

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Our Borders store has at best six weeks left. Its closing has made me decide it is time to put money aside for an e reader.

The closing of Borders is strong proof that the e reader revolution is too strong to be beaten. Once I began considering acquiring one of the machines the idea of being able to take all my favorite books on a trip in a machine that weighs less than a pound, the idea of owning one has become much more attractive. I have narrowed my desires down to the Nook and the Kindle. The Kindle seems to be the more popular machine and can hold considerably more books than the Nook. The Nook is backed by two real, physical bookstores, Barnes and Noble and Books a Million. For me, that is a good reason to choose the Nook. I am scared that someday we will live in a world without bookstores you can actually walk into and handle the physical book. Plus, at a Barnes and Noble store you can read books for free while you are there. I'm no innocent. I know very well this feature is offered in hope that book addicts will get too interested in the book they're reading to be able to bear to leave it in the store. Maybe I will hedge my bets and buy the Nook first and then the Kindle.

— Lisa

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The 57th Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **July 9, 2011** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Leader of the Gang won.

The 86th Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 6, 2011** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Broad Bahn won in 3¼ lengths.

The 119th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 2, 2011** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

Printed on August 10, 2011

Deadline is **October 1, 2011**

Reviewer's Notes

By the time most of you will get this, Renovation will have announced the Hugo Award winners. They have (as of this writing) already announced that they have had the largest number of votes in Worldcon history.

And when I saw that, my question was, "How many of them voted for StarShipSofa and **nothing else whatsoever?**"

Block voting is nothing new. Camille Cazdessus managed to get Hugo voting restricted to members of Worldcon. It used to be that anyone could vote. Then, Caz reprinted the Hugo ballot in *ERBdom*. Guess what won the Best Fanzine Hugo that year?

There was an effort to present a redefinition of Fanzines, Semi-Prozines, and the like to the Worldcon Business meeting. You can't say it was secret or closed, for there was a thoroughgoing debate on the Yahoo fanzine group about the wording. Which ended up getting finely defined and saying nothing about podcasts.

After Lisa's family reunion we visited a relative of mine who worked near the resort where it was held. She has the telephone booth from her father's drug store; a substantial edifice, big enough to hold Clark Kent's entire wardrobe.

This led to something that had been running through my mind, Jim Croce's song "Operator (That's Not the Way It Feels)". Children — Cousin Ellen's children for example — probably wouldn't understand it. Not the problem of heartbreak and shifting romances, but the way the pathetic caller communicates them.

He is talking to a person, not a computer system. This person is in the same country, the same city as he is. This person can not only look up the telephone number, but try to call it for him. And all this for a dime. This was commonplace when Ellen and I were young.

What will be incomprehensible to the next generation? Provided that there is one.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Living in an Animé World: Actual headline: "Mexican teenage girls train as drug cartel killers". The hitchhiker covered her face so we don't know if she had big big eyes, a button nose, small mouth, and long flowing hair of some color not known to nature.

There **will** be a ConGlomeration 2012. The dates are **April 20-22, 2012**. The site will be the Louisville Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, the former Clarion, site of previous ConGlomerations and a RiverCon. Memberships are currently \$30.

ConGlomeration
ATTN: Registration
P.O. Box 32095
Louisville, KY 40232-2095

<http://www.conglomeration.info/>

My cousin Christopher Natsume reports on an applicant to his firm, Boomzap Entertainment:

Resume fail: "I believe [your company] will definitely benefit from my skills and expertise." It took every ounce of willpower in me to not reply "Dear [applicant] . . ."

Would-be computer game designers are advised to be sure to carefully proofread and if necessary use search-and-replace before submitting their resumes to:

Boomzap Entertainment
<http://www.boomzap.com/>

It's all in the family, since Chris's great-grandfather had developed the commodities trading game Pit.

He's baaaaaack . . . Coming in 2012:

**The Joker Blogs
Season Two**

<http://www.thejokerblogs.com>

The Globe and Mail for July 18 reports on a strange polar quarrel. The town of Asker,

Norway wants to have Roald Amundsen's exploratory ship the *Maud* returned to them for rebuilding and restoration. The Canadian government lays claim to the ship on the grounds that no one's done anything to her for over eighty years.

As you know, Bob, from having read Lincoln P. Paine's *Ships of Discovery and Exploration* (2000; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #2), the *Maud*, or *Baymaud* as she was by then, had sunk in the harbor at Cambridge Bay in what is now Nunavut in 1930. The Asker government bought the wreck from The Bay (the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, or The Hudson's Bay Company) for CAN\$1 in 1990. The HBC had bought the ship in 1925 when Amundsen's creditors had her seized in San Francisco for debt. The original export permit has expired but now there is a new proposal to raise and repatriate the ship. The original estimate for restoration was 230 million kroner and has probably gone up since then.

On **May 26, 2011**, **George Atkinson** reached the peak of Mount Everest, joining the exclusive club of Seven Summitters, the people who have climbed the tallest mountain on each continent. (For those who like to nitpick, he chose the more difficult if technically non-continental version, climbing Puncak Jaya (also known as Carstensz Pyramid) in New Guinea (4884 m.) rather than Mount Kosciuszko in Australia (2228 m.).)

Three days later he celebrated his **seventeenth** birthday. He should think about going to the Poles.

The Miraculous Well Uncorked amid
awful outbursts of
**INFERNAL FIRE AND SMOKE
ATHUNDER!**

**THE BUZZARD-ROOST ASTONISHED!
UNPARALLELED REJOICINGS!**

The FBI has released the formerly secret files on Operation SOLO, the infiltration of the Communist Party USA at the highest levels.

<http://vault.fbi.gov/solo>

So now you can find out what those old men that Harlan Ellison® saw were doing during his visit to Communist Party USA headquarters.

We regret to report the death of **Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor on June 10, 2011**. Thus ends a long and thrilling life in a far-flung variety of fields that seems almost impossible to comprehend or even conceive. Born **February 11, 1915**, he had a interesting youth, being diagnosed as "a dangerous mixture of sophistication and recklessness". Since Ritalin was unavailable then, he managed to survive.

At eighteen, he decided to see the world, or at least walk from Hook of Holland to Constantinople. This involved going through Nazi Germany, getting caught up in suppressing a Greek rebellion, and moving in with a Romanian princess. Then he joined the SOE . .

. and so on and so on. Including writing a number of travel books and introductions to others' memoirs. Such a person would have to be real; in a fiction, he would be dismissed as preposterously impossible.

We regret to report the death of premier forensic reconstructor and Vidoq Society founder **Frank Bender on July 28, 2011**. In spite of a life that made him seem more a victim of a crime than an investigator, Bender used his unique talents to reconstruct faces from skulls — or, in the incident that first brought him to public notice, to show how family exterminator John Emil List had aged, which led to his being found. Some parts of Bender's wild life and career can be found in *The Murder Room* by Michael Capuzzo (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #5).

Edison Thomas 1912-2011

On **July 16** one of the oldest patriarchs of my father's family died. I think he was probably the last one who remembered the first Thomas-Bridges reunion back in 1920. He had fallen several days earlier and the injuries were too severe to recover from. He was a grand old gentleman. We were honored to have known him and will miss him.

— Lisa

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Martin Harry Greenberg on June 25, 2011**. He was responsible for, it is estimated, over two thousand (!) anthologies. A most self-effacing man, he began stressing his middle name after being reminded of a somewhat less felicitous Martin Greenberg of less than positive fame in prodrom circles.

MONARCHIST NEWS

"A sinful, mortal man."

We regret to report the death of **Dr. Otto von Habsburg**, Archduke Franz Joseph Otto Robert Maria Anton Karl Max Heinrich Sixtus Xavier Felix Renatus Ludwig Gaetan Pius Ignatius of Austria and Hungary, at home in Pöcking, Bavaria on **July 4, 2011**, in his sleep.

Had he actually reigned, Otto would have had the longest reign in history, having succeeded to the claim upon the death of his father, the Blessed Charles I, on April 1, 1922. Born November 20, 1912, Otto had become Crown Prince of the Dual Monarchy upon the death of Kaiser und König Franz Josef on November 21, 1916.

The funeral was **July 16**, in the Imperial Crypt in Vienna, with his heart being buried separately on July 17 in Pannonhalm Archabbey in Hungary. The successor to the claims is his oldest son, Archduke Karl, who like his father was elected to the European Parliament.

THE BRADLEY OF PUNG'S CORNERS

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
"The Wizard of Pung's Corners"
by Frederik Pohl

Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 222nd Infantry Regiment, "The Fighting Two-Two-Twains" as they called themselves, was a bit understrength. Major Commaigne, the company commander, was short a platoon, which had been detached to watch a school and serve tea to the visiting aid workers. And due to a shortage of fuel, and for base security, he had had to "ground" a squad in each of his platoons.

Higher Authorities had ordered him to occupy the village of al-Pung, which had evicted an Afghani government official. There wasn't any indication of substantial resistance, so he left the heavy weapons platoon behind and set out with what force he had disposable.

Well, look. It was this way. Nine Bradley M-2 Infantry Fighting Vehicles, or IFV, had brought them there. Each squad rode in one Bradley, and he and the two platoon commanders each had one. Counting the embedded reporter, he had sixty people. A Bradley IFV had a driver, a gunner, and the squad commander, and carried six grunts. The commanders' IFV had a driver, a gunner, the commander, two passengers, and all the ammunition a nervous commander can endure, with other supplies. Well, it left exactly forty-six riflemen in line of skirmish.

A trigger-happy gunner shot up a goat on the way in. This alerted the locals, who confronted the invaders with all the weapons they had to hand, a shotgun and a rimfire rifle . . .

Frederik Pohl's "The Wizards of Pung's Corners" (*Galaxy*, October 1958) is par for the zine, a satirical story taking some feature of contemporary society and blowing it up to universal status. In this case, Pohl is eerily predicting the history of deployment of the Vietnam War.

The Major Commaigne of the story did indeed take a company to occupy the village of Pung's Corners, New Jersey, after they had insulted a government official. Yet, he seemed to need, or have anyway, a few more troops. . .

Well, look. It was this way. Twenty-six personnel carriers had brought them there. Each carrier had its driver, its relief driver, its emergency alternate driver, and its mechanic. It had its radar-and-electronics repairman, and its radar-and-electronics repairman's assistant. It had its ordnance staff of four, and its liaison communications officer to man the intercom and keep in touch with the P.C. commander.

Well, they needed all those people, of course. Couldn't get along without them.

But that came to two hundred and eighty-two men.

Then there was the field kitchen,

with its staff of forty-seven, plus administrative detachment and dietetic staff; the headquarters detachment, with paymaster's corps and military police platoon; the meteorological section, a proud sight as they began setting up their field teletypes and fax receivers and launching their weather balloons; the field hospital with eighty-one medics and nurses, nine medical officers, and attached medical administrative staff; the special services detachment, prompt to begin setting up a three-D motion picture screen in the lee of the parked personnel carriers and to commence organizing a hand-ball tournament among the off-duty men; the four chaplains and chaplains' assistants, plus the Wischam Counsellor for Ethical Culturists, agnostics and waverers; the Historical officer and his eight trained clerks already going from foxhole to foxhole bravely carrying tape recorders, to take down history as it was being made in the form of first-hand impressions of the battle that had yet to be fought; military observers from Canada, Mexico, Uruguay, the Scandinavian Confederation, and the Soviet Socialist Republic of Mongolia, with their orderlies and attachés; and, of course, field correspondents from *Stars & Stripes*, the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the Scripps-Howard chain, five wire services, eight television networks, an independent documentary motion-picture producer, and one hundred and twenty-seven other newspapers and allied public information outlets.

