

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

About a month ago I started a serious attempt to lose weight. I gave up sodas, began eating low-calorie snacks and began a walking program. To date, I'm up to walking 2.8 miles a day. So far I have lost ten pounds. I have mixed feelings about the weight loss. I feel lighter and have more energy. That's the great part. The not-so good part is that the thinner person I see in the mirror is subtly different from how I'm accustomed to thinking about myself. A big part of my internal struggles with this new image is the speed with which it happened. I woke up one morning and found that my comfortably loose pants were now a clown outfit. I could have used them for walking except that they were now uncomfortably loose. If you don't think that's possible you've never had to stop every five minutes and pull clothes up. I had to make an emergency trip to the thrift store for smaller clothes.

— Lisa

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The 53<sup>rd</sup> Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **November 7, 2009** at Yonkers Raceway. The winner was If I Can Dream.

Joe's Birthday is **December 24, 2009**.

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Deadline is **February 1, 2010**

## WARNING!

For some of you, this will be the **last** issue — unless you subscribe, write, or otherwise indicate your interest.

## Reviewer's Notes

The current nominee for This Time For Sure It's Going To Be THE Source For New Fans is *Twilight*. It was Harry Potter before that, and fanfic before that and . . . All those teenaged girls full of angst and wanting to be vamped by an emo vampire tormented by teenage-style angst (oh, and instead of dying the true death in sunlight, they merely sparkle) are going to graduate to somewhere between Doc Smith and Iain Banks. Let me know when you hear more.

A few years ago I asked about the TV/movie/book trope of Daddy dressing up as Santa Claus on Christmas Eve to put up the tree and put out the presents. No one said it actually happened to them. Well, let's try another one. Has anyone ever been given a surprise birthday party? (Says someone who has never had an ordinary one, people having had other obligations on his birthday.)

What did I think was the most frightening thing about the infamous Ralph Lauren ad that featured a picture so Photoshopped that the model's head appeared to be wider than her hips? Knowing that some surgeon somewhere would soon be offering an operation to do that for real.

While teenage girls are starving themselves to look like the models, teenage boys are eating all the food, becoming morbidly obese, because all the teachers tell you to eat properly and exercise, and only a doofus would do what teachers tell him to do.

Have a good time this winter.

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



## STEFNAL MYSTERY SOLVED!

As you know, back in the seventies, when T-K Graphics was the SF mail-order outfit, the catalogue explained why they couldn't order mass market paperbacks for customers. Distributors, you see, had a minimum order of five copies of any one title. So if someone were to want a copy of, say, *Blazing Six-Guns of Yucca-Pucca Gulch*, they would have to order five copies, and be stuck with four of them.

Whereupon several — more than five, anyway — people ordered *Blazing Six-Guns of Yucca-Pucca Gulch*. Well, that solved that problem.

But where did they get that title? Turns out that Harvey Kurtzman (as in *MAD*, "Little Annie Fanny", etc.) did "Pot Shot Pete, Sheriff of Yucca Pucca Gulch" for *John Wayne Adventure Comics* #5 in 1950. That sounds weird and I remember *Bob Hope Comics* and *Jerry Lewis Comics*.

(Doing a web search turns up several firms named "TK Graphics" or something of the sort, none of which will take your old T-K Graphics credit slips.)

Does the Warlord have a tow truck handy? During the week of April 30, the Mars Exploration Rover Spirit got stuck in loose terrain [martain? Whatever] at a site called "Home Plate", and since then, the JPL has been experimenting with various ways to get her moving again. Maybe they should have bought the Barsoomian Automobile Association's BAA Plus package, with 100 haads of towing.

[http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/mer/spirit-update.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/mer/spirit-update.html)

For those who like the "Simon's Cat" video about kitty's efforts to be fed, there is now a website with more of the same:

<http://www.simonscat.com/>

For what it's worth, there are some interesting books coming out next year. *Red Inferno: 1945* by Robert Conroy (February 23, 2010; Ballantine), *A Rainbow of Blood: The Union In Peril* by Peter G. Tsouras (March 31, 2010; Potomac Books), and *When Angels Wept: A What-If History of the Cuban Missile Crisis* by Eric G. Swedin (May 31, 2010,

Potomac Books). The Conroy seems to be yet another take on the *Damned Fine War* idea; presumably his Soviet fire fight will not have M-14 rifles, the A-10 ICBM, or the USS *Montana*. The Tsouras is a sequel to *Brittania's Fist* (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #6). The Swedin is another nuclear war book, though whether the world will be as bad off as in *The World Next Door* (by Brad Ferguson; 1987, 1990) remains to be seen.

Decius Caecilius Metellus fans will be pleased to know that *SPQR XIII: The Year of Confusion* is coming (a.d. XIV Kal. Martis AUC MMDCLXIII [February 16, 2010; Minotaur Books). The reference is to the year of the consulship of Gaius Julius Caesar and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, AUC DCCVIII [46 BC(E)] which was 445 days long. It put the calendar back in alignment with the seasons, so Xena and Gabrielle wouldn't be celebrating Solstice on a.d. VI Idus Martis (March 10). [It was always towards the end of Poseideon (Attic) or Audnaios (Macedonian), of course.]

And a good last-minute Christmas present from Bwana, who is not Koriba: *Starship: Flagship* by Mike Resnick (December 22, 2009; Pyr), the next phase of the life of Wilson Cole and the *Theodore Roosevelt*.

We now have a somewhat-definite date for ConGlomeration, of **April 9-11, 2010**. No guests listed yet, and a membership fee of \$30.

Since, I'm told, all the real hot skiffy stuff these days is being packaged as "fantastic romance", I figured I'd try another: *Shadowfae* by Erica Hayes (St. Martin's Griffin; 2009; ISBN 978-0-312-57800-8; \$14.99).

Jade is a succubus in thrall to the demon Kane, but she's really in love with her fellow incubus Rajahni, and she has to take out the demon Luna if the vampire Dante doesn't get her first. They live in Melbourne, amid a hot night life and a multiplicity of faery beings of various kinds. Everyone is supremely attractive (it goes with the job, I guess) and they have *Hot Sex™* all the time in various conjugations. (You know, Aussiecon doesn't really need any propaganda to get people to come there.)

And nobody cares; there's no real emotion there, nothing matters. Jade is flirting with total destruction but it matters little; she has a lot of talk about passion but no affect. And apparently all these fantastic creatures in Australia don't make a difference either way.

For the literary types, Hayes flips mid-chapter all the time between first-person narrative by Jade and third-person from Rajahni's point of view. Even the many explicitly and exquisitely described couplings of *Hot Sex™* that fill the book are uninteresting, which is really lamentable.

"Nobody expects the Royal Geographical Society!" **Michael Palin**, C.B.E. was elected President of the Royal Geographical Society in June of 2009, following in the footsteps of such prominent explorers and supporters as Sir Clements Markham; Leonard Darwin; Sir George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquis Curzon of

Kedleston; Sir Francis Younghusband; James Wordie; Edward Shackleton, Baron Shackleton; Sir John Hunt, Baron Hunt; Sir Vivian Fuchs; and Sir George Jellicoe, Earl Jellicoe of Scapa. Whether Cardinal Biggles and Cardinal Fang, or even Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam were present was not noted.

Subs worldwide, are pleased to hear, that the latest adventure, of Counter-Earth, is now out, *Kur of Gor* (e-reads; 2009; ISBN 978-0759297821; \$31.95), by "John Norman", which, as everyone knows, is the pseudonym, of Professor John Frederick Lange, and is about, alien beings, which are called Kur, and are interested, in Earth, and Gor as well, so Bosk of Port Kar, who is exiled from there, and on another world, was known as Tarl Cabot, and is now a prisoner, of the Priest-Kings, is a person of interest, to the Kur, thus it has a different theme, from the previous book, *Prize of Gor* (e-reads; 2008; ISBN 978-0759245808; \$28.95), which features, a Ph.D. (in mathematics?), taken to Gor, from Earth, and given the slave name, of Ellen, and the way, she learns, her innate submissive nature, but Phèdre nó Delaunay, Comtesse de Montrève, was not consulted.

One morning on our walk we passed the local health-food store, Amazing Grace, and the sign out front was advertising "A Taste of Kilimanjaro". I know you can get a lot of odd things at those places, some of them being rather hard on rustic palates, but really, **frozen leopard meat?!?**

Our anticipated con schedule next year is:

**ConCave**, February 26-28  
**ConGlomeration**, April 9-11  
**Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium**, May 15-16  
**Reconstruction**, August 5-8

We hope to see you at one or another of those places. Maybe now that the car's about to be paid off we can try a few more cons.

In the **Is This Really Necessary** department, did anyone see the remake of *The Prisoner* with Gandalf and Jesus, er, Sir Ian McKellen and James Cavaziel as Nos. 2 and 6, and did they think it was any good?

## OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Dorothy June McVay Veal**, mother of Chicago fan **Tom Veal**, on **October 19, 2009**. Our condolences to Tom.

We regret to report the death of **Robert Holdstock** on **November 29, 2009**, due to a septic infection. Born in Kent on August 2, 1948, Holdstock became a writer for *New Worlds* when he was twenty. He is best known for *Mythago Wood* (1981, 1984) one of a series of books called the Ryhope Woods series, about a woods where the myths exist, but depend on their human believers.

## TODAY'S FOLLOWUP

Probably Pointless Commentary  
by Joseph T Major

It was a slow day at work, so I managed to assemble a spreadsheet. Not just any spreadsheet. I tracked down, as best I could, the life information on the contributors to . . . are you ready for it . . . *The Last Dangerous Visions*.

Now this is hardly the most pressing of stefal concerns. By now, it seems blatantly obvious that the book will never come out. It's been thirty-seven (that's right, 37) years since it was announced as coming out in six months, and a round thirty since the last even remotely definitive table of contents was released. Many of the stories have been published elsewhere, the editor's rights to most of the stories have lapsed, and really no one cares.

So this is more on the order of curiosa than any serious investigation. But, as I said, there was nothing else to do at the time.

In his Hugo-nominated and controversial *The Book On the Edge of Forever/The Last Deadloss Visions* (1987, 1988, 1994) Christopher Priest (a disgruntled ex-contributor) gave an analysis of the living and the dead. Part of this work was based on a previous article published anonymously in 1981 in the fanzine *Patchin Review*, edited by Charles Platt (another disgruntled ex-contributor). To be fair, they both had run through a series of contentious negotiations with the original book's editor, which just might leave even the most fair-minded and generous person disgruntled.

