

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

The Kobo and the free Kindle app have changed my mind about e readers. I had the impression about e readers that they were mostly about recent bestsellers. They have shown me just how wrong I was. There is a great deal of classic SF long out of print but available in ebook format. Leigh Brackett. Edmond Hamilton, though not unfortunately *Starwolf*. A. Bertram Chandler. Much of it is available for fantastic prices. There is no shortage of free books, among them *Bob Son of Battle*, one of my favorite books. The electronic books also have the advantage of automatically bookmarking themselves so that when you open a book the file sets itself where you stopped reading. There are disadvantages, of course. The books read well on the Toshiba's big screen and on the Kobo screen. It would be far different on the small Acer screen. The ebook readers, unlike a physical book, must be periodically charged. However, they also take up much less space and are much more convenient to carry around. I have now loaded some 1,852 books onto the Toshiba, most of them free. I did pay \$5.99 for Walter Farley's *Island Stallion* (oh yes, those great horse books now have electronic editions) and ten dollars for the *Firebird* series by Kathy Tyers. I have physical copies of both these favorites but digital editions require no extra space on trips where the final frontier is usually at a premium.

— 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) was **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) was **October 2, 2011** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Manofmanymissions won in a runoff.

The 56th Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 10, 2011** at Pocono Downs in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, having been moved from Tioga Downs in Nichols, New York because of flooding. Betterthancheddar won by a neck.

The 66th Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 22, 2011** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio. Big Bad John won.

The 55th Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **November 12, 2011** at Yonkers Raceway.

The Breeders' Cup World Championships will be **November 4-5, 2011** at Churchill Downs.

Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2011**

Our Fifteenth Anniversary is **November 22, 2011**

Printed on October 5, 2011

Deadline is **December 1, 2011**

Reviewer's Notes

I am beginning to wonder about my tastes.

As you know, Bob, I have not been enthusiastic about the Hugo nominees for oh perhaps the past ten years. I remember, for example, in 2001 accepting the victory of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. "Was it the best novel of 2000?" Perhaps not. "Was it better than *A Storm of Swords*, *Calculating God*, *The Sky Road*, and *Midnight Robber*?" I'm afraid it might be so.

Then it got worse in 2007, when I went to Larry Smith's table and saw a sea of novels with young women in tight leather ready to fight vampires. The writers could and did tap their inner *Buffy*.

Nowadays it's a writer who does exhaustive historical research and puts it all in the text but gets an elementary fact wrong, floating on an ocean of zombies. Which may explain why when we went to Joseph-Beth in Lexington after the Futurity, I didn't buy anything. Really.

Who says the Internet is all bad? Thanks to modern search engines, I found that one of the boys who had made my school days so unpleasant died in 1993. Well, someone with his first name, middle initial, and last name, born in the right year, shuffled off this mortal coil in Versailles, home of William Shatner's horse ranch, that year.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



I went to Office Depot and bought a new portable hard drive. A one-terabyte (1T) hard drive. Remember the bit about the 1G hard drive that cost \$4999? [And the Weird Universe site had a piece about a “Winchester” external hard drive with a whopping **5MB** capacity that cost *only* \$999 — \$1299 with the cables and such to actually connect it to the computer.] This was less than a hundred dollars.

I’ve been reading *Hellhound on His Trail: The Stalking of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the International Hunt for His Assassin* by Hampton Sides (2010) and what surprises me is the author’s naïveté, even after reading a lot of conspiratorial works. For example, Sides cites how conspiracy theorist William F. Pepper asserted that Special Forces operative Billy Eidson had actually shot MLK, then been executed covertly to silence him. Eidson had retired to Costa Rica and had never been in Memphis in his life. Eidson confronted Pepper live on television, sued Pepper, and was awarded \$11 million. Sides seems to think this settled the matter.

Pepper now says he was confronted by an imposter. Conspiratorialists change facts to fit the theories, not the other way around. And besides, Pepper probably managed to string out the lawsuit and settle for \$9.95 and a free copy of his latest book.

Frederik Pohl made an observation on his blog, “The Way the Future Blogs”. It is in the course of an essay on the Futurian who didn’t go for being a dirty pro, **Jack Robins** (né Rubenstein). Instead, he became a chemist, with a Ph.D., a distinction shared with but Asimov from that group. But still remained a Fan. He was a member of the N3F as recently as 2009 (well, say for some values of “Fan”).

Øred, Jack, and **David Kyle** are apparently the last three Futurians left. (Did anyone ever find out what happened to the one guy who came to the first meeting and never came back?)

We do not come again.

We do not come. Ever again.

— Cyril Kornbluth

Mike Resnick did a story titled “Neutral Ground” (*The Further Adventures of Batman*

(1989)), about the little shop where the super heroes and super villains go to get their super gear (at different times, one hopes). There are all sorts of goods and services that are needed in a superhero world. Such as laundry. Your ordinary One-Hour Dry Clean isn’t quite equipped to scrub off the radioactive pollen from Black Mold Man that accumulated on Captain Wonderful’s super gauntlets during their latest struggle. So there needs to be a super laundry service for super heroes. And we have . . . ta-da! . . . the Atomic Laundromat!

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

On September 28, Steve Davidson received the official notice from the Patent and Trademark office. The previous trademarking by Hasbro having been abandoned, Davidson’s application for a trademark has been accepted. The trademark “*Amazing Stories*™”, that is.

Davidson plans to revive the First Scientifiction Magazine as a Net publication. Best wishes and keep your browsers cocked.

OBITS

Richard A. Hoen died in Hamburg, New York on **August 2, 2011**. Born **September 14, 1928**, Hoen was famous in Fandom for one incident; a letter to *Astounding* for the November 1948 issue, reviewing and evaluating the stories in the November 1949 issue. The November 1949 issue was almost like that (there was, for example, no story by “Don A. Stuart”); Campbell gave Hoen a copy of the issue, autographed by all the authors.

There has been no news of the fate of this unique SF collectable.

MONARCHIST NEWS

DNA haplogroup study shows that Nicholas I and all his descendants have DNA haplogroups consistent with German descent. So apparently Paul I was the son of Catherine II and Peter III. It would have been embarrassing if they had had DNA haplogroups consistent with the Godolphin Arabian.

