

APRIL 1999

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#### Freedom of the press:

Whoever owns the press owns the freedom.

---Arthur Lane Terego

#### Freedom of speech:

Everyone can speak; only the wealthy can make themselves heard.

---Arthur Lane Terego



#### News Diary

Here's something ominous which speaks to a future we don't want but may get:

Under the heading **Peace activists pan war games** and this bulleted sub-heading: ■ **Anti-war organizations criticize the mayor of Oakland, Calif., for supporting a Marine mock invasion to test urban warfare preparedness**, the 2-28-99 *The Oregonian* printed a *San Francisco Examiner* story by Robert Selna. Excerpts follow.

The Marine operation, Called "Urban Warrior," is scheduled to take place March 15-18 and will put 700 Marines in the Oakland area at any given time. Military officials said the exercises would test the Marines' ability to handle a 21st century coastal urban conflict, natural disaster or large-scale humanitarian effort.'

'Stacey Wells [Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown's spokeswoman] said that Brown saw no conflict between his past anti-war sentiments and his current support for the military exercises.'

'The Navy will participate in the exercises, which will allow troops to practice a "three block war," including an armed conflict, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.'

'The main "invasion" will begin March 15, when 400 Marine will launch in amphibious landing craft and helicopters from two carriers and other ships anchored near Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay. The troops will perform a landing in Alameda and then be escorted by the Oakland police to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, officials said.'

'According to Lt. Col. Gary Schenkel, the leader of the operation, most of the combat exercises will take place in and around the hospital, and it will include Marines firing blanks from M-16 rifles.'

**Geis says:** They'll never let the words 'riots' or 'rebellion' appear in the media in relation to these "urban warfare" stories.

As for that phony 'freedom-loving' peacenik, Mayor Jerry Brown, former 2-term governor of California; he knows what's coming and he wants the feds to keep him and his fellow Liberal statists in power come the Bad Times. He'll cooperate, all right.

I am reminded of a story which recently appeared in a Texas newspaper about an 'exercise' in a small town in that state in which the U.S. army troops scared the shit out of local oldsters and others who hadn't been warned. Apparently some real bullets were fired.

This current "preparedness" for emergencies which require federal armed forces to invade and pacify and 'keep the peace' in cities and suburbs suggests a Time of Troubles not too far ahead. And that very important people know what's coming and are preparing for the worst.

Perhaps Y2K will really be quick hell and force a dictatorship of sorts, or perhaps Y2K will disrupt foreign trade and world money flows to an extent that in six-month consequence the United States will be forced into an increasingly swift, calamitous crash as the world debt structure shatters and a liquidity collapse and mass unemployment are unavoidable.

Or perhaps a series of "terrorist" bio-chem attacks on U.S. cities is expected. Or both?

I've an idea we'll see something happen this year as the 'early birds' try to protect their money and as governments react to protect their power and security.

■ And here's another "Urban Warrior" story from the 3-14-99 *The Oregonian*: an Associated Press story by Martha Mendoza which emphasizes the 'rescue' of a city. The accompanying photo shows four men, dutifully using a traffic

crosswalk, dressed in sealed white suits with breathing masks on, carrying air tanks in back packs and rescue equipment in carrying cases.

The first two paragraphs read:

'MONTEREY, Calif. --- Hundreds of Marines practiced rescuing a city threatened by chemical terrorism Saturday outside the view of dozens of protesters who hoped to break up the war game.'

'The controversial military exercise, known as Urban Warrior, was launched without the beachfront invasion originally planned.'

The seventh paragraph reveals:

'Protesters said they hoped to disrupt the military war game, the largest of more than two dozen Urban Warrior exercises held around the country in recent years.'

**Geis comment:** The story further notes that the 250 Marines originally planned to land at the beach and drive nearly 50 sea-transported and debarked Humvees, 5-ton trucks and light-armored vehicles to training sites.

But these exercises, performed at government-owned sites [the Naval Postgraduate School near downtown and the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey] could have been done on military bases!

Clearly the intent is to acclimatize the populations of American cities to the idea of rescue invasions of federal armed forces in case of bio-chem attacks, armed uprisings, or severe urban unrest.

And of course in those declared-martial-law circumstances the by-sea invasions and landings would not be cancelled because of environmental concerns.



### A Caustic Harangue:

## BANK\$

Recently my local Big Bank branch (where I had a checking account which received my Direct Deposit Social Security payment each month) informed me that my account would be charged a \$12.00 per month 'maintenance fee' unless it maintained a \$10,000 balance.

[This new charge was instituted soon after this Big Oregon Bank was

bought by a Big Midwestern Bank to create a top-10 Big American Bank. I divined the new charges were to help pay for the multi-billion \$ purchase.]

Aghast and infuriated at this blatant rip-off, I went to my local branch and asked the 'Financial Representative' to put my account into a Senior Account (which I remembered the bank had been offering) which charged no fees and yielded no interest and required no minimum balance...so that I could avoid that outrageous \$12. per month fee.

Because, since the bank was paying less than 2% interest on the money in my account, in effect the \$12.00 per month fee was creating a negative interest account---I was paying them to use my \$800-\$1,000 account as backing for loans on which they make up to 18% interest!