The original article is based on the 1979 Table of Contents listed in *Locus Magazine*. For the moment, we'll discuss the mortality statistics. Priest lists twenty-three contributors who had died before the announcement, or in the fifteen years since the publication of the list. Six were in the former category — "Anthony Boucher" [William A. P. White], Leigh Brackett, Edmond Hamilton, Ward Moore, Tom Reamy, and "Cordwainer Smith" [Paul M. A. Linebarger]. Since then, at least fourteen more have died.

Actually, given the time elapsed, that's not so bad.

A more interesting problem has to do with the scope of it. Priest argues that the anthology came to reflect apparently not so much a desire to be "dangerous", to press further against the envelope, as to be "complete", to represent all SF at the time. This would seem to follow from his having received a solicitation to get in while there was still a chance.

Getting non-American authors to contribute, that is. And indeed, the table of contents lists a number of authors from *New Worlds* — Michael Moorcock himself, Graham Charnock, Graham Hall, and so on. There are French authors — "Philippe Curval" [Philippe Tronche] and Daniel Walther. And American minorities — "Felix C. Gotschalk" [Jacques Gouldchaux], a French-American, and Laurence Yep [Yeh

Hsiang-t'an (Pinyin: Ye Xiangtan) and at that it's a Cantonese name, so the family name is indeed pronounced "Yep"], a Chinese-American, and of course Craig Strete an ~~Indian~~ **Amerind Native American!**

Other contributions seem a bit . . . less than dangerous. Jack Williamson, for example, though he showed throughout his very long career a prodigious ability to reinvent himself. But Brackett's and Hamilton's story is a combination of pulp stories written by them earlier; if it weren't them doing it, "Stark and the Star Kings" would be a crossover fan fiction story. In the pulp fiction department, the presence of Nelson S. Bond is very strange, much less that of Clifford D. Simak. And what about John Jakes, better known since then as a prodigious perpetrator of multi-volume historical romance sagas?

Checking the Internet Science Fiction Data Base creates a strange feeling of nostalgia. So many of the obscure writers in the table of contents list had their careers end in the seventies. Not to mention Pamela Zoline, who had only one other listed story, and Janet Nay, who according to the *Patchin Review* article had utterly disappeared. (There is a "Janet Nay Zadina" who has written books on writing; could this be her?)

Some of the stories seem to be there mostly so the author could be represented. Thus "Anthony Boucher's" story "Precis of the Rappacini Report" which is only 850 words. Or "Cordwainer Smith's" story "Himself in Anachron", which is a piece of juvenilia. (Note that both of these have been published, as a matter of completeism.)

The question arises if *The Last Dangerous Visions* could ever have lived up to the exalted expectations presented.

## WE GO TO A LAND DOWN UNDER

Trip Report by Joseph T Major  
<http://www.kdu.com/>



Lisa had heard of this place called Kentucky Down Under and figured it would make a nice birthday visiting place. So we went.

The weekend was agreeably mild and dry; the only problem was the reconstruction on I-65, which entailed going down some formerly main roads in Louisville. At least all the rush-hour

traffic was coming the other way. After a breakfast in Elizabethtown, we got to Horse Cave at a reasonable mid-morning time. Yes, that's where ConCave is held, and in fact if you turn right you get to the hotel, while we turned left and went back behind the truck stop.

The trip began with a tour of Kentucky Caverns. This was the original facility, so to speak. It had been discovered in 1799 when Martha Woodson was playing on the hill and felt a cold breeze coming from that hole in the ground. She told her siblings, who volunteered her to explore the place. They tied a rope around her and lowered her into the hole, presumably fishing for shoggoths or something.

The cave wasn't developed for commercial purposes until 1921. The owners built a lodge near the opening for the cave guides. You see, they had 24/7 cave tours. Imagine you are sitting in a speakeasy in Nashville, bored, and suddenly you desire to see a cave. Driving up US 31E to this little place called Horse Cave, you arrive there at two in the morning. You bang on the door of the lodge, and a griping half-awake guide will emerge, getting dressed, and proceed to lead you through the cave. Really. Now, tours are more limited, and the park and cave are open from nine to four.

The original entrance has been sort of sidelined. The tourists and guides used to descend through the Historic Entrance on a long ladder. This turned out to be less than practical, and now there are two artificial entrances at the ends of the cave. It's not very long, only six or seven hundred feet (they said "an eighth of a mile").

The cave is wet. There are drips and formation is still proceeding. The most prominent feature is the great column in the main room, the one that earned the cave its original name of "Mammoth Onyx Cavern". (This was changed because the people running that big cave over there objected.)

The pool towards the end of the cave tour is being rehabilitated. It used to be used as a wishing well, to the loss of the natural cave fauna. (The tour distinguishes between the animals which live in the cave proper, and the ones which hang out in the entrance as a way to find someplace for shelter.) They dredged several thousand dollars of coins out of the pool, which hoard benefited cave preservation not insignificantly.

Kentucky Caverns is a very commercial cave, and not one to everyone's liking. One can get a start there on going down under the ground, that process that fetches up with getting stuck in a cavern while they dig. Incidentally, the shop in the former guides lodge sold a DVD of a documentary on Floyd Collins, a Kentucky icon who found out somewhat too late the problems of cave exploration.

The current owner of the area is married to an Australian woman. He provided her with familiar fauna, a different sort of "down under" so to speak. A short walk from the cave is the animal park. We began with the bird cages, containing several colorful and noisy cockatoos and kookaburras. Which I guess kept the dingoes from going too much off their heads.

Getting out of the woods, we went through the kangaroo pen. They had two types of kangaroos, the Eastern Grey and the Red. With care, they could be petted. (Those little forepaws have very long and unpleasant claws.) Also in the same enclosure were some wallabies and the odd emu. Again, it was possible to get close, but the guide kept watch in case the bird objected to this.

After this one could see adventitious fauna. That is, sheep. This began with a demonstration of sheep herding dogs (as in *Bob, Son of Battle* (1898; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #2-4)); a vigorous little border collie moving around three professional sheep. I say professional because it looked like they were used to being herded.

The sheep barn had an assortment of breeds on display. Some of them were substantial, they mentioned that their Lincoln sheep (called, unsurprisingly for here, "Abe", though I believe the breed was named after the English county) weighed 300 pounds. They discussed all the sheep products one could obtain, which included gelatine.

The children were allowed to feed the lambs and milk the cow to get the milk to feed the lambs. They needed someone larger to demonstrate how one held a sheep in order to shear it.

There was one last demonstration of local culture, as a guide showed off other Australian animals as well as items of Aboriginal culture. Snakes have an unjustified bad reputation in the touch category; the ones we saw were quite clean and dry, if a bit chill. As for the cultural matters, the guide not only demonstrated boomerangs but painstiks. Really. Apparently as a rite of passage in their culture the boy wishing to become a man had to stand in a circle and get stabbed by all the elders.

This is a good place for children and indeed we were figuring how to get my grandnephew there. Somewhat older Fans would find the cave more interesting, albeit the more rotund would not be able to pass one passage.

From there we went on down to Nashville. That was when the rain came. In the morning, we tried to see some of my relatives there and did managed to see one. We also got in a couple of bookstores.

From there, we went to Hopkinsville and saw my cousin the historian, to Madisonville to see my brother and about ten thousand kids, who were being brought around in flatbed trucks for trick-or-treat, and finally Lisa's father and stepmother. And home on Sunday.

## ¿QUIERES VER LA TELEVISIÓN?

by Joe

My cousin Vaden in Nashville bought a new television the other day. He picked it up, put in his car, and drove home. There are two factors to consider in this off-hand statement.

- 1) He picked it up **himself**; hefted the box under one arm and walked out to the car.
- 2) Vaden is **eighty**.

Remembering all the effort we were at to get the 30" HDTV up the stairs and into the bedroom, I think we have learned the price of being early adopters.

Now how much did Vaden get for his money? He didn't go into details, but I can give you an example from my own life. We got a television in, I suppose, 1955. It was a black-and-white job with perhaps a 21" screen, and you can probably guess I sat with my nose right in the screen. What I remember are the Popeye cartoons that Channel 5, WLAC-TV, station of the Life and Casualty Insurance Company, CBS affiliate, had (the original Fleischer Brothers full-animation ones with Bluto, the Sea Hag, the fancy credits with the hatch in the poop deck bulkhead opening and closing, and so on, not the later limited-animation ones for TV).

For Nashville broadcasting historical reference, WLAC is now WTVF News Channel 5. The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, their competitor, owned WSM, Channel 4 (the competitor of WLAC and the NBC affiliate, but it had also had DuMont Network programs) and the Grand Ole Opry. The two insurance companies sold their stations, merged, and eventually were bought out by AIG. Oops.

Now obviously I can't know what my parents paid for the television, but I searched Hopkinsville newspaper ads and found a 21" console TV for \$179. That was not an insignificant sum then. The Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank site has a CPI evaluator, which places the current value of that amount as being about \$1320. What could you get for that much today?

Office Depot lists six models in that price range — a Panasonic 49.9" plasma, a Regza 42" HD LCD, a Toshiba 46" LCD, a Sony 46" LCD, a Sony 40" LCD, and an LG 47" LCD. Think about it for a moment. First off, since all of them are wide-screen, it's obvious that we're talking about more than four times the viewing area (anyone who doesn't know about the square-cube law please talk to Grant, or Stickmaker, or . . .). Then there's the difference not only between monochrome and color, but between 525-line raster and HD.

By way of comparison, my computer monitor is a wide-screen HD 19" model and cost . . . \$280. But in 1955 dollars that comes out to \$34.87. That was about the price of a radio!

At this rate, it will be possible in a few years to have wall-sized screens. Add to that computer morphing and whatever succeeds Twitter by then and you have . . .

"Why Mrs. Montag! Won't you come join us on the dinosaur hunt?"

"Er . . ." [checks her Ezhov hand-carried Web-connector for her line]  
"Why, of course!"

— Not by Ray Bradbury

## RUDBECK & ASSOC.

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*UNCLEAN SPIRITS*

"Book One of The Black Sun's Daughter"  
(Pocket Books; 2008, 2009;

ISBN 978-1-4391-4305-6; \$7.99) and

**DARKER ANGELS**

"Book Two of the Black Sun's Daughter"  
(Pocket Books; 2009;

ISBN 978-1-4165-7677-8; \$7.99)

by M. L. N. Hanover

I once had to deal with a discussion on the Net. The other person opined that Thorby Baslim/Thor Bradley-Rudbeck was an utter fool and instead of staying to take back control of Rudbeck & Assoc., then fight back against the slavers, he should have grabbed several million and split. Thus utterly misunderstanding the character and the circumstances in *Citizen of the Galaxy* (1957; NHOL G.134).

Jayné (and unlike "Thor", no one can get her name right on the first try; as she says, "It's actually *zha-nay*" [Page 8]) Heller might understand the situation that the sometime Guardsman, erstwhile Trader, former beggar found himself in. Her uncle Eric had always been there for her, and she did have a tumultuous life (as when, aged sixteen, she woke up after a three-day drunk in someone else's clothes with a tattoo on her back). But now Eric is dead and Jayné is his heir.