YOU CAN KEEP THE DIME

Commentary by Joe

We went to the Kentucky State Fair twice. Now it wasn’t the fried Kool-Aid, or the Donut Burgers (I saw them, they definitely were made with two count ‘em two Krispy-Kreme™ glazed doughnuts), or even the chance to get in another conversation with Freddy Farm Bureau, the genial host of the fair, that led us to return.

Now mind you, on our second visit Lisa did get a plush bald eagle for my grand-nephew, and I gave some money to Raptor Rescue, too. And we did get the lime-green tote bags that Louisville Gas & Electric was giving away.

But the real reason . . .

After seeing the (closed) midway (it was early) and going past the cows, we proceeded to the mart. En route we passed by the upper Verizon Wireless booth, where the salesman

burst out from behind his stand with “Do I ever have a deal for you!”

But I’ve been with Verizon Wireless ever since Lisa and I got engaged, just about. So he asked for my phone number. Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap and then the last four digits of my Social Security Number this is not supposed to be an identification number (yet for some reason it ends up getting used as one). Tap-tap-tap-tap.

Some sadness. “Can’t do anything. Wait a minute. You’ve got our internet service. Let me see . . . Oh, I can convert a new modem into two smartphones.” Talk about Verizon Wireless and the Sorcerer’s Stone.

Except, the rollover date was August 28.

On August 28, we were back. And, such was the miracle of the Sorcerer’s Stone that one wireless modem became two HTC Android smartphones. Now, we have apps. There’s a nap for that — er, an app for that!

One of the apps is very interesting. It’s a wireless modem! Nowadays most hotels and motels, not to mention public libraries, have wireless internet connections. And indeed, if a neighbor happens to be slipshod, so do some houses. The neighbors of 1672 Bruce Street, Henderson, Kentucky are more careful.

Thus, our visit to Henderson after the family reunions brought us to our bedroom at the Thomas house, where I had my phone plugged in and the Wireless app up and running. With **both of us** on the Net.

I like the weather app, too, even though most of the news it had for me that next week was not too cheering:

Local weather:
Sunny, temperature 100°

I had a problem with the long-distance service, because somehow the phone had been set as if it were out of the U.S. And the stored phone numbers are still out of whack. Could Marc Schirmeister please send me his number again? I think I entered it wrong.

The battery life is less than optimal. We charge them up about every day.

END AND RESUME

by Joe

Friday September 9 was our farewell to Borders. The last remaining Borders store in Louisville was offering 80% off, except where it was 90% off, and a further 15% discount if you bought six items or more. We all got it.

And so ends thirty years of book shopping. I used to go to Hawley-Cooke when I was working in Bowling Green, coming up for FOSFA meetings on the Second Sunday. A Big Store, and all full of books. And now it’s gone.

Saturday September 10, Lisa and I went to Heitzman’s Bakery for breakfast. They had, it seems, Dooley’s Bagels. Yes, there was a place that had our traditional Saturday Morning Breakfast again.

Not everything is bad, I suppose.

... IS MINE

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
I WILL REPAY! (1906) by
 Báró Orczy Emma Magdolna Rozália Mária
 Jozefa Borbála



The joke was that the definition of a Fascist country was one where they named a street after you one day and chased you down it the next. This was, of course, more true of the Soviet Union, where every hero of the October Revolution save one, and the dead, turned out to have always been agents of the counterrevolutionary powers.

Before that, too, such was the case in the French Revolution, where one might be taken to the guillotine past the street once renamed from its feudal designation in honor of you, the hero of the revolution. Well, perhaps not, but it was noteworthy that the French Revolution, like the October Revolution, seemed to have been carried out by its opponents.

In the year of grace 1783 the glorious revolution is yet to come. Paul Déroulède is no more than a common bourgeois, albeit a rising one, fit to stand on the fringes of the heirs of the ancient companions who had ridden across the Rhenius with Clovis, the blue bloods of ancient eras. Such as M. le Vicomte de Marny, who takes offense at a comment this Déroulède has made regarding his current amie, Mme. Adèle. (Something that the author found too indelicate to explicitly recount, but which is implied to be that she is somewhat more generous with her favors than is quite proper.) A comment that can only be wiped out in blood.

The Vicomte has the bravado of the third bottle of wine, and proceeds to make a proper cock-up of the duel. Having lost, he demands the best two out of three. In the subsequent second round, he discovers the problems of duelling while drunk, though not so as to be able to profit from them.

He is the last heir of his line. His aged and withered father, the Duc de Marny, takes the loss amiss. However, the defunct was not his only child, and the Duke makes his daughter, Juliette, swear on her brother's body that she will avenge his death on Déroulède.

Circumstances change. Ten years later, Paul Déroulède is one of the leading lights of the new government, and the beloved of *le mob Parisien*. He is governor of the Temple prison, overseeing the confinement of the Austrian whore, the former Queen that is.

He is less idealistic than his colleagues about the situation. The admiration of the commonality is less than faithful (like Mme. Adèle) while the Erzherzogin Maria-Antonia is only unobservant and dull, not vicious, and having her executed would make the government look worse than it does.

Now-Citoyenne Juliette Marny has spent most of the past ten years in a convent, getting educated, while letting pass the teachings about forgiveness and vengeance. She has at least enough for a small establishment of her own, and with kindly nurse, prowls the streets of Paris, nurturing her vengeance.

However, while out prowling, she discovers that she is too well dressed for current tastes. Before anything worse happens to her, a gallant ("noble" is out of style these days, understand) rescuer intervenes and takes her to his home. She can't thank her luck too much, for apparently the name "Marny" has completely slipped Paul Déroulède's mind, and here she is, like a viper in his bosom, ready to repay with interest, on principle, the offense he had committed.

Except... she becomes of two minds on the subject. Two conflicting minds, as she finds him admirable, lovable, and indeed she falls for him. Except when she remembers she swore to repay his offense against her family. And the two opposed attitudes co-exist, with little moral or mental struggle.

The vengeance gets the upper hand, and there are means to contract out such efforts. Juliette has available the facilities of anonymous denunciation, and Paul has carelessly let slip that he is intending to help the Widow Capet leave the country before she can receive revolutionary justice. So she anonymously denounces him for plotting to encompass the escape of Marie-Antoinette.

