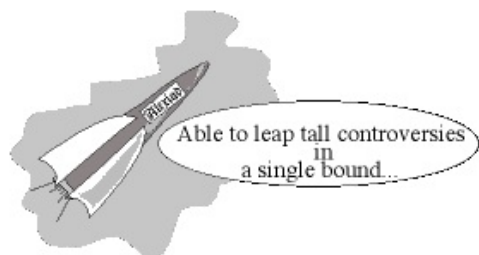


Letters, we get letters



From: **John Hertz** January 31, 2011
236 S. Coronado Street No. 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

It's easier than ever to connect with others. Also there are more and better tools than ever for making art.

Calling the Chinese goddess "Change-O" is one of the better transliteration gags I've cheen in a while. Pop me for a Popperian!

February 23, 2011

As it happens I am reading Viscount Norwich's three-volume *Byzantium* (1995) and have come to Alexiad I so quotations from the original *Alexiad* are before me. I feel little danger of confusing Joe with the Emperor, or Lisa with Anna Commena, or Darrell Schweitzer with Michael Psellus.

About the Hugos, if more people of taste and discernment nominate, there'll be better choices for voting.

From: **Brad W. Foster** February 14, 2011
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I thought this issue felt larger when I pulled it out of the envelope. And while it does seem to be one of the thicker ones in a while at 30 pages, it also seems to be on a heavier, slightly slicker stock. Hmm, is this just the first move to a higher class of publication? Can we expect **two** staples soon? Color covers? Advertising from clients and fake articles to support them? It's the thin end of the wedge, is what it is!

Another bit of strange fauna from Foster is attached for your possible amusement and use, to keep my fannish account up to date.

I had to go look up the tree octopus of the Pacific Northwest. I hit the website, and was pretty obvious to me it was a hoax, but then I kind of love this kind of thing, so it's probably easier to recognize. Still, I was amused to then read of the studies of people actually being fooled by it. Thankfully I've been personally touched by the noodly appendage of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, and all true knowledge is mine. (Can I get a "Ramen"?)

Ramen!

A few years ago I wrote a series of obituaries for the Marx Brothers — based on the idea that the first child, Manfred, had lived and gone into the acting business, so the other brothers could pursue their own courses in life; thus Julius (no "Groucho" here) became a doctor — and a Fan. Somebody wrote and asked me why I had got their biographies so badly wrong. It's getting hard to tell what is a hoax these days.

— JTM

Now, the Rock Nest Monster, *that's* something we should all take seriously.

Good pics on Taral's "Digital Animated" list, though my own list would probably put *The Incredibles* at the top. One way I've come to realize how much I do or don't enjoy a movie is how I will treat it if it shows up at random on television. For most movies, if I've missed the start, I won't switch to it. But for some, like *The Incredibles* I've found I'll often tune to it even if it is in the middle somewhere, and even if I know I'll not be able to stick around until the end. Also really loved *How to Train Your Dragon*. Saw it with a triple-feature of rented movies at a friend's house a few months back. We got *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Kick Ass*, and the last *Star Trek*. All three were fun in their own ways, but a group of middle-aged adults all agreed in the end that *Train Your Dragon* was the best of the three.

I like the idea of having a Children's/Young Adult Book Hugo award. Usually not big for adding more categories to awards, but I think that one would fill a very good slot, and help draw attention to some real material. If I had any clout at all in making such things happen, I would.

Recently finished a book thought I'd pass the word on: *Monster 1959* by David Maine. In my notes I referred to it as a serio-comic novel the re-imagines the core story of the King Kong myth, getting inside the head of the monster, and having more fleshed-out human characters. It was a fun read, and I've just picked up another Maine book, *The Preservationist*, his take on Noah and the flood.

From: **Rod E. Smith** October 14, 2010
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I was surprised and saddened to read about Jack Young. I was worried about him at MarCon last year, but when I saw him in October he looked much better. He and Sue regaled me with the tale of finding out his pacemaker needed new batteries. We sat and talked for a long time, with me showing them convention photos, including many of Jack and Sue. Now I wish I had talked less and listened more. (A bad habit not unique to that instance.)

In somewhat more optimistic news, long-time comic book huckster Kerry Gilley recently had heart surgery and is doing better. I

don't know any details because Kerry sent only a short note to the list of convention photographers we are both on.

Was the paper in this issue thicker than usual?

Office Depot had an inconsistency in their paper selection. I hope no one got nicked for extra postage.

— JTM

In re. parsecs, I remember how Great-Uncle Edward (no, not really) got that wrong in one of the Skylark novels. Dick Seaton claimed it was a purely mathematical concept, so the Fenachrone superman he was dealing with could tell him a distance in parsecs without being familiar with human measuring systems.

I have hotel reservations for Renovation, but am on the verge of canceling them. Given the fooforaw over the new human airport X-ray machines (experts on the medical effects of X-rays say the type used in these machines dump all their energy in the outer layer of the skin; my family has a history of skin cancer; all this with equipment not certified for medical use operated by folks not certified for radiating people). I will check out rail travel as an alternative.

I am currently working on *three* new Joy of High Tech columns. Thanks largely to my short attention span, I tend to work on multiple projects in parallel. Which is why nothing ever gets finished, until there's a sudden avalanche. :-)

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** February 15, 2011
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According to my *Columbia Encyclopedia* and other sources, the Coptic Church is indeed Monophysite, and allied to the Jacobite Church, which is also Monophysite. Now a certain amount of patching up of inter-church relations have been done in recent years. The Church of Rome recognizes that of the Eastern Rite as "valid," i.e. their sacraments are "real," as opposed to the purely symbolic sacraments of Protestant denominations, which is a considerable improvement over the Great Schism of 1055, then the Pope and the Patriarch excommunicated one another. It is possible that somebody declared the Copts to be "orthodox" in the past century, but certainly an ancient or medieval times, they were NOT orthodox, and, more to the point, not in communion with either Rome or Constantinople. So, yes, Alexis Gilliland is absolutely correct that the reason the Arabs took Egypt so easily was that the common people regarded the Byzantine government as oppressive, resented the imposition of Orthodoxy, and therefore saw the Arabs as liberators. Indeed, the early Muslims offered such heretic groups a much better deal. For the mere payment of a tax, you could practice Monophysitism or Nestorianism or whatever in complete freedom.

Not quite. Read Bat Ye'or's *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam* (1996) to see how free that "complete freedom" was.

The other reason the Arabs won is that the Byzantine defense of Egypt was fragmented, a holdover from the Diocletianic system of sub-dividing provinces into smaller units to prevent revolt. The problem was that each regional commander defended only his own territory and waited until he was attacked to do anything. Therefore the Arabs could defeat these commanders one by one.

My response on the subject of Global Warming, as we have come out of *yet again* the hottest year on record is to paraphrase Galileo, "But it still melts." My Latin is insufficient to do that properly, but you get the idea. Reality is one thing. Politics is another. Argue all you will, but it keeps on happening. Frankly I think the deniers and the anti-environmentalists generally should be honest and admit that they are working to protect the interests of the polluters. Their thesis, such as they have one, is that short-term prosperity is more important than any amount of environmental damage, and they don't give a damn what sort of world they pass on to their children or grandchildren. Sure enough, Republicans in Congress are doing their best to repeal what little environmental protection we have. This will have global consequences. It will show the United States up for being entirely hypocritical when it criticizes the rest of the world on such matters. Why should the Chinese stop polluting, then? The Americans got rich doing it? Rich Americans still benefit from it. Why should not China or India or Brazil get on this gravy train too?

I believe that as catastrophes mount, the ultimate solution will be a lot more extreme than anything presently being proposed. As coast cities vanish, fertile areas become wastelands, and millions or even billions are reduced to desperation, will we see wars over diminishing resources, or even, at the end, a less-than-democratic world government devoted to policing the planet in the interests of human survival? Science fictionists can play out those scenarios. Meanwhile, I quite liked a button I saw recently in a head shop in, of all places, Tempe Arizona, which read *Either you're part of the solution, or you're a Republican.*

Admit it. The Republican Party is the party of anti-environmentalists, of the polluters, of the wealthy elite. It puzzles me that often very middle class or lower middle class often support an agenda which does not favor their interests at all. Maybe the deniers are the right wing equivalents of the "useful idiots" from the famous (if apocryphal) Lenin quote. Grant McCormick, for instance, should not delude himself into thinking the corporate masters he serves give a goddamn about his welfare or his future. They do not, any more than tobacco companies care about your health.

After the uprising of the 17th June
The Secretary of the Writers Union
Had leaflets distributed in the

Stalinalee
Stating that the people
Had forfeited the confidence of the
government
And could win it back only
By redoubled efforts. Would it not
be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people
And elect another?
— "The Solution" by Bertolt Brecht

I can't deny that the consequences of Global Warming have sometimes been other than I at least anticipated. This is probably because I am not a climate scientist. I expected northward shifts in plant and animal species, in diseases, etc. I did not expect that it would give Pennsylvania more snow in the winter, but this seems to be the case, although admittedly this had been going on for too short a time for it to be statistically significant. But it seems that a warmer climate means more moisture in the atmosphere, which, when it meets a Canadian air mass, equals snow. We have had one epic blizzard this year so far (actually two blizzards about 8 hours apart), but it hasn't been particularly cold. No single digit temperatures such as I can remember from my youth, but 18 inches of snow overnight. This sort of snowfall is becoming routine.

As for Ronald Reagan that liberals seriously underestimated him — as an actor. Gore Vidal has often proudly called himself "the American Nostradamus" because in the early '60s he turned down Ronald Reagan for the lead role in his play *The Best Man* (which is about the presidency.) "Ronald Reagan is a fine actor," Vidal told the agent, "but he just would never be convincing as president." No, he was **very** convincing as "the acting president" (another Vidal phrase). He had the moves down. He could say the lines his handlers gave him. He played the role of president very well on TV, except for that slip I mentioned, where he forgot what he'd said, was shown the clip, and admitted he couldn't remember. He played it so well that people didn't actually listen to what he said, as he admitted incompetence over and over again. As I've said, no chairman of the board of a corporation would last very long if his sole excuse was "I didn't know what was going on; nobody told me." But Reagan could plead senility and even get re-elected. Now **that's** stage presence. I haven't seen anything like it anywhere else, save when Harlan Ellison, at the height of his game, could insult his audience endlessly and still get a standing ovation. It was a true triumph of presentation over content, in both instances.

One little snippet of information I appreciate from your review of the book on Byzantine strategy is that Zhu Yuanzhang (a.k.a. Ming Tai Zu, "Great Ancestor of Ming") wrote to John V Paleologos to announce his acquisition of the Mandate of Heaven. That's the sort of thing I write poems about. I'll send you the result if I do. A delicious irony. The Chinese had long known that the Byzantine Empire was there. They weren't all that interested in it, but they

did know, vaguely, that it constituted something that could be recognized as real civilization. Not equal to the Middle Kingdom, now, mind you, but civilization nonetheless. I am sure the early Ming government was not up-to-date on its understanding of the nature and extent of Byzantium. When the Yong-le Emperor famously sent his treasure fleet of junks all around the Indian Ocean in the early 15th century, the expedition had little interest in Europe. As far as they were concerned, all it produced was wool and bad wine.