To more than just fabulous wealth. It seems that Eric was fighting supernatural enemies, creatures that can possess ordinary humans.

It takes some time for her to comprehend this. Except that her uncle's death was just before a crucial time when a powerful Rider, one of the *Unclean Spirits* possessing people, was about to conduct a mass infection. Which means that Jayné, hardly believing what is going on, much less what she can do, has to do something.

Her uncle's associates do their part. They are an interesting lot, hardly the oaf boy type. Particularly when Jayné finds herself attracted to one, sleeps with him — and then discovers he's married. Worse yet, his wife comes to Denver to meet him, and Jayné likes her. They're both good people, and yet . . . one sees such emotional tension so rarely anywhere.

This is about the last thing they need while dealing with the Riders. Both problems need to be dealt with, and in a surprising conceit, neither miraculously provides the solution for the other.

But having encountered one set of Riders, Jayné and her divided crew (she still has that emotional schism) set out to deal with *Darker Angels* in a city which is even more ruined. In the place they call the City of New Orleans, there is a powerful Rider.

There's also a lot of other things, including allies who turn out to be enemies, foes who are willing and able to become allies, lawpersons who are criminal, criminals who support the law, vodun, devastation, and Mardi Gras beads. Well, maybe not the last.

It should be noted that the characters don't always know what to do. Their quest to find out what will work is often painful. It's one that can't be solved by digging up squamous, rugose, and blasphemous ancient books of lore, having



the only teenager who hasn't had sex set the bad guy on fire, or tossing off flippant comments. Jayné has to deal with people (for some values of people) who have their own plans and intents, their own limits. Life isn't easy, and having more resources doesn't solve all the problems, for all that it makes some problems more solvable. There are human problems amid the supernatural ones, reminding the characters and the reader alike of the real pains of life while appealing to the fantastic desire to escape.

## HALVED, QUARTERED, AND CENT TO HELL

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE GOLDEN SHRINE**  
by Harry Turtledove

(Tor; 2009;  
ISBN 978-0-7653-1712-4; \$24.99)  
Sequel to *Beyond the Gap*  
(2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #2) and  
*The Breath of God*  
(2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 8 #2)

Count Hamnet Thyssen is now even worse off than he was at the beginning of *The Breath of God*. His then girlfriend Liv didn't like eating people except metaphorically. Now, it's quite another matter, and I'm surprised he doesn't twinge more when his current girlfriend Marcofeva does what Monica did.

Things aren't well out of bed, either. The Rulers, the mammoth-riding brutal overlords of the far side of the Gap, having come through and smashed the Bizogots, are now down in civilized territory, besieging the capital of the Raumsdalian Empire. Count Thyssen has little love for his sometime overlord, Emperor Sigvat II, but he doesn't care to see a sack.

There is a long and grueling tale of the conduct of a war. There's plenty of guts but little enough glory here, unless survival is a glorious thing. History may not be written by those who were right, but it certainly is written by those who were left.

Hamnet, Marcofeva, and their comrades work towards a means for finally overcoming the Rulers. By a great and peculiar irony it turns out, the Rulers end up collaborating in their own demise — which also reveals the even more ironic pointlessness of the original quest of Hamnet & Co.

There turns out to be a message for the Raumsdalian Emperor from the Golden Shrine, a message that echoes across time and over time-lines. "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting." At least there are no Kurds around to conduct a sack.

Turtledove is returning here to the theme of his Elabon series — *Wereblood* (1979) by "Eric G. Iverson" and its sequels, that of the remote lord striving to defend civilization, as best he can, where he can. Gerin's ambit became a little more broad as his life progressed; Hamnet's is more of a withdrawal to what lies within his normal competence. What does one do after the Heroic Quest? That may be more trying than the Great Story.

## THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**NORSE CODE**

by Greg van Eekhout  
(Ballantine Spectra; 2009;  
ISBN 978-0-553-59213-9; \$7.99)



Of all the problems Alfred Bester (the writer, not the character on *Babylon 5*) had to deal with towards the end of his life, the Callahan's Place story had to be nagging. As you know, a "feghoot" is a short-short story setting up an improbable situation, ending in a particularly evocative item of paranomasia. Er, that's a groan-inducing pun. The concept was invented by Reginald Bretnor, who according to legend named the eponymous protagonist Ferdinand Feghoot during a game of Scrabble, seeing the letters "EFGHOOT" on his rack. (Incidentally, that's fourteen points.) Perhaps appropriately, "Grendel Briarton", the name his feghoots were published under, is an anagram of "Reginald Bretnor".

Randall Garrett, always in the trail, created a subset of these featuring one Benedict Breadfruit, where the closing pun was on the name of a science-fiction writer. [When Benedict Breadfruit had to get rid of a sinister creature, he promised to get "the wretch annulled, *bête-noir*."] And in one of his Callahan's Place stories, Spider Robinson had a "Breadfruit", with the closing pun being "seeing the great Al Phee bestered." Yes, it's about as (in)competent as most of the verbal or literary jokes in Robinson's work.

And this was published in *Analog*. So was the real Bester's *The Computer Connection* (1975) as "The Indian Giver" (December 1974-January 1975). Many were overjoyed to see that the author of *The Demolished Man* (1953) was returning to SF. However, when they started reading the story, many of them were less so. The narrator Edward Curzon, or Grand Guignol, or just Guig, proudly recounts how his aim in life is killing people in as painful and outré fashions as possible. You see, a tiny percentage of those so killed respond very vigorously to that stimulus by becoming immortal. (Just like the way Dr. Jaunte, the eponymous teleporter in *The Stars My Destination* (1956), first teleported, or jaunted, in reaction to a potentially fatal lab accident, and many volunteers died painfully and grotesquely in experiments intended to reproduce the event and replicate the result.)

Mist, the protagonist of the first chapter of

this book, is somewhat like Guig, albeit prettier to look at. She's a Valkyrie, and her job at NorseCODE is recruiting for the Einherar, Odin's corps of warriors. Since her recruitment method consists of having the candidates killed, well die in battle, one can understand that too many of the interviewees are less than enthusiastic about the hiring process. And I thought my job interviews were hard.

Mist is also somewhat lacking in job satisfaction. The prime recruit for the Valkyrie Corps was her sister Lilly, murdered in the same incident, but Lilly shuffled off to Helheim instead and Mist wants her back. And the recruit who didn't want to join the Einherar, while she's at it. She wants to apologize.

Meanwhile, Lily has found a new friend in Helheim; Höd, the guy who was tricked into killing Baldr. She organizes a breakout. The description of Helheim is not for the squeamish, but then a lot of Norse doctrine closely reflected the harsh and treacherous community.

And it's very important that they get their act together, because Ragnarok is coming and the Nine Worlds are already coming apart at the seams. Ferdinand Feghoot would be hard put to find the proper pun to save this day.

What it does involve is trying to break the prophesy. This becomes a question of paying the cost . . . and an ending which leaves more confusion than destruction, which when you consider that it is after all Ragnarok, suggests there is a different sort of problem involved.

## QAPLA'

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**IN THE LAND OF INVENTED LANGUAGES:**

*Esperanto Rock Stars, Klingon Poets, Loglan Lovers, and the Mad Dreamers Who Tried to Build a Perfect Language*

by Arika Okrent  
(Spiegel & Grau; 2009;  
ISBN 978-0-385-52788-0; \$26.00)

<http://www.inthelandofinventedlanguages.com>

Jack Vance's book *The Languages of Pao* (1957) describes a giant social experiment. Taking control of a planet through a cunning coup, plotters devise a world-spanning experiment in proving the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The inhabitants are commanded to learn and only speak new languages, languages constructed to instill new ways of viewing the world.

This would seem to be the only way to test this hypothesis, since most different languages are associated with different cultures. We can't speak to the Houyhnhnms and get their opinion on the Thing That Is Not, and why they don't have it in their culture, unfortunately for the progress of science.

Dr. Okrent lays out a brief but amusing description of the history of invented languages, from St. Hildegard of Bingen to the present. The twelfth-century anchoress had invented a language of her own, understand.

The first more than personal example of this, though, was that of John Wilkins, F.R.S. (yes, a member of the Academy of Lagado that Swift

satirized). Wilkins's primary role at the Royal Society had been organizing; he had advanced the careers and researches of several of its more prominent members. His own addition to human knowledge and understanding was of a different sort.

Wilkins developed and described what he called a "Philosophical Language", one in which a word would indicate its place in the hierarchy of meaning. Such a language would be a language of truth, a language in which there would be truths.

One suspects that Okrent is a bit cynical when she says, "I did what any sensible, mature language scholar would do, I tried to look up the word for 'shit.'" [Page 38] This entailed understanding the form of the hierarchy of ideas that Wilkins had. As she puts it, "A word in Wilkins's language doesn't stand for a concept; it defines the concept." [Page 53]

Wilkins's hierarchy has problems, and Okrent can do no better than to quote Borges on "*El idioma analítico de John Wilkins*" (you can see that she wasn't the only one to read him recently) on the mythical Chinese encyclopedia with its idiosyncratic qualifications of animals into such categories as "having just broken the water pitcher". Any classification would be arbitrary. In the course of translating that statement, Okrent describes the problems of getting Borges's classification to fit Wilkins's classifications. It was a difficult task.

Oh yes, the word for "shit" is pronounced "cepuhws" [Page 57]. Wilkins used a lot of new letters. Think of *On Beyond Zebra!* (1955). (And there is now Unicode coding for the new letters in that book.)

Our readers will be disappointed that the section on Esperanto does not mention Forrest J. Ackerman, SF's most enthusiastic Esperantist. And other incidents in the history of the language of peace don't quite make the cut, such as the arrests of Esperantists during the Great Terror or the use of the language as the official tongue of Aggressor Nation, the enemy country of the US Army's maneuvers in the sixties.

Ludwig Zamenhof had a background of less successful invented languages to draw on. For example, Solresol, the language that can be so easily sung (there are seven sounds in the language, so they can be assigned notes and sung). Or the one that just proceeded him, Volapük. Zamenhof himself grew up in a polyglot community, in Bialystock, then part of Russia (after periods in Byelorussia and the Generalgouvernement, it is in Poland).

Okrent describes a still-flourishing culture of Esperanto and Esperantists, with folk music, literature, community . . . and some decidedly eccentric people, like the Icelandic fisherman who learned it by himself and made a career of going to every Esperanto Congress. On the other hand, it seems we owe George Soros to the Esperanto movement [Pages 126-127].

