

THE GEIS LETTER -----65

The Future Is Never What It's Supposed To Be!

JULY 1999

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ART CREDITS

BILL ROTSLER----- 4, 5, 6
ALEXIS GILLILAND----- 1
4030 Eighth St S., Arlington, VA 22204
TEDDY HARVIA-----2
701 Regency Dr., Hurst, TX 76054-2307

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All Post Office Mail to:
RICHARD E. GEIS
PO BOX 11408
PORTLAND OR 97211-0408

email: CompuServe: 100313,3440
INTERNET:
100313.3440@compuserve.com
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News Diary

HOW LONG...?

The "war" in Kosovo is over, the air fleets are being returned to national bases, and the only question in my mind now is---

How long before World Leader Clinton, unwilling to yield the maximum stage for very long, finds another small country to attack?

Or will it be 'domestic enemies' next time?

I would almost bet he'll be at it again before the year is out. I think he is a power-headline addict.

7-8-99 Saw a 2½-minute 'report' on NBC and CNBC about a commission appointed by congress whose just-released report is about the threat of terrorist bio-chem attack in America, and how unprepared cities and states are. [Video of men in bio-hazard suits, ambulances, hospitals, etc.] **The report recommends a special agency be set up by the president with power to stop proliferation of bio-chem weapons in the world.** Think of the national and international implications of that bit of arrogance!

This NBC feature is a propaganda piece, in my view, designed to further frighten people and to further pave the way for drastic, "necessary" unconstitutional action to protect us, until the danger is past, of course.

7-9-99 The way Clinton is going about the country visiting poverty and mouth-ing worthy causes (and making front pages and news vid), you'd think he's the one running for President, and not Gore.

Poor Al is being upstaged and shouldered aside by Clinton. Why, you might think Bill doesn't give a shit what happens to Al.

Or that Clinton's Image Building is more important.

7-10-99 Story in the news about how oral sex is now expected as a minimum on dates among middle-school kids, 12-14 year-olds. And as one girl is reported to have told her mother, "It keeps us from getting pregnant, and besides, President Clinton does it!"

Gad! I was born 60 years too soon!

THE FOUR HORSEMEN
OF HOLLYWOOD



7-11-99 Many, many financial experts in New York and elsewhere are worried about the 'Bubble' economy we are currently enjoying, in which the stock market is priced to the point that *nothing bad dare happen*, and in which "inflation" is miniscule, interest rates are low, employment is very high and the consumer is spending like crazy...

It's instructive to know that about one-third of the average American's savings is tied up in the stock markets, and that currently the American consumer (deluded by the feeling of wealth prompted by ever-rising stock prices) is spending more than he is making, going into debt in order to buy the goodies he is conditioned to have to have! That cellphone, that SUV, that new computer, and soon that new \$5,000 hdtv set.

Yet there are horrible beasts lurking just beneath the surface:

The price of oil has inched up into the \$20 per barrel range, causing havoc in the Transportation Average (as the airlines and trucking and railroads face increased costs---and lower profits.

The housing industry is faltering, with fewer sales and starts and permits each month.

The 'recovery' in Central and South America is a fraud, and Asia's recovery is questioned as more of a wish than reality by top Asian bankers.

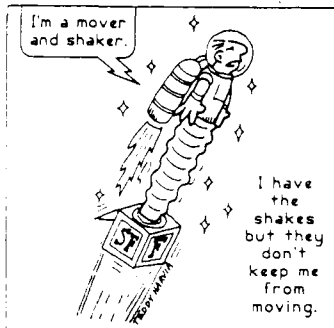
Asia's economies are hostage to the American consumer's mad spending spree; let that spending slack off and orders to Asian cheap labor factories will also slack off...

My thought is that with full employment in America, there isn't a large number of new workers available to work and spend and go into debt to continue the Bubble at ever-higher levels.

And the Great Expectations of endless automatic yearly wealth expansions will falter and die...

And the Bubble of debt piled on debt based on debt which is based on layers and layers of Great Expectations ...will collapse.

Politicians and financial gurus will talk of 'Restoring confidence' as panic screams in the night.



Update

Radar Shows 'Getaway Boat' Fleeing Flight 800 Crash

By Philip Weiss
THE NEW YORK OBSERVER
Week of July 12, 1999

The third anniversary of the crash of Trans World Airlines Flight 800 is July 17, so it's a good time to look into what even the Government reluctantly concedes is a mystery about the crash: "the 30-knot track." The 30-knot track is the radar trail of a boat that was the closest vessel to the 747 when it exploded and that then headed out to sea on a beeline from right under the burning wreckage.

"That boat is extremely suspect," said William S. Donaldson, a retired Navy commander who supports the missile theory of the plane's destruction. "He not only doesn't turn to render assistance, he runs."

"It's like the getaway car," said Graeme Sephton, an electrical engineer who is active in an Internet researchers organization that is highly critical of the Federal investigation.

"The Government doesn't think the unidentified boat is such a big deal. "It does not intrigue me," said Peter Goelz, the National Transportation Safety Board managing director.

F.B.I. spokesman Joseph Valiquette added, "In an ideal world, it would be nice to know everything, but I don't think the F.B.I. or the N.T.S.B. claims to know everything that happened in the crash."