He was very nice, agreed with me, and did indeed create a new account for me.

BUT as I soon learned by mail, this new account still was subject to the \$12. fee charge and was accompanied with a huge leatherette-covered portfolio of printed checks which cost \$58. In my unsuspecting state I had assumed when I said I wanted the "end stub" checks as usual which were usually free with new accounts, that I would get the simple low-end 25-per-pad checks I showed him.

Enraged, I returned to the bank where this 'Representative' had assured me he would be every day, and found him 'away'. The young male bank receptionist & low rank deskman who 'served' me did not know when he would return and could not or would not help me with my problem (he played with his computer to no avail), and pretended astonishing ignorance of the bank's checking account offerings, especially whether or not there actually was a Senior no-fee, no-interest, no-minimum account available.

When I asked (now very suspicious) if the absent 'Financial Representative' made a commission on new accounts, the young man said evasively, "Not directly."

I concluded I'd been brazenly played for a chump. And I concluded that the new Big Bank had instituted a deliberate policy of driving away as many Seniors and low-income checking account customers as possible, because the profit margin is too low, and to save a salary or two from the window teller staff. Now I see the bank prefers its account holders to use the teller machines outside whenever possible, and to accrue the use-fees those machines garner.



And now I realize why the Big Bank has recently required Safety Deposit Box holders to go to a teller for service, rather than a desk person whose job was solely the bank vault boxes, as formerly: to save a salary or two. Forcing a customer into a long line to get to a teller in order to get into his box is arrogant and conemptuous. But they don't care anymore if the low-enders come to hate their guts.

I complied with their wishes, of course. I hid myself to the three-blocks-away branch of Bank of America and was welcomed with open arms and signed up for a Senior account with the features I wanted. My Social Security is now going to the BofA. The manager of the Bank of America branch told me that they'd had a lot of people from the Big Bank come to them and start new accounts.

It will be with a large degree of satisfaction and malicious glee when I eventually read of the Big Bank's discovery of the value of "customer service" and small account holders. But it will be too late. Ruin is the reward for Hubris and excess Greed.

Are other greedy banks across the country going this 'maintenance fee' route to drive away bothersome Senior and low-income accounts? I expect so. The policy is probably reaping great praise in bank trade magazines for its 'profit enhancement' performance.



#### **SFWA ONLINE UPDATE No. 40**

An electronic publication of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America

#### **SFWA To Honor Hal Clement as Grand Master**

February 22nd, 1999---Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) announced today that Harry Clement Stubbs, who writes under the name Hal Clement, will be named Grand Master at the Nebula Awards banquet this May 1st in Pittsburgh.

The highly-coveted Grand Master award represents the pinnacle of peer recognition in the genres of science fiction and fantasy. It is awarded by SFWA in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy writing.

Hal Clement published his first story, "Proof," in 1946, in *Astounding Science Fiction*, then the premier magazine of the field.

His best-known novel, *Mission of Gravity*, is one of the seminal works of "hard"---scientifically rigorous---science fiction; it deals with a mission to recover a vital component from a space probe that has crashed on Mesklin, a fast-rotating, massive planet where the effective gravity varies from three times that of Earth's at the equator to 700gs at the poles. It typifies Clement's imaginative creation of scientifically plausible but truly weird worlds, a recurring theme of his work. A clean, spare writer with an ability to dramatize complex scientific ideas in a compelling way, Clement invariably leaves the reader with the sense that the universe is a fascinating and wonderful place---and the laws that govern its behavior are equally fascinating and wonderful.

Consequently, his work has influenced and inspired a whole generation of scientists and engineers as well as a whole generation of writers.

Harry Stubbs, born in 1922, taught high school science for many years; in addition to his science fiction, he writes science articles under his proper name, and paints astronomical scenes under the name George Richard. He is a resident of Milton, Massachusetts.

The Grand Master award will be presented to Mr. Stubbs at this year's Nebula Awards Ceremony (to be held May 1st in Pittsburgh). At the same ceremony, SFWA will present Nebula Awards for the best science fiction or fantasy novel, novella, novette, and short story of the year; the winners are selected by vote of the active writer members of the organization.

Previous Grand Masters include Robert A. Heinlein (1974), Jack Williamson (1975), Clifford D. Simak (1976), L. Sprague de Camp (1978), Fritz Leiber (1981), Andre Norton (1983), Arthur C. Clarke (1985), Isaac Asimov (1986), Alfred Bester (1987), Ray Bradbury (1988), Lester del Rey (1990), Frederik Pohl (1992), Damon Knight (1994), A. E. van Vogt (1995), Jack Vance (1996), and Poul Anderson (1997).

=====



AGING

# **LUCIFER'S LEXICON**

BY L.A. ROLLINS

Armageddon Theology, n. This is the way the world ends, not with a whimper, but with a big bang.

Bowel Movement, n. The only kind of Movement there is.

Equality, n. The enemy of quality.

Fundamentalist, n. One who knows how to read, but not how to think.

Gratitude, n. The virtue of kissing the ass that feeds you.