Okrent refutes a popular belief about the hieroglyphic nature of Chinese characters. In James Blish's *The Quincunx of Time* (1973), Thor Wald is reading a Chinese mathematics journal, although he can't speak or read Chinese, but he knows what the characters mean

because they look like that. As Okrent points out, this is the case for only some of the more elementary ones, and more often the characters reflect the Putonghua word; thus the character for "clamp" consists of the character for "wood" and the character for "horse", because the word for "clamp" is *ma* and the word for "horse" is *ma* with a different tone [Pages 168-170].

A guy named Karl Kasiel Blitz didn't know that when he fetched up in Shanghai in 1940. He was concerned about communication too, and wanted to develop a simpler means of representing concepts independent of languages, thus reducing the sort of conflict that impelled him to change his name to Charles Bliss.

The result was Blissymbolics, a representation of concepts in pictures instead of letters. Okrent describes how Blissymbolics was used by schools for the handicapped, particularly one in Canada.

Bliss allowed his inner control freak to come out. He berated the teachers for not using existing symbols in the fashion he had intended them, even though he had not communicated that usage to them. He refused to design new symbols, then berated the teachers for designing new symbols without his permission. Finally, he accepted a payment of \$160,000 for a permanent license.

Okrent describes how during the filming of a documentary about him, Bliss had flown into a frothing rage about such a use, then gone before the cameras and acted the enthusiastic, exuberant, positive advocate. The documentary, incidentally, is titled *Mr. Symbol Man* (1974).

As you know, Mike, the Lunar Authority's mainframe and Net, originally communicated in Loglan, the logical language, and only when they did the upgrade to English (or Loonie) voice-recognition software did things go pear-shaped. The creepy political cultists in Robert Rimmer's utopian novel *Love Me Tomorrow* (1977) also sprinkled Loglan words through their conversation. Unlike Mike (and we're all very sorry to know that) or Newt Morrow, the creepy cult leader candidate in *Love Me Tomorrow*, and his people (and it's good to know that), Loglan is very real. The language was devised by James Cooke Brown, a sociologist who was pondering the implications of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. (He must not have read *The Languages of Pao*.)

Although Brown announced the concept in 1960, he didn't get around to actually producing anything anyone else could use until 1975. He had spent much of the intervening time trying to get various grants for the project, which is hard to do when one doesn't have any work in refereed journals. All he had written on it he published himself, and fanzine writing doesn't have much influence on the National Science Foundation. When he finally did publish, while the research community didn't take to the idea, he did find a small but avid group to follow the path to logic.

Brown allowed his inner control freak to come out. He berated the Loglanists for not using existing words in the fashion he had intended them, even though he had not communicated that usage to them. He refused

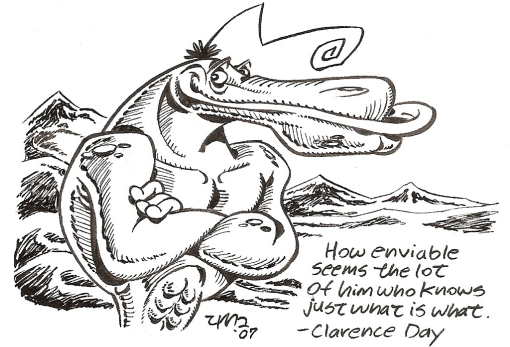
to design new words, then berated the Loglanists for designing new words without his permission. If this sounds familiar, that's the point.

Not having \$160k to hand, the followers of Brown eventually split off and created their own logical language, which they called Lojban. Brown continued in his own little world until he died in 2000.

Okrent describes how she went to a meeting of the few, the proud, the Lojbanphones; what they call Logfest, the meeting of the Lojban people. It was at Philcon 2006, and she describes how they went from function room to room, always getting bumped out. (Sounds like they weren't really on the program. Anyone remember if Philcon 2006 had programming problems?)

There, she ran into a real problem. Nobody seems to be able to write a correct sentence in Lojban. Brown may not have been the only person involved lacking the virtue instilled in his language and its heir.

How strong and steadfast those without  
The least uncertainty or doubt.



After a discussion of Láadan, the feminist language invented by Suzette Hadin Elgin, Okrent goes on to recount her encounter with another such language: **thIngan**, or in other tongues, Klingon. (In a serious typographic flaw, the **thIngan** words given in the text are printed in *italic*, not **boldface** as they are supposed to be; the editor had no honor.)

Okrent describes with some pleasure the story of the creation of the Klingon language and then her own experiences with it. She enjoyed learning it. Marc Okrand, the deviser, works with his fellow fans, taking suggestions for new words and putting in often-sly suggestions and byplay:

If you have a sharp eye and an active imagination, Okrand does offer a narrow foothold into the lexicon. The word for "fish," for example, is **ghotl'**. If you get the reference to the George Bernard Shaw anecdote about the absurdity of English spelling ("gh" as in "tough," "o" as in "women," "ti" as in "nation" = "fish"), you remember this word. The word for "guitar" is **leSpal** (parsed Les Paul). Other nations are simpler, but just

as memorable. The word for "pain" is 'oy'. "Hangover" is 'uH. This wink-wink tendency in the vocabulary, however, is no more than a faint undercurrent and can't be relied on as a study aid.

— *In the Land of Invented Languages*, Page 277 [Corrected for typography]

Okrent had begun the book by saying "Klingon speakers . . . inhabit the lowest possible rung on the geek ladder." [Page 3] Maybe so among computer types, but she should go to more cons. If she were a member, the Lojban item might be on the program.

In a final chapter, she discusses more literary invented languages, primarily of course Tolkien. For the Professor, it was a work of art, and the novel was merely a means for expressing it.

An appendix lists some five hundred artificial languages, from Hildegard's *Lingua Ignota* (c1150) on up to 2007. I did note one dubious point; Okrent states that M. A. R. Barker's *Tsolányi* was first published in 1978 but there are several *Tsolányi* phrases and even a document in the original in the first rule book, *Empire of the Petal Throne*, which was published in 1975. Or is she only counting the publication of explicitly linguistic discussions (i.e., she puts the publication date of Quenya in 1955, when *The Return of the King* was published, even though it's used in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, published the year before)?

Discussions of the fate of dying and dead languages raise the point that the demise of a language means the demise of a universe of thought, of literature, of poetry. Looked at it from that perspective, the creation of a language implies the birth of such things. Which is a quite beautiful thought; creation, to combat destruction.

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Seussian Latin Extensions

<http://www.evertype.com/standards/csur/seuss.html>

Mr. Symbol Man

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0202481/>

Lojban

<http://www.lojban.org>

Loglan Institute

<http://www.loglan.org>

Klingon Language Institute

<http://www.kli.org/>

## STAND ON ZANZIBAR

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**BLOOD & RAGE:**

*A Cultural History of Terrorism*

by Michael Burleigh

(Harper; 2008, 2009;

ISBN 978-0-06-117385-1; \$29.99)

. . . Nor does the cliché that today's terrorist is tomorrow's statesman really get us very far. If you imagine that

Osama bin Laden is going to evolve into Nelson Mandela, you need a psychiatrist rather than a historian. The Al Qaeda leader does not want to negotiate with us since what he desires is for all infidels and apostates to submit or be killed.

— *Blood & Rage*, Page ix

ALT. TREK  
ALT. TREK, THE  
RATING GENERATION  
WHEN KLINGON BLOOD  
POURS DOWN THE SEWER DRAINS  
AH, THEN MY FRIENDS  
THE FUTURE WILL BE BRIGHT!



John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* (1969) contains a chapter ["the happening world (11) HOW TO"] of quotes from fliers and bulletin boards explaining and soliciting means of physical destruction. Brunner treats this as the justified outcry of victims repressed and oppressed by a hostile system; an outlook much repeated and endorsed by many among the young generation to which the styles and themes of that book appealed.

When others took up this methodology, for some reason they became subhumans who deserved extirpation and extermination. This just goes to show how inconsistent the Christian Right is.

In this work, Burleigh describes the methods and aims of non-state sponsored terrorism. (That is, he does not mention the efforts by Robespierre to purify the French body politic, or by Stalin to ensure his dominance.) His span is the past two centuries; from the various Russian idealists who really knew what the *narod* wanted better than the people themselves did down to the shaheeds of today.

The recurring theme is how any doctrine, any idealism, becomes all too soon, all too easily, an empty belief in killing for the sake of

killing, destruction for the sake of destruction, obliteration for the sake of obliteration. (Why is this sounding like what the Guru in *Gunga Din* (1939) would say?) If there is any aim at all, it is that something new will emerge once all that exists is gone, has been expunged.

A second theme that emerges is that of the enablers, from the liberal lawyers who defended the Russian terrorists to today's apologists for Islamic terrorism. They defend those who intend to (and in some cases, actually did) destroy the values they defended. Or, how the way to understand the sandalistas was to read sixty-year-old reports by Eugene Lyons and Malcolm Muggeridge. And so for the Fenians and their heirs in America.

Burleigh plays no favorites; he criticizes actions of the Irgun in the same tone that he discusses the deeds of the anarchists. He reveals some unsettling links. Emma Goldman is heralded in some circles as the beautiful face of radicalism: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." But she was the lover of Johann Most, the man who imported political bombings to the U.S. (Admittedly they did break up rather violently.)

Burleigh raises the point, quite incisively, that the rebels are not the oppressed. Or at least, from an objective standpoint they are not oppressed, though they turn out to be very good at reinventing their society as oppressive. All too often, the rebels turn out to be the bored, spoiled elite, going into wrecking because there's nothing to do that weekend. Like the Bill Mauldin cartoon showing the Italian revolutionaries: "I'm bored. Let's go drag-race our Ferraris." The example of the *Brigate Rossi* is particularly contrasting as they were surrounded by real revolutionaries who had really fought a real oppression. But the *Rote Armee Fraktion* and their other overseas comrades were just as bad.

The current problem also comes up. The particular difficulty in this case is that there is an entire sector of society that provides sanction and support for these terrorists, and in response, to the actions of the part, the defending society as a whole has ceased to defend itself.

Burleigh provides an intellectual taxonomy of terrorism. Understanding the how and the why does not provide a what; it does provide the foundations for creating a what.

## ATALANTĚ

Review by Joseph T Major of

**HOW ROME FELL:**

*Death of a Superpower*

by Adrian Goldsworthy

(Yale University Press; 2009;

ISBN 978-0-300-13719-4; \$32.50) and

**LOST TO THE WEST:**

*The Forgotten Byzantine Empire That Rescued Western Civilization*

by Lars Brownworth

(Crown Publishers; 2009;

ISBN 978-0-307-40795-5; \$26.00)

I believe that at least one reader will dismiss the magisterial, complex, and far-reaching work



by the distinguished Ph.D. (Oxon). It does not mention a crop failure.

