

TYNDALLITE

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from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368,  
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mailing comments                      page 862

**The New Port News** #201 January 2002  
- Ned Brooks

p. 2 Yes, battery-electric  
locomotives preceded Jules Verne's  
*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. They go  
back to at least 1835 when Thomas  
Davenport demonstrated such in Boston  
and Springfield MA. In 1842 Robert  
Davidson operated a battery-electric  
locomotive between Edinburgh and  
Glasgow Scotland. In 1851 Professor  
Charles G. Page of the Smithsonian  
Institution operated a battery-electric  
locomotive at nineteen miles per hour on  
the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad  
between Washington DC and  
Bladensburg MD. Your idea that  
electric locomotives postdated Nikola  
Tesla's invention of alternating current  
ignores electric locomotives powered by  
either batteries or direct-current  
distribution systems (third-rail or  
trolley/catenary distribution).

If you would check Verne's  
references regarding the technology used  
to build the *Nautilus* you would find that  
they're real, Verne wasn't using the  
technique of fictional references that  
often occurs in science-fiction. In this  
case he wasn't trying to write science-  
fiction. It was an attack on colonialism

whose protagonist is using the best  
available technology to wreak revenge  
upon the British (in the book version, the  
original version targeted Russia).

p. 3 Gabriel D. Fahrenheit chose  
32 and 212 degrees because he thought  
that 0 degrees on his scale was absolute  
zero. He thus anticipated the idea  
behind William Thompson (1<sup>st</sup> Lord  
Kelvin)' idea of starting from absolute  
zero. Unfortunately Fahrenheit's  
technology wasn't par with his idea.  
(You could say that it didn't measure  
down to his idea.)

**REAR-ENDER '01** 31 Dec 2001 -  
Guy H. Lillian III

pp. [1] Thanks for your praise  
of Sean Stewart's *Galveston*.

**Derogatory Reference** #98 [no month]  
year 2001 – Arthur D. Hlavaty

p. 5 Thanks for letting us know  
that NESFA has published *From These  
Ashes, the Complete Short SF of  
Frederic [sic] Brown* and the complete  
(?) science-fiction of "William Tenn" in  
two volumes *Immodest Proposals* and  
*Here Comes Civilization*. Obviously the  
latter two volumes are Instant Klassics.

I like your comment:

*"In the spirit of God/Mammon  
ecumenism so beloved by the  
Republicans, the religion best at  
separating people from their money  
could merge with a similarly skilled  
corporation. The resulting entity would  
be called Enron Hubbard."*

pp. 6-[8] Thanks for your  
"Millennium Philcon" report.

p. 6 You say that the panel on Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. was competing with a panel on “William Tenn”, the latter featuring Robert Silverberg, Jo Walton and Connie Willis. This makes them the heads of the class.

You mention similarities between Vonnegut and “Theodore Sturgeon” such as them combining mainstream with science-fiction. “Sturgeon” made an effort to sell to the slicks in the 1950’s, but without success. So he revised the stories to give them science-fiction trappings and was able to sell them as science-fiction. At the time a bunch of us were hoping that he’d succeed. Vonnegut sold to the slicks before his first story in the science-fiction magazines (“Unready to Wear”, *Galaxy Science Fiction* Apr 1953).

I like your speculation about what would have happened if Vonnegut had gotten “Sturgeon”’s writer’s block: Your idea that we would have been spared the later works of Vonnegut and instead gotten superb “Sturgeon” fiction is an idea that I applaud.

Of course, a lot of actual and aspiring authors would love to get writer’s block.

p. [8] To quote you regarding the Millennium Philcon Hugos:

“...I’m perfectly willing to concede that everyone who voted for Potter IV had read it.”

It’s also possible that Potter IV was the only story they read.

**SPIRITUS MUNDI** #187 1 Jan 2002  
- Guy H. Lillian III

pp. [5?-6?] You’re right that when I suggest “running” Hugo nominations that I meant ongoing and well publicized. This would give others the opportunity to read nominated stories **before** voting. Hopefully all of the good stories would be favored over the lesser works. And with a better-informed electorate it would increase the odds of the best winning.

You cite Joe Moudry’s suggestion of a “voting membership” so as to improve the Hugos but you’re apprehensive that “*it’d be very easy to pack the competition with cheap ballots.*” At the moment it’s being packed with expensive ballots. If the franchise were expanded to all of science-fiction fandom any attempt to stuff the ballots would be overwhelmed by the majority, unless the U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of the runner-up.

p. [6] I agree with you that Herbert G. Wells’ *The First Men in the Moon* is a much better story than is Jules Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* and its sequel, *All Around the Moon*. You suggest that the non-science-fictional elements in the Wells story make it better than Verne’s ponderous exercise in applied science. You have an excellent point. Verne realized that he couldn’t land his space travelers since they’d have no means of returning. With “Cavourite” Wells evaded that problem.

p. [11?] You ask, “What’s **The Syndic**?” It’s a novelette by Cyril M. Kornbluth that was serialized in *Science Fiction Adventures* from Dec 1953 until Feb 1954, and also in book form (probably a longer version). It concerns a future in which the Mafia has taken

over New Jersey. As I recall, it's fairly good.