It was a stripped-down combat command, naturally. Therefore there was only one Public Information Officer per reporter.

Still . . .

Well, it left exactly forty-six riflemen in line of skirmish.

— "The Wizards of Pung's Corners"

The total ration strength of that force is given as twelve hundred fifty. Let's break that down:

Twenty-six personnel carriers had brought them there.

Twenty-six vehicles, armored personnel carriers (APC) for 1250 men, that is. Those aren't APC, they're buses! Small wonder they need three drivers, two techs, and a mechanic.

The "ordnance staff" is firing a 150-mm howitzer. This seems perhaps a trifle too powerful for the task assigned. As we shall see, this also means there are more gunners than there are infantrymen. Twenty-six howitzers is about the right number for a brigade! (By way of comparison, a Bradley IFV has a 25-mm chain-gun cannon and a TOW anti-tank missile launcher, and one gunner to handle them both.)

They are also described as "half-tracked", which was the standard in 1959; the fully-

tracked M113 APC was not in service until 1962. (See Brian Daley's *The Doomfarers of Coramonde* (1977) for a description of a scout version of the M113 in combat under rather extraordinary circumstances.)

One item that seems to be subsumed into the general head-count is the supply staff. Those vehicles are going to be using a lot of fuel. Given the size, one could also be concerned about their off-road functionality.

Then there was the field kitchen, with its staff of forty-seven, plus administrative detachment and dietetic staff . . .

Not all the matters of supply have been ignored. This level of food supply is more suited to a permanent firebase. Such an excursion would be, one would think, supplied in this regard more on the order of issuing field rations (K rations then, MRE's now).

. . . the headquarters detachment, with paymaster's corps and military police platoon . . .

Again, more of a establishing a base than carrying out a combat mission. With so many troops and others, presumably some sort of order is needed. The paymaster's group is the beginning of a tipoff that this is not entirely serious. Whether the lack of seriousness can be traced to the author, or to the command, is another issue.

. . . the meteorological section, a proud sight as they began setting up their field teletypes and fax receivers and launching their weather balloons . . .

Another detachment for a permanent base, not a combat operation. Pohl was in the meteorological section of an air force unit, so this is his area of expertise. (The matter of Brian Aldiss comes to mind in this context; he was in the Royal Corps of Signals in Burma, and one wonders if his ire at *Starship Troopers* contains a bit of pique that there is no communications section in the Mobile Infantry. You'll note that there are at least twenty-six signalmen in this outfit.)

. . . the field hospital with eighty-one medics and nurses, nine medical officers, and attached medical administrative staff . . .

By now, presumably, people are aware of the nature of such traumatic-services medical institutions, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Richard Hornberger ("Richard Hooker", alone and with William E. Butterworth [who is occasionally "W. E. B. Griffin"]), Robert Altmann, Ring Lardner, Jr., and Larry Gelbart on the various versions of *M*A*S*H* (novel 1968, movie 1970, series 1972-1983). This hospital seems to be somewhat larger than the 4077th.

. . . the special services detachment, prompt to begin setting up a three-D motion picture screen in the lee of the parked personnel carriers and to commence organizing a hand-ball tournament among the off-duty men . . .

Now we are quite obviously seeing the staff for a permanent base. All it needs is a visit by

a group of Playboy Playmates, and perhaps a break to have some of the soldiers go surfing, on their way to *Apocalypse Now* (1979). The horror, the horror.

... the four chaplains and chaplains' assistants, plus the Wisaham Counsellor for Ethical Culturists, agnostics and waverers ...

Yet another indication of a permanent base. This shows how Pohl failed to predict the future. Where are the Wiccans, the Satanists, and so on?

... the Historical officer and his eight trained clerks already going from foxhole to foxhole bravely carrying tape recorders, to take down history as it was being made in the form of first-hand impressions of the battle that had yet to be fought ...

Pohl's war was the one that was recorded like that. The Army Historical Section produced a large and useful collection of histories of not only the campaigns but of specific non-campaign fields of interest, such as the employment of "colored" troops. (It's all available on the Net now, too.) A recounting of this effort by someone who had been there and done that may be found in *War Is a Private Affair* (1959) by Edmund G. Love, one such "Historical officer", describing many of the less sane incidents in such historical work, such as the company kleptomaniac and how he avenged the company commander's death, or the subordinate who missed every troop movement and somehow got honorably discharged as a Major. (Love also wrote the charming fantasy *An End to Bugling* (1963) about Civil War Centennial celebrators and the Maryland and Pennsylvania National Guards and state troopers having to deal with the real thing.)

... military observers from Canada, Mexico, Uruguay, the Scandinavian Confederation, and the Soviet Socialist Republic of Mongolia, with their orderlies and attachés ...

By now the reader may be getting the impression that no one in the chain of command can say "No". At least there aren't helicopters. In his analysis of the failures of the Vietnam era and post-Vietnam era military, *The Straw Giant* (1986) Arthur T. Hadley describes in painful detail the suffering of the company commander (like Major Commaigne) in Vietnam trying to fight a battle while battalion, brigade, and even assistant division commanders fly overhead, issuing orders over the radio. (Hadley may possibly be more familiar to the SF reader as the author of *The Joy Wagon* (1958), a story of a computer running for President, reviewed favorably by Damon Knight in *In Search of Wonder*.) This gaggle of observers comes across as the result of a similar, perhaps in some ways even broader, controlling effort.

... and, of course, field correspondents from *Stars & Stripes*, the *New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Scripps-Howard* chain, five wire services, eight

television networks, an independent documentary motion-picture producer, and one hundred and twenty-seven other newspapers and allied public information outlets.

It was a stripped-down combat command, naturally. Therefore there was only one Public Information Officer per reporter.

This isn't embedded reporters in the combat units, but embedded soldiers in the press pool! In an era where the media representatives were waiting on the beach to see the Marines land in Somalia, Pohl's portrayal of such a massive communications contingent is if anything understated. That's a minimum of 145 reporters and 145 PIO's out of those 1250 men. The television and movie people will require a cameraman, a sound man, and perhaps others, boosting the media detachment even more.

Someone who would have understood this was William Brinkley, who in *Don't Go Near the Water* (1956) described the plight of a Navy Public Relations Section handling such events as the visit of a certain war correspondent — Edgar Rice Burroughs. (They had the slipshod taste to focus on Tarzan as their theme for the reception, and not, say John Carter, but one goes with what is best known, and besides Waldo Emerson Smith-Jones of Wild Island in the Pacific [*The Cave Girl* (1913-1917, 1925)] wasn't popular enough.) Yes, ERB was a war correspondent in the Pacific. Quite a follow-up for the guy who had been turned down by TR himself for service in the Rough Riders.

Well, it left exactly forty-six riflemen in line of skirmish.

And now you see the problem. Which makes the climax of the story a perfect example of bureaucratic malaise in action.

(Extra points for anyone who can tell what state the Fighting Two-Two-Twains came from.)

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

by Joe

And Tuesday ain't so good either.

I bought Daniel Akst's *The Webster Chronicle* (2001) because of his portrait of the Satanic Ritual Abuse Investigation process, the sort of incident where a kid comes home from the day-care center crying and within three months a D.A. becomes famous as the guy who has unmasked a giant coven of Satanic Ritual Abusers (and in two years the whole case has fallen apart on appeal and after objective investigation). But Akst's fictional town of Webster shows a more general pattern of decline.

Webster has a local department store. Because of the fallout from the Satanic Ritual Abuse case, the owner has to sell out to a larger chain. What happens in such cases?

For a time, things improve. There are lower prices due to larger-scale buying, even though the local executives are gradually being eased out of the picture. Then, the chain has reductions, down-sizings, and may even go

bankrupt.

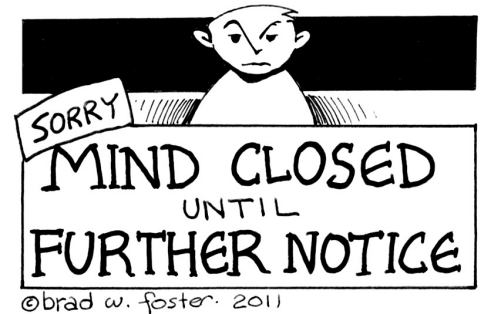
Replace that with "Hawley-Cooke Books" and "Borders" and here you are. Our wonderful local bookstore Hawley-Cooke sold out to Borders, rather than close up. Except, now, Borders is in the same state, and no one to take them over, so we are losing two more stores.

But bricks-and-mortar stores are generally in decline, being replaced by such net-based outfits as BigSouthAmericanRiver.com. Same thing with video stores. Twenty years ago, there was a video place on every corner. They got replaced by big video places such as Blockbuster, and now that's gone, and everyone gets Netflix.

And what happens when Jeff Bezos puts the financial fate of his company into the hands of Ponzi, Kreuger, Madoff, et Cia.?

Beyond that, what's going to happen when standards for ebooks get too hard to maintain? Or a virus corrupts texts. Ray Brown's "Pixie Dixon and the Mystery of the Haunted Playpen" (*ANALOG*, March 29, 1982), where e-texts had proliferated, then vanished, and the few surviving dead-tree texts were valuable treasures well may have been predictive.

Here in Louisville, we still have two Barnes & Noble stores and a Books-a-Million, but for how long?



OCTOBER 19, 1899 —
JULY 21, 2011

by Joe

On October 19, 1899, Robert Hutchings Goddard of Worcester, Massachusetts climbed a tree behind the barn at the farm to do some pruning. Having read a speculative work recently, and perhaps not taken to heart the lesson of the effects of imperialism the author intended, but rather only become attached to the external story, he was wondering if he was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own.¹

On this day I climbed a tall cherry tree at the back of the barn ... and as I looked toward the fields at the east, I imagined how wonderful it would be to make some device which had even the possibility of ascending to Mars, and how it would look on a small scale, if sent up from the meadow at my feet. I

have several photographs of the tree, taken since, with the little ladder I made to climb it, leaning against it.

It seemed to me then that a weight whirling around a horizontal shaft, moving more rapidly above than below, could furnish lift by virtue of the greater centrifugal force at the top of the path.

I was a different boy when I descended the tree from when I ascended. Existence at last seemed very purposive.

He worked for many years on that purpose, devising more suitable devices. The purpose became more popular and some sixty-two years after he came down the cherry tree, some people started going up a little higher. Here is a list of the survivors.

It was a high-risk job. One of their colleagues died when his vehicle broke down, got snarled in its parachute, and spectacularly crashed. Two more, with a later colleague, were killed in a fire. The first of them all died keeping his plane from hitting an inhabited area.

The ones who survived had interesting times. One got stuck out in the cold and had to take a big chance to get inside to safety, and then it happened again in a different kind of place. Two of them had a breakdown and got back safely, and then another one got frustrated when his vehicle had a problem which nearly killed him and his two crewmates. Not to mention personal matters, divorces and the like.

The survivors got honor and glory, though. Two were elected to the legislature, though one of the elections was a little shady. One became a general, another stepped into the shoes of a famous hero of an older time.

And one of them was the first to step on the Moon.

John H. Glenn, Jr.