Speculating why Rome fell has been a popular pastime since, oh, AUC MCCXXX, after König Odoacer offed Orestes, the Master of the Soldiers, kicked out his little boy, and packed the Imperial regalia off to Constantinople. Goldsworthy presents the long and excruciating story of *How Rome Fell* in one large, but not as large as the best-known work, volume.

To understand why a raggle-taggle gang of barely civilized Germans could expunge an empire entails going back a few years. Like to the death of Marcus Aurelius.

Unlike his predecessors, Commodus was a stay-at home sort. That, more than his ego or his fondness for playing gladiator, weakened his position. Then, the struggle to succeed him followed the bad precedent of the year of the Consulship of Nero Claudius Caesar (for the fourth time) and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus, with C. Velleius Paterculus and M. Manilius Vopiscus as suffect consuls, AUC DCCCXIII (or as the despised followers of Chrestus would come to render it, AD 60), when generals proclaimed themselves emperor and set out to ratify the decision in blood.

Which was a significant contributory cause. Civil wars destroyed property, killed men, and wrecked the structure of society. When the era of the Barracks-Room Emperors burned out, when a tribune could send out a party of a decurion and two soldiers to cut wood and feel sure the soldiers would not hail their commander as Augustus, demand a donative, and kill him when he couldn't pay up, a reaction ensued, with results as bad the other way.

The great stabilizer was Diocletian. Other observers have focused on his efforts to provide a sufficient command structure, or his enforcement of social class (e.g., the scenes in Alfred Duggan's *The Little Emperors* (1961) where the narrator blandly describes burning people alive for having switched careers). A more substantial cause, though, seems to have been the reorganization of government.

Diocletian broke the existing provinces into smaller ones, then grouped them into dioceses ruled by vicars. Later on a group he didn't particularly like would take up that structure, but that's another story. All this required more and more clerks to process the paperwork, which meant that any particular malign event could all too easily be hidden from those in charge, lost in the records.

The system became more and more inflexible. As a result, the raid of the Tervingi, which would have been seen off easily enough before, led to the catastrophe of Adrianople (for more on that see Alessandro Barbero's *9 Agosto 378: il Giorno dei Barbari* [*Day of the Barbarians*] (2005, 2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #5)).

After that, the government stumbled from one coup to another, one catastrophe to another, one failure to another. Anyone of ability fell afoul of intrigue. Goldsworthy spends a chapter describing how Roman authority in Britain evaporated (the topic of Duggan's novel, and

also noted in Wallace Breem's *Eagle In the Snow* (1970; discussed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #3)).

And finally, when essentially the boss of a bunch of gangs sticking together for the moment wound up the wasted and truncated remnant of the Western Roman Empire, nothing changed — and yet everything did. Goldsworthy argues that though things did not change that much, there was still a transition.

But that was only half the story. The rest has been pretty much *Lost to the West*. Edward Gibbon, whose shadow falls over both these works, found the Eastern Empire an unworthy successor to its classical progenitor. And Byzantine society can be difficult to accept. Perhaps not for all, what with the popularity of the John the Eunuch mysteries, the radiant clemency of Guy Gavriel Kay's *Sarantine Mosaic*, or some of the stuff from that other guy who wrote about Basil Argyros.

In a chatty and often thin-on-the-ground style, Brownworth describes the long string of catastrophes and recoveries that marked the gradual downtrend of the Roman Empire. That was what they said they were, even though their government bore little resemblance to the Rome they descended from.

Some parts are less than they could be; for example, Maurice is never even mentioned once in the text.

Brownworth's description of those he does touch on is striking. For example, he argues that there was no Seldon Crisis forcing Emperor Peter "Justinian" Sabbatius to dispose of his leading general, that hero of alternate history Belisarius; rather, the emperor distrusted his general because the empress distrusted the general, and Theodora knew where he slept. Or didn't; Justinian was notorious for walking about the imperial palace, unable to sleep.

Other rebuilders — Heraclius, Basil II, John I, Alexius I, or the pitifully unheralded Manuel II, who in the final days of the empire actually managed by diplomacy to make the Osmanlis his vassals (for a while) — fill these pages, along with the wreckers who undid what they did, whether the internal ones such as Phokas, or the outside ones like Enrico Dandolo. There is room for a dozen sagas here, of betrayers, the betrayed, the builders, the destroyers, and more politics and intrigue than in your average publisher's.

Of these two books, *How Rome Fell* is more of a study for one already acquainted with the basic facts, while *Lost to the West* is for the neophyte who wants to find about about Rome-on-the-Bosporus. Rejoice.

#### "... WE'RE NEEDED"

Review by Joseph T Major of

**DEFEND THE REALM:**

**The Authorized History of MI5**

by Christopher Andrew

(Borzoi/Alfred A. Knopf; 2009;

ISBN 978-0-307-26363-6; \$40.00)

[British title: *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5*]

Extraordinary crimes against the people and the state have to be avenged by

agents extraordinary. Two such people are John Steed, top professional, and his partner, Emma Peel, talented amateur — otherwise known as 'The Avengers'.

Professor Andrew has done this previously, but not with such cooperation: *Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1985, 1986, 1987) covers this and the other outfit. And, peculiarly enough, their first leaders were the first officers of their progenitor, the Secret Service Bureau: Vernon Kell and Mansfield Cumming.

It may surprise the reader to learn that MI5 pioneered in opening up fields for women. The Registry, the department which filed the records of all German agents and suspected German agents in Britain during the Big War, was womanned completely by, well, women, almost all of them University graduates to boot. Their subsequent record was mixed, but MI5 had a female Director-General long before any other such outfit has been led by a woman.

Professor Andrew describes a strange and exotic, very potty and eccentric, organisation. One could not imagine the prim and proper G-Men of the FBI, or the revolutionary sword and shield men of the Cheka/OGPU/NKVD/KGB putting on a self-satirical pageant, for example.

In this, its centennial year, the Circus can look back on a long and varied career in the Defence of the Realm, ferreting out such threats as Irish rebels, German spies, Bolshevik agents, Nazi spies, Soviet agents, jihadists, and oh yes Irish rebels. Some things never change.

Andrew touches on the triumphs and the disasters with equal lucidity. Similarly, he describes the varied sorts of people who headed up this eccentric outfit. Some were failures, such as Sir Patrick Sillitoe, who burst into tears when describing how his subordinates would humiliate him by lacing the conversation with Latin quotes. Some wore themselves out, such as the above-mentioned Sir Vernon Kell, who remained in charge for the first thirty years of the organisation.

Some went on to other successes, such as Sir Dick White, who took over t'other Firm, or Dame Stella Rimington, who wrote novels and advised her fictional counterpart Dame Judi Dench. And then there was *him* . . .

Perhaps the only significant figure still beating the drum for the theory that Sir Roger Hollis, Director-General of the Security Service, was a Soviet agent is Chapman Pincher (see his *Treachery* (2009; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 8 #4). Andrew spends more time refuting the theory than it's worth, perhaps, but some things need to be said. As well, he refutes the accusations against others such as Graham Mitchell and Guy Liddell. The real ones were bad enough.

The story of the tracking-down of Philby — so close and yet not close enough — illuminates the problem of being confined within the law, facing those who exploit its vulnerabilities. And other matters; as with so many, revealing the culpability of Agent STANLEY would mean revealing the breaking of the Soviet codes.

Another matter Andrew strives to lay to rest was the Very British Coup, the theory that on



the one hand Harold Wilson was a Soviet agent, and on the other that though he wasn't the Security Service forced him out of office. They did keep a file on him. However, his retirement was due entirely to health.

A means powerful and effective enough to pursue wrongdoers effectively has the power, if misused, to damage the lives of the innocent. What can be done to keep this in check? An organization that traditionally spoofs its ways and means has the tradition of self-analysis, an ability that need not be confined to comic shows. How to develop it?

### WHEN VOIHA WAKES

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

#### GODDESS UNMASKED:

*The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality*  
by Philip G. Davis

(Spence Publishing Company; 1998, 2000;  
ISBN 1-890626-20-1; \$17.95)

Eileen Joyce Chant Rutter, who preferred to be known, at least to publishers and readers, by her maiden nickname of Joy Chant, had a certain attunement to the zeitgeist. In 1970, High Fantasy, with plenty of demidivine beings, an ultimate war between the goodly folk and the Evil Overlord, and a cataclysmic ending, was all the rage. That year, she brought out *Red Moon and Black Mountain*, which was not set in North Carolina or in Crna Gora (Montenegro).

By 1977, Conan had o'erpast Frodo, and what was in was barbarians fighting masses of foes, visiting "civilized" lands and shaming the locals through their honest humanity, and then finding their Right Woman on a battlefield. That year, Chant published *The Grey Mane of Morning*.

Six years later, the big muscular guy and the little furry-footed chap were ignored as chauvinist pigs and the trend was towards explorations of Gynocracy, how the rule of Woman, which had been smashed by sexism, had been peaceful and harmonious, and only gender rage was wrong. That saw Chant's final work by herself, *When Voiha Wakes*.

Davis explores here the background of these works; the intellectual history and underpinnings of feminist neopaganism. The result is not the most pleasant of backgrounds; it is at best mythomantic, more commonly sordid. In fact, most of these people were the sort you wouldn't let into your home.

Before he gets to write about those org—**rituals** that Elron and Jack Parsons conducted in the Manner According to Crowley, he has to discuss the facts on the ground, or perhaps under it. The archaeologists and anthropologists who determined the matriarchal prehistory of huwomany, it seems, were interpreting their finds with a very high level of preconception. (See *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future* by Cynthia Eller (2000) for a more detailed analysis.)

Before the facts, it seems there were the legends. Davis has to trail through the long, elaborate, and mythomantic history of occultism; the Rosicrucians, the Freemasons, and other

such mysterious and esoteric cults. All of which had to invent even more ancient and cryptic origins; thus the Templar ancestry beloved by writers from Brown to Baigent, Kurtz to Leigh. (One more blow to *Two Crowns for America* (1996); the first Masonic Lodge to admit women was in 1882, and was speedily expelled from the national organization [Page 223].)

There were no clear lines back then, and such names familiar in other fields as that of Agent Henri Fagot, er Giordano Bruno [see Page 131], John Dee (but not *Be Boke of Be Arab*), and so on contributed to the hermanuetic and romantic exploration of the mystical and occult part of the world.

For all that they called it the Age of Reason, the great thinkers of that era could often, and embarrassingly so, be thoroughly credulous. David discusses in this context the contributions of Franz Mesmer, and how in turn that led through Kant to the German Romantics.

Another thread was that of the Feminist Utopians of France. Admittedly it usually started with a guy arranging things so he could get all the women he wanted (Henri de Saint-Simon used to go around wearing a bib saying "LE PERE", that is "The Father") but when the original founder passed on (worn out, no doubt) the followers created a society of women that usually imploded before long.