Libertarians, n. pl. The machine-heads of freedom.

Smart Bomb, n. A weapon with an I.Q. higher than that of the patriots who applaud its use.



#### **News Diary**

The handwriting may be burning on the wall for storytellers:

A *Boston Globe* story which appeared in *The Oregonian* of 3-11-99 sayeth:

The Supreme Court this week refused to stop a lawsuit charging that the 1994 film "Natural Born Killers" incited a Louisiana couple to shoot and seriously injure a woman.

The lawsuit, brought by the shooting victim's family [for damages as high as \$5 or \$6 million] accuses director Oliver Stone, Time Warner Entertainment Co., and others of intentionally inspiring a real life crime spree that mimicked the plot of the film, in which a couple played by Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis embarked on a series of murders.

Without comment or dissent, the court cleared the way for the case to proceed by letting stand a Louisiana appeals court ruling that the film was not subject to free-speech protection because it allegedly incited "imminent lawless activity."

Geis Comment: Proving the defendants intentionally inspired an imitative

crime spree will be impossible to prove, but convicting the film (or story) of 'inciting imminent lawless activity' may be doable up to the Supreme Court.

It reminds me of the "attractive nuisance" ordinances sometimes found in local codes: an insufficiently fenced and obstructed private swimming pool into which local children might fall and drown could subject its owners to fines and/or prison.

If this 'inciteful' film/story is found to be insufficiently "fenced" to prevent easily influenced kids and adults from copy-catting, then every film, program, story, poem, opinion will have to be preceded by a Warning Label a la cigarettes.

Would the Supreme Court allow that? Maybe. Warning labels are the current rage for social activists, if they can't exile from society the offending product or activity. "Do not try this at home" and "Adults Only" and 'Child Proof' bottle tops come to mind.

It comes down to the basic core of ruling belief about people today: Are we a nation of idiots and incompetents who are clay easily molded, seduced and impelled by ads, stories, opinions, news, unpleasant experiences, childhood traumas, etc ... or are we mostly controlled by our genes, self-directed, self-responsible, generally competent and able to run our lives without being told what to do and what to avoid by a nanny government?

It'll be interesting to see how far this lawsuit goes.

As a precaution I will add a Warning to any fiction I publish (and even to this Letter, come to think) to help protect me from possible similar future lawsuits [even though I have very shallow pockets] or government prosecutions.

Something like:

**WARNING !** This publication may contain words and word-inspired images which may influence your thinking and/or behavior in harmful or anti-social ways...or in helpful and pro-social ways. It all depends on your genes, your environment, your childhood, your emotional maturity, your education and your intelligence. You are advised to ask your local government Liberal or neighborhood social worker for guidance. They know best.

**Read further at your own risk.**

But--are you even capable of making that risk decision? Do you have the social right to think for yourself?

Alas all thinking!



#### News Diary

### THE FLAMING SWORD WITH TWO EDGES

The conservative *Christian Action Network* has come forward in true idiotthink to attempt to use the government [FCC] and film & TV associations to protect TV viewers from HC [Homosexual Content] in comedies, documentaries, long dramas...

Alarmed by the appearance of gay characters and their sympathetic treatment, the CAN are intent on using the Liberal 'protect society' scam again (after shaming the industry into the V-S-D-L-F ratings for TV and the V-S-N-L-R [and variations] in films-on-TV & Cable) to get their way.

But the secular Politically Correct crowd may strike back by adding another 'warning' category---CC for Christian Content. Or maybe RC for Religious Content.

Jesus Christ, what's the world coming to?

By the way, when those 'warning' ratings come on when a movie on HBO or Showtime or Cinemax is about to begin, when we see V for Violence, S for sexual content, N for nudity, and L for naughty language, we say "Ah, all the good stuff!!" That's why we pay for the premium channels, after all!

Those ratings allow us (and millions of others) to avoid the bland, 'nice' family movies.

#### News Diary

### KOSOVO: Duh!

3-25-99 President Clinton seems to be following an internationalist "impose peace at any cost" agenda in his decision to try to bomb Yugoslavia into signing a cease-fire/peace agreement with the 'Ethnic Albanian' rebels in the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo.

And because Clinton has lied and temporized so much in the past that he now must put up or shut up.

[What is an 'Ethnic Albanian' by the way? As near as I can tell from the fringe media (the major media are very reluctant to explain it and don't normally indulge in such deliberate evasion and obscurantism) an Ethnic Albanian is a muslim.]

Clinton's excuse for the bombing

campaign is that he must degrade Yugoslavia's military power and thus slow or stop its ability to wipe out the "Ethnic Albanian" (muslim) rebels who want to make Kosovo an independent state (and probably eventually a part of Albania) and to slow or stop the evil Serbs, the ruling 'ethnics' [Christians] of Yugoslavia from the process of 'ethnic cleansing': chasing out hundreds of thousands of muslims from Kosovo.

Kosovo has a long history as 'sacred territory' of the Christian Serbs who lost a major battle there to the muslim Turks in the middle ages; thus this 'war' today has deep roots tracing back to the Crusades and Afterward.

And this current struggle is as much a religious war as a turf war.