Mercury-Atlas 6 "Friendship 7" February 20, 1962
Born July 18, 1921 (age 90)

Scott Carpenter

Mercury-Atlas 7 "Aurora 7" May 24, 1962
Born May 1, 1925 (age 86)

Valery F. Bykovsky

Vostok 5 "Ястреб" [*Yastreb* "Hawk"] June 14-19, 1963
Born August 2, 1934 (age 77)

Valentina V. Tereshkova

Vostok 6 "Чайка" [*Chayka* "Seagull"] June 16-19, 1963
Born March 6, 1937 (age 74)

John W. Young

Gemini 3 "Molly Brown" March 23, 1965
Born September 24, 1930 (age 80)

James A. McDivitt

Gemini 4 June 3-7, 1965
Born June 10, 1929 (age 82)

Alexei A. Leonov

Soyuz 2 "Алмаз" [*Aimaz* "Diamond"]
March 18-19, 1965
Born May 30, 1934 (age 77)

Frank F. Borman II

Gemini 7 December 4-18, 1965
Born March 14, 1928 (age 83)

James A. Lovell

Gemini 7 December 4-18, 1965
Born March 25, 1928 (age 83)

Thomas P. Stafford

Gemini 6A December 15-16, 1965
Born September 17, 1930 (age 80)

Neil A. Armstrong

Gemini 8 March 15-16, 1966
Born August 5, 1930 (age 81)

David R. Scott

Gemini 8 March 15-16, 1966
Born June 6, 1932 (age 79)

These are the Twelve Senior Persons in Space.

Nowadays, existence does not seem very purposive. If we can't apologize to these dozen, perhaps we should go to where the cherry tree had been and apologize to Dr. Goddard.

"Out of her breast
A blossom ascended.
The summer burned it.
The song is ended."

Then he spread his wings for the long flight away.

— Poul Anderson, "The Queen of Air and Darkness"



1. One hopes it was the original *The War of the Worlds* (1898) he was thinking about and not the *Boston Evening Post's* reimagining of it, *Fighters from Mars* (1898) with its thrilling sequel *Edison's Conquest of Mars* (1898).

BONES AND ODYSSEY

Review by Joseph T Major of
FUZZY NATION
by John Scalzi
(Tor; 2011;

ISBN 978-0-615-33327-4; \$24.99)

... as a safe and responsible driver, Seaton pulled his moped over to the curb before pulling out his iPhone to answer the message from Shiro. The text was disheartening: "LATEST BATCH STILL SUBSTANDARD". The *Skylark of Space* would never get off the ground if they couldn't get hull material that was up to spec. He called up an app and began a search for a material provider that wasn't tied to WorldComposites PLC ...
— Not from *Skylark Nation* by John Scalzi

Advances in technology often leave SF classics looking rather erratically developed. Some followers find explanations (i.e., the authors of GDW's *Lensman* sourcebook for their GURPS role-playing game included a section where the Arisians blocked transistor and integrated circuit development).

Other followers add their own explanations. Here we have a piece of fan fiction by a Hugo-winning fan writer. That he just happens to be a dirty pro is entirely tangential. (Did Tucker cease to be a fan because of his SF novel sales? Hearken to *The Long Loud Silence* (1952) from those critics.)

However, those looking for a mere technological updating of the original will be disappointed. Scalzi has changed much of the background, recast the supporting characters, and altered Jack Holloway's personality and background. About all that's left is Zarathustra himself and the Company. He even changed the biology of the Fuzzies. (!)

This somewhat blunts the trial. (Scalzi did follow most of the original plot.) The question of whether the Fuzzies are in fact sapient is pushed somewhat into the background, becoming given. It gains the poignant scene where Pappa Fuzzy (still little, though no longer Little), the first to get into Holloway's house, makes an identification of the killer.

"I know this voice," Papa said, and its voice was surprisingly forceful. Papa looked up at Soltan. "Do you not have a child? If a man killed your child, you would know about that man. You would know the face of the man. You would know the hands of the man. You would know the smell of the man. You would know the voice of the man. This is the voice of the man who killed my child. My child who I cannot see. Who I cannot hold. Who is gone. This man killed my child. I know this voice."
— *Fuzzy Nation*, Page 282

The way the book is set up there probably won't be a *Fuzzy Sapiens/The Other Human Race* equivalent, much less the diverse continuations by Piper himself, Mayhar, and Tuning — *Fuzzies and Other People*, *Golden Dream: A Fuzzy Odyssey*, and *Fuzzy Bones* respectively. The biological conundrum of the other books doesn't apply here.

Will Scalzi perhaps dare to write *Son of Space Viking* as a sequel to a *Space Viking*

Rebooted?

(There is also yet another sequel out there, *Fuzzy Ergo Sum* (Pequod Press; 2011; \$38) by Wolfgang Diehr, author of "Second Genesis".)

BUT I HAVE . . .

Review by Joseph T Major of
NAAMAH'S BLESSING
by Jacqueline Carey
(Grand Central Publishing; 2011;
ISBN 978-0-446-19807-3; \$26.99)
A Kushiel Novel

"I won't go! The jungle is impenetrable! Swamps! Marshes! Canyons! Mountain ridges! Icy cliffs! Raging rivers! Arctic winds! Quicksand! Dust storms! Torrential rain! I stay here!"

"But I have a Range Rover."

"Okay. I bring the kids."

— Range Rover Safari ad

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aKGDHm5L0s>

Which is made in Alba, though at last report the company was owned by Tata Motors in Bhodistan, so perhaps Moirin and Bao can get one as a wedding present. They could use it in the desperate journey . . . well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Our last thrilling episode, *Naamah's Curse* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #6) ended with Bao rescued and Moirin married to him (well maybe not). Now it's time to return to Terre d'Ange and find out what's gone wrong.

What's gone wrong is that the Dauphin Thierry went off on an expedition to the New World, went south in quest of this strange new land of riches, disappeared into the impenetrable jungle with its swamps, marshes, canyons, mountain ridges, icy cliffs, raging rivers, arctic winds, quicksand, dust storms, torrential rain . . . well, the jungle, and never came back.

Then, just as Moirin is getting in well with the Dauphiness, the King goes for a walk by the river and next morning they find him in it. Much confusion ensues, and the regent seems to be just a bit too forward. He's brought his son to be the Dauphiness's . . . friend.

So Moirin and Bao set off across the ocean to the new world, where the Aragonese have established a tentative trading relationship with the locals. Here Carey's inventiveness falls down, having the Mexica being much the same as in our world (the way that in her *Savage Empire* series Jean Lorrah had brought out some clever alternative names for places in her equivalent of our-time-line Italy, and then referred to the continent to the south as "Africa").

After a little problem with the First Speaker, who had been told he was getting a white-skin concubine, Moirin and Bao head south with their party and a few Aragonese. (Not before she gets to show off some of the Night Court's artistry, though.)

The impenetrable jungle has swamps, marshes, mountain ridges . . . and also poisonous animals and such. Particularly ants. Which turn out to be the principal defense of the

next bad guy, another adventurer from Terre d'Ange who has enslaved the Dauphin and subdued the locals, thanks to his mind meld with the local ants. Think "Leiningen Versus the Ants", but with Leiningen commanding the ants instead of fighting them.

However, thanks to the willingness of a sacrifice, and that little incident in Bao's previous life where his teacher Master Lo figured the boy was worth swapping for, all turns out more Leiningen style. Then they have to settle the little matter of the succession crisis . . .

Now if Moirin and Bao had come instead to the Five Empires of Tékumel, where she would be drawn into the night courts of Lady Dlamélish, and he might find himself doing his kung fu fighting for the gallant warriors of Lord Karakán, that might have been interesting. Or at least different.

THE UNITED COLONIES TRIUMPHANT

Review by Joseph T Major of
COLUMBIA & BRITANNIA
Adam Chamberlain & Brian A. Dixon, eds.
(Fourth Horseman Press; 2010;
ISBN 978-0-615-33327-4; \$22.99)
Sidewise Award Nominee, Long Form

When in *The Two Georges* (1995, 1996) our heroes visit the offices of the independence movement in Massachusetts, their leader presents them with a copy of the thrilling alternate history novel *The United Colonies Triumphant*, the story of a revolution by the American Colonies against Great Britain.

In this collection, the various stories are set in a world where, in 1766, William Pitt got through Parliament a bill that would give the North American colonies representation in Parliament. As a result, there is no uprising a decade later over the East India Company's tea and the revenue therefrom.

The authors present a variety of perspectives and show a diversity of subsequent events, managing to avoid both too close a parallel to our time-line events (such as the reader will observe in *The Plot Against America* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. # 6)) and too broad a change from them (e.g., S. M. Stirling's "Cops and Robbers" (*Far Frontiers*, Winter 1985) where somehow Pitt is able to throw out the Septennial Act and Mutiny Act because Britain has conquered all of Spanish America, creating a Britain where only the strong survive, smashing their boots into the teeth of the serfs). The comparison with Roger Thompson's "If I Had Been . . . the Earl of Shelburne in 1762-5" (from Daniel Snowman's anthology *If I Had Been . . . Ten Historical Fantasies* (1979)) can be made.

Indeed, there is quite a variety, as the stories range from sports to war, from rebellion to exploration. It's well to remember that a society is not one voice with one person speaking, but many different people with many different experiences. The concept is fascinating and having different perspectives is an innovative

method of writing; it avoids the problem of "It was raining on Planet Earth that day," and other such monocultural lapses.

Yet, there is a colonial tristesse, so to speak, about the stories, where for all that the colonials supposedly have representation, they seem to have no influence on the government, and are treated as, well, *colonials*. It's almost as if the point of departure, having done its work, is laid aside. And the general social attitude is perhaps more contemporary than it should be. Compare for example Gus Washington's ambivalent feelings about being a part of a great Empire able to conceive and build such great engineering projects that nevertheless had executed one of his progenitors, as described in *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* (by Harry Harrison, *Analog*, April-June 1972; 1972), much less the variety of attitudes in *The Two Georges* (and there's no one in this book like Kathleen Flannery, either).

The writers are from "outside" as it were, being people from other than SF. It is tempting to wonder if in fact they are all pseudonyms of the editor(s), but probably not.

NOT SO FINE A WAR

Review by Joseph T Major of
RED INFERNO: 1945
by Robert Conroy
(Ballentine Books; 2010;
ISBN 978-0-345-50606-1; \$15.00)
Sidewise Award Nominee, Long Form
(Reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #2)

Good News: Conroy does not have American soldiers carrying M-14 assault rifles or 20 mm BAR's. He does not have the Soviets firing off A-10 ICBMs. He does not have the battleship USS *Montana* (BB-67) participating in a dramatic finale for the *rengō kantai*.

Bad News: He does, however, have a "Major" in the RAF (read "Squadron Leader") and a "Field Marshal" (read "Marshal of the Soviet Union") in the Soviet Army. *sigh* [He also gets the armament of Sturmoviks wrong.]

By way of comparison, General George S. Patton likely wouldn't be thinking this particular conflict was *A Damned Fine War* (by Bill Yenne; 2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #5) and *Blood and Guts Is Going Nuts* (by Christopher Leopold, 1976) because he can't launch the decisive thrust towards Berlin he knows he can do. Perhaps because the last thrust towards Berlin was just a little too . . . less than successful.

In our timeline, American troops reached the Elbe during the last campaign of the war on April 9th. They could have pressed on to Berlin; the opposition was the hastily-improvised units of the German 12th Army. They didn't.