And speaking of women, there were the occultists. Helena P. Blavatsky for example, and her life-story was so singularly at odds with what she said it was, while her philosophy was very much taken from the above sources. And others were about as bad. (I'm pleased to say that Davis shows that my notorious relative had absolutely no contact with any of this bunch.)

You'll recall that Mary Lefkowitz discovered that the dirty little secret of the Afrocentric movement was that the theory of the Stolen Legacy of Greek Philosophy derived, not from any research, but from a novel written before the rediscovery of the transliteration of hieroglyphics. (See her *Not Out of Africa* (1997) for this and her *History Lesson: A Race Odyssey* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #2) for the reaction to it.)

Well, the Goddess Theory has a similar origin; it can be traced back to a little-known book, *Das Mutterrecht* by Johann Jakob Bachofen (1861). Worse yet, to an incomplete and skewed translation.

Then there came the guy who put it all together, Gerald Gardner. Davis shows how his

sources, the witches who initiated him, were conveniently unavailable. Not to mention his ties with Aleister Crowley, or his derivations from Margaret Murray. Murray's theories are still a basis of the doctrine of those Wiccans who claim that it's the Old Religion brought back to life, and a little more space debunking them would be useful.

Believing that Wicca or Modern Witchcraft or whatever it's called is the Old Religion that was the basic faith of Europe until the arrival of the Kurgan People, or until the Burning Times, or whenever, is not sustainable. Those who cite it as their own new but true for them faith must confront the less dignified foundations recounted here.

There could be more on the exaggerated history of Wiccan theory, such as the claim that nine million witches were annihilated during the witch craze, or that it was in fact an attack on an all too modern feminist socialist egalitarianism. The actual figure was more like 60,000, which is bad enough, and the accused did not pretend to anything like modern feminist socialist multicultural ecological wiccan doctrine.

Not that this will stop stuff like Naomi Kritzer's feminist empowerment group in *Freedom's Gate* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #5) and so on in her Dead Rivers Trilogy.

**And as year follows year,  
More old men disappear,  
Someday no one will march there  
at all.**

Report by Joseph T Major

Remaining are:

#### Australia

Claude Stanley Choules (108) Royal Navy

#### Poland

Józef Kowalski\* (109) 22 Pulk Ułanów

#### United States

John Henry Foster "Jack" Babcock (109)  
146th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary  
Force

Frank Woodruff Buckles (108) United  
States Army

\* "WWI-era" veteran, enlisted between the  
Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles

National totals: Canada, U.K., U.S. 1 each;  
Poland 1 WWI-era. British Empire 2.

### ZENYATTA

(Street Cry out of Vertigineux by Kris S)  
by Lisa Major

Zenyatta scored a tremendous win in the Breeder's Cup Classic, a feat not even the legendary Personal Ensign managed. There were some very anxious moments before the race when Quality Road violently resisted going into the gate and fought the gate after the starters got him in. Fortunately the gates are designed to yield if the horse is truly determined to escape. He did not escape without several cuts and probably bruises and so became the first horse ever scratched at the gate in the Breeder's Cup.

Zenyatta is huge. She would not look out of

place among a collection of Trakehners, the towering German breed. She dances on the way to the post. If she hadn't had the speed she does she could have had a career in dressage..

## THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

Being the occasionally interesting ramblings of a major-league technophile.

### Why We Need Planets

It is a bit of a trope in SF — including some very bad stories — that aliens land on Earth to steal its resources. People aware of such things as the composition of lunar regolith and asteroids — as well as the fact that there's lots of water in comets and icy moons — decry this as pure folly. (*Ice Pirates* can get away with this because it's a farce, but there have been some serious works which base their entire plot on absurd concept of aliens wanting Earth's water.) Why drop down into a deep gravity well, grab something, then climb back out, when such resources are available for far less work elsewhere?

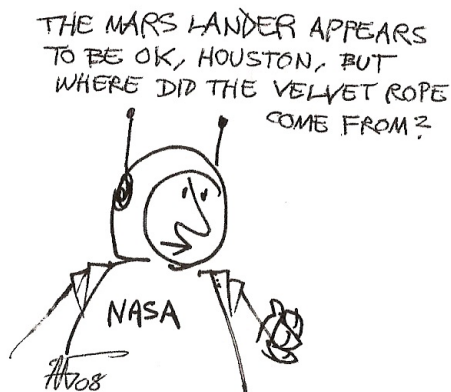
The thing is, there *are* resources on planets which *aren't* available for far less work in space. Or, in some cases, at all.

Much is available in space. Light elements — such as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen and so forth — are plentiful, both in the interplanetary dust and in asteroids and comets. Asteroids also contain small but significant quantities of heavy metals, valuable both intrinsically (as conductors, for reflective coatings, etc.) and extrinsically, due to historical significance. The soil on the Moon is rich in helium-three, which is easy (relatively speaking) to fuse, making it a valuable energy source. Mining regolith or asteroid crust should be easy. The material is loose, barely consolidated if at all. Just rake it up and sort out what you want. However, while these sources contain many raw materials necessary for life or profit, there are other things which are necessary, useful or simply desirable, which cannot be found on small bodies.

Geological process on large bodies — such as differentiation and metamorphism — take those raw materials and segregate, concentrate and physically and chemically alter them. Think of gravitational differentiation as a radial centrifuge, pulling everything in a body towards the center of mass, in the process separating them by density. The more fluid the materials, the better this works, of course. Fluidity for most materials is temperature dependent. Temperature in turn depends on several factors: Kinetic heating (from infalling material); Tidal heating (from the flexing which takes place due to tides); Radiative heating (from incoming light and heat, usually from being close to a star); and Radioactive heating.

Gravitational differentiation concentrates materials according to density. Other forms of differentiation concentrate materials by different mechanisms. This means that on bodies which are big enough for these processes to take place,

normally rare substances can be found in large amounts if you know where to look. Differentiation not only concentrates rare materials where they can be easily gathered, but also allows chemical processes which would be extremely rare to impossible in space to occur on differentiated bodies. (Remember how happy scientists were to find minerals on Mars which require water to form?) In addition to the chemistry, physical and mechanical processes only found on planets are necessary to produce certain minerals. Additionally, large bodies have transport processes which move things around, often selectively. (Diamonds only form deep underground. Most diamonds humans find are brought to or near the surface by volcanic processes.)



Gold has many technical uses, besides its purely decorative value. So do all the noble metals. Under what circumstances would it be more economical to drop down to a surface, mine the metal or high-quality ore (which would presumably be processed on the planet to further concentrate the target material) then boost back out, instead of processing regolith, or whatever? Is the easiest way to mine gold on a planet, where you have large veins forming in rock? Or is it by processing huge amounts of asteroidal material to recover the faint traces distributed throughout? The answer depends on both the particular asteroid and the technology available.

I posted my thoughts about this to my LJ account. A professional geologist added geothermal processes, which combine heat and water to produce materials not available otherwise. She also pointed out that early in the formation of the solar system, the higher proportion of radioactive materials would allow gravitational differentiation on smaller bodies than can occur in now. We could find that the largest asteroids are solid bodies made up of radial layers of differentiated materials, thanks to this effect. There is evidence that at least Ceres has experienced differentiation. If you have ever seen a large jawbreaker cut in half, you have the general idea of the effect, though with jawbreakers the process is one of accretion during multiple baths in different candy formulations. Depending on the amount of kinetic heating from impacts during formation

you might not even need radioactive heating for differentiation to occur on asteroids and moons.

Our Moon most likely formed when a Mars-sized body impacted the young Earth. Most of the material was added to our planet, with much of the rest forming a ring around it. This ring coalesced into the Moon in a process which probably left that body molten throughout for millions of years. The lightest volatiles were driven off, baked out of the forming rocks. Dense materials settled toward the core, leaving light but non-volatile materials on the surface.

The Moon is different from an asteroid in more than size. Besides the separation which took place due to this formative heating there were also the tidal effects of having the Earth so close. The distance between Moon and Earth was much smaller in those early days, amplifying the effect. One result is that the Moon is lop-sided, with masscons (mass concentrations) located deep under the surface in several areas. Further complicating things, late heavy bombardments broke through the light crust and allowed dense magma from below to well up, among other effects creating the famous lunar maria.

One effect which could occur on other bodies which is rare as a natural process on Earth is distillation. There is considerable evidence for ice in permanently shaded craters around the Moon's poles. The most likely source is cometary water. Comets would impact the Moon, the water vaporizing into the vacuum and freezing out in those shadowed craters.

This brings up some interesting speculation on geochemical processes which take place on moons of gas giants. Many of these are heated by tidal effects. They start with a different mix of ingredients than you would have on rocky, inner bodies and then bake for billions of years. What might you get? We know Saturn's moon Enceladus has geysers of water. Ice is a solid mineral there, but tidal heating can melt it deep under ground. The resulting effect is more like a volcano than a geyser. There is a very good chance that close-up images of that moon's surface will show conical formations of ice as the sources of these eruptions. The water has probably brought minerals to the surface with it. Volcanos on Earth can bring up enough sulfur to create lakes of concentrated sulfuric acid, besides the diamonds mentioned above. Imagine mining the side of an ice volcano for veins of precious gems which can't even exist at room temperature.

Remember that some elements will be better concentrated on geologically active planetary bodies due to geologic processes. That's the basis of our ore deposit exploration here on Earth. Rather than mining for precious exotic gems, settlers might have to tap those veins on Enceladus for the relatively high concentrations of trace elements which are otherwise segregated in the core.

On Earth, limestone, granite and other metamorphic rocks are used for things besides raw ingredients. However, we wouldn't likely need metamorphic rock in space for structural uses. The Moon's soil is rich in aluminum and some other light metals, and we already know

how to make lunarcrete from the regolith. Asteroids would provide similar resources. I could easily see marble, granite and even limestone becoming luxury items, though, used to decorate executive offices in space. (I'm talking about \*really\* thin veneers, here. :-)

Besides providing potential resources, the presence of certain minerals tells us things about a body's past. For example, The ESA's Venus Express has found evidence of granite on the shrouded planet. If this proves out, that is significant. Before, it was thought that Venus' plate tectonic system was stillborn. However, to create granite you start with basaltic rock, bury it deep under the ground with enough water, leave it for a while, then bring it back to the surface where it can be found and quarried. This means that Venus had plate tectonics long enough for the conversion, and enough water to do the job. If there actually is granite there.

A large part of the answer to the question of whether going to the surface of a large planet is worthwhile depends on how easy access is. If the planet has a beanstalk (space elevator) things become much easier. If the miners are still limited to rockets — even very good rockets — the justification for the trip becomes much more difficult.