"This is a convenient position for the F.B.I. to adopt now. The most unsettling thing about the 30-knot track is that the F.B.I. essentially suppressed knowledge of it when the crash was foremost on the public agenda. Two years ago, the F.B.I. closed its criminal investigation into the crash, and James Kallstrom, then the lead F.B.I. investigator, testified before Congress that the agency's "exhaustive" efforts had included "tracking of all air and water-borne vessels in the area at the time of the explosion followed by appropriate interviews."

Kallstrom later held a lengthy press conference saying that agents had "left no stone unturned." He went into great detail about suspicious boats. "Who is

there in the water? Who could be escaping in any direction?" he said. "We identified 371 vessels in the Long Island area and did investigation on those vessels. For the one-month period, we identified 20,000 records of vessels that entered New York Harbor and did an investigation of those vessels." The F.B.I. even seized some boats to inspect the flooring for burns characteristic of backfire from a shoulder-fired rocket.

Mr. Kallstrom's press conference was aimed at discrediting the missile theory, and it worked. In an editorial titled "Conspiracy Inoculation," The New York Times congratulated him for an "extraordinary" performance.

The F.B.I. had shared its "voluminous evidence" with "admirable thoroughness and openness."

The closing of the criminal investigation allowed the N.T.S.B. to hold hearings on the crash, one month later, where it offered hundreds of exhibits, a few of which depicted a "30-knot track" 10 miles out in the Atlantic.

Radar data collected during the last minute of the T.W.A. flight revealed the two closest objects to the plane, both between three and four miles away, as a Navy P-3 airplane and what the exhibit called simply a "30-knot target."

Radar data for the next 20 minutes showed the mystery boat heading on a beeline out to sea, on a south-south-west course, even as other boats rushed to the crash to try to help out. It was nearly 9 o'clock at night, not the usual time for an excursion.

"I looked at that and said, 'Wow, what is that guy doing leaving the scene?'" Commander Donaldson said. "And of course I assumed he was identified."

Commander Donaldson called Steve Bongardt, an F.B.I. agent and fellow Navy veteran who was active in the investigation. "It was a pilot-to-pilot exchange," Commander Donaldson said. "I said, I want you to tell me if you have a 302 [interview] form for every single boat out there. He said, 'I can't answer that question without higher authority.' I said, 'Steve, you have answered the question.'"

Commander Donaldson was then working closely with Representative James Traficant Jr., Democrat of Ohio, who was looking into the investigation for the House Aviation Subcommittee, and at the commander's prompting, Mr. Traficant sent a list of questions to the F.B.I.

"One asked if the F.B.I. has "been

able to positively identify every single aircraft and surface vessel that was in the proximity of T.W.A. Flight 800 at the time of the accident."

"It took more than three months, but in July 1998 an acting assistant director answered the Representative: No.

"Lewis Schiliro acknowledged the presence of the mystery boat, which he said was at least 25 to 30 feet long and reached speeds of 35 knots, close to 40 miles per hour. "Despite extensive efforts, the F.B.I. has been unable to identify this vessel," he said.

"The response is somewhat alarming given the F.B.I.'s assurances that it had turned over every stone, and given the fact that many eyewitnesses on Long Island said they had seen a flare like object streak up from the horizon before the explosion in the air. Yet the speeding mystery boat goes unmentioned in the mainstream press.

"I first learned about it in a scientific report on "anomalies" in the Government investigation that has been widely circulated on the Net. "I show this data to physicists and their jaws drop," said the report's author, Thomas Stalcup, a graduate student in physics at Florida State University who heads an Internet group of 40 people with a technical background, called Flight 800 Independent Researchers' Organization, or F.I.R.O.

"Mr. Sephton, a F.I.R.O. member, said, "It's really weird that there are no eyewitnesses reporting from that vessel. These are the people who are pulling out from under the flaming debris, and none of them calls the 800 number that is set up by the F.B.I."

"The N.T.S.B.'s Mr. Goetz disputes the suggestion that the boat was fleeing. "It's perfectly reasonable to assume, because they were on a direct course and the explosion didn't occur in front of them, that they didn't see it," he said. Given the boat's speed, those on board may have heard nothing over the engine noise.

"They would have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to have seen something," Mr. Sephton said.

"Commander Donaldson pointed out that the explosion was "a huge physical event" that filled the night sky behind the boat with a curtain of burning fuel. "It would be like having the sun come up at midnight right behind you," he said. "You would feel heat on the back of your neck. And you're going to feel the concussion. The explosion rattled windows on the beach 10 miles away."

"It would seem that even the F.B.I. secretly regarded the 30-knot track as suspicious. For six months, the Government conducted a \$5.5 million trawling operation of the waters surrounding the crash, using scallop boats.

"Commander Donaldson has obtained documents left by the F.B.I. on one scalloper, showing that the F.B.I. was specifically looking for shoulder-fired Stinger missile parts---notably a Stinger ejector motor---in what the F.B.I. called a "possible missile launch zone" 2.7 miles from the crash. That circle included the mystery boat.

"If it's a legitimate criminal investigation, with a possibility of 230 homicides, how do you close the investigation when you haven't identified the boat that was within missile firing range?" said Commander Donaldson, who investigated a dozen crashes in the Navy. "To me that's egregious. I don't see how you justify it."

"An aide to Representative Traficant said the F.B.I. and N.T.S.B. should have been more open about the mystery boat. Paul Marcone said, "Kallstrom should have come out and said, Here are some things we haven't been able to explain."

"Now an executive with the banking company MBNA, Mr. Kallstrom said he had no intention of misleading anyone at his press conference. "I wish I knew who it was," he said of the 30-knot track. But there are always loose ends in any investigation, and mentioning them is not helpful: "If you say you're 99.9 percent sure, people think you're opening the door, or that you're playing games."