And if they had, the opposition might not have been merely German . . .

Conroy switches between the council rooms far apart and the men on the ground, whether the beleaguered soldiers of the U.S. 17th Armored and 55th Infantry Divisions (he can check Shelby L. Stanton's *World War II Order of*

Battle (2006) and find these units which never existed outside the fertile imagination of Juan Pujol Garcia) fighting in Potsdam, or the other soldiers and airmen who are drawn into this war that has begun before the other has ended. He demonstrates a knowledge of the multi-polar world that is not usually present in other works.

While the bypassed Potsdam Kessel becomes an even larger and more desperate Bastogne, the Soviet Army continues to drive west. Not as badly as Yenne had them, and indeed one wonders if they would be able to advance so far so soon with what little they had.

Still, as Yenne did, and as few if any writers then would have done, Conroy points up the multi-national nature of the Soviet Army, and the consequent strains. Also, he has a better handle on the composition of forces here.

There may be longer-term consequences here, as the now manpower-short Allies are forced to use one of the handy sources of reinforcements. The anti-Fascist lobby would be horrified at the employment of German soldiers in the front lines, and it's only going to get worse. As it is there's a good bit of demonstration in the streets by those who care about the fight against the principal opponent of fascism (think Illig and Fomenko: those days between August 25, 1939 and June 22, 1941 just did not exist!).

Many of those buffs will be gratified to learn of the catastrophic breakdown of Field-Marshal Montgomery, and his replacement by the less grating Field-Marshal Alexander, which makes the dramatic conference where Eisenhower discusses the weapon that will spare them two dooms (by C. M. Kornbluth, well maybe not) a little more calm. Alex had commanded Germans before. Conroy does have a habit of slighting the Allies, but he gives them more thought than (say) Yenne did.

And the following parallel scene at the Soviet front headquarters, where "Field-Marshal" Zhukov and General Chuikov take a break from planning Operation Bagration II — "This Time It's Personal!" — and look up to see an American bomber dropping something on a parachute . . .

Any West-Soviet war story is going to have the problem that the Soviet Army was exhausted at the end of the war, and that the Western Allies had to wrap up this conflict, finish the other one, and then go home before they came apart. That is, neither would start a war intentionally. Which means a plausible means to start one unintentionally has to be found as a point of departure.

Some minor points get repeated a little too much. (The way, for example, that Roland "Never-Finished" Green puts a gargantuan-muscled second-banana into every one of his works, whether his own, the "Wandor" series, or the continuations of Pournelle's *Janissaries* and Piper's *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*.) Such as, for example, the Good Guys having the uniform and ID of a secret policeman (Kempeltai in *1945: A Novel* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #3) and NKVD [should be, of course, SMERSH] here).

And, arguably, the ending was a little too scantied. There are echoes of Yenne and of in fact the current day factors that Yenne raised, but then those were very real, only slighted by those who imagined millions of borsht-breathed Ivans in solid unified phalanx behind Stalin.

FOR WANT OF A U-2

Review by Joseph T Major of

WHEN ANGELS WEPT

by Eric G. Swedin

(Potomac Books; 2010;

ISBN 978-159795179; \$27.50)

Sidewise Award Nominee, Long Form

Robert Sobel's *For Want of a Nail . . . If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga* (1973, 1997) and Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream* (1972) share an uncommon characteristic. Each is a work from the alternate history, instead of a work about the alternate history. Sobel's book is a sober history of the world since Burgoyne's victory at Saratoga (no, Gentleman Johnny wouldn't be made "Duke of Albany", since that was a title reserved for the royal family) while Spinrad's is a scholarly edition, with accompanying background essay, of Adolf Hitler's award-winning piece of lurid pulp trash *Lord of the Swastika* (1954).

For the equivalent of Spinrad's book-within-a-book one might consider as a starting point such works as *The World Next Door* by Brad Ferguson (*Asimov's*, September 1987; 1990) and *Resurrection Day* by Brendon DuBois (1999; Sidewise Award Winner), or before them the "classic" works of postnuclear rebuilding such as *Tomorrow!* by Philip Wylie (1954) and *Alas, Babylon* by Harry Hart "Pat" Frank (1959). But this is a book like Sobel's, a scholarly tome with invented references from within its own history.

And Swedin describes how the Cuban Missile Crisis went from bad to worse, complete with a global nuclear war. The devastation of the US was pretty bad, but Europe and above all the Soviet Union suffered even worse. He shows step by step how the nuclear arsenals were employed, backing up the almost bloodless descriptions of Council Rooms Apart (most of which were zapped) with more intimate and painful tales of the destruction on the ground. [There has been criticism of his having used slightly rewritten stories by Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors for the bases of his stories, but what else is there to use?]

And finally, in the ravaged ruins, a world strives to rebuild. Many survivors of America emigrate to the southern hemisphere, such as the "Eric G. Swedin" of this world, author of this book in it. It's somewhat reminiscent of the early days of Piper's *TerroHuman Future History*, or perhaps his "The Edge of the Knife" (*Amazing Stories*, May 1957) and "The Mercenaries" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, March 1950).

I suspect Swedin may have been overstating both the numbers and the reliability of Soviet nuclear delivery systems.

Review by Joseph T Major of
**THE HORSE THE WHEEL AND
LANGUAGE:**

**How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian
Steppes Shaped the Modern World**

by David W. Anthony

(Princeton University Press; 2007;
ISBN 978-0-691-05887-0; \$22.95)

Wait a minute. The words for "father" and "mother." German, *vater*; Spanish, *padre*; Latin, *pater*; Greek, as near that as didn't matter; Sanskrit, *pitr*. German, *mutter*; Spanish, *madre*; Latin, *mater*; Greek, *meter*; Sanskrit, *matr*. In Zarthani, they were *phadros* and *mavra*. — H. Beam Piper, *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*

And, as has been hypothesized, they were all originally **pāter* and **mā-*. Or something like that. (To be precise the Greek words are *πατήρ* and *μήτηρ*.)

This publication is written in what we can call an "Indo-European" language. Much of it deals with wheels and with horses. In this work, David Anthony brings together these features and so very much more.

In the August 1964 issue of *Analog*, back during the "slick" period, there was a story titled "Inter-Disciplinary Conference" by Philip R. Geffe. This is his only story. It is, not surprisingly, a story about an interdisciplinary scientific conference. The story included abstracts of papers written by the participants; from reading them, the reader can assume that the various scientists have found and can decipher a message from a very ancient alien race. The actual meeting consisted of a lot of jokes and small talk. While this study doesn't have quite the same cosmic results, it does have a similar breadth of constituent parts and a more successful result.

For example, what animals did the Proto-Indo-European people have? Trying to determine this involves not only archaeology, to find the remnants of ancient clothing, but linguistics, determining the common root of the similar words that developed in the subsequent languages. In other words, by studying all these clues, Anthony concludes that they had sheep and dogs (for example) as well as horses (but apparently not cats).

This multi-disciplinary approach limns the ancient society, with its male-oriented family groupings, its religion oriented around the god **dyeus pāter*, "Sky Father". It seems odd that while Greek *ΘΕΟΣ* [*Theos*] and Latin *DEVS* both mean "God", "Deus" derives from **dyeus pāter* while its Greek equivalent is *ΖΕΥΣ*, Zeus. But Zeus is referred to as *Zeu Pater* and in Mycenaean Greek was *di-we*.

Going back to Kalvan's thoughts above, the entire theory of a "Proto-Indo-European" language arose when Sir William Jones, an English judge (who had been up to public school and learned Greek and Latin), was sent to India, had to learn Sanskrit to learn the local body of law, and (like Calvin Morrison) noticed the similarities. One would have thought that this realization would have put a damper on

supremacist thoughts but it seems to have incited them.

Anthony argues that people don't remember their great-grandmothers' maiden names, and yet these women contributed a significant part of their memory-lapsed descendants's genetic and social history. Gary, Mabry, Campbell, Sheperd: he ain't no *suthren* boy, now, air he?

At what point did the Proto-Indo-European language die out? Anthony can only give a range of dates, derived by the likely dissemination of the language as it divided into the language families of later eras.

The Heartland of the Proto-Indo-European origins is as contentious a topic as any other. Anthony puts it in the modern-day Ukraine and Caucasus, based (again) on a combination of archaeology, word usage, and climate. (After seeing a very vehement one-star review of the book on Amazon.com by someone who argued in favor of a different source, it's possible to understand that these theories are controversial, if not why they are.)

Any such reconstruction is likely to be subject to change without prior notice, as it were. Add to that the habits of those who wish to make fine differentiations, and the result is often very hard to make out. The more recent Proto-Indo-European reconstructions are full of superscripts, diacritical marks, and other typographic nightmares. Add to that the problems of reconstructing grammar and any reconstruction is likely to be highly hypothetical. Though I have seen two stories written in an approach to Proto-Indo-European, one of which seems to be an entry in the Bad Hemingway Contest, so here's the other, "Schleicher's Fable", or "The Sheep and the Horses":

h₂ówis h₁ék'wōsk'e

h₂ówis, (H)jésmin h₂wlh₂néh₂ ne éh₁est, dedork'e (h₁)ék'wons, tóm, wóg^hom g^wérh₂um wég^hontm, tóm, b^hórom mēg^hoh₂m, tóm, d^hg^hémonm h₂oHk'ú b^hérontm. h₂ówis (h₁)ék'wob^hos ewewk'e(t): k'?'rd h₂g^hnutoj moj widntéj d^hg^hmónm (h₁)ék'wons h₂ég^hontm. (h₁)ék'wōs ewewk': k'lud^hí, h₂ówi! k'?'rd h₂g^hnutoj widntb^hós: d^hg^hémō(n), pótis, h₂wlnéh₂m h₂ówjom k^wnewti séb^hoj g^wérmom wéstrom; h₂éwib^hosk'e h₂wlh₂néh₂ né h₁esti. Tód k'ek'luw's h₂ówis h₂ég^hrom eb^huge(t).

To give you an idea of how much the representation has changed, when Schleicher wrote it the title was rendered "*Avis akvāsas ka*". If you want to see this in a simplified version check Geoffrey Sampson's webpage:

Gwrhéei hówis, qésyo wlnéh ne est, hécwons spécet, hoinom kke gwrhúm wócom wécontm, hoinom-qe méghm ppórom, hoinom-qe ccménm hóocu ppérontm. Hówis tu hecwoippos weuqét: "Céer hekknutór moi, hécwons héjontm hnérn widntéi". Hécwoos tu weuqónt: "Clutti, hówi,

céer kke hekknutór nsméi widntppós: hnээр, pótis, héwyom r wlnéh^m seppi qrnéuti nu qqérmom wéstrom; nécci héwyom wlnéh^h hésti". Tód cecluwóos hówis héjrom ppugét.

http://www.grsampson.net/Q_PIE.html

Well, here's the translation:

[On a hill] a sheep that had no wool saw horses, one of them pulling a heavy wagon, one carrying a big load, and one carrying a man quickly. The sheep said to the horses: "My heart pains me, seeing a man driving horses." The horses said, "Listen, sheep, our hearts pain us when we see this: a man, the master, makes the wool of the sheep into a warm garment for himself. And the sheep has no wool." Having heard this, the sheep fled into the plain.

— August Schleicher, *The Sheep and the Horses*

Looking at the Latin, for example, the path of development becomes clearer: horse = equus = *hécwo; sheep = ovis = *hōwis.