[One more fact not realized by 99.99% of Americans: Kosovo measures about one hundred miles by 100 miles! The county you live in may be larger! Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, has a population of about 50,000 people.]

And Clinton thinks he can bully the Yugoslavian/Serb leader, Milosevic, into stopping this rooting-out-the-rebels process. [Milosevic and the Serbs are getting the full demonization treatment by the U.S. government and the media, of course.]

The muslims of Kosovo make up 90% of the population of Kosovo and have recently done a bit of their own 'ethnic cleansing' of the remaining Christian Serbs.

Boy, it gits complicated.

But, militarily, now, the stark reality is that while America in clever NATO disguise rules the skies high over Yugoslavia, the Serbs rule the ground! And as I write this after two nights of being bombed by high-flying U.S. bombers, they are not stopping or slowing their operations in Kosovo. In fact, they seem to be speeding up.

The first air war objective of our draft-dodging Commander-in-Chief Clinton is to destroy the 'formidable' missile defense capability of Yugoslavia, to allow later, safe low-level precision smart-bombing of troops, tanks, supply dumps, bivouacs, etc. Thus the use of extremely high-flying, (too-high-to-reach) B-2 and B-52 bombers using laser-guided bombs, and using air-launched and ship-launched Cruise missiles from long distances.

But (being of sound mind, unlike the Iraqis) the Serbs are not wasting missiles nor revealing to us the locations of their mobile missile batteries, smartly waiting till the Americans are forced to fly low to do more attacks and thus come



into range of the missiles. That's when the planes go down, casualties on our side mount, and Clinton starts to sweat, big time.

I suspect that the tactical low-level air attacks might not ever come, because of U.S. fear of the Yugoslav possession of Stinger-like shoulder-fired anti-plane missiles, and the bigger, menacing, mobile air defense missiles.

■ 3-27-99 After four nights and two afternoons of 'degrading' Yugoslavia's air-defense system with Cruise missiles and satellite-guided big bombs from safe distances, a NATO spokesman said today that NATO would begin its low-level air attacks on tanks, small military units and etc. I presume tomorrow or tonight.

But I'll believe it when I see it.

I suppose the NATO and U.S. military are under orders from U.S. and British politicians to "Do something!" to stop the accelerated and ruthless Yugoslavian 'Ethnic Cleansing' land campaign in Kosovo.

■ 3-28-99 An American F117A Stealth fighter-bomber crashed 20 miles from Belgrade last night. The pilot was found first by an American helicopter Rescue team. No word yet on whether the plane was shot down or crashed due to mechanical failure.

Note this plane was part of the 'stand-off' bombing Phase One campaign.

■ 3-29-99 The continuing failure by the U.S. or NATO to say what caused that F117A stealth fighter-bomber to crash suggests to me that it was in fact shot down by a Yugoslavian air-defense missile.

If it was shot down, that presents a lot of questions:

★ How could the Yugos' radar detect and lock on to the stealth, radar-proof plane?

★ Do they have new, advanced radar?

If so, that would explain why the Second Phase (low-level air attacks) of the air war is still almost entirely a missile and guided bomb assault from high and far away. The U.S. and NATO are afraid of more downed planes. And some pilots would be captured or killed in the hit and/or crash.

Large, fixed targets in Kosovo and Yugoslavia are taking repeated hits, but out in the countryside of Kosovo the Serb army and police and paramilitary are going ahead with their task of shoving the muslims (Ethnic Albanians) out of Kosovo.

Another month of this Cleansing and Kosovo will be virtually empty of muslims and the reasons for the air attacks will be non-existent. Fait accompli. All that will remain is revenge and punishment.

By the way, this Serb campaign is being called 'Genocide'. But this is not a case of mass killings of an entire population. This Genocide label is used as propaganda. Demonizing.

So far, at least, the Serbs are not being accused of bayoneting pregnant women in the belly (as were the Iraqis, and the Germans in World War I and II. It's a classic propaganda atrocity story).

I find it very interesting that Clinton and NATO keep saying they "have no intention of using ground troops in Kosovo." They refuse to say categorically that they will not ever use ground troops to invade Kosovo. Very suspicious use of weasel words.



## Social Security

It occurred to me the other day that the establishment may be following a hidden subconscious 'Fix' for the next-century Social Security Crisis of too many retirees and too few workers to support them (at their present rate of purchasing power).

The fix may be: allowing into the U.S. more and more millions of young Latino workers who smoke a lot, drink a lot and eat wrong and who thus will disproportionately not live long enough to collect U.S. Social Security benefits after having 'contributed' to the S.S. system for 30-40 years.

But even with the raping of these Latino workers, the system will still probably fall short of funds in 20-30 years and require a 'fix' of lower benefits and later and later retirement ages.

Social Security always has been a government Ponzi scheme with multi-\$Trillions of obligations in the future which could not possibly be paid.

Consider the social revolution shaping up when the stock markets crash, the economy smashes and Social Security's (and Medicare's) money problems come due in the next few years, instead of decades from now.

Will the president in 2001 be named Forbes, Buchanan, Dole---or Clinton? It all depends on the unexpected future.