"Representative Traficant's report concluded there was no Government cover-up. Such a conspiracy would have required hundreds of participants, Mr. Marcone reasons. He interviewed 40 or 50 investigators and they all struck him as sincere. If there had been a cover-up, he added, "Why would the F.B.I. admit to a U.S. Congressman that they couldn't identify the 30-knot track?"

"Commander Donaldson said a cover-up wouldn't require those numbers. Tasks in the Flight 800 investigation were parceled out amid an air of state secrecy, with pre-emptive suggestions from on high that the Government had found no evidence of a missile. In this climate, individual teams' reports could be honest and insufficient, because technicians were not in a position to put what they had seen together with other evidence.

"For instance, the N.T.S.B. held

public hearings on the crash, but refused to allow eyewitnesses to testify about what they'd seen.

"Meantime, the F.B.I. presented a C.I.A. animation of the plane's breakup that purported to explain what the eyewitnesses had seen, and merely infuriated them.

"It's not hard to imagine ways this investigation could have become politicized. The Atlanta Olympics were to start days after the crash. A leading terrorist was then on trial in New York. There were threats; three weeks before, an apartment complex in Saudi Arabia had been bombed, killing 19 American servicemen. And it was election year for an administration that has shown it will do just about anything to win. What if voters saw the country as being vulnerable to terrorists?

"The N.T.S.B. likes to point out that Commander Donaldson is a right-winger, funded by Accuracy in Media. Yes, and Mr. Stalcup and Mr. Sephton are lefties. They have lately obtained more radar data which they say challenges the Government findings.

"The real distinction here is between the old hierarchical information order and the new one.

"For some time now, the mainstream media has been able to write off Internet investigators as ill-trained, people who are unable to sort out rumor from fact, and, when they do have facts, have no sense of their proportion.

"This criticism has often been true, but the Internet gets less hysterical one month to the next, and meantime the mainstream media have found themselves in an odd position. They are corporate authorities, who tend to accept the word of other authorities at face value. They don't seem to see the revolution at the door: The Internet is a growing society of people who are comfortable challenging authority.

"You're focusing on minutiae," the N.T.S.B.'s Mr. Goetz said to me.

"Ninety-five percent of the wreckage of the plane has been recovered and it shows no missile."

"Let's see," Commander Donaldson said, getting out a calculator.

"Five percent of the wreckage is 8 tons. You can put a lot of holes in that much stuff. It's like saying the Empire State Building fell over and we've found all but five floors."

Thanks to Ian Williams and Wayne Mann

■■■■

BOOKS RECEIVED



Some reviewed, others listed and described.



New Releases

CHI - A Novel of Virtual Reality

By Alexander Beshar

Simon & Shuster, 1999, 304p., \$24.00, Hardcover, ISBN: 0-684-83088-4.

Chi is the third 'cyberspace' novel in Beshar's *Rim* series.

Set in the Far East of 2038 A.D., this psi-psy-psyche travelogue into a future wild & bizarre crime-ridden SE Asia takes you to the leading edge of reality and then throws you over into tech fantasyland.

Beshar has here created enough vivid, eccentric, demonized and demon possessed characters (and creatures) to drive half a dozen novels, and created an incredible underworld commercialization of stolen life force (the *chi*) and a love story between baby orangutans changed to human, raised as human until the genetic chip programming wears out and an all-life-form Gaea-based internet, 'telemorphically' linked and a green-eyed set of emerging super-mind humans who will-might-should? replace humanity as we know us.

Beshar can write! You probably won't believe his future, but man, what a ride!

THE COLOR OF DISTANCE

By Amy Thomson

ACE SF, 1999, \$6.50, 472p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00632-9.

Originally published by Ace in 1995, Trade paperback edition.

Juna is the sole survivor of a team of surveyors marooned in the dense and isolated Tendu rain forest, an uninhabitable world for humans. Her only hope for survival is total transformation---and terrifying assimilation---into the amphibian Tendu species. Now she speaks as they speak. She fears what they fear. And in surviving as they survive, Juna will come to fathom more about her own human nature than ever before...

THROUGH ALIEN EYES

By Amy Thomson

ACE SF, 1999, \$13.95, 328p., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00617-5.

Bound to the human race by a lifesaving link and a sacred pledge of honor, two members of the alien Tendu species leave the safety of their homeland and board a spacecraft headed toward Earth. Isolated from humans because of their alien bodies, customs, and language, the Tendu must learn the ways of Earth in order to survive. But if their attempts at human convention are not enough to overcome the suspicions they have aroused, their voyage to Earth could cause more than a gap between the two worlds---it could bring about their ultimate downfall.

NEWS FROM THE EDGE: VAMPIRES OF VERMONT

By Mark Sumner

ACE SF, 1999, \$5.99, 198p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00628-0.

Global Query ace reporter Savvy McKinnon is in Vermont to verify the existence of Count Yorga, and alleged *nosferatu*. While conducting her "interview with the vampire," the supposed immortal drops dead---after biting her on the arm!

Now Savvy's feeling funny---pale, tired, sensitive to the sun. And when the "vampire's" body mysteriously disappears from the morgue, Savvy has to find out the truth behind the Count's fantastical fiction, before she becomes a *Global Query* headline!

This is more a ho-hum present-day murder and secret agent and secret virus-on-the-loose novel tricked up with a facade of fake vampirism. Not real science fiction...or fantasy.