And how *did* the humans control the *hécwoos? By bits. And studying the use of bits requires a study of how horses' teeth are marked by them. Sure enough, horse skulls from the probable period of the rise of the presumed PIE-speakers show tooth wear similar to the tooth wear that horses have from bits.

One of those horses was pulling a wagon. And PIE has, apparently, words for parts of a wagon: *k^wek^wlos "wheel", *rot^h-eh², "wheel", *ak^ws-, or "axle", *ei^hoi-, or "thill" [the harness pole], and *wég^heti- "ride". (Not, however, for "spoke", which indicates that these wagons had those solid wheels.) So they could transport more goods in one load than a man could carry, putting them at a technological level above the Incas — or the Old Europeans.

Other issues covered include such as the dietary range of the ancients. It is possible to determine the diet that someone five millennia dead consumed, through the concentrations of elements in the bones of the deceased. Eating fish leaves its mark.

About a fifth of the Kurgan graves have in the center, the place of honor, female burials. I mention this because of the dictum that the Kurgan invasion brought an end to the wise woman sages of the feminist matriarchal egalitarian communitarian socialist ecological pacifist nonhierarchical Old Europe. (See *First Dawn* (1996) by "Mike Moscoe" [Mike Shepherd of the *Kris Longknife* series], though in the sequel it seemed the rescued Old European society didn't turn out much better.)

A somewhat less driven version of the creation of Proto-Indo-European appears in Philip José Farmer's *Time's Last Gift* (1972), with his favorite hero being involved. Unlike Anthony, he has the heartland being in the contemporary Czech republic.

The study of our ancestors, culturally if not physically, requires a very broad and diverse

range of sciences and techniques. That such an effort can be brought to bear at all is reassuring; that it further brings about an understanding of the nature of our society is useful in a different sphere of knowledge.

INTO THIN AIR

Review by Joseph T Major of
FINDING EVERETT RUESS:
*The Life and Unsolved Disappearance of a
Legendary Wilderness Explorer*
by David Roberts
(Broadway Books; 2011;
ISBN 978-0-307-59178-0; \$25.00)

Everett Ruess was a talented artist. The chapter-headings of this book are his linoleum block prints, and show his skill and artistry. He was also a developing writer; the quotes from his journals and letters that copiously adorn these pages show him growing in observation and talent. He was a self-reliant wanderer, having rambled about the American Southwest for five years, living, well not quite marginally, but hardly in any great luxury, without any great abundance of equipment.

All these things are not surprising; unusual, noteworthy even, but not surprising. What *is* surprising is that he did all these things, and then disappeared utterly, before he was twenty-one years old.

The author of *Great Exploration Hoaxes* (1980, 2001) goes into the history of someone who disappeared more thoroughly than Donald Crowhurst and was a lot saner. Everett Ruess was born in 1914 and grew up fast. He learned to read young (why does this seem familiar?) and graduated from high school very early. He had an artistic soul and real talent, unlike most of those who have artistic souls.

His family, sad to say, was supportive (perhaps too supportive), loving, positive, and helpful. I mean, isn't a character supposed to have a hostile and unhelpful family to set up a circumstance that he can overcome, demonstrating his moral strength? His parents supported him while he wandered the American southwest, perhaps more than they could afford. His brother (one can make bad jokes because his name was Waldo) liked him too.

Between 1931 and 1935, Everett Ruess walked, sometimes with pack burros, over California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. He wrote long letters to his family and kept journals. It's possible to recreate his trips, in other words. You see his shifting attitude towards various of the people he encountered, as when he starts out distrusting the Navajo and ends up apparently being very highly trusted.

Then, one day in November 1935, he departed on another stage of his latest walk . . . and vanished.

His family became concerned when his letters came to an end. As seems to be the case, con men and woo-masters descended on them giving "help" and "information". The honest searchers found the camp where he had left his donkeys — but taken all his camping gear.

Everett became mildly popular after his

disappearance, people quoting some of his more striking comments and using his block prints. The Ruess family continued to get used, having to deal with a would-be biographer who got all his papers, those letters, his journals, and other items, and then held on to them for years. Waldo Ruess, after a successful career in the diplomatic service, became something of an accessory to the Everett Ruess memorialists.

Jon Krakauer mentioned Everett in his tale of a different wanderer, *Into The Wild* (1996). He was not quite a prototype for Chris McCandless, among other things Everett kept and needed money, and apparently didn't try to commit suicide in a grandiose fashion. Krakauer wrote the introduction to this book and did some of the "on the ground" research with Roberts.

Various rumors of Everett Ruess's life or death flourished. Roberts finally settled on one man who claimed to have buried the body after Everett was murdered. Sure enough, he found a body buried rather sketchily. Then, apparently, an FBI agent came and messed up the grave site. In a sense, it didn't matter, since after one promising lead, it turned out the skeleton wasn't Everett's.

Readers of the history of fandom of the thirties — *The Immortal Storm*, *The Futurians*, *The Way the Future Was*, *All Our Yesterdays* — will recall how one could get by on what today seems a terrifyingly small amount of money. One wonders what Ruess would have done in Fandom. Or he might have become an American Patrick Leigh Fermor, who you will recall was born about a year later, but lived a little longer.

Like with *Looking for Mr. Smith* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #3), this book is as much about the search for the story as it is about the story itself. And as with Linda Willis's efforts, so much of the effort dead-ends, trails off, or is in vain. The life and death of Everett Ruess still end in an unsolved mystery.

**For every mystery, there is someone,
somewhere, who knows the truth.**

A CARR WHICH FELL

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE MAGIC BULLET:

A Locked Room Mystery Featuring Shadwell Rafferty and Sherlock Holmes

(University of Minnesota Press; 2011;

ISBN 978-0-8166-7480-0)

The fact that a minor character is named "J. D. Carr" and that a significant piece of background information is written by one "Gideon Fell" may indicate to the perceptive reader that someone is making in-jokes.

The in-joke is no joke. It's the first day of October, 1917. In a country which is working up for a war to end all war, a reclusive millionaire financier in St. Paul, Minnesota is about to deal with a financial crisis in his firm when — he is shot dead. In his office, which is a sealed and impregnable fortress!

And before long, all sorts of misdeeds, corruptions, vilenesses, and corruptions pop up.

A notorious terrorist also makes an appearance, spreading riots and other unrest.

Since this took place not too far from the tavern of Shadwell Rafferty, Civil War veteran and friend and associate of a certain reasoner from Britain, naturally old Shad gets interested. Also involved. With riots, kidnappings, blackmailings, and outright murders going on, affairs get parlous. Not to mention racial prejudice, ethnic strife, national security investigations, and other such side issues to complicate further this already complicated matter. And yet the explanation can be derived from something given in the very first pages of the book . . .

(It should be noted that Holmes probably wasn't living in London in 1917. Cay van Ash got it better in his book *Ten Years Beyond Baker Street* (1984).)

THE LAND OF GREAT HORSES

Trip Report by Joseph and Lisa Major



When we had to give up our plans to go to Reno and on to California, for a while we wondered what to do by way of a vacation. Then I read in the *Wall Street Journal* that the Field Museum was having a special exhibition on horses that would last until August. Now we will be going to Chicago next year, but it's not a bad idea to do another practice run. There was that time we went to Chicago for Thanksgiving, for example. (Another special exhibition there, on Ernest Shackleton.) Might as well see another part of the world, and besides I could cultivate my Chicago family contacts.

Friday, July 1, 2011

Louisville

This day I got various errands done, including the laundry. We went to the doctor's office, where I had some bloodwork done (my

internist had wanted my semi-annual tests) and a B-12 shot. We also did some shopping for various necessities.

And so to bed.

Saturday, July 2, 2011

Louisville — Hopkinsville, KY

What had disarranged my plans was that Lisa had to work today. We had breakfast at home and I took her to the library, then went back and did the packing. I said goodbye to Grant, went by the bank, and then picked up Lisa.

Interstate 65 South was a little clogged. There had been a terrible accident on the road, in Bullitt County, and that part of the trip took an hour and a half; it usually takes just over half an hour. We saw where the incident had taken place; the scorched road surface suggested that whatever had happened had not been good. It was a very grueling delay.

When we got down to Hopkinsville Lisa suggested we go by Salem Church, where the Garrott Reunion was being held. I'd thought everybody would have left by then, but not quite; my cousin Garrott and his wife, Charlotte, were cleaning up and we helped a little while going over who had and hadn't been there. Maybe next year.

After stopping off to see my cousin Brooks, who is a little better off than he was back at Christmas, we went to the WalMart. For gas; the needle was flirting a little too intimately with the "Empty" marker. But it was right across from the motel, and we checked in, had dinner, and then went to see my cousin Dan and his wife Jeanne. He had been doing some guiding out on the lake, you see, and had a tan line where his big hat had hadn't covered his jaw and mouth.

Lisa wanted a new camera. We went to WalMart (again) and looked over what they had but — the counter was closed until nine in the morning. She took notes and resolved to do some research. It's so helpful these days that most hotels have free wireless.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 199.7

Sunday, July 3, 2011

Hopkinsville

Everyone was (sensibly) going out to the lake that day. So after calling on my cousin Mary Alice and her husband, Graham, we went down to Clarksville, where there is a Best Buy that has, among other things, a better selection of cameras. Lisa was remarkably satisfied with the one she found. Myself, I got the DVD of *The Eagle*, which is based on Rosemary Sutcliffe's book *The Eagle of the Ninth*.

We had dinner with my younger brother and with my cousin Mary Ann, who is a librarian in Clarksville. There was much professional talk all round, and it was a pleasure to finally see her face-to-face, as it were. Lisa wanted to charge up her new acquisition, and we returned to the motel much more pleased.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 53.3

Books read: *Medallon*, by Jennifer Fallon

**Monday, July 4, 2011
Hopkinsville — Henderson, KY**

Up in the morning and off to see my cousin W. L., who is it seems related to all the family lines. And to talk about health issues. As I've said before, the principal topic of conversation these days seems to be what people have and what they are taking for it.

The route into town passed by a Fred's. Lisa just loves that store, and I was getting concerned that I had misplaced my note pad holder. So I pulled into the lot, she went into the store, and I shifted some things in the back seat (as we get older, we seem to need more and more stuff to travel with) until I found it. Then I went inside and found — 1) a silent movies DVD collection that had Buster Keaton's *The General*, 2) two pairs of crocs in my size, 3) my cousin Hope and her two grandsons. I bought the disk and shoes, had a nice talk with Hope (who is working there now; the store is next to where my cousin Jim once had a pharmacy), wished her grandson with the pinched fingers well, and we were off to Henderson, where Lisa's father and stepmother were waiting for us.

We went to St. Louis Cemetery in Henderson that evening to put out some flags. The stories the tombstones hinted at were sometimes too painful. Such as the veteran of World War Two, Korea, and Vietnam — a Japanese-American. Or the couple, with a headstone next to them with a half-dozen names, topped with "Our Children". Or the other couple; the husband died in 1939 and the wife in 2001.

How many more are there whose stories aren't told?

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 85.4

Books read: *Sword of Fire and Sea*, by Erin Hoffman

**Tuesday, July 5, 2011
Henderson — Springfield, IL**

Off in the morning to the Land of Lincoln, Area 3. (Area 1 is Hodgenville, where he was born, and Area 2 is Dale, Indiana, where he grew up.) One thing that struck me was that the one side road we took in Illinois was straight. Very straight. You don't get this in Kentucky. The GPS got us to our destination.