By the way, if King Arthur had fought Belisarius, there would have been no knights in shining armor involved, because of course, *Prince Valiant* to the contrary, plate armor and chivalry were many centuries in the future. It would have been a struggle of post-Romanized Britons in everything from skins to chain mail, in helmets (for those warriors that could afford them) in more like the Sutton Hoo helmet you see reproduced on the cover of many editions of *Beowulf*, versus a "Roman" army which would have had substantially more chain mail and Beowulfian helmets (called "spangenhelms") and the occasional crest helmet for the officers. The "Roman" army would have consisted mostly of Germans, people from the Balkans, and a few Middle Easterners. The question of who were the "good guys" would have to be worked out by propagandists and historians later, because of course it would be the usual sordid mess that wars are, caused very likely by short-term political aims that have nothing to do with morality. The one difference is that it would have placed Arthur more firmly in history. You can imagine Procopius writing about how the noble Belisarius made short work of the barbarian Britons and sent the chieftain Arthur's head to Justinian.

Ah, but that's the difference between history and what Sir Boss encountered. And yes, the Noble Knights of the Round Table would have been a chapter or two in Prokopios (along with a more sordid tale about Guenevere in the *Anekdotia*).

— Iosephos

Uh... at least **try** to be diplomatic



From: **Grant C. McCormick** Feb. 15, 2011
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Once again, I notice that Darrell is implying that I am **denying** Global Warming (or at least I so infer), when in fact I am **doubting** the

significance of *Anthropogenic* Global Warming.

I am seriously doubting that 2010 was in reality any significant amount hotter than the preceding year. Increased urbanization will cause the same sensor to read higher over time, for the same ambient climate — a thermometer that was in a rural woods in 1970 but is now in a back lot of a suburban strip mall in 2010 will give higher readings just because of the added localized heat from human activity, even if nothing else whatsoever has changed in the overall background temperature. A more reliable indication of the recent global **lack** of warming may be inferred from leap seconds, or rather the **dearth** of leap seconds in the 2000's.

First, what are leap seconds? The current “official” length of the day (86,400 seconds) was defined by the Tropical Year of 1900¹, which divided the that year into 31,556,925.974 7 seconds, and 365.242 198 781 25 days (hence the Julian Calendar’s approximation of 365.25 days, and the Gregorian’s better approximation of 365.242 5 days). Because of tidal friction and other factors, the Earth is slowing down its spin very slowly, increasing the length of an average day by about 0.002 seconds (2 milliseconds) per century. In addition, various “random” factors can cause a random variation in this “secular” change, so the spin of the Earth can slow down even more, or even speed up briefly. So today, the “true” length of the day is about 86,400.002 seconds. Because of this, atomic time (based on the vibrations of caesium atoms, and quite steady) and astronomical time (based on the time from one noon to the next, and slowly increasing) have been drifting slowly apart since 1900. By 1970, they had drifted about 10 seconds apart. The decision was made that whenever the gap approached an added 0.9 seconds, that a “leap second” would be added, to keep it at the net 10 second difference. In theory, a negative leap second could be deducted, but to date that has never happened. More information on this can be found on the online encyclopædia, Wikipedia, at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leap_second²

Based on the estimated secular increase alone, a leap second would have to added about every 500 days, or one every year to two years. And this was the pattern from 1972 (when there were two!) through 1998. But from 1999 through 2010, there were only two total (2005 and 2008). What happened?

A **lack** of **increased** Global Warming is what happened, in my opinion. The problem with trying to integrate multiple local temperature samples to bring them into a true global average is that there is much too much uncertainty. Is a given sample truly representative of its local? Have conditions changed so that a sample location that was representative no longer is (as is my example above of a thermometer that was rural, is now suburban, and may be fully urban in a decade)? How much weight should each datum be given? How reliable is the value? It would be nice if we could find a natural process that would do a worldwide averaging of the global temperature for us. I claim that the daily rotation of the

Earth is just that process.

With very few exceptions, as you heat a substance, it expands; and as you cool it, it contracts. This specifically applies to the Earth’s atmosphere and its hydrosphere. As the Earth warms, the air and the water both expand, which pushes them farther from the center of the Earth, and (more importantly) farther from the Earth’s spin axis — the line the Earth spins about, connecting the North and South Poles. Because the angular momentum³ of the Earth **will** be preserved, as the mass moves outward, the rate of spin decreases, and the length of the day increases — think of the traditional ballerina spreading her arms out and slowing down, or pulling them in and speeding up.

My belief (and it is an educated belief — I graduated with Honors in Physics and Mathematics [dual major] from the University of Louisville in 1977) is that the lack of leap seconds stating in 1999 and running through 2010 (so far), compared to what came before, reflects a halting of Global Warming during that period. Since the number of leap seconds during the 1999 - 2010 timeframe is significantly less than what would be expected from the tidal friction alone (one every 500 days would have given us 8; we got 2), I further believe either that there has truly been at least some Global *Cooling* during that time, or (more likely) that **some** of what had been seen as part of the secular change was in reality caused by the warming earlier in the century. Both of these might be true, in different proportions.

If you wish to claim that there was significant warming in the Twentieth Century, I will not only not dispute this, I will agree. However, if you wish to claim that it has continued into the first decade of the Twenty-first, I will point at the Sun and the stars above and the Earth below, and tell you that they say you are wrong.

The point of all this? If human-generated greenhouse gasses have been increasing during this past decade, and the warming has just — stopped, then how reliable can the models and theories be that say that human-generated greenhouse gasses caused and are causing the warming?

As to the Chinese and the Indians, **I** am not being hypocritical in criticizing them for not stopping CO₂ emissions, since I do not think that they should stop; nor do I think that the U.S., Japan, nor Europe should stop, either. However, anyone who truly believes that the CO₂ emissions are causing the Global Warming is hypocritical in not asking two of the largest emitters (including the very largest) not to cut back — is a CO₂ molecule emitted in China or India harmless, and only ones from Developed Nations harmful? I don’t think so. And, no, I do not think that dumping ever-increasing amounts of CO₂ into our atmosphere is a Good Thing, I just do not believe that it is significant **yet**. If left unchecked, it will become so at some point.

Only in the last paragraph did I veer, even indirectly, into politics. Everything before was numbers and physics. Numbers that anyone can check. Physics that can be verified with the

simplest research. If we are going to do anything useful about Global Warming (like find out what is **really** causing it, if it isn’t human greenhouse gas emissions), that is how we have to approach it, not with blame, reproach, recrimination, and guilt.

¹ “The *Tropical Year* of 1900” does not refer to the overall climate, but to the fact that it refers to the astronomical year, not the calendar year — the time from one vernal equinox (beginning of Spring) to the next. Why it isn’t called the Equinoctial Year, I don’t know.

² Please note that there is an underscore character (“_”) betwixt “Leap” and “second”, in that URL.

³ The amount of “spin” it contains.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** February 15, 2011

All I can really reply to this is that meanwhile the icecaps and glaciers are disappearing (causing a major geopolitical shift over north polar oilfields; causing famines in southern Asia), species of plants and animals move north (and presumably south in the Southern Hemisphere), tropical diseases move into temperate zones, storms become more powerful. It may not be working quite according to projections, but dramatic change is taking place. There doesn’t seem to be much debate about this in the scientific community. Possibly before much longer we will have palm trees growing in Washington DC. Republicans will doubtless then claim that there have always been palm trees in DC.

It is ridiculous to claim this is not happening. The issue is what can be done about it.

Anecdotally, last summer in Philadelphia was in the middle to upper 90s from May through September, non-stop. In my youth, this was unheard of. There might be a week like that, but then it would break. I understand that one year is not statistically significant. It’s only when the hottest year on record is followed by the hottest year on record, which is again followed by the hottest year on record. The first decade of the 21st century is probably not a long enough period to be significant. But the trend since, say, 1950, should be.

All sorts of industries should gear up to the new climate. There will be real demand for a cheap air conditioner that doesn’t consume as much power, or which even keeps on working in a blackout. The fashion industry should adjust. The classic business suit may become unbearable (and unwearable) in the summer. Should we dress more like the people in India, as our climate gets hotter and wetter? Thsi sort of forward thinking is going to separate the winners from the losers. I have to say I admire the foresight of the US company that bought up the port facilities in Churchill, on the northern side of Hudson’s Bay. When the icecap goes and Hudson’s Bay is ice-free much of the year, that will be the major entry to North America.

The smart people should not be arguing about whether or not this is happening, but planning for the effects.

From: **Joy V. Smith** February 17, 2011
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I enjoyed the article on Theda Bara, which went beyond the vamp photos you associate with her. In your *The Buntline Special* review, I liked best your closing scene — not from *The Buntline Special* — “. . . Now I want to find a girl at some young ladies’ academy who will wuv me, and protect her.” As usual, you have a good selection of book reviews, and re: *Wanted Undead or Alive; Vampire Hunters* . . ., there is a story, Sanguineous (a contest winner) in the March/April issue of *Writer’s Digest* that you might enjoy.

That was why the “vamp” picture went at the front and the “intellectual” (“So, what am I thinking?” — from an ad for a magazine, where others showed people like Natan Sharansky, for example) one went at the end. She acted the vamp and was a reader.

— JTM

I enjoyed your travel diary also and Taral Wayne’s Ten Best Digital Animated films, which included some of my favorites; now I want to see *Toy Story 3*. However, I’ve never been able to get past those accents in *Cars*! And *Ice Age* (the first one only), *The Polar Express*, and *Finding Nemo* would have been on my list. Oh, and I think a Children’s/Young Adult Book Hugo Award is a great idea.

On the home front, we’ve finally sold our house and are heading towards a new house. (Lots to do there.) See my house blog for details: <http://pagadan.blogspot.com/>

the riots Dr. Zawi Hawas, the Minister of Antiquities, walked out into the mob and recruited fifty civilians, some of them armed, as guards to protect his turf — the Cairo Museum, from looting and damage. What’s more, he succeeded, with only a few items being broken and nothing stolen. Like most Ministers, Dr. Hawas is a bit of an autocrat if not a bully (trying to get the Rosetta stone back from the British Museum he sought a ban on British Egyptologists but was overruled,) and not universally liked, but after his first night performance the archaeological forums that Lee looks into are giving him his well-deserved props. At this point the military has ended the more than thirty years of “emergency rule” and gone over to martial law, presumably because the people wanted a change. We’ll see how it works out.

In the letter column the discussion of global warming continues, with a consensus that it is real, but without agreement as to whether it is anthropogenic, which, Grant McCormick to the contrary not withstanding, I think it is. Why do I think so? The short answer is that our burning of fossil fuels is increasing the atmospheric concentration of CO₂, which in turn is making the oceans more acid, a major and permanent change in our environment. Grant asks for proof that this change is having any effect while I ask how it could NOT be having an effect. Even though many climatologists are pro-Anthropomorphic Global Warming, Grant graciously allows that this is not a conspiracy since they are mostly of an age where they would have been brainwashed by Dr. Seuss’s Lorax, “who spoke for the trees.” Tsk. The naive might think that the preponderance of evidence had something to do with it. To the question of whether or not we happy humans could do anything about global warming, Taras Wolansky provides the answer when he cites Bjorn Lomborg and other economists who make the case that the costs of reducing CO₂ emissions are grossly out of line with the benefits. Another take on that problem is to understand that any legislation raising the price of fossil fuels enough to affect global warming will first result in a change of government to bring those prices back down. We humans are just as committed to burning the world’s fossil fuels as the yeast cells in brewer’s wort are committed to eating all the available sugar.