## Feedback:

GEORGE LASKOWSKI 2-26-99

george\_laskowski@cc.cranbrook.edu

'In the book summary for RUN HARD, DIE FAST by Mel Odum, you mention that it has SF elements, but little to do with fantasy. I found out about this discrepancy several years ago. Since the bookstores started grouping SF and Fantasy books together on the same shelves, the distinction between them has blurred in too many readers' minds.

A student of mine said that she liked science fiction, but not the spaceship kind, just the dragon kind. I knew then the field was in trouble!

**Geis says:** Used to be sf was considered a part of fantasy. Now, in the common mind, fantasy is a part of science fiction.

HARRY WARNER, JR 2-13-99

423 Summit Av., Hagerstown, MD 21740

'At least two of the novels reviewed in *The Geis Letter* #58 (and I assume you've already guessed that it's the reason for this letter) seem to be the latest books whose plots can be traced back to the Cinderella fairy tale. I'd guess that at least 500 fantasy and science fiction novels in the past century have their ancestry in the little story written by a Frenchman whose name I can't recall at the moment.

'So far I've encountered only one anti-Cinderella fantasy novel, the story of a youth who knew he'd been born in a high stratum of society and begins efforts to win recognition and escape from his current humble circumstances, then decides to heck with it because he's reasonably happy and doesn't really care about ascending to importance.'

**Geis says:** My Big Dictionary says the earliest written version of the Cinderella tale came from 9th Century China, which speaks to its primal power and appeal. I'd imagine the anti-Cinderella novel you mention wasn't a success...because it cheats the reader of a Self-boosting Hero- (or Heroine) identification payoff.

JUANITA COULSON 3/6/99

2677W-500N, HARTFORD CITY IN 47348

'I appreciate the copy of the obituary. Only one correction: I wish he had made 75, but he only got 70 years; 75 would have put us within striking distance of 50 yrs together, but it was not to be.' ■■■

# BOOKS RECEIVED



Some reviewed, others listed and described and sometimes unfairly dealt with.



## New Releases

### NOT OF WOMAN BORN

Edited by Constance Ash

ROC Science Fiction, 1999, \$6.99, 288 pp, Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-451-45681-5.

An original anthology of 14 stories dealing with modern science's impact on our ideas of conception, birth and parenting. Stories range from the humorous to the horrific, the fascinating to the far-fetched, with our humanity surviving in the face of overwhelming technology as the common theme of each.

Authors featured on the cover are Robert Silverberg, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Patricia A. McKillip, and Walter Jon Williams.

### FALCON RISING - Twilight of the Clans VIII (BattleTech #43)

By Robert Thurston

ROC Science Fiction, 1999, 288pp, \$5.99, Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-451-45738-2.

The Clans are in turmoil. Hamstrung by their truce with the hated Inner Sphere and plagued by internal conflict, the once-mighty Clans now race against each other to rebuild their decimated ranks of warriors. One Clan--The Jade Falcons--becomes the strongest of all by violating tradition and building an army of both freeborn humans and genetically engineered trueborns. But their pride is short lived, as the forces of the Inner Sphere rise to do the unimaginable--invade Clan space!

A spin-off of the *BattleTech* role-playing game.

Very competently written.

### DARK NADIR-A Sholan Alliance Novel By Lisanne Norman

DAW Science Fiction, 1999, 576pp, \$6.99, Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-88677-829-8.

Well-crafted deep space opera. This

is the fifth novel in the series. Alien races, wars, secrets, danger, intrigue, and now Carrie and Kusak in medical cryo, in escape pods, and the sudden appearance of a massive vessel and a new, mysterious alien people whose motives for interference in the Valtegan space ambush are unknown...

### MY FAVORITE SCIENCE FICTION STORY

Edited by Martin H. Greenberg

DAW Science Fiction, 1999, \$6.99, 320pp, Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-88677-830-1.

A unique anthology of favorite influential classic sf stories (by such as Theodore Sturgeon, Gordon R. Dickson, Robert Sheckley, Lester Del Rey, Roger Zelazny) picked by some present-day top sf writers (such as---listed on the cover---Arthur C. Clarke, Anne McCaffrey, Connie Willis, Lois McMaster Bujold).

The choosers also include Haldeman, Pohl, Resnick, Norton, Foster, Anderson, Turtledove, Bear, de Camp, Silverberg, Benford, Bradley, Drake.

But note that Clarke and three women writers were chosen to be on the cover. This anthology cover is a very interesting publisher comment on the gendergraphics of present-day sf readers.

There are many stories here which are new to me, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to read them...and to read the introductions to each story by the chooser, which provide many insights.

### THE POOLS OF TWO MOONS - Book Two of The Witches of Eileanan

By Kate Forsyth

ROC Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 416 pp Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-451-45690-4.

Taking up where THE WITCHES OF EILEANAN left off, we find Meghan o' the Beasts and her young charge Isabeau, outcasts in a land where magic has been outlawed. But the pair are soon separated, and Isabeau is wounded by witchfinders, and saved by a group of samaritans.

Meghan sets out to find Isabeau's warrior-trained twin, Iseult, and a missing prince living under an ancient curse.