Lincoln's Tomb

Why don't more people go to see this? You remember the story Andrew Ferguson told about the Czech guy who made the pilgrimage there — and I do mean pilgrimage, for in prison he had been about to give up when he had had a vision of Lincoln and the message he had for humanity. It had sustained him through his years of suffering, both in and out of ostensible imprisonment, and now that the rule of Communism was over, he could travel and actually see the place before he died.

Here I let the GPS let me down. It directed me to just behind the motel — but I couldn't see

the sign, and thought the map hadn't been updated. So I went back, called them, and went on, discovering that I had seen the back of the building. The place was practically empty. There wasn't the refrigerator I had requested but the clerk/manager brought one in five minutes. (It had taken an hour in Montréal and three in Denver.) Many thanks.

We went out to dinner, saw an Army-Navy Surplus store along the way, and resolved to take a look in the morning. The room was a bit small and using the desk made it hard for Lisa to get by, but we managed.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 266.0

Books read: *When Angels Wept* by Eric G. Swedin

**Wednesday, July 6, 2011
Springfield — Chicago, IL**

Up in the morning and off to the other sights, after a stop at the surplus store. I found a big floppy hat in my size, and with all that concern about skin cancer, an all-round coverage was not a bad idea.

Lincoln Museum

This had the entire life, in the currently-popular reenactment mode. Lisa was downheartened by the group of schoolchildren who were painfully uninterested in the debate over the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Even among the supposedly united anti-slavery loyal states, there was a broad and contentious divide over the issue. (As for those who were committed, as opposed to being involved, the "Contrabands", in their encampments with the Union Army, to which they had fled at the first opportunity, lacking the refined sensibilities and enlightened legalistic perceptions of L. Neil Smith, had at the time ignorantly celebrated the Proclamation as giving them their freedom.)

Lincoln Presidential Library

This had an exhibit of Illinois soldiers' call to duty. Strangely enough, that was a lot like the other exhibits I'd seen of civilians being called into service. Further south, that is.

Lincoln Home

The neighborhood has been taken over and rebuilt in mid-nineteenth century style, except for the ramps added to the walks so that those in bath-chairs may cross the streets without overmuch impediment, provided the horses and carriages pause to give them way. Like at the museum, curators in authentic dress of the period lecture the visitor on the way things were back then.

The bookstores at the Museum and Home did not have Andrew Ferguson's *Land of Lincoln* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #3). The latter did have *The Last Lincolns: The Rise and Fall of a Great American Family* (by Charles Lachman; 2008; Union Square Press; ISBN 978-1402758904; \$24.95), a book on the life of Lincoln's descendants. The death of

Abraham Lincoln II, for example, was particularly agonizing and an example of the advance of medical technology (he had a carbuncle which became badly infected; who even has carbuncles these days?). Or that Timothy Lincoln Beckwith could not possibly have been the son of Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, the now assured last descendant of Old Abe.

Our visit done, we were off to Chicago. The drive was mostly unexceptional, and I had been very pleased to get gas in Springfield for \$3.759 a gallon; to get ahead of myself, the lowest I saw it for in Chicago was \$4.159, and prices like \$4.349 were far more common.

The traffic in Chicago was dreadful. Short cuts make long delays, Pippin observed, even though he did want to go by a tavern instead. Frodo & Co. PLC didn't have to deal with torn-up Chicago streets, either. But we persevered and emerged in a lovely lovely upper Chicago neighborhood to my cousin's house where Anya and Simon greeted us.

Somewhat later, their parents Mike and Dana came. Anya is a lively charming little girl and Simon is a very little very busy boy. If they survive the next few years I expect they'll be great. Mike is an attorney, and Dana is an artist. I said she would like the Worldcon art show, and promised to buy her a day membership. If anyone from the ChiCon Committee (*koff* *koff* Steve Silver *koff* *koff*) is interested I can provide URLs, addresses, and the like. Some of her pieces are very . . . unusual.

Miles driven: 215.7

**Thursday, July 7, 2011
Chicago**

There was a place around the corner from Mike's and Dana's called "Beans and Bagels". They had salt and poppy bagels. Wonderful. And there was a little shop on the way where I could get the newspapers and some additional beverages. (Chicago has two newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times*. They are both tabloids now.)

To get there, we had had to cross the track of the CTA Brown Line. Dana's and Mike's home turned out to be in a very convenient neighborhood. After breakfast, we took the train downtown and walked through the park. It was a warm, but pleasant day, and we walked down to the lakeshore, which had a refreshing cool breeze coming in off the lake. Lisa got many pictures. And at the southern end of the park was our destination.

Field Museum

The line wasn't too long. The horse exhibit, which was what we came for, was up to date on the evolution of the horse. The old picture of a gradual increase in size and decrease in toes in a continuous line of development running from *Eohippus* to *Equus* has been rendered obsolete by increased knowledge. The evolutionary tree of the horse now has many branches, and, for example, the first equid is now properly referred to as *Hyracotherium* "Hyrax-like beast" since that was what the guy who discovered one first

named it, and only later did everyone find out that this creature *Eohippus* was the same thing. *Hyracotherium* was about two hands high, had five toes, and if the time travel people ever manage to get that thing up and going will no doubt be a very popular household pet.

There was a time when several species of equids co-existed in what would become North America, some with one hoof, some with three toes, eating different kinds of plants. (Julius Caesar's "steed that he rides shall have toes for hooves" presumably had extra-long splint bones that had formed subsidiary hooves, thus resembling some individuals of its ancestral species *Dinohippus*.)

Apparently the first use of horses was as meat animals. And the example they showed of such a horse-ranching community was in Kazakhstan, from ca. 5000 BC(E). "Jagshemash. My name Borat. I big man here in village, keep many horse, they make very very good meat. The Jew Cohen he not eat them, he say meat dirty, hoof not split. I throw him down well. Good-bye. Chenquie!"

I bought my grand-nephew a coloring book on the evolution of the horse, with many nice drawings of *Hyracotherium*, *Dinohippus*, and the other intermediate species. The exhibit itself had recreated one of the pictures in a display. For myself I got *The Horse the Wheel and Language*.

Lisa got some very nice pictures of Sue the Tyrannosaurus. Of course, it wasn't moving, so that wasn't hard. I had to look twice at one of the other photographers, but yes indeed he was wearing a kippot and had payess. Now what was that again about Orthodox Jews being Creationists?

Shedd Aquarium

Actually, they call it the Museum Campus, as the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium are all near each other. The aquarium was next to the museum, in fact, and they were having a big special exhibition on jellyfish. Dana had talked enthusiastically about it, for example.

We got in line. A long line. After a minute or two a very nice woman came around and asked if we needed special assistance, which we didn't. Whereupon she directed us to the main line. Which was a very very long line.

Not wanting to stand in the heat for another hour, we went back through Millennium Park, got on the CTA, and went back to Dana's and Mike's. After a while, they got home, we went out to a German restaurant, and then through the farmer's market nearby. Lisa looked at the plants.

I estimate we walked at least four miles that day.

Books read: *Fuzzy Nation*, by John Scalzi

Friday, July 8, 2011 Chicago

Up again in the morning, same routine as before, but we did change from the Brown to the Red Line to get closer to the museums. One of the transfer points is Belmont; they lack a Churchill or Pimlico station.

Shedd Aquarium

Which had a long line. Again. The jellyfish exhibition must have been really popular. So we went instead to the:

Adler Planetarium

Which had a show on the origin and nature of the universe, narrated by Guinan. Er . . . that's Caryn Elaine Johnson . . . make that **Whoopi Goldberg**. Since the auditorium was full up I would say that it was popular, and also informative.

There was also an exhibit about the local boy, James A. Lovell, including his Gemini 12 capsule. You remember, the guy who played the ship captain in *Apollo 13*. (And sad to say that's how too many people will remember it.)

There was also the usual number of kids attractions. Museums and planetariums and such are these days making a real effort to reach out to the younger generation. But do they see it as anything more than another Energy Depletion Zone?

While waiting for the show I tried to read, and gave up on reading, two books I had with me. They both turned into zombie novels. What is with this? Was there a dictum handed out at SFWA, "Zombies are the coming thing."?

One item that was mentioned was their bulk admissions pass; one pass that enabled the user to see several of the attractions. Since we're hoping to *finally* tour the Shedd Aquarium, and also see the Museum of Science & Industry again (now that U-505 is under cover) as well as go to these again, I think we'll get them.

Books read: *Columbia and Britannia*, edited

by Adam Chamberlain and Brian A. Dixon

Saturday, July 9, 2011 Chicago — Louisville

We made our final thanks to Dana and Mike, loaded the car, went to Beans & Bagels for breakfast, and then set off to Powell's Bookstore. Which did not open until ten. So to plan B.

We had noticed that Dana and Mike had a spray can of Banana Boat 85 SPF sunblock. Now this was doubly useful, secondly for the spray part and firstly for the protection. The highest concentration we'd ever seen was 50 SPF — the higher the number the better, understand, and after the skin cancer I was looking for protection. Mike had kindly written down where they had got it, at Target. So we went there while waiting for the bookstore to open.

They didn't have the 85 SPF sunblock. They had 110 SPF sunblock. As Grant said later when I showed him the bottle, "What's the lead concentration?"

This shopping tour gave us enough time to get to Powell's when it opened. Imagine a huge room full of bookcases twice as high as your head. And two more, one each on either side of it. That was Powell's. Lisa thanked her *Lucky Starr* and I got a book on German Polar Exploration.

We left with some sadness at the prospect of having to put behind us a place of such exuberance in the supply of arcane works, and drove over to I-90 to head on home. The expressway had one stretch of tight traffic, but it wasn't a patch on I-65. With regard to those Chicago gas prices, I managed to stretch out the string, as it were, out to northern Indiana.

Speaking of Steve Silver, we had hoped to have a get-together with him, but busy times eventuated. He did get out the new Special Issue of *Argentus*, on Neptune's First Birthday. A very nice issue, by the way.

The rest of the drive was unexceptional. Lisa got some very nice pictures of the huge wind farm in northern Indiana — which, I had noted, only supplied a quarter of the power requirements of the one rest stop it was next to.

Got home, had dinner, Grant was busy helping his friend Charley, so we couldn't take him out. The cats had been Up to Something, he had reported, as they had been so quiet. Whatever it was, it didn't seem to affect us.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 311.2

Books read: *The Horse the Wheel and Language*, by David W. Anthony

Sunday, July 10, 2011 Louisville

We went out for a walk in the morning and then I did laundry.

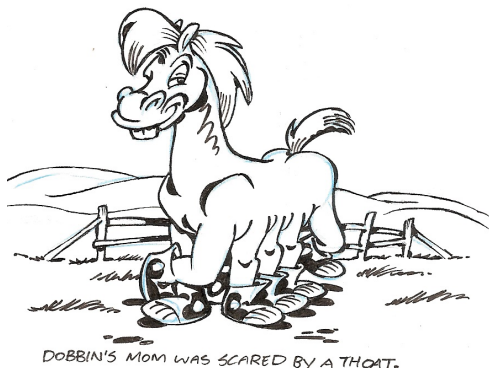
Total mileage: 1131.3
Gas bought: \$150.63
Time out: 12:27 PM
Time back: 6:09 PM



We then went to look at the animal exhibits. The only living ones were of ants, along with a cartoon biography of the curator who studies them. She started out when she was a little girl studying fire ants in New Orleans. Some people have really strange habits.