Juliette comes to realize that events have consequences. The investigators come in response to the anonymous denunciation and proceed to search Paul's house. Her offense having come home to her in full, how she returned evil to one who was merciful and charitable to her, she realizes there is only one proper response.

First off she destroys most of Paul's letters to the former queen. Then she blames it all on herself. She had left just enough to incriminate herself. The investigators don't have a quota, they just arrest everyone, and so she gets taken off to prison.

Paul, having already put his career on the line with a prior defense of a patently guilty client, now goes to the brink again for Juliette, and offers to defend her. With an extremely unusual defense; he confesses! At least his feelings for her are not mixed or schizoid; he thinks she is a wonderful person worth dying for.

Some tricks never work. They both get condemned and are taken off to be held for the morning's executions. If they even get that far. The disappointed urban mob is now crying "*À la lanterne!*" and various preparations involving ropes and lampposts are being undertaken. You would think they were in *un Western*

Américain.

In order to have a proper execution, that is to say one by the government instead of the mob, the judges have Paul and Juliette escorted secretly out of the building and to the prison. Their original two escorts are joined by three more, because of the press of the crowd.

They get out of the building and then... the three newcomers attack and incapacitate the two original escorts. The principal inciter of the mob then joins them, with a casual comment of, "Well done, Tony! Gadzooks, ffoulkes, that was a smart bit of work! ... La, friend Déroulède! you had not thought, I trust, that I would leave Mademoiselle Juliette in such a damned uncomfortable hole?"

The Scarlet Pimpernel (1905) began as a play, which perhaps may explain the ease with which it is re-translated to the stage and screen. Baroness Orczy's book is a proof supporting Robert Bloch's thesis about the comparative morality of "popular" and "literary" fictions. Bloch argued at some length that the "serious" character of the "literary" work is so often a contemptible person, destructive even, who nevertheless continues to succeed and prosper. In his own writings by way of contrast he did have contemptible, destructive persons, who failed and were punished by one means or another. In *Psycho II* (1982) he had Norman Bates appalled by the admiration he was receiving, for example.

Now that it's a century past and no longer pulp junk, there have been serious comments about *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (admittedly in a milieu where writings on "Deconstructing the Transgender Hermeneutic in 1920's Western Pulp Fiction" are also taken seriously). I call to mind the one edition with the introduction by Anne Perry, discussing how Marguerite St. Just, Lady Blakeney is described physically in the terms of a helpless, object-of-rescue, Victorian-fiction maiden — and acts boldly, aggressively, and independently.

One can make a similar point about her husband, who is portrayed as a man of great intellect and character, and who, for a higher purpose, deliberately sets out to be a witless ninny, a upper-class twit of the upper-class twits. A principal part of the plot is the anguish each of them has in being deeply in love with the other, yet being constrained from revealing their love.

The greater plot depicts a more traditional English custom, one of regarding such frightening derring-do as "sport". A pause between the Ascot season and fox-hunting to go rescue Frenchmen from summary execution, ha!, that is. A few wars later they signed up for the SAS.

It is hardly a new custom for a sequel to have the same plot and character types, with merely different actors in one or two places and different settings. Lin Carter knew what a good story was, if not what a bad one was, and in *Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings* (1969) he discussed the history of the epic fantasy.

Such as, for example, the long string of

sequels to *Amadis of Gaul*; which were more or less rewrites of the book, with relations or descendants of Amadis fighting descendants or relations of the various villains of the first book. So, “Amadis of Gaul II: This Time It’s Personal!” is true to the original theme, if disappointing to those who long for originality.

By this model, therefore, *I Will Repay!* fails. The plot is not a rerun of the plot of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*; Chauvelin does not appear, Sir Percy plays a minor but significant part, and the perspective is different.

Indeed, one might take into consideration Perry’s thesis on the original book and note that the moral struggle here is even more female-centered. Juliette has to resolve her oath to get revenge on Paul with her discovery that he is an eminently noble and lovable person, who loves her and will sacrifice his life for her. He doesn’t have any moral conflicts, just worldly obstacles.

Beyond this conflict there lies a greater one. Juliette has not been reconciling her religious belief with her family life. “I will repay!” she has vowed, and she means to fulfill her vow. (The title of the French translation of the book is *Le Serment*, “The Vow”.) She has vowed to do something that is entirely opposite to her religion, and she has to reconcile the conflict of her personal justice with the higher justice.

In placing Juliette’s life in context, the author says, “She was not twenty when the feeble, vacillating monarch and his imperious consort were dragged back — a pair of humiliated prisoners — to the capital from which they had tried to flee.” This is hardly praise of Louis and Marie Antoinette.

Understandably, given the descriptions of snatching aristos from beneath the blade of the guillotine, the books have been described as reactionary, pro-monarchist. Not quite. What is depicted in its full horror is the culture of terror and denunciation. Indeed, one might well call it a prediction of the *Yezhovshchina*, the Great Purge (as described by SF writer and editor Robert Conquest in his *The Great Terror* (1968, 1990)), were it not that it was a depiction of the events of history.

History gave the author her plot device; the *loi des Suspects* of 1793:

Art. 1er. Immédiatement après la publication du présent décret, tous les gens suspects qui se trouvent dans le territoire de la République, et qui sont encore en liberté, seront mis en état d’arrestation.

Art. 2e. Sont réputés gens suspects : 1° ceux qui, soit par leur conduite, soit par leur relations, soit par leur propos ou leurs écrits, se sont montrés partisans de la tyrannie ou du fédéralisme, et ennemis de la liberté ; 2° ceux qui ne pourront pas justifier, de la manière prescrite par le décret du 21 Mars dernier, de leurs moyens d’exister et de l’acquit de leurs devoirs civiques ; 3° ceux à qui il a été refusé des certificats de civisme ; 4° les fonctionnaires publics suspendus ou destitués de leurs fonctions par la Convention nationale ou ses

commissaires, et non réintégrés, notamment ceux qui ont été ou doivent être destitués en vertu du décret du 14 août dernier ; 5° ceux des ci-devants nobles, ensemble les maris, femmes, pères, mères, fils ou filles, frère ou sœurs, et agens d’émigrés, qui n’ont pas constamment manifesté leur attachement à la révolution ; 6° ceux qui ont émigré dans l’intervalle du 1er juillet 1789 à la publication du décret du 30 mars - 8 avril 1792, quoiqu’ils soient rentrés en France dans le délai fixé par ce décret, ou précédemment.