However, there is one thing we know is freely available on Earth which we haven't found anywhere else. Life.

How much would you pay to bring a small package of grass seeds and some potting soil to your space station?

### PERUGINA BACI

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers  
<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>

I first heard about Baci chocolates many, many years ago. I'm pretty sure it was in the pages of *Chocolatier* where I first heard about this Italian chocolate, or at least it was the most likely place. I'm trying to remember when I finally tried one for the first time, but I'm drawing a blank. I know it was several years ago, but I can't recall specifics.

More recently (as in a few months ago), I was in World Market, and in the candy section, I saw Baci on one of the shelves. Obviously, I picked up a couple of boxes to enjoy, and to use for review purposes.

There is just one slight problem with what was available. The only packages are boxes that contain only two chocolates. Now, this might not be a problem if all you want is just a little taste. If you're going to be writing a review, however, a bag of the chocolates would be much better. But, I have to work with what I have.

The center of a Baci chocolate is a dark chocolate ganache blended with chopped hazelnuts. A ball of this ganache is topped with a whole hazelnut, and everything is covered in dark chocolate.

The Baci are wrapped in silver foil decorated with blue stars. Wrapped inside each chocolate is a love note, with the same message written in several languages. The only one I can read is English, but I'm pretty certain that at least one of the others is Italian. A couple of the

others look like Spanish and French, and I have seen Greek on at least one note.

The dark chocolate of the outer shell seems to be the most dominant flavor. It's more intense than that of the ganache. The ganache contains a hint of hazelnut flavor, but a stronger taste of hazelnut comes from the whole nut topping the chocolate. And both the whole nut and the chopped nuts in the ganache give a slight crunchy texture to the chocolate.

I could easily go through an entire bag of Baci, if they were available. Since they are an import, I'm kind of limited to what stores like World Market are able to obtain. I would be interested in learning if Perugina makes other variations of Baci chocolates. I think I will be picking up the occasional package, even if I only get two chocolates. I want to see more of the love notes hidden inside.

### BRACH'S MILK MAID CHOCOLATE CARAMEL CANDY CORN

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers  
<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>

[NOTE: I suppose I should start by mentioning that this review is actually a year overdue. This candy first appeared around this time last year, but for whatever reason, I didn't get around to reviewing it then. This year, I'm reviewing it.]

Two years ago, when I reviewed Brach's Caramel Candy Corn and Caramel Apple Candy Corn, I ended my review by thinking, "How about a chocolate flavored candy corn? Or perhaps a chocolate caramel candy corn . . . ?" Well, when the Halloween candy began appearing on the shelves for the 2008 season, both the Caramel and Caramel Apple variations appeared for a second year. And they were joined by the Chocolate Caramel Candy Corn.

Now, part of me would like to think that there was someone at Brach's who saw my review two years ago, said, "Hey, what a great idea," and turned my random musings into reality. It would be nice to think that, but I don't know how likely that really is. Yes, I suspect that Brach's more than likely has someone searching the Internet for any reference to the company. And if that indeed is the case, that someone or someones probably saw my review. But I really, really doubt that one little line at the end of a product review would be enough to inspire a new product. I think it's far more likely that the Chocolate Caramel Candy Corn was in development in 2007, and just wasn't ready for release until Halloween 2008.

The Chocolate Caramel Candy Corn has the same flattened cone shape that you find in other candy corn. Instead of being tri-colored like most candy corn, this version has only two colors. The base is a lighter shade of brown; about the same shade as the color of most caramels. The tip is a more chocolate shade of brown; somewhere closer to the color of dark chocolate.

The flavor is caramel and chocolate, just as advertised. It isn't the same as the flavor of a

chocolate caramel. Instead, it's more like the flavor you would get when you took a jar of caramel sauce and a jar of hot fudge sauce, and blended them together. You can tell that the two flavors are there, but they aren't distinctly separate. (This is not necessarily a negative thing; in fact, the taste is quite pleasant.)

And just as I mentioned two years ago, I am still trying to decide the right way to describe the texture of candy corn. Whatever that description might be (and I will eventually find the right way to describe it), it definitely applies to the Chocolate Caramel Candy Corn. It has the same feel in the mouth as other candy corn.

The Chocolate Caramel Candy Corn has already weathered one Halloween season, and survived to make a return engagement. So while the usual seasonal disclaimer applies here, I feel safe in saying that even though it will disappear from the shelves sometime in early November, it will also be reappearing somewhere around Labor Day 2010.

And just in case someone from Brach's is reading this, I have one question. When will you be making that chocolate candy corn available?

### CANDY CORN DOTS

Candy Review by Johnny Carruthers  
<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>

This variation of Dots gumdrops appeared on the shelves this year for Halloween at the same time as the Bat Dots did. At first, though, I thought this would be a review that would be relegated to post-Halloween. For a time, I saw them only in bags of snack-size packages (suitable for handing out to trick or treaters), and I wasn't going to buy any of those until November 1. But much to my surprise, I saw boxes of them (I they are usually referred to as "theatre-sized" boxes) on the shelves at Walgreens, and I picked one up. (I then paid for it.)

In terms of shape, Candy Corn Dots look like the other varieties of Dots — short, squat truncated cones that have been rounded off at the top. They are colored to resemble candy corn — primarily orange, with a layer of yellow at the bottom. (I'm guessing that making them white at the top was technically difficult.)

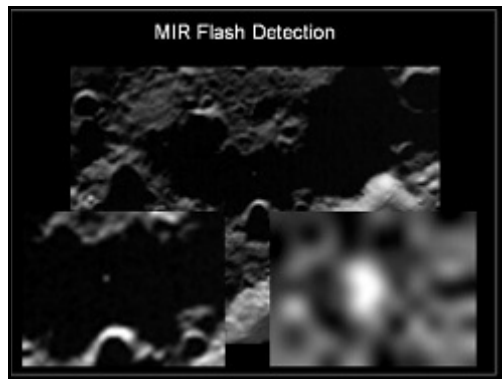
They have the same gummy texture as regular Dots, and they do taste like candy corn. Regular candy corn, that is; not like any of the flavored candy corns that I have seen (and that is a subject for a whole series of other reviews). Having said that, I just realized that I've never really been able to describe the flavor of candy corn. I know that it's made with honey (at least, that's what Brach's says on its packaging, as well as several other makers of candy corn), but I don't really know the right way to describe that flavor. (And yes, that is probably the subject for yet another entry.)

One thing I have noticed about all of the Dots varieties that I have sampled is that the flavor on all of them tends toward the bland side. They are sweet, but it seems that the people at Tootsie Roll are more interested in the gummy texture of the Dots more than their flavor.

Like the Bat Dots and Ghost Dots, Candy Corn Dots are a seasonal release. The Ghost Dots seemed to be popular enough last year to merit a return engagement this year. In a similar fashion, I suspect that Candy Corn Dots, as well as Bat Dots, will more than likely reappear on the shelves for the Halloween 2010 season.

## DRINKING MOON JUICE

by Taral Wayne



That Lucky Ol' Moon got a poke in the eye a few days ago . . . or maybe a goosing. Whichever metaphor you prefer, NASA has a bit of a black eye after the recent LCROSS mission. People gathered to watch the impact of a Centaur rocket stage in the dark basin of Cabeus crater near the Moon's south pole. They were disappointed. The expected six mile plume of rock and ice debris that NASA predicted never materialized. It could not be seen by any Earth based telescope. In fact, even the "shepherding" LCROSS vehicle in the wake of the Centaur stage was unable to record much. An infra-red signal confirmed that the impactor struck the dark bottom of the crater exactly as calculated, but all that was visible to the camera trained on the spot was a dim spot. The impact of the following instrument package made no more display than the empty Centaur stage. There was no camera to observe the second deliberate crash.

NASA is trying to explain the results away. The rock was unexpectedly hard, or the crater deeper than calculated. Another excuse is that the impact took place on a steep slope.

But from what I know of ballistics, the slope theory won't work unless it was almost vertical. And the following instrument package's crash site was several miles away from the first. Did they both impact on extremely steep surfaces?

My guess is that the hoped for ice-rich crater bottom was only wishful thinking.

Scientists have predicted there might be large deposits of frozen water at the Moon's poles, where the angle of sunlight leaves deep crater bottoms in perpetual shadow. Temperatures there might be close to absolute zero, and any water that had ever existed there might remain frozen virtually forever.

It wasn't an unreasonable theory. Comets that struck the moon in ancient times might easily have brought quantities of water with

them, and ice crystals could be widely dispersed over the lunar surface. Of course, any explosion likely to disperse ice crystals over the surface of the Moon is also likely to vaporize all of it. What little settled to the surface would not likely have lasted long while exposed to vacuum and day-time temperatures over 100 degrees Celsius. However, other debris might well have buried the ice, protecting at least some. Scientists also conjectured that exotic mechanisms might transport water molecules gradually to the poles.

In support of these ideas, scientists pointed to recent findings that detected the infra-red "signature" of water over broad areas of the Moon's surface. Unfortunately, the study couldn't distinguish between actual water and a hydroxyl radical that closely resembles water (HO rather than H<sub>2</sub>O). The radical could easily be deposited on the upper soil by the solar wind, and being highly reactive would probably only be transient.

Remember, lunar samples brought back by five different Apollo missions were drier than bone-dry. The only water found was tightly bound in minerals. Imagine trying to extract liquid water from concrete. Even the best extrapolations gave the amount of water present in the lunar soil as miniscule. Never mind the figures – picture a ton of utterly desiccated dirt in which three glasses of water had been mixed. That was as "wet" as the moon was previously thought to be.

Now all of this is very interesting, and good science. Where good science and what NASA was saying to the public parted ways was in the way the science was presented to the media. NASA was waxing happily about future colonies on the moon, supported by processing water from the lunar soil. They were already extrapolating that rocket fuel for interplanetary missions might be synthesized on the moon, outside of Earth's deeper gravity well. This would be an enormous advantage *if possible*.

But was it? True, there was limitless potential power in the form of sunlight, but that was almost irrelevant. That sunlight wasn't going to be collected with pocket calculators. It would take a very large surface array of solar cells, cables, transformers, and a ton of other equipment to turn the raw sunlight into usable electricity. We haven't even begun digging for ice, and we've already embarked on a project of the same scale as the International Space Station.

Our hypothetical lunar colony next needs the means to dig for ice. One can imagine several methods. Perhaps an enclosed pit, or robot miners remotely controlled like the Martian rovers, Opportunity and Spirit. It's too early to predict which might be most practical. But one thing we can be fairly sure of is that the facilities needed would be far greater than those it will take just to gather solar power. A lunar mining project might require the capacity for thousands of tons of payload just for the processing equipment. If a human presence is needed, as I assume it would be, then there must be habitats as well. Picture constructing on the moon a small industrial city somewhat like Scranton, or

Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania.