Mark Sumner writes well; his tabloid reporter heroine, Savvy McKinnon, is marvelously egocentric and semi-hardboiled, though his opening four chapters are slow and full of too-detailed, too-long personality encounters with minor characters. Sumner likes to be clever.

THE GNOMEWRENCH IN THE DWARFWORKS

By Nick O'Donohoe

ACE Fantasy, 1999, \$6.50, 359p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00633-7.

Autumn 1944. While the war rages, 4-F draft reject Grady Cavanaugh works a boring job as an engineer for a small industrial furnace manufacturer in New England. Then he receives an order for a rather unique furnace---built to accommodate someone under three feet tall. Suspicious of the secrecy and odd accent of the buyer---Anthony "Dutch" Van Der Woeden---Grady decides to investigate.

What he discovers defies all imagination...

BY BLOOD ALONE

By William C. Dietz

ACE SF, 1999, \$6.99, 370p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00631-0.

In a Legion gone lax, Colonel Bill Booley, with his mixed-blood and by-the-book attitude, is a misfit. So when he steps on some important toes, the brass is quick to make him pay. His punishment: assignment to the worst post in the galaxy. Fort Mosby, Earth. Home of the 13th Half Brigade, a collection of the Legion's rogues and rejects.

But Booley and his troublemaking troops will turn out to be Earth's best line of defense when a Legion-led military coup topples the government.

THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by Gardner Dozois

ST MARTIN'S PRESS, 1999, \$29.95, 609p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-312-20963-0.

This is the 16th annual edition. 24 stories, over 250,000 words, with a magnificent 49-page Summation of the year in sf, fantasy and horror, and with 7-pages of Honorable Mentions for 1998.

Editor Dozois is incredible in memory, judgement and energy. The winner of ten Hugo Awards and editor of *Asimov's Science Fiction* magazine, he has also won two Nebula Awards for his own short stories.

What impresses me most is the inventiveness of these chosen stories; I never know where the author is going, and I'm always delighted at the skills used in getting me there.

Yes, yes, if you only buy one sf book per year you're cheating yourself if this isn't it.

THE BORDERS OF LIFE

By G.A. Kathryns

ROC Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 335p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45574-6.

Seventy-seven-year-old Alma Montague returns to her sleepy hometown of Lee's Corners, Mississippi, to live out the rest of her life in peace and solitude. But instead of escaping personal entanglements and attachments, she is drawn into the town's edge-of-reality, supernatural mysteries.

SWORDS OF HAVEN

By Simon R. Green

ROC Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 540p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45750-1.

Three novels in one volume: HAWK & FISHER, WINNER TAKE ALL, THE GOD KILLER.

They're the battle-scarred crimebusters of a never-ending urban war... Hawk rules the streets by battle-axe. Fisher cracks down on outlaws with sword and dagger. They're lovers, they're partners, they're cops. Their merciless beat is the sinister city misnamed Haven---a dark and violent town overrun with spell-casters, demons, and thieves. A place where money will buy anything...except justice.

STARGATE SG-1

By Ashley McConnell

ROC Science Fiction, 1998, \$5.99, 202p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45725-0.

A novela based on the story and characters created by Dean Devlin & Roland Emmerich.

An awesome force of evil, bent on domination and destruction, has blasted its way through the Stargate, threatening the very survival of planet Earth. Ra is dead, but the serpent god Apophis has risen in his wake... and he's more than Ra's equal in his cunning, in his cruelty, in his ruthless lust for power.

Colonel Jack O'Neill has been summoned out of retirement to lead the expeditionary mission through the Stargate to hunt down Apophis and his legions. But the search-and-destroy team is about to face the ultimate test of courage---for if O'Neill and his crew fail to return in seventy-two hours, they will be trapped, their fate sealed forever...

MOON SHOTS

Edited By Peter Crowther

Introduction By Ben Bova

DAW Science Fiction, 1999, \$6.99, 312p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-848-4.

Sixteen new-story anthology about mankind on the moon. By Brian Aldiss, Gene Wolfe, Brian Stableford, Colin Greenland, Eric Brown, Jerry Oltion, Scott Edelman, James Lovegrove, Kathleen M. Massie-Ferch, Alan Dean Foster, Stephen Baxter, Robert Sheckley, Paul J. Auley, Paul Di Filippo, Michelle West, and Ian McDonald.

THIS ALIEN SHORE

By C.S. Friedman

DAW Science Fiction, 1999, \$6.99, 564p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-799-2.

Humanity's initial attempt to people the stars ended in disaster when it was discovered that Earth's original superluminal drive did permanent genetic damage to all who used it---mutating Earth's far-flung colonists in mind and body.

One of Earth's first colonies---a world called Guera---has given humanity back the stars, but the new Outships can only be piloted by members of Guera's Outspace Guild, whose mysterious abilities allow them to monopolize galactic transportation.

Powerful companies from dozens of planets vie to be the first to topple Guera's stranglehold on the stars.

On a corporate satellite in Earth's outer orbit lives a girl named Jamisia. Protected by her biological branware systems, and accompanied by the many voices in her head, she has grown into a resourceful, unusual young woman who soon finds herself fleeing corporate raiders to a starship. But she is herself pursued and must unravel the deepening mystery of her hidden identity and importance.

THE COMPASS OF THE SOUL

By Sean Russell

DAW Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 407p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-933-2.