Er . . .

Art. 1. Immediately after the publication of the present decree, all suspected persons within the territory of the Republic and still at liberty shall be placed in custody.

Art. 2. The following are deemed suspected persons: 1st, those who, by their conduct, associations, talk, or writings have shown themselves partisans of tyranny or federalism and enemies of liberty; 2nd, those who are unable to justify, in the manner prescribed by the decree of 21 March last, their means of existence and the performance of their civic duties; 3rd, those to whom certificates of patriotism have been refused; 4th, public functionaries suspended or dismissed from their positions by the National Convention or by its commissioners, and not reinstated, especially those who have been or are to be dismissed by virtue of decree of 14 August last; 5th, those former nobles, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, and agents of the *émigrés*, who have not steadily manifested their devotion to the Revolution; 6th, those who have emigrated during the interval between 1 July, 1789, and the publication of the decree of 30 March – 8 April, 1792, even though they may have returned to France within the period established by said decree or prior thereto.

The Scarlet Pimpernel and his League are opposing a government that is arbitrary and authoritarian, using the terminology of democracy and freedom to justify and promote these actions. As one commentator observed about similar language: ‘The words of this wizard stand on their heads. In the language of Orthanc help means ruin, and saving means slaying, that is plain.’

In 1941, while the author of those words was looking out for air raids, Leslie Howard appeared in a movie that was titled for American distribution *Mister V*. He played Professor Horatio Smith, a British archaeologist from Oxford doing investigative work in Germany. (No fedora, leather jacket, whip, and pistol for him.) It would be for the *Ahnenerbe*,

but they didn’t have that degree of knowledge of the Higher Aryan Racial Science then. The dig was a cover; his actual goal was extracting concentration camp prisoners.

If you think this sounds familiar, the original British title of the movie was ‘*Pimpernel*’ Smith. The connection was blatant, and you will recall that Howard played Sir Percy in the 1934 version of the original. So you can see that it is possible to do such a rewrite of a work, and still be original and good.

The film was banned in Sweden, for being British propaganda. In 1943, a diplomat with connections managed to see it anyhow, and then decided to make life imitate art. If you think this sounds familiar, yes, it was Raoul Wallenberg. (And if you like full-circle matters, Leslie Howard’s father, Ferdinand Steiner, was a Hungarian Jew.)

That’s a better emulation than making the original related to all the pulp characters a couple of people happened to really like. Vincent McHugh and his successors did not do well by the originals.

I Will Repay! is available in hardback and paperback, from the Amazon Kindle Store, and on the Project Gutenberg website, and can be read on-line at the Blakeney Manor website:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5090>

<http://www.blakeneymanor.com/spb2.html>

‘*Pimpernel*’ Smith
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0034027/>

(Not available on DVD, dash it all. Demned inconvenient, what?)



LORD KALVAN OF BYZANTION

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE END OF HISTORY

(*Orthodox Rising*)

by James Butler

(2011; Jamesdomus Books;

ISBN 978-146091975-0;

\$10.95 (tpb). \$5.00 (Kindle))

This was the first book I paid for that I read on the Kindle. Well, it *looked* interesting.

One can’t fault Butler for his scope; he has characters not only in the Empire, but in Italy, Mesopotamia, Kiev, and Ireland. But how will they all come together?

This diverse and divided crew includes two Rhomanoi who are given the secret of fireseed,

by an angel, a Turkish spy who is a very un-Islamic daughter, a Rus jarl who is working at being a kniaz of Kiev, a man who three hundred years later would be a *condottiere*, and an Ard-ri of Eire who is ruthless, and potentially schismatic. In the year of grace 980, these people work their separate ways, as the Roman Empire is caught in a life-or-death struggle with the Turks, a war of succession in Kievan Rus turns dangerously personal, a war of unification in Italy is as much, and Ireland fights for its unity against the twin perils of the Sassenach and the Lochlannach . . .

And that's the problem. Butler seems to be having a bunch of non-related points of departure, and it never seems clear if any are related, if some time-traveller is meddling all over, or what.

Some of his background seems a little off. 980, for example, was near the unexpected end of the reign of Otto II, who had a power base in Italy, and might not appreciate a papal commander snapping up various cities in the north. Similarly, **no**-body expects the Irish Inquisition, because there wasn't one.

It's a good try, and I can certainly appreciate his scope. Too many novels, not just alternate histories, have politics seemingly organized on the basis of "it was raining on Earth that day."

There are later books, if you're interested: *Trapped in the Middle* (2011) and *The Beginning of Time* (forthcoming). Kindle publication has enabled a large number of writers to get their works out, but at the same time, it's enabled a large number of writers to get their works out.

THREE DAYS OF THE 'COON

Review by Joseph T Major of
CROSSING THE LINE

A Novel of Alternate History

by Peter Pauzé

(2011; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)

This is basically a *Three Days of the Condor* version set in an alternate universe, where an official of an intelligence service has his own people trying to kill him because he's found out something they don't want known. Not to mention the other side wanting to kill him for their own reasons. In other words, it's a Campbell-esque novel, the ordinary story of an imagined world.

The Confederacy attained independence, after a great war of liberation. Now, the Underground Railroad is engaged in running escaped slaves across the border . . . but they seem to be up to something. The Confederates got in line with world opinion and freed their slaves . . . and then established a Ministry to keep slaves who weren't slaves in slavery. And the Kaiser is making a state visit to the two nations of North America, which gives someone the opportunity to make a mark.

So often the backstory is more interesting than the story. Pauzé begins each chapter with a blurb from history, some of which are quite interesting. The one where George Herman Ruth signs the papers for the bankruptcy of the baseball league, for example . . .

Amazon has started publishing a lot of new writers who can't get over the transom as it were. In an era where traditional publishers seem only to be bringing out animé books and zombie novels (ick, animé zombies, I bet it's already being done) this does provide some variety. But then, one is reminded why there are editors.