However old habits of debate die hard, and when I said (by way of supporting the case for global warming) that the Arctic sea ice was shrinking, Taras coolly replies “maybe” while noting by way of refutation that the Antarctic sea ice is growing. Which is true, for although the western Antarctic sea ice has been shrinking, the eastern Antarctic sea ice has grown enough to offset that loss.

However, to compare Arctic and Antarctic sea ice is comparing eggs and eggplants, in that the Arctic sea ice forms on a polar sea surrounded by land, while the Antarctic sea ice is forming around a polar continent surrounded by ocean. When I suggested that Earth’s climate may change to be less suited for human survival, Taras counters with smiling

paleontologists recalling “how warm and verdant the Earth has been in the past.” Alas, changes in climate tend to reduce agricultural output optimized to the status quo ante, as suggested by the recent droughts in Russia, China and Australia, (though Australia and Pakistan have recently experienced severe flooding as well) which means that feeding seven or eight billion happy humans is likely become increasingly problematical. His suggestion that the projected 20- inch rise in sea levels over the next 90 years is not very apocalyptic probably depends on one’s elevation in 2100. Googling “sea level rise projections” to verify his 20-inch figure gives us the IPCC (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) projections for 2100 which range from 30 to 75 inches suggesting rather more change than Taras admits to.

Since 2100 figures not to be the end of history how high will the sea level rise after 2100? We can look to the “recent” past, namely the Pliocene epoch 5.3 to 1.8 million years ago (mya), when the continents were pretty much in their present position. Compared to the present the mid-Pliocene warming period, 3.3 to 3.0 mya was 2 to 3 degrees Celsius warmer, while the sea level averaged 25 meters higher. Of which 15 meters came from Greenland, 7 meters came from the eastern Antarctic ice sheet, and 3 meters came from the western Antarctic ice sheet. Cores taken from the seabed underneath the sea ice floating around Antarctica indicate that both ice sheets collapsed and reformed 26 times in that 300,000-year period. The atmospheric CO₂ for the mid-Pliocene warming period has been estimated at 400 parts per million (ppm), which compares with 340 ppm in 1989 and 376 ppm in 2009. At our present rate of consumption, we figure to go past that 400 ppm mark about 2029, and might well reach 500 ppm by 2100. On the bright side, if you take the long view, that higher level of CO₂ means that we won’t be troubled with the Antarctic ice sheets collapsing and reforming every millennia or so, since they will be unlikely to reform.

What else? Lisa should definitely resume her walking, weather permitting.

From: **Milt Stevens** February 21, 2011
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In *Alexiad* V10 #1, Joseph mentions the Holocaust denying on the internet. I haven’t paid much attention to the Holocaust deniers, but I presume somebody is making money out of the whole thing. I wonder if there might be any money to be made out of WWII denying. You might claim that WWII was really a conspiracy of Hollywood movie makers. The WWII hoax was designed to cover the fact that the governments of the US and Europe had embezzled trillions to build palaces for themselves in State 51 which is located where the Bermuda Triangle ought to be. So many ships have had troubles in the Bermuda Triangle, because it’s really dry land. Concocting insane ideas is really rather fun. I



From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** February 16, 2011
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<http://www.alexisgilliland.org>

Thank you for *Alexiad* 10.1, which arrived on the day Hosni Mubarak resigned after his 30-year run as president of Egypt. In human terms, that’s a very long time, while the 18 days of riots that brought him down seem shockingly brief. It should be noted that on the first day of

can see why people do it so often.

I'm not convinced by Chris Barkley's arguments for adding a YA Hugo category. This shouldn't be surprising, since I'm on record as opposing any further Hugo categories. I'll skip over the issue of whether the Hugos are or should be viewed as an instrument for selling books for the moment. YA is a marketing category. We identify YA books by identification on the outside of the book and location in bookstores. Are there any other ways of identifying YA fiction? I'm on much firmer ground identifying steam punk or alternate history than I am with YA. One of the Harry Potter novels won a Hugo. I found it to be a presentable novel, and I can't see any reason it should have been in a special category.

Are the Hugo Awards a mechanism for selling books? I don't think they are or should be. The Hugo Awards are our way of thanking people for creating works we like. There is some economic impact, but it isn't huge. A writer who can convince enough of us to vote them a Hugo is going to become fairly popular with or without the award. With the current collapse of the publishing industry, nobody knows what the new business model for books is going to be. Changing the Hugos to influence a vanishing system isn't really sensible.

Taral's article reminded me of how many animated features I've enjoyed in the last few years. It also points out that I don't understand the technology involved. I saw seven of the films Taral lists and enjoyed them I also enjoyed films like *Coraline*, *Igor*, and *The Princess and the Frog*, but I have no idea whether they were entirely digital or not. The reason I'm enjoying more animated features is that both the art and the stories have become much better than they were years ago.

As Robert Kennedy mentioned, I was on a number of panels at Loscon 37. I'm a regular at Loscons, and the programming people always know where to find me. While it may have been caused by the particular panels I was on at this Loscon, but the audiences seemed odder than at most cons. There was one frothing at the mouth libertarian who seemed to be always on the verge of rage if anyone disagreed with him in any way. There was another fellow who kept referring to some conspiracy book that was on sale in the dealers room. There was a third guy who began one panel by flashing a strobe unit directly in my eyes. So I found myself in a crowded room, expected to say something, and unable to see a damned thing. As my vision started to come back, the guy did it twice more. The funny thing is I'm not sure the idiot was taking pictures.

The strangest audience member was an Asian male who had the sort of fixed smile I associate with autism. He would hold his hand up and keep it up until he was recognized, even if questions and answers didn't come for another ten minutes. He believed in a guy named Hoaglund who had talked to a guy who had talked to a guy who had seen a photo of a dead alien. That explanation prompted me to comment "Bullshit!" I shouldn't have done that. It was impolite. However, some ideas are

dumb enough to go beyond the limits of polite discourse.

That goes all the way back to Claude Degler, of course. Perhaps we could get Hoaglund (Richard Hoagland?) to dig to Hell for the Arkansas Love Camp.

— JTM

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Feb. 23, 2011
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I know this is late.

I greatly enjoyed your review of *In the Still of the Night*. From other reading I gather that real CSI units are much less than we are led to believe from the TV shows. They are understaffed and underfunded, and there are always (unfortunately) politics involved.

Not only that, they don't provide the unquestionable solution to the crime in 48 minutes. But then, it's been pointed out that the confessions to the crime that Perry Mason gets the real criminal to blurt out on the stand are inadmissible.

— JTM

I thank Grant for bringing to my attention the latest Miles Vorkosigan book.

I have fond memories of Sladek's Roderick books. I was sorry there weren't any more.

I have to say that my reaction to *Windup Girl* was very different from Richard Dengrove's. I found it a chore to get through, and I didn't find any characters to be very compelling. The title character came close, but no cigar. I've never enjoyed anything by Bacigalupi.

I hope one day to catch up with my reading, but don't hold your breath. We're on the road right now, and so far I haven't done a lot of reading during the trip.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** February 16, 2011
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,
PA 19143-3310 USA

For me, one cat is both necessary and sufficient. One of the first things I did once I had a wife and a home was to acquire a cat. This first was a cat already adult, on offer from a friend of Betsy's. The present incumbent was not fully grown when I got her; she remains slim and kittenish, treating bare or stockinged feet as a prey species and in general following an I-want-it-first policy.

The one-cat policy is so much a matter of principle that other considerations are pretty much moot. I don't think Thisby would appreciate a rival; and would I appreciate two cats nestling upon my blankets at night? I can usually assure myself half a cat-free night by getting the dear creature to settle peacefully on

the day bed where I read in repose. For the first five minutes after arrival, she is on my chest being stroked; then she will consent to being eased off, settling down against my thigh where she might spend some time washing but in time curls up to sleep. It rouses her when I pull away, but if she then curls up again, I can depart without being followed. Arrival is about four hours later, when I arise to go to the bathroom. At times, a vigorous shove is necessary to keep the cat from gravitating to the exact middle of the bed.

C'Mell used to climb on my chest when I was napping. She'd do a little clawing, but then settle down and give out her quiet little purr.

Whether I fit the pattern of underemployment described by Darrell, I find hard to say; and I will not go into particulars. For a while I could get academic employment, as a lowly instructor of English, with only a Masters. I was turned against academic prose at the latest when I read Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder* — which I promptly persuaded the University of Michigan library to acquire. I had already found telltale thumb marks in the card catalogue at the subject entry of Science Fiction; and Knight's book was seen in after years to have been wildly popular. Who knows when it might have reached the library otherwise? I like to think that it poisoned yet other minds against academic prose.

My son Hilary is fifty years younger than I. I may already have told here that I figure that anyone who keeps a little green Cthulhu doll on the dashboard can't go seriously to the bad. The latest news here is that his girl friend Elizabeth will be pursuing a Masters in Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania, a short distance from here. The word fiancée is not being used but that her parents are interested in meeting me is something of a sign. Many private matters are hidden from me, but there is some solid compatibility of tastes. I have discussed this matter in principle with Hilary; what incomprehension of one's own favorites would put another beyond the pale? Enough said that we agreed on the principle. Now this is a basis of friendship, which of course can subsist between all sorts and conditions of people; but how could one possibly do without the "You too!?" experience with your nearest and dearest? Being fans together of something is anyway a good start; the complete mundane would be, by definition, not a fan of anything. Seems to me that is what I want to discover of people, and often fail; what are they fans of? What is interesting for its own sake and not for material benefits?

There's the story of Walt Willis discovering that his date Madeline was another one when they both reached for the same issue of *Astounding* on the newsstand.

Some of my lost loves chose other marriage

partners who had more to offer, and I could understand their reasons and even accept them without bitterness. How things worked out in the long term, I did not generally see. What Betsy saw in me, I can't fully say; she did see an odd duck (her phrase) who had never mastered lessons in scratching and pecking (my phrase). When I heard her exclaim "Shit!" I knew she was okay; when she heard me use with precision the word "flinders", she knew I was okay.

It's getting on for seven years since she died. So long a time already?

I have lately looked through Saul Steinberg's books of drawings which have long been on my shelves. Some of his best work is in *The Labyrinth* and in *The Passport*; later he relied less on recording things observed. His impressions of American architecture, especially of southern California, are acute. He distills the essence. I would put forward as his masterpiece the view of St. Mark's Square in Venice, in which a pair of carabinieri is drawn with the utmost economy of line. Steinberg knows what to leave out; some of his drawings are exercises in omission. The gist of things.

As his final practical joke, on his honeymoon, William Horace de Vere Cole was in Venice. He went to a stables, procured something abundant there, and bestrewed it over St. Mark's Square in the nighttime, leaving the Venetians to wonder where those messy horses had got to. A few years later, having fought his way up the Italian peninsula, in fulfillment of a promise to a man gone, Colonel Vladimir Alexandrovich "Popski" Peniakoff of Popski's Private Army loaded jeeps into a landing craft, had then conveyed across the canals, and drove a victory lap around St. Mark's Square.