Separately, the two parties must make their way through a land where magic is punished by death, seeking allies to spread the news--that the Witches are returning, and the Queen and her evil must fall.

Another written-for-women, adventure/magic fantasy, though far more realistic than Xena on TV.

Forsyth uses an old English/Medieval dialect which adds charm and realism and authenticity to the tale. Very well written.

### SWORD BORN -A Novel of Tiger and Del [The Fifth Book of the Series]

By Jennifer Roberson

DAW Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 432pp, Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-88677-827-1.

It has been three years since Southron sword-dancer Tiger and Northern sword-singer Del's first fateful meeting. Now these mismatched companions have become true partners; their alliance forged by blood, magic, danger, adventure...and something more.

Exiled from both the North and the South, the two have set sail to search for Tiger's homeland. But they are ship wrecked, nearly drowned, abducted by pirates, bedeviled by magic and those who would use the pair to their own ends, the two finally do arrive at their destination.

But before their quest is over, Tiger must face a truth about himself which may prove more dangerous than any sword-dance.

Robertson has a well-turned, well-tuned narrative style---in this novel First Person---and she has now, as a battle-scarred veteran of more than a dozen volumes, used her skills and talents to be rather bold and free-wheeling in her style and techniques. I like that. She's fun to read.

### GUARDIAN OF THE BALANCE Merlin's Descendants #1

By Irene Radford

DAW Fantasy, 1999, \$23.95, 529p., Hardcover, ISBN:0-88677-826-3.

*Guardian of the Balance* begins in the time of Merlin and Arthur, when the balance of power is shifting between the new Christian faith and the magic of the old gods. Merlin, blessed with the gift of true prophesy and pledged to the ancient Druidic gods, is sworn to preserve the old values and to protect Earth and its people. Lured by the spell of the earth goddess, he forsakes his vow of celibacy for one Beltane festival, and the result is his daughter Wren, first in the line of his descendants, all of whom will be sworn to preserve the natural balance of the world.

Although Wren is gifted in the ancient magics, and her rightful place should be Avalon, she is instead thrust into the heart of the political and religious struggles of a society on the brink of chaos, forced to confront an overwhelming evil which may well destroy Merlin, Arthur, and her entire civilization.

*Disciplined and muscular and realistic* come to mind to describe this fantasy. Radford's characters must exist in a real world of ruthless humans and powerful gods, all intent on conflicting goals. A very believable, detailed fantasy world. Admirable.

### THE CHANGELING WAR - Book One of the Changeling Saga

By Peter Garrison

ACE Books, Fantasy, 1999, \$13.00, 340p., Trade paperback, ISBN:0-441-0055207.

Two worlds are about to collide. Earth's crime empire is crumbling and is beset by tech-adapted law enforcement. The influx of foreign gangs are more ruthless and possess an energy that only the Old Guard can remember.

The other world is known as the Castle, a twisting maze of interconnected dwellings and empty space. A war has been raging in the Castle longer than anyone can remember. The High Lords who rule there have squandered men, materials, and magic and are fighting among themselves.

Now, a way has been opened between



the two worlds, and an uneasy alliance has been forged between murderers and mages. But each world's rulers think of eventual conquest of the other.

This is also the tale of a sixteen-year-old Earth boy who does not yet know he is from the Castle---a Changeling, switched with a human child when an infant. He is destined to participate in a war that will determine the futures of both worlds.

**About the author:** PETER GARRISON is the pseudonym of a *New York Times* bestselling author who has written a wide variety of novels over the past ten years. He lives in Arlington, VA.

Garrison writes a smooth, engaging, fast-paced story. Multiple points-of-view. But the novel is essentially an adult Juvenile--violence but no sex and not much depth, with teen-agers the prime characters.

## THE BURNING STONE

Volume Three of *Crown of Stars*

By Kate Elliott

DAW Books Fantasy, 1999, \$23.95, 755pp, Hardcover, ISBN:0-88677-813-1.

Previous novels in this series are *King's Dragon* and *Prince of Dogs*.

Ostracized by the community because of their love, Liath and Sanglant must choose among the pathways of politics, forbidden knowledge and family. Liath is torn between her longing for Sanglant and the child they are about to have, and by the call of sorcery, which can open the way into the land of the Aoi, the Lost Ones. And even as Liath struggles with magic's seductive lure, Sanglant's Aoi mother returns to the mortal world in search of the one she abandoned as a babe.

With the fates of kingdoms shifting due to civil war and increasing encroachments by the non-human Eika and by Quman invaders, time is running out for King Henry and his people. For the moment is fast approaching when the lands of Aoi and human will once again be joined in time and space, and none can foretell who will survive---or rule---after this cataclysmic event.

I don't say this often about a writer, so take note: Kate Elliott writes with singular grace, beauty and power. She is master of the vivid, precise detail, the perfectly described action and thought.

The Jody Lee wrap-around dj painting is very fine.

## PVC PROJECTS FOR THE

**OUTDOORSMAN - Building Shelters, Camping Gear, Weapons, and More Out of Plastic Pipe**

By Tom Forbes

Paladin Press, POBox 1307, Boulder, CO 80306, 1999, \$12.00, 92p, Trade paperback, ISBN:1-58160-021-6.