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS

Review by Joseph T Major of
"LEE AT THE ALAMO"

by Harry Turtledove

(2011; Tor.com (Kindle); \$0.99)

After The War, it was alleged that Southron Sympathizers had in a conspiracy so immense cunningly pre-positioned munitions in the about-to-secede states. And other things, such as (for example) the incredible pliability with which General David Twiggs of the Department of Texas had handed over all his equipment to the rebels there. One of his officers would not all that long thereafter resign from the army and take up another post.

However, if said officer, highest in rank and defacto commander in the absence of General Twiggs, was in fact in charge, his sense of honor and loyalty just might work things differently . . .

In this shorter story, Turtledove presents a brilliant character portrait of a conflicted Robert E. Lee, a man with divided sympathies and rock-solid direction. Forced to defend a United States he is no longer so sure of, but faced with opponents who are now enemies of that nation, he holes up in the one place in San Antonio that is a defensible military strong point, the quartermaster's depot, formerly the Mission San Antonio de Valero. Remember?

And when Colonel Lee comes out of the place famous, like Col. Bowie, Col. Travis, and Col. (ret.) Crockett, and alive, unlike them, he has yet another resolution to resolve. Cousin Mary's husband still won't fight the people of Virginia, but will he fight for the Union?

Tor.com is releasing several shorter stories by Turtledove and others specifically for the Kindle. As K'ung Fu-tze (Kong Fuzi) said, "He who buys an iPod must buy downloads." Or something like that.



"FIRST ZARQAWI, NOW MULTAJAR AND BEGHADADI... WE SURE COULD STAND GETTING A BETTER CLASS OF CLIENTELE."

LEVIATHAN

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE MIGHTY QUINN

by Benjamin Kerstein

(2011; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)

Leviathan by John Gordon Davis (1977) is about the rescue of the true heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne by a young English female brass dirigible pilot . . . no, let's try that again. The son and heir of a producer of oceanographic documentaries is somewhat put out by his late father's preference for flash over meaning. Having the tools, he goes for meaning; sabotaging and indeed destroying the Japanese and Soviet whaling fleets.

The eponymous protagonist of this book also wants to sabotage and destroy the Japanese whaling fleet. His methods are a little more rough.

Kerstein does not find the environmental activist community a very charming lot. His nameless narrator, a fundraiser for environmental causes, finds himself drawn deeper and deeper into the movement. And at its heart is a legendary monkeywrencher known as Quinn.

Legendary he may be, but real he is, and Quinn has a most striking plot. He will lead a group of activists on an extreme protest against the Japanese whaling community. And so our narrator finds himself on a crumbling ex-Soviet research ship, bound for the south seas.

In a violent climax, Quinn attempts to block the Japanese factory ship, only to find that sometimes the big guy can get his own way no matter what. Just to make sure, the narrator jumps on board Quinn's ship, to serve him out like Black Peter Carey . . .

Kerstein does not have the most favorable view of such activists. From their physical unkemptness if not outright degradation down to the intellectual emptiness of their statements, he presents a unappealing picture.

And in the portrayal of Quinn, he gives a picture of a Great Nothing; a man who values The Cause more than people. As when he tells the narrator and his girlfriend to go block the whaling ships by sitting in an inflatable rubber boat in front of a blue whale, and then sails off abandoning them. The narrator loses a finger to frostbite. His girlfriend isn't so lucky.

(The ship names might be better chosen. *Korzbyski* is a Polish name, not Russian, and I seriously doubt the Japanese would now name any ship, particularly a whaling ship, *Yamato*.)

THE LAST LICORN

Review by Joseph T Major of
1612: Хроники смутного времени
[*"1612: The Bloody Battle for the Motherland"*] (2007)

Directed by Vladimir Khotinenko

Written by Arif Aliyev

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1139085/>

I kept on expecting the Spanish mercenary (Ramón Langa), or Andrei (Pyotr Kislov) in his Spanish mercenary pose, to say, *«¡Hola! Mi*

nombre es Iñigo Montoya. Tu mataste al Zar. Prepare morirse.» ["Hello! My name is Iñigo Montoya. You killed the Tsar. Prepare to die."] Alas, the Spanish mercenary gunner is named Alvar Borja. There is a princess, but she has some problems on the way to becoming a bride.

1612 is set in the Time of Troubles, and begins with the murder of Tsar Feodor II Godunov and his mother Maria (what, she wasn't named Natasha?). This brings about the accession of Tsar Dmitri II — better known as False Dmitri (Dmitri Ulyanov (!)), a Polish puppet. And what happened to *him* is described in a publication cited by the multidisciplinary writer Borge Rosenbaum which was titled:

THE
*Reporte of a bloudie
and terrible Massacre in the City
of Mosco, with the fearefull and
tragicall end of Demetrius the last
Duke, before him reigning
at this present.*
(1607)

<http://www.aquinas.edu/history/research.html>

The fearefull and tragicall end of Demetrius, or Dmitri, was that during a coup against Polish domination of Russia he was thrown out of a window, beaten to death, and cremated. Then his ashes were loaded into a cannon which was fired in the general direction of Poland. And you thought our Polack jokes were bad.

This is where Andrei comes in. His mother works at the estate of Tsarevna Kseniya Borisova Godunova (Violetta Davydovskaya), daughter of the late Tsar Boris Godunov, and little boy Andrei wanders around, having various formative encounters. A workman replacing parts of a carved gate tells him about the power of the unicorn. Andrei has an encounter somewhat like Schmendrick seeing the last unicorn turned into Almathea, watching Kseniya and the rest of the girls running from the sweatbath to the pool. After they get dressed, the Hetman (Michal Zebrowski) and his subordinates (You were expecting maybe moose and squirrel?) come to take Kseniya away. Like every other event in the movie, this seems to involve a lot of bloodshed.

Maybe not. The Pope [this would be Paul V] is sending a priest off to save the Russians. He was going to go evangelize the Indians. There is a little matter of 1204 which everyone seems to be ignoring.

A few years later, and a few Tsars later, the Hetman is bringing Kseniya to Moscow. She is traveling in a riverboat, and apparently they can't even afford horses or oxen, so the boat is dragged along by a team of serfs, including Andrei. (All they need now is Bart from *Blazing Saddles*, along with Taggart saying to Lyle, "Horses!? We can't afford to lose any horses, you dummy! Send over a couple of black-asses— I mean serfs!")