Lord Eldrich, the last mage, has dedicated his unnaturally long life to eradicating all vestiges of magic from the world, for he has had a vision of a terrible cataclysm brought about by the continued practice of his arts.

But fanatical followers of a renegade mage-apprentice, the Tellerites, have braved the wrath of Eldrich and trained one of their own, a young woman named Anna Fielding, in the magical arts.

Lord Eldrich summons all who have served him to find and destroy Anna---and among these seekers is a young man who knows Anna, Erasmus Flattery...

FUTURE WAR

Edited by Jack Dann & Gardner Dozois

ACE SF, 1999, \$5.99, 261p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00639-6.

Ten stories about future war, by Tony Daniel, Philip K. Dick, Gardner Dozois, Joe Haldeman, Geoffrey A. Landis, Paul J. McCauley, Ian McDonald, Alastair Reynolds, Lucius Shepard, and Allen Steele.

TIMESHARE: A TIME FOR WAR

By Joshua Dann

ACE SF, 1999, \$5.99, 280p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00638-8.

John Surrey, head of security for a very special 2007 AD travel agency, Timeshare Unlimited, illegally takes 1940's film star Althea Rowland back to WWII England during the Blitz.

John risks his life and the future while learning two things: straddling the present and the past is no vacation...and war *is* hell...

Lucas Film's ALIEN CHRONICLES [3]:

The Crystal Eye

By Deborah Chester

ACE SF, 1999, \$6.99, 458p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00635-3.

In a universe far from ours, the rule of the mighty reptilian Viis is coming to an end. Planetary resources have been wasted. Slave races are challenging their masters. And a prophecy will come to pass as the story of Ampris the exiled female gladiator concludes...

XENA - Warrior Princess: GO QUEST, YOUNG MAN

By Ru Emerson, based on the Universal Television Series created by John Schulian and Rob Tapert

ACE Fantasy/TV Tie-In, 1999, \$5.99, 273p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00637-X.

Ancient Greece-Roman times is Xena's era, as she does good and foils evil with her faithful girl companion Gabrielle and doltish friends.

So, like, a Quest is set up by the king of Sparta, for devious purposes, and It Must Be Stopped!

This novel is the first of a trilogy, and this one is centered mostly on Gabrielle who talks American high school girl *endlessly* and will drive any male reader to *distraction!* Really!

THE SPELL-BOUND SCHOLAR

By Christopher Stasheff

ACE Fantasy, 1999, \$6.99, 309p. Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00636-1.

Gregory Gallowglass is *the* eligible bachelor on the planet of Gramarye. The youngest son of the High Warlock Rod Gallowglass and witch Gwendolyn, his powers of intellect and magic are without equal. But he's best known for his pure heart---one that is impervious to love.

To Moraga, sworn enemy of the Gallowglass family, Gregory's heart is the ultimate challenge. Through her spells, she will bring him under her power---and then destroy him...



THE RAINY SEASON

By James P. Blaylock

ACE Fantasy, 1999, \$21.95, 356p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-441-00618-3.

The sudden death of Phil Ainsworth's young wife has left him shaken, and he senses an eerie presence in the big old house he inherited from his mother. Then, a late night phone call brings him more bad news: Phil's sister has died, leaving her ten-year-old daughter Betsy in his care.

Blaylock writes all of his characters' thoughts, and loves to over-detail actions, geography and sinister atmosphere. There are too many characters in and from the past, the story is excessively two-tracked through most of the novel, and too many of the 65 chapters are devoted to transitions.

Yet the concepts of life experiences which coalesce into crystal stones after a person's death, which can be experienced later by others who hold the stones...and of time-travel wells of supernatural waters which give up previously drowned people to renewed life in the future...

These carry this sometimes confusing novel well enough to hold a critical reader like me through to the formula ending.

THE BOOK OF JHEREG

By Steven Brust

ACE Fantasy, 1999, \$15.00, 468p., Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00615-9.

This volume contains the first three adventures of assassin Vlad Taltos and his mind-linked, winged, taloned jhereg: *Jhereg*, *Yendi*, *Teckla*.

A VERY STRANGE TRIP

From an original story by L. Ron

Hubbard---Novel by Dave Wolverton

Bridge Publications, 1999, \$25.00, 300p., Hardcover, ISBN: 1-57318-164-1.

Tongue-in-cheek pulp writing, incredible storyline and coincidences, a bit of sex and realism, PC-morality, some insights into Primitives' thinking, some good history on the hoof...

Dave Wolverton is a very good professional writer, and I'm sure he gave the publisher exactly what it wanted.

What we have here is a young West Virginia 'moonshiner' forced into the U.S. Army. As a reputed expert driver, he is assigned to drive a special ATV from Trenton, NJ to Denver, CO with a cargo of mysterious, high-tech Russian weaponry, including a temperamental, experimental time machine.

Of course he ends up in a series of cliff-hanging time jumps in the interesting past (18th and 19th centuries, a Mayan colony in mid-continent, the ice age), sans his commanding officer, and with three beautiful, willful Indian squaws who are far too much for him to handle.

It reads fast and is humorous in a juvenile fashion, but dies young as a believable novel.

A Very Strange Trip is nicely packaged: a well made, partially cloth-bound book, with map liners, heavy paper and large (14-point) type.

Wolverton reports adapting this from an L. Ron Hubbard screenplay. As a movie it would be fun.

BLACK ON BLACK

By K.D. Wentworth

BAEN Books, 1999, \$6.99, 341p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-671-57788-3.