The Penguin exhibit (*Emperor Penguin* (*Aptenodytes forsteri*), not Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot) contains penguins collected by the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition (1933-1935). I read about this expedition in Byrd's book *Discovery* (1935), back when I was in grade school, also reading comic books (and seeing the TV show) about Mr. Cobblepot and his legal difficulties.

States passed through: 4 (KY, TN, IN, IL)



We encountered heavy traffic out of Louisville. It took an hour and a half to go the forty miles to Elizabethtown. Maybe next year we should try the scenic route.

The camera I ended up with was a Fujifilm Jx 310. It does okay but I think I will save up my money for a camera with a better zoom. For Lincoln's Tomb maybe we could put in pictures.

— Lisa

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

Report by Joseph T Major

Remaining are:

Poland

Józef Kowalski* (111) 22 Pulk Ułanów

United Kingdom

Florence Beatrice Patterson Green (110),
Women's Royal Air Force

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

Robert Kennedy also wished that the memory of Claude Stanley "Chuckles" Choules, late R.N., late R.A.N, last surviving combat veteran of WWI, be honored.

YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

There was a partial eclipse of the sun on July 1, 2011, visible only at sea north of Dronning Maud Land. The maximum duration was at 65° 24' S 28° 36' W. This eclipse was the first eclipse of Saros 156. This saros will end on July 14, 3237. There will be a total of four solar eclipses in 2011, all of them partial.

The next solar eclipse will be on November 25, 2011. It will be a partial eclipse visible in Antarctica and the neighboring seas, and in South Africa and Tasmania. The maximum duration will be at 68° 36' S 82° 24' W, in the Bellinghousen Sea, off Alexander I Island. It will be part of Saros 123, which began on August 16, 1087 and will end on October 8,

2367.

There will not be a total solar eclipse until November 14-13, 2012 (the track crosses the International Date Line), visible on land in Australia (Northern Territory and Queensland). This eclipse will be part of Saros 133, which began on July 13, 1219 and will end on September 5, 2499.

<http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse>

<http://www.eclipse.org.uk/>

<http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html>

THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

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

Terminology

Ever notice that electricity flows backwards?

In a flow of electricity, electrons carry charge from the negative to the positive. (Actually, it's more complicated than that, but the complication is irrelevant to the point.) You'd think that the people who named the electrical poles would have known things flow from a positive to a negative. Which would have ultimately resulted in the electron — after its discovery much later — being designated as holding a positive charge.

However, those early experimenters had no idea how electricity was carried. They could produce a flow and measure its effects, and agreed on what to call the poles they found. Only later was the direction of charge travel actually determined. We can't reasonably blame them for getting it wrong, or actually even seriously consider that they got it wrong. However, the existing convention still causes trouble for some people.

The corresponding labels for Magnetism, at least, make sense. They're based on long-standing names for parts of the Earth. The north pole of a magnet therefore has the same direction of magnetic field as the Earth's North Pole. This is something anyone who understands that the Earth has a magnetic field can also understand.

I'm an engineer. Any competent engineer knows the importance of proper use of terminology. Because when we engineers are careless with it in a professional capacity, things tend to fall down. Being a bit obsessive-compulsive on top of that, one of my pet peeves is misuse of words and terms.

For example, ever notice how some folks use "literal" and "virtual" exactly backwards? Either error makes me gnash my teeth. However, there are far more important reasons than personal irritation to be careful about what you say.

Terminology is important, especially terminology which allows us to abbreviate. Using the right short word or abbreviation in the proper context can save us from repeatedly giving long descriptions of what we mean.

Saying "chip" instead of "microprocessor circuit assembly on a single chip" or even "microchip" saves a lot of time and effort. However, if you say "chip" in some circumstances without elaboration folks won't know whether you mean "microprocessor circuit assembly on a single chip" or "chocolate chip." As usual, context is very important to meaning in language, whether spoke or written.

It's not just engineering and the physical sciences which require precise terminology, either. Paleontologists seethe quietly — and sometimes not so quietly — when the media or popular culture lump all prehistoric reptiles together as "dinosaurs." That word actually refers to a specific group of creatures distinguished from other reptiles — past and present — by shared characteristics.

See:

http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/dinosaur/2010/11/18/why-a-pterosaur-is-not-a-dinosaur/?utm_source=direct&utm_medium=printmagazine&utm_campaign=2011-January&utm_content=pterosaur

for a rant on just this subject.

This isn't just people being picky. These distinctions are important because the differences they point out are significant. Even when - as with electricity, electromagnetism and electromagnetic energy — the specific terminology is an accident of history, not adhering to the accepted terminology can result in confusion. Any competent engineer will tell you that when a standard exists — even an arbitrary one — you should use it, unless you have a good reason not to. Unfortunately, the exact same term can mean different things in different professions. Again, context is often essential.

By the way, an electromagnet is a magnet which only works when you put electricity through it. Electromagnetic radiation has nothing to do with that. It received its name because it has some characteristics of both electricity and magnetism, even though it is something distinct from both of them.

Your life could depend on precise and accurate labeling. Saying "gas" when you mean "gasoline" is acceptable when you're talking about vehicles or liquid fuels. However, if you're talking about atmospheric contaminants this could lead to confusion. "You need a filter mask. There's gas fumes in there." A mask for keeping out gasoline vapor might not work against methane (natural gas) and vice-versa.

Even in situations where the literal meaning of the words used to describe something are accurate for both fields, there can still be problems if the particular field isn't known. When an astronomer recently published a paper on "a new taxonomy for asteroids" referring to those lumps between Mars and Jupiter, he got multiple requests for copies of his paper from marine biology departments . . . because "asteroid" is the technical term for starfish. (The word in Latin meaning "star like.") Yet again, context is vital!

So, you think you know what plasma is? To

a medical person it is something quite different from what a physicist expects. Neither usage is exactly true to the original Greek meaning! (Books could be written on the problems caused when the person who names something has an incomplete understanding of a language.)

In physics, a plasma is a state of matter in which the electrons have been stripped away from the atomic nuclei they normally circle. It is like a gas, only moreso. The word was adopted to describe this state in 1928.

In medicine, plasma is the fluid which carries the other components of blood. Only, it is also the fluid inside cells, or the fluid inside cellular nuclei, or . . . This usage was adopted in 1845.

The etymology of plasma — or plasm, to get a little closer to the original — is rather interesting. In the original Greek it means something molded or created, or something spread thin. You can see how it applies to both areas of current scientific usage.

One of my really hot button pet peeves is the phrase “dark side of the Moon.”

Now, when it’s being used in a poetic or metaphorical sense, as Pink Floyd did, that’s fine. However, when someone uses it literally that makes my teeth ache. Because unless they’re an astronomer or planetologist or an amateur interested in those fields, they are pretty much guaranteed to get it wrong.

You see, what part of the Moon is dark changes on a monthly cycle. Unlike the near and far sides, which never change, because the Moon is tidally locked to the Earth. Anyone who knows the Moon has phases *knows* that the lit part changes on a regular schedule. Yet they keep saying “dark side” usually to mean the far side.

Sometimes, lay people inexplicably perpetuate an archaic or incorrect usage long dropped — or never used — by professionals. Take the word “galaxy.” The word derives from the Greek term for our own galaxy, galaxias (ΓΑΛΑΞΙΑΣ), or *kyklos galaktikos*, meaning “milky circle” for its appearance in the sky. Also known as the Milky Way, our galaxy appears as a dense, bright band in the night sky, resembling spilt milk.

Once the telescope came into use, Astronomers quickly found some rather distinct “spiral nebulae” in the sky, and wondered over their nature. By the early Twentieth Century they were known to be groups of stars, and thought to be something similar to various globular and irregular clusters, and part of the Milky Way like all other stars. However, that didn’t quite fit new data coming in. Eventually, distance measurements and improved mapping of the Milky Way combined to show that these “nebulae” were actually “island universes” vastly more distant than the stars of the Milky Way, and that the closer stars in that formation were arranged in a complex shape resembling the “spiral nebulae.”

This meant that not all stars were together in one, vast group, the Milky Way. Instead, there were multiple Milky Ways, or island universes, one of which we reside in. Due to the ancient Greek myths attributing the spray of stars

making up our island universe with the spilled breast milk of a goddess, “galaxy” came to be the general term for large, gravitationally bound aggregations of stars separated from each other by vast distances. “Island universe” is still occasionally used, but normally in a deliberately archaic sense.

However, for some reason, certain laymen can’t seem to understand just what a galaxy is. Nearly a century after astronomers got things straight, these people use “galaxy” to mean our solar system. The origin of this mistake is not known to me, but it seems to be about as old as the modern definition of galaxy.

Time designations such as 12 AM or 12 PM are nonsense. You see, AM means *ante meridian*, or before Noon. PM means *post meridian*, or after Noon. Saying 12 PM for Noon is like saying “twelve Noon after Noon.” You could almost make a case for 12 Midnight, but since it is equal amounts of time before or after Noon, is it AM or PM? We have correct and distinct terms for these times. Why go out of the way to say something not only not the standard, but confusing?

Now, yes, usage changes, as do standards. However, when careless usage results in something which isn’t really useful, it’s not creating a new standard. It’s creating confusion. Like saying “Eighteen Hundreds” when meaning “Nineteenth Century.” The Eighteen Hundreds were actually 1800 to 1810. (Or maybe 1801 to 1810. This is a gray area.) Using a term which has a long-understood — if not precise — definition to mean something else is careless at best and folly at worst.

By the way, stainless steel isn’t. Bulletproof isn’t, either (someone always has a bigger bullet). “Almost infinite” is an oxymoron. Totally unique is redundant. Penultimate does *not* mean “more than ultimate.” And on and on . . .

HOW I KILLED PLUTO And Why it Had it Coming

by Mike Brown

(Spiegel and Grau; 2010;

ISBN 978-0-385-53108-5; \$25.00)

Reviewed by Rodford Edmiston



More anecdote than scientific textbook — though there is plenty of science in this — this work still manages to cover the history — both professional and personal — of the author’s efforts to have Pluto reclassified. It also covers the huge furor — both professional and public — associated with the discoveries which led to this decision, and the decision itself.

Brown is a leader in the effort to discover and study trans-Neptunian objects. It was this work which led him to a new understanding of Pluto. An understanding that it fits far better in the same folder as the very similar objects he was discovering than with the rocky planets or gas giants.

The campaign was not driven by ego. In fact, the opposite was true. For a while Brown was being hailed as the discoverer of the tenth planet, 2003 UB313 (it was given the preliminary name Xena and yes, after the warrior princess; its later-discovered moon was originally named Gabrielle). However, he knew that his little world didn’t qualify as a planet. It was too small, the orbit too eccentric, it was made of the wrong stuff. Also, several similar bodies were soon discovered, some larger and even further from the Sun. On the other hand, Xena and its kin were so much like Pluto, that if Xena didn’t qualify, then Pluto shouldn’t, either.

He goes into the history of the discovery of planets, as well as previous “planets” which turned out to be something else. The asteroid Ceres, for example, was originally touted as the eighth planet, before its true size — and the fact that it was in a belt of similar objects, some nearly as large — became evident. This class of objects was eventually declared to be minor or dwarf planets, more commonly today known as asteroids. Though that took half a century to set. (The author notes that an 1837 secondary school text explains that “The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth planets” orbit between the fourth planet — Mars — and the ninth — Jupiter.)