— JTM

I don't know Spanish but have a dictionary; as of 2004 it already cites ll and ch as being former letters of the Spanish alphabet: that is, these digraphs had been distinct characters in the alphabetic sequence. The like is true of other languages, e.g., ch comes after h in Czech; and variously accented letters have their places — or not. Little details you gotta know. But of course lama the priest and llama the beast are still distinct.

Can the changes have been coordinated with the many Latin American countries, which all have their own peculiarities, as with UK and US not to mention others? The recent changes in German rested on agreement; I have a little handbook. I've heard of some changes having been made in French, but never got the lowdown on them.

From: **Lloyd Penney** February 23, 2011
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This month has been a good one for loc writing and a bad one for the job hunt. Something's got to give for jobs, so while I continue to look, I will take some time to write some comments on *Alexiad* WN 55. Entering your tenth volume, congratulations!

A modern-day Moby Dick? It never made it up here, and maybe just as well. If there something to do with being beyond huge for a whale, or maybe he's nuclear-powered... I'll stick with the original, thank you.

Interesting to see a book written by Adrian Raeside. I met Raeside once when I was a reporter for the Arrowsmith Star newspaper on Vancouver Island. He's been a long-time political cartoonist for newspapers all over British Columbia, and he's also had a few strip cartoons along the way, too. Looks like he's had a change of career to become an author, but I am sure he's still drawing.

The book (see review) has a couple of nice cartoons and I wish there were more.

Very interesting article on Theda Bara. I think the word you wanted was empathize, not emphasize. So many characters from the silent era of movies were played by actors who most people never knew. Much of this comes before the star system, and our sad obsession with movie actors.

I wrote a review of Mike Resnick's *The Buntline Special* for Adam Smith's *The Dominion Dispatch*, the official magazine of Steampunk Canada. It will be in Vol. 1, No. 3, and is yet to be released. Looks like we may think the same of the novel; could have been a lot better, and for a western novel, there wasn't much Western about it. It suffered from a surfeit of dialogue, and not much action. It was Resnick's first shot at such a novel; if he tries it again, I am sure it will be much better.

I can see Chris Barkley's argument for the best children's/YA Hugo . . . but I'm tired of the arguing, the personal insults, the hair-splitting. I'll just say fight it out, folks, and when you're done and recovered from your injuries, let us all know what you decide. Will it lessen the prestige of the whole award ceremony? Are there too many already? Will the ceremony be too long? Will there be more questions to answer?

I haven't seen some of Taral's ten best digital animated films, and that's mostly because not all of them appeal to me, not just the animation, but the premise for some of the films. I never saw *Cars* because I am not a racing or NASCAR fan. Yvonne saw *Ratatouille* with her sisters because one is a bit of a gourmet, and the other is a chef. I've not seen any of the *Shrek* movies; didn't turn my crank. But, give me Pixar stuff . . . *Monsters, Inc.*, *Finding Nemo*, *Wall-E*, *The Incredibles*. These four, I have loved, especially the pointed environmental message of *Wall-E*.

Our plans are still to go to Reno, but that will depend on me finding work, and I have to

find it soon. If I had \$5 for each resume I've sent out, I wouldn't need to send out resumes. Further plans include skipping Chicago and Texas so we have a number of years to save for London in 2014. However, nothing is graven in stone . . .

John Purcell, you're very welcome. I respond to almost everything I get, paper or e-. There's been a few publications over the years I simply cannot respond to, or they've been offensive to the point where I don't care to respond at all.

My loc . . . Yvonne is now working as a contract SP administrator for the Allan Candy Co. in neighbouring Mississauga. Allan used to be a part of the Cadbury candy conglomerate, but is independent once again. I just have to move it and find a job, but all leads seem to go nowhere these days.

I spent twelve years after leaving U of L trying to find a permanent job. I know about leads going nowhere all too well.

— JTM

Time to wrap it up. Baseball spring training is starting, the temperatures are starting to rise a little, there's not much snow on the ground . . . I hope spring is not far behind. Thank you for another *Alexiad*, and I look forward to more.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** March 5, 2011
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I liked *Alexiad*, Feb. 2011. One article I particularly liked was the one on Theda Bara, AKA Theodosia Burr Goodman. Unfortunately, I didn't find any comment hooks.

THE BAGELS. Joe, you say your blood sugar was 69. Isn't that a little low? I have to admit mine, without medicine, is a little high, 120, 130. Fortunately, it doesn't oscillate much, and my A1C registers well-controlled.

We go from ailments of the body to ailments of the soul. After you got back from your trip to relatives, I was wondering whether I would similarly want a closeknit family. Would that solve any ailments of the soul? Probably I shouldn't ask for one. It's not in the cards. Geographics makes it impossible. Some of my family lives on the East Coast, some on the West Coast, and some in Israel.

Some of my family lives on the East Coast, some on the West Coast, and some in between. (And some overseas.) Same with Lisa's.

— JTM

TARAL WAYNE. I saw many of those new animations. I have to agree that this is the golden age of special effects, and those movies had the added virtue of being clever. I can well agree with Gary Trudeau. He said if he was starting these days, he wouldn't send his portfolio around to newspaper syndicates and hope for a comic strip. Instead, he would send it

to Pixar.

LETTERS. ct. Milt Stevens. Do readers respond to zines on the web? It depends. If readers are notified by email, and either there is a link to the zine or it is there as an attachment, I doubt there is much difference between that and a totally hard copy zine.

ct. Joy V. Smith. A doff of the hat to you for praising my review of *Pacing the Void*.

ct. Martin Wooster As Martin says, he forgets the logical fallacy I committed by pointing out that bin Laden was on our side in the '80s Russian-Afghani war, whether he worked for us or the Pakistanis.

Anyway, I don't believe we didn't support bin Laden in the '80s before he acquired his reputation. People consider it an embarrassment when their side fails to predict the future. However, no one is good at predicting the future.

ct. Darrel Schweitzer. Thanks for your long dissertation on 20th Century depictions of Tang politics. It seemed to prove my point that the Tang Dynasty has been remade in the 20th Century. And the real Tang were quite different.

ct. Grant McCormick. I think I've blown my wad on the environment, and, for the time being, I will let others contend about it.

ct. Myself. I think I remember the Dead Darwin Fish signs on cars. Animosity pure and simple, without the slightest cleverness. It can't even shine O'Rourke's shoes. Also, isn't it blasphemy since the fish is supposed to be a sign of Christ?

ct. Dainis Bisenieks. If I remember correctly, at one point in the World War II, the Romanians showed contempt for their Nazi 'allies' by interning downed American airmen in Bucharest's luxury hotels. Under such circumstances, I would imagine nobody ever escaped.

Well, that's it for this time around.

Am I really in the
Alexiad lettercol...?



From: **Steve George** March 7, 2011
steve@glort.com

Just wanted to make a quick comment on Rodney Leighton's LoC in the Feb issue. He refers to me as a "one time BNF . . . who doesn't write to non-computerized fools like me."

Just to set the record straight: I was never a BNF! I must admit, however, it was funny to see myself referred to as one.

One fan's BNF is another fan's
fakefan.

— JTM

As to the second part of that quote, that I

don't write to him any more, he's right . . . but it's not intentional. Rodney is an old-school typewriter and paper kind of guy to whom I've written many letters that never reached the mail box. I did subscribe to a service once that allowed me to submit digital letters that they snail-mailed... but Rodney thought that was pretty decadent, which I suppose it was, so I stopped.

Guess I better send him a letter to shut him up!

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** March 20, 2011
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Thank you for Vol. 10, No. 1.

I was in the Camarillo Library and noticed that they had a shelf over on the side that was just indicated as new SF books. So, I took three of them. The first one that I read was *Space Captain Smith* by Toby Frost (2008). Hardly a new book; but maybe new to the library. The Copyright page contains all British information so it appears that it was not published in the United States. However, on the back of the book is a sticker with US and Canada prices. A bit confusing, at least to me. Anyway, enough of that. I thoroughly enjoyed the book and it caused me to laugh several times. So, if you can find a copy you might give it a try. The second one, *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* by Charles Yu (2010), I couldn't finish. The third one was *Not Less Than Gods* by Kage Baker (2010). An interesting read. But, I don't think that I'll read any of his other books. I have 6 or so on order from Interlibrary Loan and will have quite enough to read.

After writing the above *God Emperor of Diddot* by Toby Frost (2008) was found shelved in the regular fiction instead of Science Fiction where it belonged. This one was enjoyed too. Space Captain Smith finally gets the girl. Or, more accurately, the girl gets Space Captain Smith.

Then *WORLDS* by Eric Flint was found, it being billed as "The Best of Eric Flint's Short Fiction" and it was enjoyed very much despite there being a couple of stories I didn't find interesting so didn't read.

OK—*Inception* with Leonardo DiCaprio in the lead was rented and watched. I don't understand the ending. If anyone has seen the movie and understands the ending please tell me.

Area 51 on the SyFy channel was watched because Bruce Boxleitner was advertised as the lead. He must really need the work.

Later I was in the Friends of the Camarillo Library Bookstore and purchased three SF hardbacks for \$2.00 each. First was *A Very Strange Trip* by L. Ron Hubbard and Dave Wolverton (1999, Bridge Publications, Inc.). A rather fun quick read, especially the last chapter. Second was *Galaxy Blues* by Allen Steele (2007, Ace Books). A very good read even if Steele is another author who doesn't understand that "over and out" are mutually exclusive terms

in radio usage. The book is apparently part of the Coyote Trilogy/Coyote Universe. But, it is just fine as a stand alone novel. Last was *The Octagonal Raven* by L. E. Modesitt, Jr. (2001, TOR). This was by far the most enjoyed of the three books. I do not recall having read any other novels by Modesitt. But, I'll be looking for more. Now the three books will be donated back to the Friends and they can sell them again. This has been done in the past with other books and it seems to be a common practice to recycle books that people purchase there. I do, however, have the same problem with their paperbacks that I have in bookstores. The spines face out and I have to turn my head to read them which drives me nuts.

Sherlock Holmes – the American Years edited by Michael Kurland (2010) was obtained from Interlibrary Loan. It's an excellent read. Just one thing bothered me and that was in the story "Inga Sigerson Weds" by Richard A. Lupoff. He has one of the female characters refer to the "female gender". Words have gender, people have sex. I don't know when the word gender replaced the word sex. But, I refuse to buy into it. Anyway, I doubt very much that gender replaced sex in the time period in which Sherlock Holmes stories take place.

I was generally disappointed with the stories in the Kurland anthology. Some of the authors seemed not to have sufficient knowledge of the Canon to even bend it properly.

— JTM

One more book. I have not read any Miles Vorkosigan novels for some time. *Cryoburn* (2010) was found in the library and was very enjoyable.

Joe: I am trying to obtain *The Swordsman of Mars* by Otis Adelbert Kline (reviewed by you on p. 4) from Interlibrary Loan. Thank you for printing my *LosCon 37* Report. In my letter, your finding the Gilliland art (p. 28) to go with my comment about Vlad the Impaler was incredible. "Bad News" on page 18. You, Lisa, and Grant will not make it to Renovation. I am truly sorry to learn that as I was looking forward to seeing you.