All you need is a goodly supply of various sizes and lengths of PVC pipe, plus a lot of joints, elbows, caps and cement. Every project is illustrated.

Some of these uses are surprising and ingenious; all are useful and sometimes vital. For the survivalist and Emergency preparer, this is a must-have.

## Hugo Contenders

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

By Elizabeth Moon

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$22.00, 393p., Hardcover, ISBN:0-671-87747-X.

Women's sf, with two young women the main characters in a future diaspora space adventure setting as one is captured and the other struggles to rescue her... Powerful family and political factors complicate, as well as intense other-personal relationships.

Moon writes well and aims squarely at the emergent new young-woman sf reader audience.

Gary Rudder's dj painting is a masterful contrast of cold, hard body armor & weapon, and warm beautiful woman's head.

### WITH THE LIGHTNINGS

By David Drake

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$22.00, 323p., Hardcover, ISBN:0-671-87881-6.

Daniel Leary is a lieutenant in the Republic of Cinnabar Navy with no money and no prospects since he quarreled with his ruthless, politically powerful father.

Adele Mundy is a scholar with no money and no prospects since her family was massacred for conspiring against the Government of Cinnabar.

Kostroma is a wealthy planet which depends on diplomacy to stay independent in a galaxy whose two great powers, Cinnabar and the Alliance, battle for supremacy.

In a few hours, diplomacy is going to fail. Kostroma, Daniel, Adele, and the scratch crew they gather aren't much to stand in the way of a powerful invasion fleet, but just possibly they're enough.

Again a future war novel which spends a hundred pages setting the scene and detailing its characters and their relationships, while the male reader sits bored and impatient for expected, promised Drake action, blood and guts.

When the killing starts, on page 123, the novel revives, for me.

### KOMARR - A Miles Vorkosigan Adventure

By Lois McMaster Bujold

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$22.00, 314p., Hardcover, ISBN:0-6761-87877-8.

The solar mirror vital to the terraforming of the conquered planet Komarr has been shattered by a ship hurtling off course. The Emperor of Barrabar sends his newest Imperial Auditor, Lord Miles Vorkosigan, to find out why.

I must be crazy not to like these (to me) boring, overwritten, overcomplicated novels of power and intrigue, crammed full of thought and subtle facial expressions and looks and options and alternatives. I think sf and fantasy writing has gone down the elitist path of intellectualism and literariness, trying to keep some action and violence but terrified of the

dreaded 'pulp' label (but keeping the anti-sex dictates of the pulp era) and aware that violence is evil according to the canons of PC. What a box!

Dare I say sf is mostly pussy-whipped fiction, now, subverted by college literature courses and aimed too high for its natural readership?

In a world of R-ratings, video editing and scripting and twenty-second scenes, print sf has abandoned the competition and retreated, with an ever-shrinking readership and pretentious self-delusions, into deep nichedearth.

### ALTERNATE GENERALS

Edited By Harry Turtledove

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$5.99, 314p., Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-671-87886-7.

16-story anthology dedicated to substituting different famous generals and commanders in different famous battles and conflicts.

Authors are: Lillian Stewart Carl, Elizabeth Moon, Brad Linaweaver, S.M. Stirling, Lois Tilton, Jody Lynn Nye, Harry Turtledove, Esther Freisner, Bill Fawcett, William Sanders, Janet Berliner, William R. Forstchen, David Weber, John Mina, Brian M. Thomsen, R.M. Meluch.

With editorial assistance by Roland Green.

### MORE THAN HONOR

By David Weber, with David Drake and S.M. Stirling

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$5.99, 371p., Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-671-87857-3.

Three future war novelas set in David Weber's 'Honor Harrington's' universe. These are: "A Beautiful Friendship" by David Weber, "A Grand Tour," by David Drake, and "A Whiff of Grapeshot" by S.M. Stirling.

Also included is "The Universe of Honor Harrington," by David Weber, an 80-page detailing of this mankind-in-deep-space future. A major effort. Reading this makes comprehending this complicated, far-flung future history (and thereby enjoying the stories and novels) far easier.

But, gee, now we have to go to school to properly appreciate certain sf sagas? What usually is reserved to the author(s) for use in writing the stories and novels is now offered to the reader as necessary-reading reference material?

This strikes my rebellious, lazy soul as onerous, arrogant, pretentious and presumptuous.

But it works for the STAR TREK and STAR WARS and BABYLON 5 fans, so...

## IN THE COMPANY OF MIND

By Steven Piziks

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$6.99, 339p., Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-671-57776-X.

Well done multiple-personality story about the son of a billionaire who has been subjected to illegal medical experiments since childhood; imagine three people in your mind (one enraged, one compliant, one a woman!) along with a helpful artificial intelligence. Add an escape, being hunted, captured...

## STAR CHILD

By James P. Hogan

BAEN Books, Science Fiction, 1998, \$5.99, 269p., Mass Market paperback, ISBN:0-671-87878-6.