Also on the boat, Alvar is playing dice with the Russians, which wouldn't seem to work since he hardly speaks Russian. (He talks a lot about "Andalucian dynamite." ¿Dice *que!*?)

Fortunately he has his Sancho, that is his squire and gun-loader Kostka (Artur Smolyanivov) the Tatar, who can explain things. Like the unicorn horn he puts up as a stake.

Just then, the boat runs aground. Andrei is held responsible and whipped as badly as the title character in Mel Gibson's *The Jesus Chainsaw Massacre* — er, *The Passion of the Christ*. Alvar takes pity on the lad and at the next stop buys him at a knockdown price, sending Kostka to patch him up. Andrei too has a unicorn horn, a piece taken from one of the carvings at the estate where he and Kseniya grew up.

Kseniya wants to consult a *starets*. Rather than follow the Grigori Efimitovich model, this holy man has chained himself up on a pillar, vowing not to come down until the Time of Troubles is over. So she goes off one way with the Hetman and the Catholic priest while the main body of the escort, including Alvar, Andrei, and Kostka, go the other.

There is a nonhuman waiting for them. I mean, the guy can cock a crossbow and wait underwater until his target comes by. His less amphibian buddies hide in bushes and trees. When the procession gets halfway across a bridge, the amphibian shoots his bow from underwater and proceeds to reload while the rest of the ambush wipes out the escort.

Alvar gets Kostka to reload while he fights with a sword. Unfortunately, he buys it, and his horse carries him off, while Andrei and Kostka make tracks themselves.

The *starets* gives Kseniya his wisdom, and tells the Catholic he would have been better off with the Indians, but it might help him if he went native. Kseniya, the priest, and the Hetman go about their business.

Alvar's horse arrives at where Andrei and Kostka have holed up. They bury him and in the night Andrei has a dream, where the Spaniard teaches him swordfighting and strategy. In the morning, Kostka notices a resemblance. Where *was* the Spaniard back then, anyway? So Andrei decides to assume the boss's identity, in spite of the fact that he knows hardly any Spanish. Now one can get far with «¡Pendejo!» , «¡Maricón!», and that popular Russian phrase «¡Chinga tu madre!» ["Еб твою мать!" ("Yeb *tvoyu mat'*!")] but this movie seems a little too genteel to have them. Gory battle scenes, those are all right, but language?

They end up joining the Hetman's army. Kostka has taught Andrei how to load and fire a cannon, and in response to a demonstration, they proceed to do so. Someone has been watching *Pearl Harbor* a little too closely, as we have cannon's eye views of the cannon being loaded, primed, and fired. In response, a real Spanish mercenary invites "Alvar" to dinner. This requires some quick thinking, also a brawl, to get out of. Then the Polish army, from newly-recruited cannons to Hussars in armor with wings, marches on.

This fortified Russian town they're going to has just had Prince Dmitri Pozharsky (Mikhail Porechenkov), the local *kniaz*, go join the Russian army at Moscow, taking all their cannon with him. This is a trifle inconvenient.

The Poles get to the town outside the walls and remember the proper way to do things: "First you pillage, then you rape, *then* you burn!"

Kostka rescues a young woman who fortuitously knows the secret passage into the fortifications. This and the other antics persuade Andrei it's time to change sides, and while he's at it, deprive the Hetman of his principal bargaining chip. It didn't hurt that the Hetman took things a little amiss and had Andrei hung up by his wrists overnight to be impaled in the morning. The decision became easier to make.

Kostka and his girl rescue Andrei, who proceeds to rescue Kseniya. Her kindly old nurse has been vending sleeping medicine every night, and Andrei makes the old lady practice what she preaches. They sneak through the tunnel into town.

Oops. No cannon. Prince Pozharsky took them, remember? So they improvise, making a wrapped leather gun. This can be done, if you don't mind the occasional burst. Fortunately it doesn't.

Andrei proceeds to blow up the Polish powder store with a red-hot shot. This gets the Hetman just a bit annoyed and he decides to storm the walls. Fortunately the town's magazine was a little harder to find, and they improvise grenades, throwing them over the walls with catapults. Nobody expects the British Grenadiers, or even the Russian ones.

When the Poles use their more abundant surviving cannon (the big siege guns were too near the blast, oops) to knock open the gate, Andrei uses a fortunately available bar shot to slaughter the front files of the charging hussars. This is getting to look like Captain Horatio Hornblower (we know it isn't Aubrey & Maturin because nobody spends hours explaining everything to everyone else). The rest of the horses are too smart to go in there.

Well, maybe one explanation. Kostka's girl has asked him how Tatars get married. He explained: "You go before a group of people and say 'Wife, wife, wife.'" Then he realized they *were* before a group of people. Oops. Borat wouldn't have had that problem.

Speaking of woman problems . . . the Hetman offers to leave the fort be if only they hand over Kseniya. And she doesn't think herself worthy of staying, she's betrayed Russia and the Hetman has her daughter hostage. So she goes.

Soon thereafter Andrei joins the Russian Army at Moscow, and in a long battle the Russians win. The *starets* sees this through sacred vision and begins to remove all his manacles. This energizes his associate, who runs around shouting to nobody, "The Time of Troubles is over!"

The Catholic Priest, having gone native, goes back to Italy. We see him wandering along, talking to himself, his hair and beard long. Two nuns see him and wonder what is going on. The Pope gets a look at him when he finally gets back to the Vatican, and decides he doesn't need to see him personally. (Now, the Indians, they would have hung him on a spit over a slow fire and sliced fingernail-sized pieces of flesh off, all so he would have the

opportunity to show his valor and manhood by contemptuously singing his death song. As oppressed indigenous persons they get to impose their world view on others.)

The fighting isn't over for everyone. While a group of scholars are fabricating a proper descent for the Spaniard, who they plan to make Tsar (makes you wonder about genealogy, but then when I found the cousin who claimed descent from Augustus, that just goes to show; come to think of it, the Rurikids also claimed descent from a brother of Augustus — and I am descended from the Rurikids), he goes after the Hetman.