Grant C. McCormick: Just by chance I was in the process of reading *Citadel* by John Ringo (2011) when I came to your review (p. 10). *Live Free or Die* (2010) was read previously. *Citadel* was enjoyed quite a lot more than the first book in what is obviously a new series. Along with you I also very highly recommend both books. Even for readers who are not fans of Ringo I recommend obtaining a copy of *Citadel* (from a library?) if only to read his eulogy to his mother that's on page 381 through page 389.

Taral Wayne: I have made a list of some of the movies you cover and will see about renting copies. I've already seen *The Incredibles* twice and thoroughly enjoyed it both times. Also, seen previously are *Wall-E* and *Shrek*.

From: **Henry L. Welch** March 22, 2011

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Thanks for the latest two issues of *Alexiad*.

In regard to Joe's online lament in Vol. 9 No. 6, I'm not certain that electronic copies of *TKK* going back to 2000 have EVER resulted in a LoC or other contact due only to the e-version. Several people I've known for years says they read it online, but they never respond in any other fashion. For an interactive media, this seems contradictory.

Interesting bit on the parsec by Grant in Vol. 10 No. 1. My head is still spinning from all the explanations.

It would be interesting to see how Taral compares his favorite digital animated movies to more traditional animated films. Am I sensing a follow-up article?



From: **AL du Pisani** March 27, 2011
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It has been a wet summer. My holiday by the beach took place under cloudy skies and rain. To some extent this did not trouble me, as I was tired, and just wanted to rest. And I was happy to be with my close family, for the first time in about two years.

The holiday was also a bit emotionally clouded, as my mother found out she had to undergo a hip replacement just after the holiday. The operation went well, but my mother has not yet regained her old mobility, and was a bit isolated, as she could not travel as much as she normally does.

In any case, after a bit of sun, we are into another rain cycle. I heard that we already had either our season's rain, or our year's rain, as at the end of January. And with the rain, potholes. It is so desperate a situation, that a large insurance company is finding it cheaper to patch up potholes, than to pay out claims for damages caused by potholes. So, if we want a pothole fixed, you call the insurance company. You ignore local government, as they are in any case not interested to come and fix the potholes.

Which should be a bad thing for local government, as we are having local government elections in the middle of March. We are already having riots due to lack of service delivery. But are still expecting the ANC to be reelected at each of those places. As the electorate does not seem to make the connection

that they can vote against the guy they are rioting against.

One of the funny things happening, especially in the rural areas, is tax boycotts. The guys are paying their taxes, just not to local government. The taxpayers association then contacts local government for service, and will pay strictly for services rendered. And if they cannot get what they want from the local government, the taxpayers associations have contracted directly for services. I do not see this as sustainable — one of two things are going to happen — local government is going to fall apart, or the taxpayers associations are going to take over local government functions wholesale.

In many ways small scale signs that the way things have been are not going to continue. I expect blood in the streets. But then, we always expect blood in the streets. And there are always either no blood or much less blood than we expect. Somehow we have muddled through. I just do not know if we can expect enough grace to muddle through again.

Joseph, you ask about local stories about Sinterklaas inspanning — No, mostly not. But there were a series of short stories featuring Santa Claus in South Africa. He changes to comfortable local clothes, and gets into a large velskoen drawn by a team of Springbok, (the antelope, not our Rugby team) and then delivers presents. These stories are not that well known, and do not feature at all in commercial Christmas celebrations.

Pity they don't encourage more local color. Or colour. "Rudolf the Red-nosed Springbuck/Had a very shiny nose..."

— JTM

I am reading a bit more SF than before at the moment, but am still finding a lot of what is locally available to be unreadable or in some other way not be my kettle of fish.

Good luck and may we keep getting enough hope to live on each day.

From: **Rodney Leighton** February 23, 2011
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CANADA

Daze in the Country was published in 2008. This one has some photos and lots of tales of life and adventure on a small farm in New Zealand. Not as many cat stories in this one although Tiger and Dancer and Fluffy and Tai and others appear. I don't know what tales of travelling to large cities and attending SF cons and the woes of hotels and airlines and customs has to do with living in the country but they are probably things which would resonate with con going fans. This one has an email address; probably still valid:

info@avalook.com.au

I proofread a manuscript for a friend in the United Kingdom. It was kind of fun and I got well paid. One interesting aspect was that some

words were unknown to me; and phrases; pure Britisms. Letter just received explained a few of them including this one: servery. I thought it was a trick of the mind or something. This explanation: "where food is dished up from and often in front of kitchen — also where used crockery and cutlery [why do Americans call that "flatware"?] is deposited prior to going back into the kitchen." Not being American I have no idea of the answer to that question. Anyone care to provide it?

NOW we have snow! Blizzard did appear on Dec. 26. Hasn't stopped since. About five feet on the ground, I reckon.

Inorganic milk would taste like water. I imagine the milk Milt mentioned is from special organic farms. No commercial fertilizers allowed. I am not sure of all the regulations but that's the main one.

February 28

28 books in the 100 Books thing at the moment. Started 3 or 4 and either set them aside or tossed them. Spending time watching hockey games and tv shows recorded on dvd and shipped to me from the U.K., commercial free. And staring into space. Started a 100 Zines thing at the same time, switched it to the 100 Books thing a few weeks ago and have now abandoned it entirely. Between issues of *Alexiad* I received 2 zines plus 10 issues of *Vanamonde*. Hardly worth doing a record of.

I was thinking I might comment on the matter of people reading the issue online not locking. I don't think I will. Intriguing what people think of. I was just now recalling a package of fanzines sent me by Steve a couple of decades ago, give or take. Can't recall when it was but I remember there were 35 of them; 3 issues of *FOSFAX* I believe. That was when it came out every 2 months. I was just thinking that the loc section of those issues were larger than the entire issue of *Alexiad*. I think. 7 or 8 of the loccers appeared in those old *FOSFAX* issues, I think.

Did Grant email his loc from the couch or another room or what?

From his office at home, which is right below mine.

March 19

I have abandoned the 100 Books project. Given that I don't much want to do it I couldn't see any point in doing it further. I had 31 listed; thus about 3 per week. Haven't finished one this past week; started 3 or 4. Read some magazines; well, parts of them. Watched some of the tv shows. Spent one day sleeping... had some sort of attack which left me sleeping about 19 hours one day.

An old friend phoned last night and chattered at me for ages. I didn't really want to but am too polite to tell him to shut up. Part of the conversation involved how the years have passed and things have changed. I see that everywhere. Gas prices are ridiculous; everything is higher; 20 or 30 years ago; 15

years ago, hell probably 10 years ago, I would have been anxious to get back to work; planning a garden and would have loved to get tons of fanzines and read them all and locced every damned one. Instead I don't feel like doing much of anything; I hope the snow coming down doesn't amount to much since almost all of it is gone but I don't really care; don't know if I will plant any garden this year; I would be happy to get fanzines but like magazines I would read only what interested me and I don't much want to loc anything.

If you want to get locs; take the fanzine off the web; do paper copies only and send them only to people who contribute to it in some way or who send a halfway decent letter at least twice a year. I am sure you know this but here it is anyway: there are only three legitimate reasons to loc a fanzine:

- 1) The reader receives the fanzine as a gift and feels the need or the desire to return the favor in some way.
- 2) The reader reads something which he reacts to strongly enough that she wants to respond to.
- 3) To try to obtain a copy of the next issue.

Which, I guess suggests that people who read it on the web don't find anything they react to enough to want to respond. But, well, obviously, if a person can hit a few buttons and there is the next issue, more or less free, with no obligations, well, why bother?

Ah, I am going to go mail this off and pick up some groceries.

You've raised an interesting point. I've said before that often, people on the internet seem to think that the world ends there. Thus we had the podcasters that Nicki Lynch noted didn't come down to the Fanzine Lounge. And there was the "Racefail" discussion of 2009, which seems to have been conducted on LiveJournal and other such places, never once leaking over into fanzines. There seems to be no communication, no community; just everyone saying his say in her own place.

— JTM

From: Eric Mayer

March 29, 2011

The idea of "paying" (or just thanking the editor) for an electronic fanzine by way of a LoC doesn't appear to have caught on. It is an alien concept to the everything-for-free culture of the Internet. When I got re-involved, to a small extent, with fandom a few years ago I did try to write plenty of LoCs and burned myself out for two years during which I wrote, essentially, none. Let's be honest I have neither the time nor the energy that I had when I got into fandom during my college years and locced every zine in sight. But I do clearly recall that that's the way it is done and have made some effort. While it doesn't surprise me that younger folks, brought up with Internet values, don't

grasp loccking, it does amaze me that so many old pharts — who ought to know what to do — refuse.

You eat too many of those Krispy-Kreme burgers and your heart will definitely be still.

Congrats on the new laptop. My computer's having trouble getting up and going in the morning. Needs a boot in the ass to boot. So I reckon it is on the way out. I usually wait until the ornery things croak before replacing them because I can't bear to face the hell of getting a new machine up and running and configured the way I want, with the appropriate programs and so on, especially on dial-up.

External hard drives have relieved me of much of the burden of one particular annoyance; transferring data to a new computer. It used to be an unending parade of CDs and before that floppies. Now it's copy, unplug, plug, copy.

The BOBOs described in your comments on Children of the Atom aren't leading what I would call happy lives. But, hey, they are a lot smarter than me. I've got to believe they are smart enough to know how they want to live. They sure aren't running the country though, that would be their anagram the BOOBs.

Lisa, if I ever wrote 36,000 words in a month I would be thrilled. Congrats.



Thanks. Nano definitely forced me to sit in the chair and produce output, even if very rough output. There are big continuity problems because I shoved straight through instead of going back and fixing them. I just let the story evolve as the characters developed themselves and built the

crude plot. I think for my third attempt in November I might try a horse novel. I would love to produce something like the old-fashioned horse novels of Rutherford Montgomery and Walter Farley.

—Lisa

For a few years, before my back decided otherwise, I did some running. One thing I learned was when it comes to shoes you get what you pay for. At least up to a point. A decent pair of running shoes was so much easier on my feet and legs than the worn out tennis shoes I started running in. It's been years since I've been able to do much more than walk, but I still wear good running shoes in preference to anything else.

I liked Johnny Carruthers's candy reviews. I think I have had a Skybar, but I don't recall it being very recent. When I start thinking of candy I am amazed at how much of it I must have devoured a kid. I doubt I'll see any of the maple candies he mentions but I will keep an eye out for the Skybar.

In the loccol, Darrell Schweitzer has it right Cyril and the monophysites and all that. Somehow I was surprised reading about monophysites in a fanzine. Funnily enough I had just written a bit in which, strictly in passing, it is mentioned that a couple of eternally squabbling cats have been named Cyril and Nestor. Who'd have thought I'd pick up a fanzine and find that whole nature-of-Christ business alluded to?

I have had reason to read a little about those religious disputes and a little is all I can bear to read. It is fascinating to see the myriad forms of Jesus, Theologians managed to invent, and it can be a good mental exercise to try to discern just exactly what the various differences were, since so many of the descriptions sound so similar to a modern agnostic's ears. Some of the problems arose from semantics since some of those from the western church only read Latin and some from the eastern only read Greek. At one point Pope Vigilius supposedly changed his mind about his position on a certain "heresy" when he read a good Latin translation of what the heretical Greek speaker had actually written.