In other words, to exploit lunar ice for a colony first requires we built a colony to exploit it. Not merely a couple of pressurized domes, and a bit of heavy machinery that you might load in the back of a pick-up truck. Granted, the first self-sufficient colony won't need facilities as massive as an oil refinery, weighing *millions* of tons. Better engineering, and the very modest needs to support a colony of a half dozen astronauts might bring the total payload down to thousands, maybe even hundreds of tons.

We can't lift anything like that much mass into space, much less get it to the moon safely. But, perhaps in twenty years we might give it serious thought. Before we can consider much else, we need to rebuild the ability to get a man back to the moon at all. Estimates of a return to the Moon around 2020 under have been quietly retired, and a more reasonable time-table might be nearly 2030. (It may depend very much on how aggressively the Chinese pursue their stated objective of putting a man on the Moon.) Before much more than that can be done, the trip to the Moon and back will have to become routine. At some point later, it may become an advantage to have a permanent presence there, similar to the one at the Earth's South Pole.

Such a presence would be more of a scientific outpost than a colon, though. It wouldn't be able to do much more than sustain itself while exploring the immediate neighborhood, or carry out astronomical observations from a privileged location. It would hardly be able to synthesize fuel for the exploration of the outer solar system. By the time a colony grew to a population of hundreds, I suspect water would be more easily obtained from Saturn's rings, or from captured comets. But that's looking well toward the 22nd. century I'm guessing. Barring developments in hyperspace particle accelerators, or quantum communications arrays, I would argue that the moon will have few attractions for a more than scientific purposes, *ever*.

Why then the media circus over water on the moon? NASA is ever-optimistic, of course. And scientists sometimes see their bread and butter in making hopeful predictions. If ice was as plentiful under the lunar soil as it is in terrestrial tundras, it isn't hard to paint pictures for the public of busy, useful space cities on the moon someday, not too far in the future. It's meant to appeal to taxpayers, not to be good science. Favorable public opinion results in larger budgets, and expanded NASA programs, which, they argue, is good *for science*.

This is disingenuous though. Ultimately I expect we will establish some sort of permanent presence on the moon. But, giving the public expectations that can't be met could blow up in NASA's face . . . Or in the case of the recent LCROSS mission, simply fizzle out. Tying expectations to a single media event, one that is as likely to fail as it is to produce the predicted results, is almost asking to disillusion the non-scientific public.

For the moment, it appears that the fabled ice deposits at the Moon's south pole were a wrong guess. But, even should it turn out that



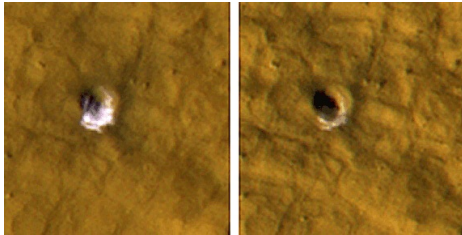
the water is there at the south pole, or anywhere on the Moon, it's very premature to begin thinking of it as a potential resource. Promoting lunar colonies is almost irresponsible.

For now, if true, the possibility of water in some form on the Moon should be treated as an interesting scientific discovery waiting to be made. That's no small thing in itself.

Meanwhile, there is far more intriguing news about water on Mars. Ice has been demonstrated as existing in sizable pockets of nearly pure ice much further toward the equator than ever thought possible. Orbital cameras have photographed newly formed craterlets with floors of uncovered ice, as well as aprons of ice strewn around their perimeters. Other phenomena clearly show very recent ground water activity, that has carved gullies and created exotic forms of sink holes, virtually as we watched from orbit. As if that weren't sufficient evidence of vast quantities of ice on Mars, the late Phoenix lander dug into it. Ice was uncovered by the rocket blast as Phoenix landed, and refroze on the lander's legs. Some evidence suggests that Mars may have had extensive open bodies of water far more recently than ever imagined – *thousands* of years rather than millions or billions.

I would almost wager that someday in my lifetime, certainly in the lifetime of anyone under thirty, anyone with a thirst may be able to buy bottled "Mars Water" from the 7-11. Much sooner than bottled "Moon Juice" at any rate.

Ice melting after recent meteorite impact on Mars.



#### Postscript:

*"NASA says it has found a 'significant amount' of water on the moon as a result of a recent probe."*

Maybe. It may be probable it was water they found, but strictly speaking what they've found is a cloud of hydroxyl molecules, the product of the UV decomposition of water. The problem is that it might not be water at all, but just a lot of hydroxyl molecules mixed into the lunar dirt.

Also, NASA statements that I've seen have been somewhat misleading about the amount. "Significant?" How much is "significant?" One figure said there might have been about 100 liters in the plume the LCROSS impactor kicked up, which is roughly 25 gallons. Fine. But how much dirt does that mean? No statement is the least bit clear about that, and you could actually interpret one of them as meaning 100 liters in

the entire crater, tens of miles across. I presume what NASA meant was the area of the impact, but that's still far from saying how much dirt that actually is.

Another statement says "wetter than some deserts on Earth." A friend of mine, who I was discussing this with only minutes ago, quipped that this was "praising with faint damnation." How much Saharan sand do you think would have to be processed in some way to extract 25 gallons of water? My guess would be tons. Even tens of tons.

But all right, let's assume there's enough moisture in that green cheese that it can be squeezed out. I figure it'll take one whole payload to get the equipment there. Now who's going to dig the dirt and shovel it into the extraction plant? Full-time astronauts are out of the question, so perhaps some sort of robots – like the Martian Rovers but with shovels instead of cameras. That's a second payload. How much water is it fair to suppose the initial plant will extract? I don't know to work that out, so I'll just hazard a guess. Extraction may be able to produce enough water to support a small research community.

But the research station would likely have to be in near proximity of the extraction site, and that means near to the south pole of the Moon. What if we want to pick up rocks somewhere else? There will be an acute need for efficient ground transportation, or, better still, something like the flying "Moon Bus" from "2001: a Space Odyssey." Now we need fuel just for that. If our research station is going to be much use, we'll have to extract quite a lot of water to synthesize into rocket juice. Oh, and another payload of equipment for the fuel synthesis plant.

Oh well . . . maybe this is do-able in 25 or 30 years. I don't foresee having the capacity to produce enough rocket fuel from lunar ice to tank up manned interplanetary spacecraft as soon as *that*, though. Give that another 15 or 20 years. The earliest a gas station on the Moon might be expected to open its pumps, then, is about 2050, maybe even 2060.

But you know what? I'd give pretty good odds that by 2060 we may not use rocket fuel anymore. Nuclear-powered ion drives or some sort of indirect laser propulsion seems more promising.

The point I'm making is not that, in some number of decades, we wouldn't find a generous supply of water or ice on the Moon useful – nor even that such water doesn't exist. (Not entirely the point, at least.) What I'm saying is that this is mostly NASA hype. They're overselling the idea to the public, hoping to keep the taxpayer interested.

But you can only play that game so long without delivering. After one or two sets by the warm-up band, the crowd wants to see The Beatles.

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#### WARBEGONE

Not Quite a Review of One Particular Copy of  
*WARBREAKER*  
by Brandon Sanderson

(Tor; 2009;

ISBN 978-0-7653-2030-8; \$27.95)

by Taral Wayne

Moshe Feder sent me a copy of Brandon Sanderson's *Warbreaker*. This seems to be a real feather in Moshe's cap – he edited the book, possibly he found the writer in the wilds of Utah, and it's put Moshe in good standing at Tor.

It must be the unluckiest copy of the book in existence.

To begin with, it didn't fit in my mailbox. That didn't deter the delivery guy, who seems to have wedged it in with a comic, circus mallet – the sort used to pound tent pegs into the ground. It was stuck tight, the edges of the book burst through the padded jacket. I literally couldn't pull the envelope out of the box. There was a slim chance of shoving it through to the other side, but what good was that? The mail man would see the book on the floor, and probably have no memory of what box it was from, even though he had delivered it the day before. And what would he do with it if he did know? Right . . . wedge it in again with that mallet!

I ended up managing to pull the book through by counter-intuitively pushing my forearm into the box with it. I was able to exert enough pressure to bend the envelope into a shallow U-shape, and that was just enough to clear it through the door. Not without the effort needed to pull a molar from a Brontosaur, and unfortunately not without scrapping the edges of the dust jacket.. Should the first edition of *Warbreaker* ever be a valuable collector's

edition, it had just lost \$100 in value.

But that would have only been a single and unremarkable stroke of bad luck. What made *this* copy of *Warbreaker* a contender for unluckiest was the meal of ravioli I had a few nights later. Yep. While scrapping the last of the pasta sauce out of the pot, a generous glob of it fell right on the book. Not on an inside page, where it would only blight a single visible surface, but on the thick open end, where it could stain every page equally. I hastily wiped the edges clean, and the damage isn't anywhere as bad as it might have been, but a number of light grey spots remain. There was another \$100 gone. At this rate I'll be fortunate if I could get twenty bucks for it next century.

Maybe I'll have better luck with *Warbreaker* while I finish reading the second half. It might never be a collector's item, and might never have any value beyond a couple of bucks at the Good Will. In that case, I won't have lost a cent.

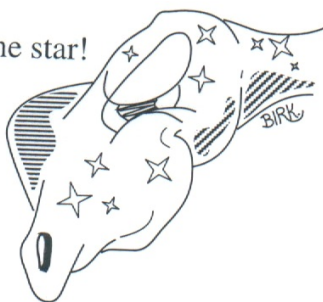
To be honest, I could never sell the book anyway. Moshe inscribed it to me, and I would have to be some kind of ingrate to ever part with it.

As for the novel, I've found it pretty good reading so far. I have little taste for sword and sorcery, and *Warbreaker* is smack dab in the bulls eye of the genre. But the writer has an eye for detail, and can paint an imaginative picture of his fantasy world. The characters are surprisingly interesting. Sanderson doesn't rely on over-familiar stereotypes like The Evil Wizard or The Barbarian Warrior. I think he could use more fleas and bad teeth, though, to be completely convincing. The main problem I have with *Warbreaker* is with the genre itself. I'm not partial to fantasies set in imaginary Dark Ages, where magic is as commonplace as sales tax. Regardless of the better case for Sword & Sorcery that Sanderson makes, it just hasn't been my cup of Elf Tea for a long time. It speaks well for the book that I fully intend to finish reading it.

Besides . . . I have a nasty suspicion that he isn't really making that stuff up. What if the writer is only borrowing his material from his surroundings? Utah is Mormon country, after all, and quite strange enough for any fantasy novel.

## FANZINES

I'm a fanzine star!



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