### **Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette**

#74 Jan 2002 – Richard  
Dengrove

p. 4 You mention a 1930's science-fiction story in which a western has been transplanted to Mars so that the Indians become Martians and the horses spaceships. This reminds me of Chester S. Geier's "Outlaw In the Sky", *Amazing Stories* Feb 1953. Apparently it had been diverted from *Mammoth Western*. The illustration shows a Martian riding beast, looking like a horse with alien appendages (why waste the artwork?). During the story a rider arrives at a Martian ranch and is asked where he came from. He said something like 'I just rode up from New Orleans.'. Both he and his mount must have had tremendous lung capacity. The mount's ability to have tractive effort both in the atmosphere and space isn't explained.

"Theodore Sturgeon"'s "Hurricane Trio", *Galaxy Science Fiction* Apr 1955 is another example. He couldn't sell it to the slicks so he rewrote it into "science-fiction". However, the original story shows through the veneer.

I wonder how many more such curiosities have been published as science-fiction.

### **PETER, PAN & MERRY #41 – David Schlosser**

p. [1] As for enjoying science-fiction (etc.) that doesn't meet one's standards I would think that in such cases one's standards need revision. Stand up for your own enjoyment; don't

let someone else dictate his or her tastes to you.

p. 2 You think that the Austronesians operated as tour groups to known destinations rather than as explorers. In the case of sailing to Madagascar from Borneo they may well have heard of Madagascar but to the best of my knowledge they'd never heard of the Pacific Islands that they colonized. As far as I know there's no evidence of any human predecessors with the possible exception of Hawaii. There's considerable evidence for trans-Indian Ocean navigation thousands of years ago. Marinus of Tyre's *Periplus of the Erythean Sea* was written at least by 150 A.D. It has sailing directions from Egypt to present-day Vietnam. It may well have been used by the Roman embassy in China.

The Austronesians fanned out across the Pacific with no apparent knowledge of what they'd find. It was a remarkable achievement.

It's on a par with Africans voyaging to South America many thousands of years ago.

p. 4 You mention that *The Simpsons* had Bob Dole reading from *The Necronomicon*. That I'd like to have both seen and heard.

### **OFFLINE READER V1#26 Dec 2001 -Jan 2002 – Irv Koch**

p. 3 You say that the Austronesians reached Madagascar via North Africa, then coast hopped to Madagascar and they have the DNA evidence. You seem to be more up-to-date on this than am I. References, please. I don't keep up with all of the

prehistory research, so I'd like to fill some of the gaps in my knowledge.

**The Sphere** V196#1 – Don Markstein

p. 6 You say:

*“It’s okay for critical standards to require story elements that portray memorable characters, make us see things in a new way, help us clarify our thoughts, or in some other way give us more than **just** entertainment. Entertainment value is a minimum requirement for good fiction, but it’s not the **only** thing worth considering.”*

I agree with your views. One of the attitudes I object to is ‘I enjoyed it, so it’s bad.’. Another is ‘I don’t understand it, so it’s Great Literature.’.

**REVENANT** #10 Jan 2002 –  
Sheila J. Strickland

p. 3 I think that you’re right that a human bitten by a werewolf is transformed into a werewolf. So your question about werfleas biting werewolves and then a human would or would not transform the bitten into a werewolf is probably answered in the affirmative. As for whether or not werfleas are transformed by full moons my guess is yes. Does anyone in *SFPA* know?

**Home With the Armadillo** #51 Jan  
2002 – Liz Copeland

p. 1 Thanks for recommending Laurell K. Hamilton’s *Kiss of Shadows*. You say that it is set in the same universe with her “vampires, zombies, werewolves and other assorted creatures” but involves fairies.

**GUILTY PLEASURES** #22 Jan 2001 -  
Eve Ackerman

p. [1] I hope that by this time your novel *Pirate’s Song* has been accepted and/or published.

The Werewolf is Napping #1 28 Jan  
2002 – George H. Wells

p. 4 You wonder about the meaning of Pellucidar. I presume that Edgar R. Burroughs derived the name from pellucid, i.e., clear and/or bright. Since, except in the Land of the Awful Shadow, everything on the interior surface is bathed in perpetual light it is an appropriate name.