For a while after the discovery of Xena, the International Astronomical Union — and professional astronomy in general — went a little bonkers. There were proposals to name Pluto’s moon, Charon, as the twelfth planet. With Ceres reinstated as the eleventh?! No, wait; Ceres will be nine and Xena twelve. No, Ceres was discovered before Neptune; it should be planet eight. And on and on . . .

Numerous solutions were offered, such as calling the original six known planets the Classical Planets and everything else something else; likely, several something elses. Even within the factions supporting the various solutions, there was argument. Some said the Classical Planets should include Uranus, or Uranus and Neptune. Some wanted to arbitrarily have nine planets, including Pluto but not include other, very similar to Pluto objects, simply due to date of discovery. The situation was so fluid and argumentative that the press — not to mention the public — was left floundering.

Eventually the IAU — to Brown’s admitted surprise — decided to take the same position as him — and in doing so follow the precedent which occurred with the reclassification of the asteroids in the middle of the Nineteenth Century — and split these admittedly large bodies into planets and dwarf (or sometimes minor) planets. Unfortunately, due to all the confusion leading up to the official declaration, and the failure in large part for the IAU to explain their reasoning to those outside the profession, many in the press and public were

left dissatisfied. (People know what they know, and to have “experts” change something the know in what seems to be an arbitrary manner upsets them on a deep level.)

Time passed. Xena eventually received the official name Eris (fitting for something which caused so much discord) and Gabrielle went into the books as Dysnomia. Brown and his colleagues learned more about these bodies. They also discovered several other, similar bodies in the outer solar system, at least one of which is larger than Pluto.

I am barely touching on the scientific discoveries — and scientific community and press and public argument and confusion — of these events. The story of how our solar system has been expanded in the last decade is fascinating. Brown does a good job of explaining what happened, when and why.

How I Killed Pluto is written with a light touch of humor, the book is semi-autobiographical, revealing how Brown became interested in both astronomy in general and Pluto in particular. It is an easy and informative read.

I strongly recommend this book.

THE BUNTLINE SPECIAL

by Mike Resnick

(Pyr; 2010; CDN\$20.00)

Book Review by Lloyd Penney

Mike Resnick is a prolific and much-honoured SF writer, and he knows what's happening in the field. With that in mind, *The Buntline Special* is, to the best of my knowledge, his first venture into steampunk fiction. And, he's tried out perhaps a newer part of that sub-genre, weird western steampunk.

Now, I've not read as much steampunk as I'd like, but there seem to be many famous people from the past who show up in steampunk stories as characters. Wells, Verne, Tesla . . . one might think that these folks did more in fiction now than they did in their own lifetimes. The characters in this new Resnick book need no introduction for the same reasons. In this alternate timeline, the cast of characters include none other than Thomas Alva Edison, plus the Earps, Clantons, McLaury's, and other participants in the Shootout at the OK Corral, plus other old Western figures like Johnny Ringo and Bat Masterson. Throw in helpings of magic, steampunk, Edisonian steam tech, and a couple of zombies, and now you can see what's happening in this strange novel.

The United States' western border is at the Mississippi River, thanks to the strong magic of the native Indians and their medicine men, and the government sends Thomas Edison to find out if his advanced scientific knowledge can counteract that magic. Seeing that Edison is an important Easterner, he's guarded by a couple of important Westerners, namely Wyatt, Morgan and Virgil Earp. This is where the story starts, and Edison is inserted into the conflict of Tombstone and OK Corral and the surrounding magic Indian territories, especially the offbeat conflict in this alternate timeline. Edison, who in this story has an artificial eye and prosthetic

arm, made by his companion and manufacturer of his grand ideas, Ned Buntline, who has created a super-strong and super-light brass that has allowed electrical lights, horseless carriages and much more onto the streets of Tombstone.

The story starts with characters that are near-stock characters, and there's the assumption that we know who these people are. With this in mind, there's the initial feeling that this is a media tie-in book; there's no character development because there doesn't need to be; we know the Earps and Clantons and Tom Edison. That does allow more time to create the setting and plot of the story. It took a while to grow on me; it seemed a little formulaic, the dialogue seemed stilted, and in the first few chapters, I felt that the characters were being marched onto the stage, and paraded in front of the readers.

Once the setting is established, and why the characters are assembled, it's easy to see the imagination behind it all, but the storyline does drag a little bit. Sometimes, there's more characters talking to each other than actual action, but that's more the dialogue pushing the plot to its conclusion. It's also too easy for the plot to advance; Edison is asked for something miraculous, and soon, he's a miracle worker. In most instances, he and Ned just happened to have a working prototype in the backroom. The dialogue is actually pretty good, and a little spicy here and there, but there's just too much of it. Eventually, the story comes to its apex, and it's been interesting enough, but I guess I wanted something a little more memorable. There might even be a sequel . . . the ending is one I certainly didn't expect.

I think it's a fairly good steampunk novel, lots of tech courtesy of Tom Edison and Ned Buntline, and they produce on demand. I haven't read many Western novels, but I couldn't detect much Western about it. Steampunk fans have proved that they can mix steampunk and the Wild, Wild West, and I think Mike Resnick gave it a good try, but didn't quite succeed. He knows his stuff as a science fiction and fantasy writer; should he try Western steampunk again, I'm sure the second attempt will be better.

The Buntline Special by Mike Resnick is published by Pyr Books of Amherst, New York.

HERSHEY'S AIR DELIGHT

Candy Bar Review by Johnny Carruthers

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>

Hershey's newest candy bar is not really something new. I first encountered aerated chocolate back in 2006, when I reviewed Nestle's Aero Caramel (an import from England). This may be, though, to the best of my knowledge, the first time an aerated chocolate bar has been marketed here in the US.

The chocolate itself is the same milk chocolate you find in the standard Hershey bar. This was determined with a simple side-by-side taste comparison of the two. Trust me, it's the same thing.

The Air Delight bar is a shell of solid milk chocolate containing the aerated milk chocolate.

Presumably, the solid outer shell serves to give the bar a more uniform appearance. Especially since the “Hershey's” name is molded into the top of each of the bar's six segments.

Pumping air into the chocolate hasn't altered the flavor any. As I said, it's still Hershey's milk chocolate — however you want to take that. There is, however, a slight alteration in the texture. The Air Delight doesn't have as sharp a snap to it when you break off a section. Or when you bite into a piece, for that matter. For lack of a better term, it feels a bit softer.

This is not the only new product that Hershey's has recently introduced under the Air Delight name. They are also now selling an Air Delight version of Hershey's Kisses. I'll probably give them a try eventually, but I rather suspect that the Air Delight Kisses will be very similar to the Air Delight bar.

Now, what would really interest me would be a Special Dark Air Delight bar.

BANANA SPLIT TRUFFLE

Candy Bar Review by Johnny Carruthers

<http://chocolatescifi.livejournal.com/>

Earlier this afternoon, I found myself at Mall St. Matthews. Specifically, I went by the Godiva store to pick up my monthly freebie. I spent the usual few minutes trying to decide what to get before finally settling on the Banana Split Truffle. This is one of the Ice Cream Parlor Truffles that they are featuring during the summer months.

As usual, I will turn to Godiva's chocolate menu for the description. They describe the Banana Split Truffle as “Banana cream and strawberry mousse in milk chocolate, topped with pecan pieces.”

The particular truffle that I got had a scant dusting of pecan pieces. I think this just happened to be the luck of the draw; I did notice that some of the other Banana Split Truffles in the display case were topped with more pecan pieces. The pieces were easily flicked off the truffle, and I nibbled on them before starting on the truffle in earnest.

The milk chocolate shell on this truffle seems to have been slightly thicker than the shells on some of the other truffles I have sampled. As always, the milk chocolate was creamy and rich. I suppose “decadently creamy and rich” would be a good description to use (if I haven't used it before).

As luck of the draw would have it, the first of the two fillings I encountered when I bit into the truffle was the banana cream. From the way it tasted, I'm guessing that real live bananas (or formerly real live bananas) were used in the making of the banana cream. It had a pale yellow color, and quite frankly, I would have expected more of a white color to it. The banana cream was the softer of the two fillings.

The strawberry mousse was a pale pink color. Like the banana cream, it tasted like it had been made with genuine strawberries. The flavors of the two fillings blended together quite well, both with each other, and that of the milk chocolate.

The truffle was enjoyable, although I don't

know if I would have put both fillings in one truffle. I think I would have gone with just the banana cream filling as a solo act, but of course that is a judgement call on my part.

And once again, I have probably squeezed as much analysis out of one truffle as I possibly can.

FANZINES

Banana Wings #46, June 2011

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Beyond Bree July 2011

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA
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<http://www.cep.unt.edu/bree.html>
Not available for The Usual; \$15/year, \$20 foreign, \$10/year electronic.

The Drink Tank #285, #286, #287, #288

Christopher J. Garcia
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Fish Out of Water #436, #437, #428, #439, #440, #441, #442

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Joel's Debris #11

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Luna #9 November 2010

C. D. Carson, Post Office Box 1035, Fort Worth, TX 76101-1035 USA
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<http://www.lunarc.org>

MT Void V. 29 #51 June 17, 2011 — V. 30 #5 July 29, 2011

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mleep@optonline.net
<http://lepers.us/mtvoid>

Opuntia #70.5A July 2011, #70.5B August 2011

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA

Nice Distinctions #21 August 2011

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<http://www.maroney.org/hlavaty/>

<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Reluctant Famulus #82

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SF Commentary #81, #82

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Southern Fandom Confederation Update V. 1 #23

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Visions of Paradise #167

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SIDELINE AWARD NOMINEES

Courtesy of *File 770*
<http://file770.com>

Short Form

Eleanor Arnason, *Mammoths of the Great Plains*, PM Press

Barry B. Longyear, "Alter Kameraden", *Asimov's*, April 2010

Ken MacLeod, "Sidewinders", *The Mammoth Book of Alternate Histories*, edited by Ian Watson and Ian Whates, Robinson Publishing/Running Press

Alan Smale, *A Clash of Eagles, Panverse Two*, edited by Dario Ciriello, Panverse Publishing

William F. Wu, "Goin' Down to Anglotoon", *The Dragon and the Stars*, edited by Derwin Mak and Eric Choi, DAW Books

Long Form

Adam Chamberlain & Brian A. Dixon, *Columbia & Britannia*, Fourth Horseman Press

Robert Conroy, *Red Inferno: 1945*, Ballantine Books

Jay Lake, *Pinion*, Tor Books

Eric Swedin, *When Angels Wept*, Potomac Books

The Awards will be presented at Renovation, the 2011 WorldCon in Reno, Nevada.

WORLDCON BIDS

2013

San Antonio
<http://www.texasin2013.org>

2014

London
<http://www.londonin2014.org>

2015

Spokane
<http://spokanein2015.org>
Orlando
<http://orlandoin2015.org>

2016

Kansas City

2017

Japan
<http://nippon2017.org>

2018

New Orleans
neworleansin2018@gmail.com

2019

2020

New Zealand
<http://nzin2020.org>

Oooh! A contested bid!

Apparently, the Orlando bid is chaired by a guy in Ohio who runs an anime convention. He says his convention will feature "sci-fi". This has not been well received in some quarters.