.

I'm not positive about attending WorldCon this year. I have a membership, but have been wincing at the hotel prices. I'm planning for a Toronto trip this summer to visit my sister, and can't really afford two flights in one year. On the other hand, I'm not planning attending Con Jose next year, and there are some friends I only get to see at WorldCons. So, maybe I'll make it to Philly.

A Movie Seen, A Movie Anticipated

Guy mentioned this one last time; but I want to add my recommendation for "O, Brother, Where Art Thou". Wonderful movie, marvelous music. I'll be getting the CD so I can hear those songs again. The write-up in the local paper gave me my first reason for going to see it when they profiled Chris Thomas King (played the guitarist Tommy Johnson), who is the son of local Blues musician Tabby Thomas. The movie review mentioned the old-timey music, which was another attraction for me. When I realized the producers had also done "Raising Arizona", I was eager to see it. I went early in its run here and sat in a packed movie theater and loved it. Several reviewers mentioned the "Odyssey" allusions, but a few days later, I realized there were also a lot of water motifs. A group baptism in the river, which led to the inspiration for the "Soggy Bottom Boys", the sirens in the stream, the lake at the end. Wet, wet, wet! I was disappointed the movie received so little attention from the Oscars. Is there a category for next unoriginal musical score? If there isn't, I'll award them one myself!

A extra attraction at the theater was the trailer for "Lord of the Rings". I wasn't getting excited about the movie until now. It's hard to judge a movie from its trailer, but boy, does it *look* good. One brief scene showed the company coming over a hill, and I could pick out who was who among Legolas, Aragorn, and Boromir. They looked right. Since seeing the trailer, I found Ian McKellen's web site with comments by him on the filming. Looks interesting; I'll have to go back and read it some more. The first movie is due out in December of this year, the second in December 2002, the third in December 2003. It just hit me to wonder what type of merchandising will be out along with it. New printing of the trilogy for sure, but what else? Action figures? Happy Meal tie-ins? Shudder. Maybe the Harry Potter movie (which I'm also eager to see) to sew up that market enough that the Tolkien tie-ins will be reasonably apt and non-trashy.

I first read *Lord of the Rings* when I got the trilogy for my 14th birthday. That was good timing; I had been reading SF and fantasy for a couple years; but this was the best one I had read up until then. I still like it; still think it's one of the best fantasy books around.

Mailing comments:

The Southerner: Rule #4 , eh? Okaay..cue music. And...

“God save our gracious king/Long live our noble king/God save the king.

God send him glorious/Happy and glorious/Long to reign over us/

God save the king!” (end music)

Now my I keep my head oh, most noble sovereign? (Just be grateful this is in print and not audio as well.)

First Zine in the OEsShip: Interesting bit about the Poe ciphers. It's ironic that a cipher so hard to break should turn out to be so banal.

The New Port News: What a great cover! Is the book anywhere near as good?

Ct Dengrove: My PC also occasionally refuses to shut down---I've never asked any computer-savvy person why this is. Unlike yours, mine never finds anything wrong.

Maybe mine is not as skilled a mouser as yours!

Variation on a Theme: ct Randy Cleary: I wanted to get back into donating blood and I had a really good chance a while back when the blood van was at my church. I was dismayed to be told that any internal cancer disqualifies one for 10 years! That means another 6 1/2 years at least until I can give. I understand the thinking behind the ban; I just wish it wasn't so long.

Ct to Toni on Kage Baker. I'm surprised you had trouble finding her books. My library system has all of them and the new one on order; and I've seen it in the bookstores. It's spelled “Iden” rather than “Eden”, though, is that the problem? ✓

Rear-Ender '00: Happy to hear 2000 was such a good year for you all in all. And you've got some good times to look forward to this year.

Challenger: Thanks for running this through the mailing. I was working on a Loc, but just to reiterate, I loved reading about the launch. One of these years, I'll see one myself.

Technical Toys: 3-D. A wrist camera is very cool indeed, but do you have the pen communicator to call U.N.C.L.E. headquarters? I tried to look at the 3-D pics, but my eyes went out before the pics went 3-D

Peter, Pan & Merry: You seem to have done a good job of sight-seeing around New Orleans in a few days. I've never been to several of those places, myself, as close as I live

to the city. The sight-seeing I've done in New Orleans has mostly been with out-of-town friends---it's the old cliché that locals never bother to see the tourist attractions. Of course, I'm not really a local, but I've been to the city often enough that I have a blasé attitude about the place.

Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette: Ct me about Jews with bagpipes and kilts: Well, why not? Bagpipes are certainly ancient enough that any group should be able to claim them as part of their heritage. And yes, "The Martians and the Coys" by Brown is in *Science Fiction Carnival*.

Spiritus Mundi: Good luck on the house-hunting. I look forward to reading **The Book of Years**. It'll be nice to know some of the history of this apa.

Avatar Press: Sympathies on the flu. From reading the mailing, it looks like several of us got it. So, how did you like Mardi Gras? Did you go to New Orleans or elsewhere?

Offline Reader: Another sick person. Now I'm starting to feel rightfully guilty about missing last time.

Oblio: And yet another sick person. I must have had that same variety you did. I didn't have fever and wasn't dreadfully ill, but had the same headache and body aches you described. Annoying, too, because I had a flu shot. It was probably another strain that bit me, because the shot was early enough to have been effective.

Over 100 pounds lost? Congratulations! Quite an achievement. I am impressed. You need to run a "before" and "after" photo of yourself so we can appreciate your accomplishment.