Rescued from an alien slave market by a human trader and raised on Earth as his son, one question has haunted Heyoka Blackeagle through the years: who --- and what --- is he? He *feels* human...

But he is covered with black fur, is seven feet tall, has three-inch retractable claws and is filled with strange instincts.

K.D. Wentworth's novel about a disabled alien space ranger in service to the Confederation (at war with the implacable, insectoid Flek) who returns to his native planet, Anktan, seeking his roots is a class one winner.

He discovers a puzzling, savage, stratified male-female tribal society, terrifying rituals, power struggles to the death, genocidal treachery, and in himself a mysterious 'blueshift' power to become superalien fast in times of danger.

The evil Flek are also in the mix on Anktan, and their menace is paramount.

Wentworth has written an exciting, multi-leveled, multi-track story in which every scene, every POV shift is gripping and eye-opening. The *alienness* is palpable, constant and convincing.

Heyoka Blackeagle (Black-on-black is his native identity) is a hero-in-the-grip-of-fate you will not forget. This science fiction novel took a lot of planning and invention, and this author has great talent and the fiction skills to do it all justice. Even the routine natives-attack-the-aliens'-base ending sequence is riveting and unique in its way.

I hope there are more Blackeagle novels in the works.

FINANCIAL FREEDOM NOW - How to work less and live more

By Max Edison

Paladin Press, PO Box 1307, Boulder CO 80306. 1999, \$15.00 + \$5 p&h, 91p., perfect-bound trade paperback, ISBN: 1-58160-036-4.

Cleverly and clearly, Max Edison lays out the ways credit card companies and banks---especially banks!---and insurance companies and phone companies screw you and make interest on the deal.

And then he shows you how to

screw them and make the interest yourself.

Basically, use credit and debt wisely, and don't be used by them. SAVE!

DESPERATE MEASURES - Unarmed Self-Defense against Guns, Knives, and Clubs.

By Michael Vassolo

Paladin Press, PO Box 1307, Boulder CO 80306. 1999, \$25.00 + \$5 p&h, 164p., perfect-bound trade paperback, ISBN: 1-58160-034-8.

Profusely illustrated with how-to photographs, and with clear, honest instructions, this book can serve you to defeat an attack, but it takes PRACTICE and courage. As for me, I'll happily add this to my library of reference books for writing realistic action scenes.

STALKED - An Anatomy of Sexual Obsession

By Larry Townsend

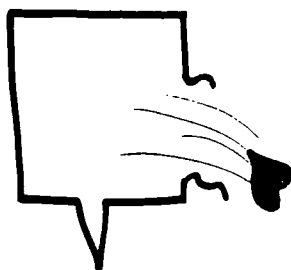
L.T. Publications, PO Box 302, Beverly Hills, CA 90213. Sept. 1999, \$13.95 + \$5 p&h., 237p., Trade paperback, ISBN: 1-8816784-17-2.

This homoerotic, bondage, S&M serial killer novel shows Townsend using his extensive knowledge of abnormal psychology and especially his familiarity with the intense male homosexual scenes of Hollywood and San Francisco to construct the character of a psychopathic hustler, an obsessive killer driven to acts of desperate savagery in his extreme need to possess the handsome young, suddenly successful actor whose life touched his only briefly, but left an overwhelming yearning.

How erotic, and how sadistic is this novel? Detailed, sensual, gross, graphic, eye-opening, the sex is ubiquitous and probably repulsive to most, and definitely educational, but in my view not pornographic in the sense of intending to provide sustained masturbatory sequences.

The climactic revenge bondage-S&M scenes near the end are very disturbing and a testimonial to Townsend's talent, skill and knowledge; he created very human characters I believed and victims I cared about, and reading the extreme emotional and physical action was both gripping and harrowing.

I could nitpick the use of occasional words and phrases I feel inappropriate, but wotthehell, overall it's a good read, a compelling 'XXX-rated' novel whose sex content is both shocking and necessary.



Review



AND THEN I SAW....

GODZILLA [1998 - PG-13]

Nuclear testing in the South Pacific produces a giant mutated lizard that wreaks havoc upon New York City.

This version of the beast has a head derivative of the alien species in *Alien*. A bit of subliminal borrowing or calculated plagiarism?

Matthew Broderick has little to do but speak professorial truth to the authorities about the creature until they stop listening, look awestruck when it trashes the city, and run like hell when it's after him. The romance subplot is blah, a mere obligatory series of inserts.

Good special effects; the beast is impressive as it thunderously runs through the forest of skyscrapers, smashes buildings and Army helicopters (a la King Kong).

Twenty years ago this film would have been a blockbuster hit, but such are the standards today it is now only an 'empty' minor hit. Watchable for the gigantism and destruction.

Guest Vid Reviews by Vince Nowell

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION:

IN SEARCH OF HISTORY

History Channel (Cable)

The producers of this one-hour documentary attempted to sum up hundreds of years of science fiction literature by emphasizing the so-called prophetic track record of sf from Jules Verne and H.G. Wells to the recent past. This "blinders-on" approach was interesting, but far too narrow to suit a dyed-in-the-wool trufan.

Brief inputs from Kim Moran, *Amazing Stories* current editor, and Larry Niven were positive, as were general comments contributed by the venerable 4SJ Ackerman. Less valuable were the comments from a "rocket scientist" (really), a physicist, and Harlan Ellison.