As Darrell says the Coptics were not pleased with the orthodox positions and that may well have made it easier for the Arabs to take take over Egypt, a huge blow to the eastern empire. During the middle of the sixth century Justinian made a huge effort to bring the religious factions from Rome, Constantinople and Egypt into agreement but couldn't find a compromise that more than two of them would accept. The Coptics were probably least willing to to compromise.

Anyway, you never know what you'll find in a fanzine.

What I want to see in a fanzine is Community and Communication. These take some time to build up, the effort requires connections and persistence. (One thing I find problematic about one particular

faned who continuously begins new zines and abruptly discontinues them after one or two issues.)

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** March 30, 2011
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In the last issue, Joe reviewed the book *Spying on the Bomb*, which “tells the story of how the United States strove to learn about, inhibit, or prevent the spread of nuclear weapons technology.” I peeked inside the book at Amazon.com, and while it mentions Spain, there’s much more to be told. Spain has been able to make a bomb since 1971, though it never actually did, and for a long time it resisted U.S. pressure to stop improving its capability.

The ambition to join the nuclear club was born as soon as the existence of the bomb became public at the end of WWII. Spain’s military leaders, including Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, began investigating how to get that technology.

The U.S. unwittingly helped. In 1955, President Eisenhower launched “Atoms for Peace” to spread atomic energy technology and make nuclear power less scary. A U.S. Senate commission deemed Spain fifth in the world in terms of nuclear physics knowledge (it had been studying for a decade, after all), so its Junta de Energía Nuclear received a credit of \$350,000. It had its first investigation reactor by 1958, which worked with small quantities of highly enriched uranium provided by the U.S.

Spain made fast technical progress with Carrero’s backing and some secret Swiss bank accounts used to buy additional instruments and apparatus. It already had plans for a full-sized nuclear reactor to produce electricity, but it needed fuel. What the U.S. had ceded was too little, too poor, and too strictly controlled.

Then in 1963, Spain’s ambassador in Paris was offered help by the French government to build the electrical plant, which, with the proper design and operation, could also manufacture plutonium for weapons. With France’s financial participation, it could escape controls by the U.S. and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). De Gaulle was looking for allies in his goal to enter the nuclear club and create his own independent European defense strategy, so both France and Spain refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Spain also created its own small reactor to produce weapons-grade plutonium. Another reprocessing plant was set up, despite the dangers to its surroundings, in a Madrid university campus about 6 kilometers from where I now live, where it busily separated fine plutonium from spent nuclear fuel.

Spain’s scientists still had some uncertainties over technical bomb details — and then the U.S. again unwittingly solved that

problem. In 1966, a B-52 carrying four live nuclear bombs collided with a KC-135 during mid-air refueling and crashed off the coast of Spain. Three bombs landed on the village of Palomares, and two broke part. Despite the radioactivity, Spanish scientists scavenged parts and the detonators, and reverse-engineered the rest.

By 1971, all Spain needed was more plutonium. In 1973 Henry Kissinger met with Carrero Blanco, then prime minister and apparent successor to the ailing dictator Franco, about Spain’s French connection, but got no cooperation. Carrero insisted that Spain needed nuclear weapons to keep Morocco terrified and to keep Great Britain, with its outpost on Gibraltar, respectful. A few days later, Carrero Blanco was assassinated by a Basque terrorist bomb a couple of blocks from the U.S. embassy. (Coincidence? Probably.) Franco’s death in 1975 intensified Spain’s ambitions, which had military worries over traditional enemies in North Africa. It continued to open nuclear power plants, now with investments from Westinghouse and General Electric.

But the CIA, possibly with those corporations’ help, had taken note, and a top secret 1974 report affirmed that Spain was among six countries that could have its own nuclear weapon within seven to ten years, and “the one European country that is deserving of some attention as a possible proliferator in the years ahead.”

President Jimmy Carter was attentive, but shortly after he took office, Spain’s minister of foreign affairs informed him that Spain would continue its nuclear program because its history gave it the right to be a world power. In fact, in 1977, Spain publicly announced that it was enriching uranium.

Carter kept up the pressure to sign the NPT, eventually threatening to boycott Spain. So in 1981, it signed an agreement to accept IAEA control over certain electric power plants in exchange for a continued supply of nuclear fuel.

The Socialists won elections in 1982 promising to “favorably study signing” the NPT, but they found reasons not to, even declaring in 1985, as Franco’s diplomats once had, that the treaty was “hypocritical and humiliating.” But apparently the IAEA investigations made nuclear weapons progress difficult, and besides, if Spain joined the NPT, it could get U.S. aid and enter the European Union, so in 1987 Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales signed on. Still, its military has maintained the scientific skills needed to restart its nuclear weapons program to this day.

Proof of all this, besides reams of once-secret documents, lay underground at the university campus in Madrid. In 2006, soil contaminated with plutonium isotopes suitable for building a Nagasaki-style bomb was discovered alongside the research facility where the reprocessing plant had been operating. Though the amount was minute, it was scheduled for prompt cleanup.

I’m surprised Richelson didn’t say more about the Spanish

project (the reference to Spain is entirely peripheral with nothing to do about nuclear research). Some people would have had a very extreme reaction to the prospect of Franco being able to say, “¡Nuestras palabras se sostienen por las ARMAS NUCLEARES!”

— José

From: **George W. Price** March 30, 2011
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February Alexiad:

Reviewing Susan Markowitz’s *My Stolen Son*, Joe comments on the gigantic corruption caused by the illegal market for drugs. Of course the corruption — and the violence — flow from the illegality, not the drugs. We have learned nothing from Prohibition.

Legalizing drugs for adults would eliminate most of the corruption at a stroke. And presumably the Mexican slaughter would lessen if the American market for smuggled drugs vanished.

But wouldn’t legalization greatly expand drug usage, with consequent harm to the users and those around them? Is there any reasonable way to both legalize drugs and discourage their use? I think there is.

My prescription (which I have offered before, in *FOSEAX* and elsewhere) is that we allow adults to take any mind-bending drugs they please, but — and this is a very big “but” indeed — any wrongdoing while “under the influence” will be punished as if it had been done on purpose.

Damage the machinery at work because you are high on pot, and you get prosecuted for sabotage. Kill somebody while driving drunk (yes, of course alcohol counts as a mind-bending drug), and you’re up for Murder One. Readers may think of many other possibilities.

When you choose to disconnect your judgment and let your body run out of control, you should be held one hundred percent responsible for whatever it does.

Now, it just might turn out that (apart from drunk driving) the harm done to others by people high on recreational drugs is really negligible. Maybe most of them just space out and enjoy their highs without bothering anyone else. Maybe there isn’t any “reefer madness.” In that case, what’s all the fuss about?

* * * * *

Hey, I thought there was a new rule against political lectures? So what’s with Darrell Schweitzer expounding on “Republican anti-environmentalism”? Not that I mind; this is just what I like to argue about.

Schweitzer says that “The extreme Republican anti-environmental position seems to be ‘To hell with the future, any regulation is bad for the short-term profits of our corporate sponsors.’” I’ve never run across extremists of

that kind, but then, they wouldn't admit it openly, would they? This is Mr. Schweitzer's deduction of the most likely reason for opposing strict limits on greenhouse gases, etc. I can think of much better reasons.

My own opposition to the economy-crushing measures favored by most environmentalists is based on their obvious futility. As I have observed before, any decreases in carbon dioxide generated by the U.S. and the rest of the West are going to be overwhelmed by the huge increases from China and India and other Asian and African peoples as they strive to raise themselves out of poverty. You can imagine how they will react to being told that they must stay poor for the sake of the planet. Sorry, that just ain't gonna happen.

Better we think about how to handle the inevitable effects of global warming (if it really is inevitable). Be ready to move coastal cities as the oceans rise, prepare for farming to migrate north, and plan to handle refugees from areas where the climate becomes intolerable.

* * * * *

On quite a different subject, Mr. Schweitzer says he knows a "disturbingly large number of people in fandom who are homeless or borderline homeless," largely middle-aged and middle-class people who are long-time unemployed. "If you are fifty and out of work, you are likely to stay out of work. Once you are out of work for a few years, you fall behind and become unemployable. Even if you haven't fallen behind, it is assumed that you have."



I suggest that a major reason for this kind of unemployment is the mushrooming of legal protections against firing workers capriciously or for socially-disapproved reasons such as racism or sexism. When a prospective employer knows that once you are hired he will have to have iron-clad reasons for firing you, lest you quite literally make a federal case of it, he will be very reluctant to hire you in the first place. In the bad old days of "at-will" hiring, the boss could take you on for a week or two, and if you didn't work out he could fire you out of hand, and that would be the end of it. So he could afford to try out people with spotty records, or no records at all. Not anymore. Now he has to be very sure you'll be a good fit.

I've had personal experience of this. Before I retired, the research institution where I worked had a woman who was quite competent at her job, but made herself widely detested because of

her unpleasant personality. Skipping the details, let's just say that she got her jollies by hurting other people's feelings. I was the fifteenth signer of the petition asking the big boss to can her, and I don't know how many others signed after me — in a place with only 300 employees.

Mrs. Nasty happened to be a person of color (though that didn't seem to have anything to do with her nastiness), and she played that to the hilt. When reprimanded, her usual response was, "Hmmpf, I'll have to check with my lawyer about this."

Getting rid of her took three years, and was accomplished only by cutting her position out of the departmental budget. (Not that anybody would admit that this was why the budget was cut. Heavens, no!) The department then had to work short-handed for another two years until the budget was restored, because had it been restored any sooner we would have had to offer Mrs. Nasty her job back. After that experience, do you suppose that the department head just might have become a little reluctant to hire new people? Especially ones she didn't know much about?

Rule of thumb: Hard-to-fire means hard-to-hire. While it's obvious that some bosses will fire people for bad reasons if they can get away with it, I think it is equally obvious that at-will hiring and firing makes it much easier for more people to get tried out at more jobs, greatly increasing their chances of finding suitable positions.

Funny, I seem to remember having made this point in the discussion of *Between Planets* in Heinlein's *Children*, published by Advent. Everybody get a copy and look it up (advrt.).

* * * * *

Darrell Schweitzer had asked why most Anthropogenic Global Warming deniers are conservatives politically. Grant McCormick offers several reasons, including "that the proposed solutions tend to be both draconian and procrustean, and tyrannical to boot," which just naturally offends conservatives. He also sees many of the Warmists as those who "Want to Make a Difference."

I agree, but suggest that a more general reason is that environmentalism has become the preferred excuse for those who cannot be happy unless they are telling the rest of us what to do. (Which is what "Making a Difference" usually turns out to mean.)

When the collapse of the Soviet Union discredited traditional socialism and the "planned economy," such people had to find other reasons why we should let them run everything. So they flooded into environmental extremism — a short journey for many of them. And these self-appointed elitists have a very hard time understanding why the rest of us don't instantly recognize their superiority and happily submit to their beneficent tutelage.

I define "elitists" as those who are certain that (a) they are smarter, better informed, wiser,

and more moral than the rest of us, and that (b) this superiority entitles them to rule over us. All for our own good, of course. (There are also genuine elites, but they demonstrate their superiority by performance, not political posturing.)