Tanya had always lived in the World. Her companion Kort had always been with her. She accepted these things, and why not? They were her world. But Tanya wondered why everything she saw beyond the window was so different from all the things inside. She also wondered why the stars never changed if her world was really moving the way her metal friend Kort said it was ... Could Kort be wrong? That would be very strange, because Kort knew everything, and he was sure they were moving--just as she was sure the stars were not. Then, one day, the World was born anew...

Hogan, who has had published dozens of novels, still has the power to instill a sense of wonder.

He sings the praises of intelligence and self-awareness wherever it exists, and of life over death, even though all lives must end and all intelligences must eventually die.

It's a secular scientific religion.

## PROPHETS FOR THE END OF TIME

By Marcos Donnelly

BAEN Books, Fantasy, 1998, \$5.99, 367p., Mass market paperback, ISBN:0-671-57775-1.

Donnelly makes mock of the Bible, God, angels, prophets, and worst of all, the end of the world!

This is humorous, satiric fantasy, if religion is fantasy in your estimation, and if you like to laugh at it.

Anyway, Donnelly writes with wit and with smart aleck sarcasm.

My problem with a satiric, mocking religious fantasy novel is that its humor and japey necessarily undermine the "reality" of the story, and so it is ruined as fiction in one way but gilded and bejeweled as a weapon against the Straight Establishment in another.

So this one will infuriate or delight, depending on you.



## Reviews



## AND THEN I SAW....

### ALICE IN WONDERLAND [1998 - TV-PG]

Mostly boring, unsatisfying version of the Lewis Carroll 'children's' fantasy, this time with some songs and malaprop shrill-voiced delivery by the Mad Hatter (Martin Short) and the Red Queen (whoever she was). Whoopi Goldberg as the Cheshire Cat was included for her name.

Some of *Through the Looking Glass* was included, too, to fill out the time period (less endless commercials).

NBC seems incapable of taking any programming chances; I note a coming presentation of the Noah's Ark story from the Bible. That should be a thrilling, suspenseful fantasy.

### THE HOWLING III [1987 TV-14]

Low-grade werewolves-exist-in-Australia movie, this time with a marsupial (infants-in-pouch) variant from the past. In two words: incredible & bad.

### THE BORROWERS [1997 - PG]

Tiny people living beneath the floorboards of an old house save their home from a greedy, dishonest realtor played by John Goodman, who is spared no indignity by the wee ones and by his blundering exterminator helper in this fantasy comedy-drama.

The marvel (and what makes this worth watching) are the film's large scale sets and photography which make the 'miniature' people really seem three inches tall.

### SPHERE [1998 - PG-13]

Dustin Hoffman, Sharon Stone and Samuel L. Jackson will not guarantee a good sf movie. This one reaches back to *The Forbidden Planet* for the idea that subconscious terrors, empowered by an alien force, can be made real and deadly.

This film is set deep undersea and wastes the concept of a huge sunken spaceship with residual electrical power; at first thought alien, then proved of human origin---from the future.

Bad formula action-suspense script wastes the big name stars and the golden alien sphere which tampers with their minds, remains inscrutable in the huge spaceship and in the end inexplicably leaves the Earth.

### THE REAL HOWARD SPITZ [1998 - TV-PG]

Kelsey Grammer is fine as a cynical, grouchy, burned-out pulp novelist. But the movie is ruined when he turns disgustingly soft and nice upon meeting a little girl and her attractive mother and successfully starts writing children's books.

### MIMIC [1997 - R]

Well made, tense, gripping story of diseased cockroaches in New York causing an epidemic. Scientists unleash a DNA-combo insect designed to wipe out the cockroaches---and three years later discover their creation has grown to human size, can mimic the human form (from a distance, in the dark) and is eating humans by the dozens...soon to be by the millions if the hive soon hatches millions of eggs and the horrors migrate out of the depths of the Old Subway System...

Formula, but it works.

### AS GOOD AS IT GETS [1997 - PG-13]

Jack Nicholson as a compulsive obsessive misanthropic romance novelist in a role that is a natural for him---and he wallows in it superbly---pursuing and helping a favorite waitress played most excellently by Helen Hunt.

This film expertly uses that ancient story dictum: Love Conquers All. It makes Nicholson's character want to 'be a better man.'

And in that process he comes to respect, like, admire and help most excellently a neighbor gay artist, portrayed marvelously by Greg Kinnear, who is nearly killed by thieves.

Nicholson and Hunt won Oscars for their work in this film, and I think Kinnear should have won Best Supporting Oscar.

### JOHN SANDFORD'S MIND PREY [1999]

Non-rated but with a Warning about Intensity. A routine escaped-psychotic-kidnaps-the-psychiatrist-(and her kids)-who-sent-him-to-mental-hospital story, with Eriq La Salle (from ER) as the over-the-edge sub-Sheriff with video game expertise who finds the psychotic kidnapper who was also a 'gamer'.

This film was written with current PC rules in mind: The psycho doesn't kill any of the kids or the woman psychiatrist (who uses a nail spike to stab the psychotic and effect last-minute escape for her and her kids), kills a police-woman off-camera, and finally shoots himself off-camera.