However, the people back in the old fort also went after him, and just as they're going to hang the Hetman and Kseniya for betraying Russia, Andrei shows up. Prince Pozharsky says that Kseniya was helpless. The Hetman explains, sarcastically, that Kseniya's daughter died a long time ago and he was just stringing her along. Andrei fights a duel with the Hetman and kills him, not before the Hetman reveals that Andrei has been flogged, and is a serf. Kseniya figures she ought to go into a convent.

The *starets* needs to wash his feet, and if he's been standing in that tower for seven years probably a lot more. All through the movie there have been scenes of a unicorn walking through the woods. (And never turning into Almathea, darn it!) The unicorn comes down to drink at the pool where the *starets* is washing his feet. Snow flakes begin to fall.

The settings are quite beautiful, and it's interesting to see for once (perhaps the last time) a movie with huge armies that are actual people and not CGI creations. Some of the acting has been criticized. Violetta Davydovskaya [Kseniya Godunova] for example was scorned as being blank. Since the character is portrayed as being under the control of others, mostly the Hetman, throughout, there is perhaps a logic to that.

The real Kseniya Godunova was the (apparently not entirely willing) mistress of the False Dmitri, and evidently went straight to the convent when his wife (Marina Mniszech [Maryna Mniszczówna], a Polish noblewoman) arrived. Her mother and brother were killed by Russian supporters of the False Dmitri, or at least opponents of the Godunovs, not Poles.

One reviewer complained that the movie dehumanizes the Poles; for example, their leader never has a name, just "The Hetman". Perhaps so but I thought that I heard him addressed repeatedly as "*Pan Gedemin*" — "Pan" being a title and "Gedemin" a Lithuanian name. Gedemin, or properly Gediminias, was one of the first Grand Dukes of Lithuania.

As for the succession, the False Dmitri was succeeded by Vasilii IV Shuisky, who in turn had to face the False Dmitri II. Also in there, the Polish crown prince Władysław Vasa was elected Tsar in 1610 after Vasilii Shuisky's deposition, but never took up the claim, and then there came the False Dmitri III . . .

Boris Godunov was of Tatar origin, while Vasilii Shuisky was a Rurikid (a male-line descendant of Rurik, the Viking creator of the

Rus state, whose name in the original Old Norse was Hrærekkr ("Roderick")), and Władysław Vasa was of Swedish ancestry. False Dmitri I was probably a Pole, False Dmitri II may have been Jewish (oy!), and no one is quite sure what False Dmitri III was. At least Mikhail Romanov, the eventual successor of and to all this mess, was really and truly Russian.

**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 Pułk 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

KOBO

by Lisa

At Borders closings the price of their e reader, the Kobo, dropped to fifty dollars, eight dollars more than I had put back in change. I yielded to temptation and took the device home. There I opened its box and joined the 21st century literary world. It came preloaded with a hundred classic books. To be honest, I don't think the Kobo is worth the \$140 it would take to get it now. I got one of the last fifteen at Borders and the rest were gone quickly. It is cranky on the download. It required an update to get 732 books, not the promised thousand. Still, it is fun to carry that many books in my purse and it will take me quite a while to read through those 732. I have been working my way through the classic books I have been able to get onto the Kobo. It has made my life much easier. No longer do I need to carry around heavy bags of books. On our recent trip to Nashville I took only one bag of books up to our room. While the Kobo is great in the doctor's waiting room and in checkout lines it has not replaced physical books as bathroom reading.

FAMILY TIES II

Trip Report by Joseph T Major on

2011 USS *Bush* Reunion

Nashville, Tennessee, September 14-18, 2011

Back in 2007, the USS *Bush* (DD-529) reunion had been in Pensacola, you will recall. See *Alexiad* Volume 6 Number 2 for that story. The reunions have been at various places since then, mostly out of our reach. But the twentieth reunion was in Nashville. That's only two and a half hours drive from Louisville.

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

We got in a walk that morning. Labor Day weekend had been infernal, with temperatures around 100 degrees, as I think I've mentioned elsewhere. But the temperatures had dropped

dramatically, summer becoming fall. So we got our walk in the morning, watching the rush-hour traffic buzz by.

Last night I had done a load of clothing, so everything would be clean when we were ready to go. So we packed and loaded the car. We were leaving a little later than I had thought because we wanted to have lunch with my niece, who is now working at Big Brothers Big Sisters in Bowling Green, and going back to Western Kentucky University to get a Master's degree.

The drive was unexceptional. Sarah admired our new smartphones, we admired our smartniece. Her son is growing well and being quite clever, and we all turned out to have e-readers.

The rest of the drive to Nashville was unexceptional. Here is where the Global Positioning System came into play, as we drove straight to the Marriott Airport. We had been there before.

The infamous Days Inn Airport had once overbooked on the first night of a Kubla Khan. So, they sent so many of the members to the Marriott that we could have had a party, had we known. Here we were again.

Liz Carney, organizer of the reunion, daughter of Ensign Carney of the *Bush*, showed that she had inherited her father's skill as a stores officer. She got us a refrigerator in no time — even though we'd showed up before official check-in time, there was still no refrigerator available.

Now here's something I just cannot understand. We commonly stay at more plebian motels, and they have refrigerators in the rooms and free Internet access. The Marriott had very few refrigerators, and Internet access cost \$15 a day, unless you wanted to go down to the lobby. Instead, we did a lot of work on the Android Wi-Fi Hotspot app I've got.

We went out to dinner; I had found an O'Charley's near the motel (the reunion banquets ran \$50 a head). However, it was closed, so we ended up going to the Longhorn Steakhouse we had patronized at Kublas, PartheKhans, and Xanadus. The route in either case entailed going by the airport, where we noticed somewhat to our surprise and relief that the Days Inn Airport was not only closed but **torn down**.

Back to learn from Facebook that while we were in Nashville, the Fellers were in Florida. Oh well maybe next time.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 193.5

Books read: *World War II Plans That Never Happened 1939-45* by Michael Kerrigan
Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters
by Louis Begley

Thursday, September 15, 2011

Today was the reunion's Nashville Tour. We had our own Tour in mind.