The program, relying at least eighty percent on the century-plus-old works of Verne and Wells, attempted to validate sf by its past successes in predicting technological devices and concepts. To the uninitiated, it made science fiction writers appear to be either scientific geniuses or lucky masters of envisioning the future through their fertile imaginations.

In the midst of this astounding capability for foreseeing things to come,

Ellison went pedantic to preach directly into the camera that time travel is an impossibility. It reminded me of some-times sf-author Dr. Miles Breuer, in a 1930s issue of *Wonder Stories*, criticizing a story by another writer because it dealt with human organ transplants. An impossibility, in the good doctor's opinion.

Overlooked were the elements of characterization, plotting, just good story-telling, and the speculative aspects of the genre aside from science and technology. But then, such things probably don't make as exciting viewing as rockets, aliens from space, and someone's concepts in the 19th century of heavier-than-air vehicles, tank warfare, and television.

Overall, mildly interesting. Value rating on a scale of one-to-five: 2.5.

WEEKEND BIOGRAPHY

A&E Channel (Cable)

Tarzan, the Ape Man

I tuned into this biography because I thought it would span all the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Instead, I found it to be almost a promo for Disney's new *Tarzan* motion picture. While I was disappointed on one hand, I learned more about Burroughs and the politics of Hollywood movie-making and story copyrights than I thought possible.

The program did a decent job of profiling Burrough's life, his ups and downs, and his motivation for writing adventure stories (a way to make money when he badly needed it). His grandson's interview clips made it apparent that the writer, and his descendants, have a lot of business savvy.

The major thrust of this show was Hollywood's approach to the Tarzan character, from Elmo Lincoln to the Bo Derek nearly R-rated Greystoke film. (Playboy did the best coverage of the latter, including photos of Derek's naked foreplay with chimpanzees.)

Playing the role of Tarzan was a hazardous occupation, as documented by the number of actors who were mauled by lions, bitten by apes, and injured while performing stunts for these movies. It almost makes Disney's earlier *George of the Jungle* seem real.

The Tarzan bio omitted the controversy raised a decade or so ago concerning whether he and Jane ever married, or were living in sin in the African greenbelt. Remember the religionists who tried to get Tarzan books banned from school and public libraries?

Perhaps an hour would have been inadequate to fully cover the works of Burroughs, including his Mars and

Venus epics, and the sensuous quality of some of his writing. (Barsroom, after all, was a clothing-optional locale.)

As a biography of Tarzan himself, it was well done. Value on a scale of one-to-five: 4.

■ ■ ■

FEEDBACK

DARRELL SCHWEITZER 6-21-99

<mattea@juno.com>

'Thanks for the kind words about REFUGEES FROM AN IMAGINARY COUNTRY. You may well find yourself quoted somewhere.

'But meanwhile I am disappointed in the new issue, as it was only a matter of HOW, not WHETHER you'd place yourself on the side of genocide and fascism, even as the mass graves are being opened. No, this is a good thing our country has done. You can always argue that the intervention should have been made much sooner and with greater strength, but otherwise Clinton, not a pillar of moral rectitude himself, has found himself in the unlikely position of conqueror of genuine evil, the man who put a stop to the greatest holocaust in Europe since the Nazis. Belgrade has a lot in common with the Berlin of 1945 these days, but the Serbs got off easy. At least their own country hasn't been carved up into occupied zones. It's going to take a slow squeeze now to "de-Nazify" Serbia without actual occupation. It remains to be seen if this can be done.

'I suppose the best way to put this in American terms would be as follows: Suppose the Mexican population of Texas rose to 90%. At the same time, the American government stripped away all civil and legal rights from the Mexican population, began to jail prominent Mexican spokesmen, etc. A rebellion breaks out. The American government then decides to kill or drive out the entire Mexican population of Texas, making a special effort to murder men of military age and the educated, particularly doctors. Within weeks, there are millions of refugees on the other side of the Rio Grande.

'I think under those circumstances, we might well deserve to lose the Alamo.

'In any case, the shameless bit of Serbian propaganda you quote distorts history. The Battle of Kosovo was a

total victory for the Turks. The Ottoman advance was not stopped until it reached Vienna in the 1500's (and again in the late 1600's). The Turks took Belgrade and pushed their frontier well into Hungary. You can see this from any map of the Ottoman Empire. Of course your Serbian propagandist plays on most Americans' total ignorance of Eastern European history.

'Incidentally, most sources I can find (e.g. a textbook of medieval history) say that Murad I was "murdered in his tent by a Serb," not smitten by 200 knights heroically rushing across the field. This may suggest that the assassin was a one of Murad's slaves, who sacrificed himself to avenge the Serbian debacle. Heroic, yes, but a little less showy. In any case, it made no difference. Murad was immediately replaced by his son Bajezet, called The Thunderbolt, who earned his name by conquering Serbia, Bulgaria, and the Morea, then annihilating a western crusade at Nicopolis in 1396. He then laid siege to Constantinople, but was himself annihilated by Tamerlane in 1402. This gave the Turkish advance a pause, but the Europeans did not recover. The Turks did, and their advance continued, unimpeded, well into the 16th century.

'The Battle of Kossovo was decisive all right. It was the end of medieval Serbia, which became a vassal, then a province (final, total annexation, 1459) of the Ottoman Empire and did not re-emerge as a nation until the early 19th century.

'In the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful,

'Darrell "Ali Pasha" Schweitzer'

Geis says: I'm happy if my review of *Refugees From an Imaginary Country* helps your fiction writing career.