* * * * *

Before I take too seriously the models which purport to show how drastically the climate is going to change, I would like the model builders to show me a few things.

First, if a model uses the data from, say, 1960 to 2010 to forecast the climate up to 2060, I want to see if plugging in the data from, say, 1850 to 1900 will give a forecast that matches what actually happened up to 1950. If not, the suspicion arises that the model was carefully designed to give the forecast that the modeler wanted for 2060.

Second, I would like to see in what ways and how far the various competing models differ in forecasts made from the same data. This would give a rough idea of the uncertainties in basic assumptions. If the forecasts are wildly different, perhaps we should research more to resolve the differences, or maybe decide that the job is impossible and no model can be trusted.

Third, I would like to have each of the competing models calculate how the climate would have behaved under several "alternate history" scenarios, such as:

- (1) The human race never evolved at all.
- (2) The Industrial Revolution never happened. North America got fully settled by Europeans, but technology is frozen at about the level of 1700 A.D. That is, no fuel-burning machines.
- (3) By 2060 the recommendations of the Warmists have been scrupulously put into effect, cutting way back on carbon dioxide generation.
- (4) The Warmists have been disregarded, and by 2060 the entire world is developed up to the level that the U.S.A. now enjoys, world population has doubled, and all these people use as much fossil fuel per capita as the U.S.A. now does.

Scenarios 1 and 2 are to show how much of the known climate change is due to natural cycles and how much is man-made. I would discard out of hand any model that doesn't show significant natural cycles, since we already know they have occurred.

And if Scenarios 3 and 4 produce climates differing only trivially from each other, and/or from Scenarios 1 and 2, then obviously we shouldn't bother cutting back on carbon dioxide. If the differences are significant, then we can debate whether the improvement is worth the cost.

* * * * *

Sometimes coincidence can be stretched almost to the breaking point. Harry Turtledove

had a two-book alternate-history series about the Pearl Harbor attack and its aftermath: *Days of Infamy* (2004) and *End of the Beginning* (2005). And I recently came across a two-book alternate-history series about the Pearl Harbor attack and its aftermath by Newt Gingrich and William R. Forstchen: *Pearl Harbor* (2007) and *Days of Infamy* (2008). I found no evidence that Gingrich & Forstchen were aware of the Turtledove books; if they had been, presumably they would not have duplicated the *Days of Infamy* title.

Both series have Yamamoto, Fuchida, and Genda as prominent characters on the Japanese side; I did not notice any major character duplications on the American side. Turtledove concentrates on how American civilians coped with the attack, while Gingrich & Forstchen deal more with the American naval response — Halsey is prominent in their second book.

The events in the two series are quite different, apart from the Pearl Harbor attack itself. Gingrich & Forstchen deal much more with why Japan attacked: their story begins in 1934 and makes very clear how the Japanese perceived U.S. efforts to interfere with their conquest of China, and why they thought war was their best option even though they knew the odds were against them.

Another major difference is that Turtledove has the Japanese occupy Hawaii. Gingrich & Forstchen make the attack on Pearl Harbor more devastating than the real one, but there's no invasion and occupation. Their second book is mainly about naval battles between the Japanese attack fleet and the surviving U.S. ships, especially the carrier *Lexington*.

I wish I knew how Turtledove and Gingrich/Forstchen reacted when they found out about each other's books.

I highly recommend both series.

Then Robert Conroy did 1942: A Novel (2009; reviewed in Alexiad V. 8 #4), which won the 2010 Sidewise Award. It's about — an alternative Pearl Harbor attack followed by a Japanese invasion of Hawaii. Do you think there was something in the air?

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Mar. 28, 2011
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Many thanks for the February Alexiad. I very much like the thicker paper.

That was a slipup by Office Depot.

As long as Joe is mentioning the fine Asylum film 2010: *Moby Dick*, one ought to mention other fine films by this High Quality studio that have come out recently. For example, there's *Titanic II*, which is a centennial recreation of the original Titanic voyage, and guess what? The iceberg's in the

very same place! Then there is the film *Mega Shark v. Crocosaurus*, which is a small-budget recreation of the games we played as three-year-olds where you took two dinosaur toys, put one in each hand, and had them attack each other and go "Grrr! Grrr! Grrr!" This does feature the line, "My God! There's a 1,500 foot crocodile running down the street!" which was written by a professional writer. Since Robert Picardo is in the film, all Trekkers must see it.

Titanic II
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1640571/>

Mega Shark v. Crocosaurus
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1705773/>



Darrell Schweitzer notes that many of his friends are Baby Boomers who are out of work for long periods of time. Look, first off, I completely sympathize. I've only had two "real jobs" in my life, and lost them through no fault of my own. (The company went bankrupt in my first job, and I lost my second through a reduction-in-force where the last hired were the first fired.) And I can well understand that HR professionals don't like hiring middle-aged people if they can get people who are younger, cheaper, and more tech-savvy. But have these highly educated friends of Darrell's tried to get new skills? I do think what is happening in the work force is that people had to become more entrepreneurial. In my case, I discovered at the start of my career that editing was something I was good at, and it was a good break from writing. I've managed to go 23 years without a "real job" because I can write, edit, and research. Have these long unemployed people tried temp work? Or tried to promote themselves? Living a life of futility sucks, but there are ways you can climb out of your hole — and I speak as a survivor of three recessions.

I've seen all the films **Taral Wayne** talks about except for *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*. That's a pretty good list. I saw *Toy Story* and *Toy Story 2* again in 2009 when they were reissued as a double feature. What makes these films work is that they're classic stories.

They're just good comedy. *Cars* strikes me as the weakest Pixar film, and *Toy Story 3* and the first hour of *Wall-E* are in my view great art. If Taral were writing his list now, I bet he'd place *Rango* on it. That's also a great story, and very funny for people who love Clint Eastwood westerns.



From: **Timothy Lane** March 29, 2011
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I enjoyed the February issue sufficiently that I finally decided to get around to LOCing it. The impulse occurs frequently with many fanzines, but I usually procrastinate too long. This time I merely waited as long as possible.

I hope Luttwak's *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* comes out in an affordable edition sometime. One of my articles for Salem Press, for *Lives of the Incredibly Wealthy*, was a biography of Basil II Bulgaroktonos, who apparently does come up in the book. He certainly had an interesting method of winning the war against the Bulgars, though I'm not sure if it qualifies as tactics, strategy, or grand strategy.

Taral Wayne's list of best digital animated films was interesting. I actually have seen two of them (*Monsters, Inc.* and *Shrek*), and would like to see at least a couple more (*The Incredibles* and *Despicable Me*). Perhaps if we ever went to a movie theater it might be different (the last time we went was for *The Phantom Menace*).

My main interest, naturally, is the discussion of global warming, and especially what I consider the unproven theory of catastrophic and anthropogenic warming. Darrell Schweitzer seems to be unaware of the difference between scientific observations (such as the estimated global warming of one degree Celsius since 1900) and theories as to why this has happened or what the future will be. The reality is that there are climate cycles, and even alarmist scientists (as opposed to such as Al Gore) will admit, at least buried deep in their books, that a portion of the recent warming (usually about a quarter) is cyclic (i.e., purely natural) and that it's even possible that a lot more is (though they doubt it).

As for the Gulf Stream, this is a very-low-odds and very-long-term fear of alarmist scientists. If the Greenland Ice Cap melts entirely or nearly so (which it is extremely

far from doing), then something of the sort might conceivably happen. Thus, Darrell believes that an unlikely and far distant possibility explains current events. I assume this is again a result of his relying on propaganda rather than studying any of the actual science. In reality, many alarmists had been predicting that British winters would warm up so much that there might be no more snow, and it could happen anytime now. That prediction was grossly wrong, an indication of a flaw in their theory.

A year ago I wrote a series of articles for *The Encyclopedia of Environmental Issues*, including one on Global Warming. This naturally required studying both sides of the issue (though I gather Darrell has no idea that there really are two sides). One thing I learned was that most of the projected warming, at least in the extreme cases which are all that Darrell is aware of, comes not from the greenhouse gas effect itself, but from synergistic effects that haven't been observed, but of course that doesn't absolutely prove that they won't happen.

As for all those scientists, can Darrell cite any actual evidence that most professional climate scientists believe the theory? An article in Wikipedia a few years ago (which Taras Wolansky kindly sent me) listed a sizable number of skeptical scientists, most of them climate scientists. Incidentally, can Darrell explain what reason he has for believing that Freeman Dyson, Robert Balling, Timothy Patterson, Richard Lindzen, and other skeptics are politically conservative? (Their skepticism isn't proof; that would be an example of circular reasoning.) Not to mention S. Fred Singer, Roy Spencer, John Christy, Dennis T. Avery, Patrick J. Michaels — all climate specialists whose skeptical work I personally possess. I can cite many others as well, such as David Deming, George Taylor, and David Legates — all three victims of politically correct alarmism. How many alarmist scientists can Darrell cite? And, again, what evidence does he have that these, and many others, are conservative?

For that matter, what about SF fan John Boardman, a very-far-left skeptic? Or columnist Andrew Cockburn, another far-left skeptic? Many on the left are skeptics; some on the right accept the alarmism.

As for why conservatives are generally less alarmist than liberals, a poll I heard of a while back may explain it. Think of the ending of the poem "Invictus": "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." According to this poll, most conservatives agree, but most liberals don't. It's easy to see what effect this has on economic policy issues, and also how believing one's fate is mostly in the hands of the Others can lead to a victim mindset and paranoid fantasies.

It also naturally leads to a more fearful and pessimistic view of life. I've read a large supply of environmental panic books in my day — *The Population Bomb*, *The Limits to Growth*, and others less well-known. But I also read skeptical works, and in the end I chose to believe them instead. One reason is that most of

the time the skepticism has been justified.

From: **Taras Wolansky** April 2, 2011
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On the cluelessness of youth: When I saw the remake of *True Grit*, there was a gaggle of twenty-somethings — three or four couples — in attendance. As they were leaving at the end, I overheard them puzzling over why the now grown Mattie Ross gives the sharp side of her tongue to that old outlaw who fails to rise from his seat when she approaches. One young woman, raised in an age of handicap privilege, speculated that it must have been because Mattie was missing an arm.

The *New York Times* review of the film says, "fearing attacks on its Coptic Christian minority, Egypt has restricted showings of 'Agora' there, according to news reports." Note that Islamists argue that their ideology gives women "true" liberation, so they would have no problems with the film's depiction. I see here that the film also blames Christians for burning the Library of Alexandria.

One might argue that the Christians in *Agora*, like the Christians in *The Handmaid's Tale*, are actually stand-ins for Muslims, which the authors and filmmakers fear to criticize explicitly.

I rather doubt that. The authors and filmmakers know that Muslims are an Oppressed Group, incapable of racism, oppression, killing those they disagree with, and so on. It's the fundies that they know are the real enemy.

Actually, when researchers at the University of Sussex ran the Club of Rome model backwards starting in 1970, it recreated the period back to 1900 just as well as when it was run from that end of the period — and then all the numbers went crazy going back before 1900, just as they did, to much hoopla, going forward from 1970. The model was simply recreating the 1900-1970 numbers that had been fed into it.