Thanks for the Dave Barry reprint. Our local paper runs his column once in a while, not nearly often enough for me to have something to read other than the usual right-wingers.

Trivial Pleasures: Thanks for the recommendation of *The Grand Ellipse*. I checked it out of my library and haven't read it yet, but look forward to doing so. I'm at one of those points where I have enough books I want to read to keep me set up for several weeks of nonstop reading; and too much else to do right now to be able to spend much time on them.

Ct me: On leaving the Southern Baptists: A few weeks ago on Weekend Edition, they ran a story about the changes going on in the Southern Baptist Convention, and about how some churches are disaffiliating with the Convention. As the interviewees were describing why they felt alienated from the new make-up of the convention, I was nodding, saying, "Yep, yep, me too." Unfortunately, my church was even more conservative than the Convention, so I felt I had to leave both.

I did see the *Sports Illustrated* issue with the 3-D photos---we get it at my library; and they were fun to look at. I'm actually the "periodical person" at the library, so I always see all the magazines when they come in.

Oh, goodie, another Dave Barry column.

More Travel Tales: On the “What If We Acted Like We Wanted New Fans” panel. At Chicon, the fan who didn’t want to know about “the good old days” seemed to be of the opinion that she didn’t want to know and didn’t care what or how they did it back then; she and her friends wanted to do it their way and no overseeing by old time fans.

Your shuttle watching experience may have been less than perfect, but at least you were there. That’s something I’ve not managed to do; so maybe one day.

“YNGVI IS A LOUSE”: I think the Mel Gibson dance scene was a tribute to an Astaire movie. I’ve seen it and I seem to recall Fred Astaire as the dancer.

The Terry Jeeves piece was wonderful. More! More!

Ct Sheryl Birkhead’s letter that SFPA couldn’t be stopped by a nuclear holocaust: did you ever read “A Way of Life”, by Robert Bloch? First published in 1956, it’s an after the blow up story, in which the two big political parties are the FAPA and the NFFF. Faans organized things because they had the contacts all over. I read it when I was first starting to read SF, and most of it was pure gibberish---I didn’t know anything about fandom! It’s still a fun story, especially now that I recognize the references.

Guilty Pleasures: I haven’t read *Pirate’s Price* yet, but I should have it soon. The first time I looked for it, it wasn’t on the web site; and I’m only now getting back to it. Congratulations on publication; and I hope you get a lot of good feedback from it. The excerpt on the site I read was enough to assure me I’ll enjoy it.

And congratulations to Micah on his Bar Mitzvah! He had a demanding tutor and still did well. Good job.

Ct to L. Copeland: Sorry to hear you’ll miss your Toronto trip. That’s a neat city and I’ve enjoyed my trips up there. I’m planning to go up in July to visit my sister; so maybe I’ll inflict a travel report on the group.

Crouching Tiger: Sympathies on the break-in. My parents house was burglarized years ago when I was in college. I was home on Christmas break, so I was there when we returned to find the door open, and stuff gone. I remember how outraged I felt that someone would break in your house and go through your things. That clod of a detective you had didn’t help matters, I’m sure.

If you’re going to hid jewelry in a fake book, make it something no one would want to look at. “Proceedings of the AMA regional meeting, Winter 1981”, for instance, might be sufficiently boring to be avoided.

Tennessee Trash: Sounds like you had a thoroughly nice family Christmas. I’m with you: I hate shopping for Christmas too early, but then I don’t like the crowds either. Some years, I’ve avoided the crush by going to stores that don’t sell a lot of Christmassy stuff; most years, I just endure the crowds.

What a wonderful New Year Eve’s party you had! And good news on the Concave front, I see.

I like the “headlight”. Have you considered entering it in an art show? At least as a display piece; I imagine people would get a kick out of it.

Home with the Armadillo: So, did you feel the great quake there in Bellevue? From the looks of the news reports, it could have been a lot worse; glad to see it wasn't.

Sympathies on your and JJ's bouts with the flu; it seems like a lot of us had one variety or another this winter. I don't usually catch the flu bugs going around, but I managed to this year.

Loved the Arlo and Janis cartoon. If my cats aren't sleeping on a bed, they're sitting on the porch watching for birds.

Thanks for the update on the monolith story. I heard a little about it when it first showed up, but hadn't heard who was responsible. Will they find another place for it once March comes?

Ct Gary Brown: Guy and I may not be “southernmost”, but we are in essentially snow free zones, too! The local weather was predicting the possibility of snow for New Year's Eve around here; and some people said they saw a few flakes; but other than that, it's been years since I saw any snow here. Which is just fine by me; I don't like cold weather. A few years ago, I was in Ottawa at Christmas. They had enough snow for me to realize I don't want to live where it snows a lot. The snow was interesting as a novelty, but it's not something I would want to deal with all winter.

Fantasy and Reality: Nice cover, neat quotes. I'll have to look for *A Man on the Moon*; sounds interesting.

I was amused by the annoying paper clip on page 19. I don't use Word very often, but it is on the computers at work. On the rare occasion I have to type up something, I change it to the cat; that way its superior attitude is a little more in character!

Ct me: “I can loan you a teenager”. Ah, no thanks. I'm sure she hasn't finished instructing you how to drive! I deal with my sister's advice by letting her drive; she likes to and I don't. Peace all around.

And in closing

I apologize for not getting to everyone this mailing. I was working along; late as usual, but would have had time to finish when I came down with a stomach virus. It's gone now, but the lost days mean I have to finish this up and get it off. So, a blanket RAEBNC to all those I skipped, and I'll hope to stay well for next time so as to do a better and more complete job.

See you at DeepSouthCon!