But I find a mean streak in the balance of your letter, almost a classic instance of "Now I've got you, you son of a bitch!" from Eric Berne's *Games People Play*.

Because I printed a piece of Serbian nationalistic-Christian history (apparently Christian propaganda, I'll give you that) as 'A perspective to think about' you leap to accuse me of being in favor of genocide and fascism.

I thought the piece an example of intense religious perspective---US vs. THEM thinking---and published it as an obvious warning that that stuff doesn't die!

Even as the religious right in **our** country endlessly tries to get the Christian religion 'back into the public schools'

by using the student shootings of late as a lever. All I see is tunnel vision on their part and a blindness to the example of endless religious fanaticism on exhibit in the Balkans.

As to Milosevic, it appears he has tried to use the ruthless and utterly cruel tactics of Medieval (and before) wars to solve his present-day population and religious problems.

As to your labeling Milosevic's strategy and tactics 'the greatest holocaust in Europe since the Nazis', I thought that honor belonged to General Eisenhower and the Allies after their WWII victory, when they forcibly 'repatriated' 2,000,000 strongly anti-communist refugee Germans into the hands of the occupying Soviets, who reportedly killed most of them.

And I'd believe the 'holocaust' reason for the war against the Serbs and be more impressed with Clinton's moral correctness and virtue in re Kosovo if he (and 17 other members of NATO) would put some pressure on Turkey, a fellow NATO member!, to stop *its* endless slaughter of *its* independence-minded minority, the Kurds.

My POV is that of an atheist, a libertarian, a contrarian and long-view social biologist.

But your letter is excellent as a history lesson, and I thank you for that.

CUYLER BROOKS 6-22-99

<nedbrooks@sprynet.com>

'I had not realized that *The Star Rover* was Jack London's last novel. Somehow I can't find my London books, which included the autobiography of a guy who claimed he was the original of the hero of *The Star Rover*.

'Useless of course for a mere reader like myself to enter into a debate between literary gurus like you and Darrell - still, you don't have to be a chicken to know when an egg is rotten. I don't know which of you is right - but to my taste his stuff reads a lot better than yours!'

Geis says: I'm bleeding from my fiction organ! Quick, an ego bandage!

But thanks for calling me a literary guru; that's some consolation. I think.

HARRY WARNER, JR. 6-22-99

423 Summit Av., Hagerstown, MD 21740

'Not long ago I encountered a paragraph somewhere that was rather chilling and was relevant to what you and Darell Schweitzer were discussing

[in TGL #64]. Someone had complained to a member of a popular magazine's staff about the way so much of the text was printed on dark purple or red backgrounds that made it very difficult to read. The staff member when asked why such things are done is supposed to have said that nobody buys magazines to read their contents any more, just to look at the pictures, so it really doesn't matter.'

Geis says: That is often the attitude of magazine art directors and page designers who often forget the reader in their desires to do something 'different' in layouts...and the managing editor lets them get away with it.

And I've heard that on occasion the art department of a big publishing house is called upon (for devious reasons and agendas) to 'kill' a novel by creating a Blah or reader turn-off cover. When you've seen thousands and thousands of covers (as most of us have) over the years, you'd swear that is occasionally true.

JIM DAPKUS 7-3-99

W6575 Dakota Av., Westfield WI 53964.

'I had heard on the early morning radio that the Wisconsin utilities do expect some power outages 1/1/00 ! At 4:00 a.m. Not many have heard this.'

Geis says: It is likely CNN and CNBC and others will have special news programs which monitor the world for Y2K breakdowns. A lot of our nuke power plants are still not Y2K compliant, and may cause a Problem. Beware the Avalanche Effect. There may even be sabotage to create panic.



Noted:

■ News from Bridge Publications about the BATTLEFIELD EARTH film in pre-production: It will star John Travolta (himself a scientologist), Barry Pepper and Roger Christian. It will begin principal photography in July.

■ SPACE AND TIME #90

The magazine of fantasy, horror and sf
138 W 70th St #4B, New York, NY 10023-4468
Single issue: \$5. + \$1.50 shipping.

Gordon Linzner, head man in this operation, has staying power; this zine, now in professional format with color

cover and perfect-bound letter-size, 50 pages, used to be a fiction fanzine, as I recall from my early years.

Gordon surely has taste and experience in selecting fiction, and the professional-level stories in this issue of *Space and Time* show his skills.

Whether it is policy, or the result of stories available, the stories in this issue are almost all death oriented, though strange and weird. The ones I liked best are "The Return of the Insects" by Joe Murphy, "Maslow's Legacy" by Wayne Edwards, "Tom Mix Wept" by Trey R. Barker, "Return of the Red Death" by Robin Lochlann Spriggs, and "Pop Goes Weasel" by Stephen Antczak. All of these heavy on style and/or difficult technique. but they certainly held my attention.

Linzner also likes to publish poetry, 10 this issue, but I don't like obscure or meaningless unrhymed 'modern' poetry: chopped up sentences of related (sometimes not) extreme figures of speech.

I certainly approve the large credit lines given each artist; very good pro-level cover painting by Dennis Calero, good to see Allen Koszowski's interior work again, and that of Bruce Conklin. Liked Glenn Chadbourne's way with a skeleton.

■ 7-22-99 MARKET FLASH!

Forrest J Ackerman is creating an anthology: SCI-FI & FSF LESBIANTHOLOGY, and needs stories 500-5,000 words. No porno. Details from 2495 Glendower Av., Hollywood, CA 90027. Fax: 323-664-5612



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