But I've run into defenders of the thing, though I forget how they rationalize its failures. It's actually even wronger than we knew: the explosive rise of the Chinese economy — hardly even a consideration in the early 1970s — should have made the world run out of resources even faster than predicted.

Two things I found objectionable about the last (or last couple of) Miles Vorkosigan stories I read. One was that he did not treat his servants and followers with respect, making them do things that are not part of their job. I know somebody who chauffeured a leading New York socialite/politician; he bitterly complained that Mrs. Socialite/Politician would make him a baby sitter instead of a chauffeur, while she went into shops. (By coincidence, just a few days ago I saw a news report to the effect that Mr. Socialite/Politician got hundreds

of hours of community service, but no jail time, for failing to pay a million dollars in taxes.)

But to get back to Miles, an even more serious failing is that he abuses his position as an Imperial Auditor to help out his friends and obstruct the processes of justice, demonstrating that he is unfit to be an Imperial Auditor.

Review of *Spying on the Bomb*, by Jeffrey T. Richelson: That the United States prevented Taiwan from getting an atomic bomb — instead of helping it — seems one of the stupider moments of American foreign policy. We may someday be drawn into a war with China because of this.

Tom Swift, Jr., was my route into SF. My parents used to bribe me to do my piano lessons with the books. But there were only about 28 of them at the time, and they ran out, so I substituted *Mission to the Stars*, by A.E. van Vogt — which I still think is one of the great SF books of all time.

Darrell Schweitzer: I believe I already answered some of your points about Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) in the February issue.

To disprove AGW, you ask Joe to "prove . . . that certain gases do not actually trap heat in the atmosphere". The fallacy here is the implicit *ceteris paribus* assumption: but what if other things are not equal? What if, for example, through some geochemical processes, other greenhouse gases zig when CO2 zags? You could end up cooler than when you started. Now, that does not appear to be the case on this planet — but there are other countervailing influences. For example, the role clouds play is in dispute. But what I'm picking up from my daily perusal of ScienceDaily.com is that climatologists, groping for an explanation of why there's been so much less warming than they expected, now realize they disregarded or misunderstood the effects of snowfall, reflecting sunlight away from the Earth.

Another factor that just occurred to me is that people are not randomly distributed across the globe of the Earth. The Earth as a whole could be warming, while the places people actually live are not. Indeed, the projections have consistently claimed the greatest effects should be at the extreme latitudes.

You ask Joe to explain "why the vast majority of climate scientists are wrong". One answer is, well, they were wrong: there's been much less global warming than they expected. Another answer is that climate science, like some other sciences, has become politicized: scientists who won't toe the line leave the field or avoid controversy. It's like discovering that the vast majority of Soviet biologists in the Thirties express support for Lamerckism: the consequences of dissent can be grim.

Accusing AGW skeptics of being driven by ideology is an example of projection. It is the Left, after all, that believes "social justice" trumps other considerations, like truthfulness or scholarly integrity. I've pointed out elsewhere that as socialism collapsed around the world during the Age of Reagan, socialists were already fishing for environmental arguments. And that was years before global warming

hysteria was whipped up.

"All children today are being brought up to have more respect for the environment." What a Freudian slip! It's not their parents who are bringing them up this way, of course. Rather, this is a reference to indoctrination by the public schools.

Robert S. Kennedy: "At no time did they mention the Hitler/Stalin pact." I recall that the great Seventies miniseries, *The World at War*, also whitewashed Soviet war crimes. The only reference to the orgy of rape by Soviet troops in Berlin was the story of a German who tricked Soviet troops, demanding he turn over his wife, by taking them to a cemetery.

Some of the things Robert Conquest (you know, the guy who edited all those SF anthologies with Sir Kingsley Amis) said about CNN's series on the Cold War are relevant here.

— JTM

Perhaps because I was totally unfamiliar with the TV show, I enjoyed the new *Green Hornet* movie. Of course, it does follow a certain, politically correct fashion of pairing a white doofus with a super-competent minority.

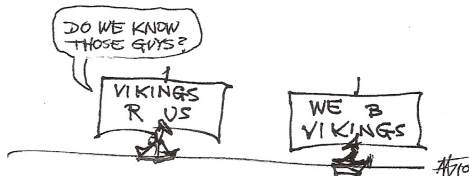
Taral Wayne: I agree that *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* is a seriously underrated film. I'm sure its satire of celebrity and local boosterism went right over the heads of its younger viewers.

Monsters vs. Aliens, I think, poses as a light-hearted romp and a buddy picture, but it really centers on Susan Murphy/Ginormica (Reese Witherspoon) and her hard decision to give up any hope of a normal life for the sake of duty.

Returning to the Tom Swift, Jr. theme, *Meet the Robinsons* is one that SF fans in particular should go out of their way to see. Or maybe wait until you have a 3D TV, as it's really designed for that. This and *Beauty and the Beast* are two animated features that give us brainy heroes.

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.
Chris Barkley, up for a discussion.



In honor of the forthcoming release of the movie of *Atlas Shrugged* . . .

PARTY GUEST

. . . Francisco bowed and turned to go. Rearden said involuntarily, not knowing that the question negated his anger, that it was a plea to stop this man and hold him, "What did you want to learn to understand about me?"

Francisco turned. The expression of his face had not changed; it was still a look of gravely courteous respect. "I have learned it," he answered.

Rearden stood watching him as he walked off into the crowd. The figure of a butler, with a crystal dish, and of Dr. Pritchett, stooping to choose another canapé, hid Francisco from sight. Rearden glanced out into the darkness; nothing could be seen there but the wind.

Dagny stepped forward, when he came out of the recess; she smiled, openly inviting conversation. He stopped. It seemed to her that he had stopped reluctantly. She spoke hastily, to break the silence. "Hank, why have you invited so many intellectuals of the looter persuasion —"

The roar of a shotgun being fired cut her off in the middle of the sentence. Dagny and Rearden turned towards the sound to look and were astonished by the sight of the person who had forced his way in. His hair was the green of tarnished copper. The great horror was his scarred face, painted white like a clown's, but with black circles around his eyes and a ragged red mouth. He was wearing a purple three-piece suit. He seemed to be some caricature from the demented vision of some particularly spiritual mystic, and he had shouted, "We made it!"

Thugs in more ordinary clothes, with blank masks covering their heads, rushed in after him and began thrusting their weapons into the faces of the party, looters confronting looters of a different degree. Their leader walked over to the buffet, declaring in irrational triumph, "Good eve-ning, ladies and gentle-men. We are tonight's entertainment!"

He plundered a shrimp on a skewer from the crystal dish and went over to the guests, snatching a glass of champagne from one terrified young woman, throwing the liquid in the air, and pretending to drink from the empty glass before throwing it at the stack of champagne glasses. "I have only one question: Where is John Galt?"

Idly, like some brainless prehuman beast, he began shambling past the guests. "Do you know where John is? You know who he is? You know where I can find John? I need to talk to him about something, just something, a little . . ." He came to then, took Rearden's face in one hand, pondered for a moment, then with "No," let him go and moved on.

There was Francisco, he had come back that way, and he said, "Your efforts are mere muscle, without any human brain to guide them. I cannot conceive that —" The stranger held a knife to Francisco's throat, as if he could slash the knowledge he sought out of the flesh.

"You know, you remind me of my father. And I **hated** my father."

He gestured towards his mouth with his

knife. "Do you want to know how I got these scars? My father was a drinker and a fiend. He'd beat Mommy right in front of me. One night he goes off crazier than usual, mommy gets the kitchen knife to defend herself. He doesn't like that. Not. One. Bit.

"So, me watching, he takes the knife to her, laughing while he does it. Turns to me and says, 'Why so serious?' Comes at me with the knife — 'Why so serious?' Sticks the blade in my mouth — 'Let's put a *smile* on that face,' and . . ."

He paused, with the threat of a savage brute forming on his maimed face. Then in the tone of a spuriously rational being he said, "Why so serious?"

"Okay, stop."

Dagny would have shrunk away from the threat the strange man presented but she knew she had to oppose him in the name of rationality and logic. He pushed Francisco away into the clutches of his flunkies and turned, shambling towards her and running a hand over his verdigris hair. "Well hell-o, beautiful! And you are beautiful."

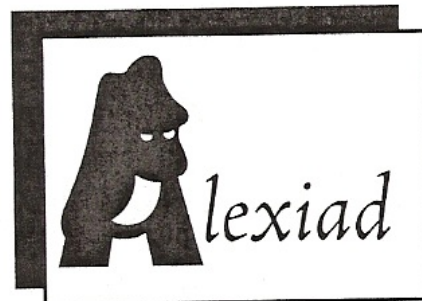
She spoke boldly, the response of a rational human being, "Your initiation of force is an entirely immoral and irrational act, the doctrine of a brute, or a looter —"

He began laughing, hollowly, the emptiness of his tone matching the emptiness of his morality. "And I thought . . . **my** jokes . . . were bad."

Shambling forward, he took Dagny in his grasp. Like the mindless brute driven by the force of mysticism he was, he declared, indicating Dr. Pritchett first and then pointing to others, "To them, you're a freak. Like me. They need you right now, but when they don't they'll cast you out."

It was the moment to employ the rational application of force, and with one mighty blow Dagny thrust the man away from her. He staggered back, doubled over, his deformed face fixed in its perpetual irrational grin. "A little fight in you! I like that."

— Not by Bob Kane or Alyssia Zinovievna Rosenbaum



HE WOULD STOP THE MOTOR OF THE WORLD

Doc Savage, the genius and adventurer, sat in his office on the 86th floor of the great skyscraper. The vast skyline of the great city of New York did not draw his attention now.

His many scientific and engineering enterprises required a vast selection of equipment. Doc looked for reliable and efficient items for such purposes, as he worked on the basis of the long term. One item of supply had begun to fail him.

Among those high-quality and reliable items had been electric motors produced by the Twentieth Century Motor Company. Recently, the new motors from the company had become particularly poor in quality, almost non-functional. This was a serious problem, for if a motor were to fail during one of his experiments or adventures, the results might be catastrophic.

Doc had asked his expert aide, "Long Tom" Roberts, the finest electrical engineer in the country, to travel to the plant of the Twentieth Century Motor Company and investigate this problem. If necessary, Doc would purchase the company and revive the brand, but he had many financial commitments to consider and wished to use his money wisely.

The telephone on Doc's desk rang. He picked up the handset, pushed a button, and said, "Savage."

It was Long Tom. He had a most doleful report to make. "The company is out of business. The old owner died and his children carried out a far-ranging reorganization. Many of the research staff and workers quit and the company collapsed."

After Doc spoke a little further, he dismissed his aide for now. Alone, in the silent room, there could be heard a metallic trill as the great genius pondered the meaning of this.

In the next issue of *Doc Savage Magazine*, Doc and his aides face one of the most mysterious and threatening opponents that they have ever dealt with — a brilliant, driven man with a strange power that induces millionaire entrepreneurs and great scientists to vanish. The investigation carries them from copper mines in Chile to steel plants in Pennsylvania, from remote mountain valleys in Colorado to the working-class apartments of New York City itself, on the trail of the enigmatic man who has vowed to stop the motor of the world, as they seek the answer to the terrifying question, "Who is John Galt?"

— Not by Lester Dent or Ann R. O'Connor

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Art: What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

Contributions: This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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