Bookwoman Bookman in Nashville is still going strong but then it's near Vanderbilt. We looked all over but only got a few books. Since

it's on 21st Avenue we could at least see if they had closed Davis-Kidd. They had. And of course the big Borders across from Centennial Park was closed. So we went out to look for this McKay Bookstore that came so well recommended. There was no there there.

Instead, we went to see my cousin Vaden. Vaden's wife had died before Thanksgiving in 2009. He seemed to have come to terms with it, and we went over his own naval experience (he was an officer on a destroyer in 1951) and other family matters. Then we went to the Books-A-Million I'd noticed along the way. Of course my membership had expired, and it would cost \$20 to renew.

From there we went to see my cousin Jim, who is in Vaden's part of the family. They had asked after each other. Oddly enough, Jim's son had not only graduated in the same class at WKU as Sarah, they had gone up to get their diplomas with only a few people between. Small world.

As we arrived at the hotel, we passed Lisa's father, Gil, stepmother, Jean, and sister Norma, going out to dinner. I didn't know where they were going, they didn't have the address, and so we all jammed into the car to go downtown. By Centennial Park, in fact, where we passed the empty and desolate Borders.

It was an interesting time and we had some good memories to share.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 54.8

Books read: *Crossing the Line* by Peter Pauzé
After America: Get Ready for Armageddon by Mark Steyn

Friday, September 16, 2011

This was the memorial service.

Which meant we had to get out early, since the bus was leaving at 8:30, or 0830 hours. The Nashville Veterans Cemetery has a long background, all the way back to the Late Unpleasantness. And the way things go, it also has a railroad track running through it.

There were seven veterans of the *Bush* at the reunion, and they and the rest of us second and third generations all went out to the memorial stand. We presented a wreath, the local recruiting office provided a naval honor guard and an officer to recount the history of the *Bush*. The second generation, including Lisa and her sister Norma, read off the names of those who had died during the war. There had been a couple of accidents with fatalities before the sinking, and one man had died after his rescue.

Lots of pictures were taken. Nowadays, if a shot doesn't quite go right, the photographer knows it right off and can try again. Which means a considerable bit of extra posing.

Afterwards, the bus took us to the cruise. Opryland has a paddlewheel excursion boat, the *General Jackson*. Which I noted was built across our river, at Jeffboat in Indiana. It has a dining facility and performance hall.

Fortunately I did not end up being the eleventh person in a group of ten-to-a-table. The staff was polite and efficient, the serving was interesting in that there was a rotary buffet

in the center of the table and everyone took a share.

There were two other naval reunions going there that weekend. One was of an oiler. The other was a little more famous; the cruiser USS *Houston*. Both of them, the "Galloping Ghost of the China Coast" which was sunk in the Battle of the Sunda Strait (CA-30), and her successor, nearly sunk in the Battle of Formosa (CL-81).

After dinner there was a country music performance. So I went out on deck and watched the river. It was very quiet and peaceful, and the view was comforting. Nashville puts on a splendid face from the riverbank, the country is green and rich . . .

That evening my cousin Jim Lester and his wife came down to the hotel to have dinner with us. I was almost absurdly flattered. We talked a lot about his grandfather, who was one of the leading people who got me into this family history thing. Jim's part of the family is the especially long-lived one, with his grandfather, two great-uncles, and great-grandfather all having lived well into their nineties.

And so to bed.

Books read: *The Mammoth Book of New Jules Verne Adventures* edited by Mike Ashley and Eric Brown
Sunk Without a Sound: The Tragic Colorado River Honeymoon of Glen and Bessie Hyde by Brad Dimock

Saturday, September 17, 2011

This was the Business Meeting.

The next reunion will be in San Francisco. Another naval officer from the local station came down to talk to us. Liz Carney recounted the financial issues, of which she didn't say much.

We went downtown to dine. My cousin Joe came over (he would have cataract surgery on Tuesday, and I hope he does better in the long term than our cousin U. L., who *would* work after the surgery) and we had an interesting time, including some less than happy thoughts about a cousin in poor health.

Back when I worked for the state of Tennessee there was a newsstand near where we ate, but instead of looking for it we went to look for McKay Bookstore. We had a correct address, but the building there was being rebuilt, so probably didn't have anything for sale. So we pulled into the gas station which was offering \$3.299 a gallon and filled up.

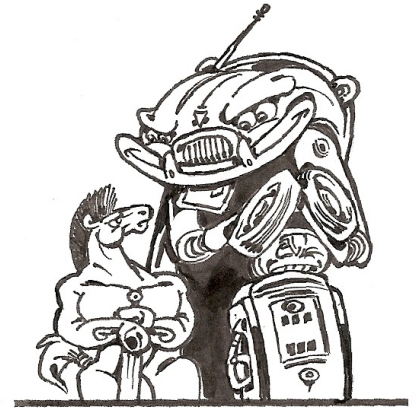
The car wouldn't start. I called AAA, the man came, checked the battery — and it turned out to be the starter. He managed to get it to work, called ahead to a Firestone near the Marriott, and we left, somewhat nervous.

The Firestone closed at six, but they got through before that and it only cost \$\$\$\$. Ouch. The Longhorn Steakhouse was across the road, so we had dinner there. It was probably just as well that we hadn't signed up for the banquet, which would have cost a lot, though not as much as replacing the starter. The reunion had a meeting room of its own, one floor below

ours, and we went there to chat people up. And so to bed.

Miles driven: 43.7

Books read: *Dancing With Death* by Shanna Hogan
Sea Warfare by Rudyard Kipling (free on the Kindle!)



Sunday, September 18, 2011

The last day of the reunion is always somber. Particularly because the survivors are all in their eighties and nineties, and it's likely that some won't be there next year. We foregathered in the hospitality room and made our slow goodbyes.

One of the survivors had written a book about his (mis)fortunes in the war. Bob was giving out copies and gave one to Lisa. She is working on ways to get it distributed more widely.

Somewhere along the way we got all our stuff packed up and out to the car (except for my insulin, which went into the small cooler which in turn went into the refrigerator in the hospitality room), and I checked out. When I first went to Kubla Khan, back in seventy-seven, I could take everything in a small bag. Times change.

People began drifting away. We finally decided we had to go ourselves, so collected the cooler, said good-bye to everyone, and got into the car.

One last try at going to McKay Bookstore, to the place where the nice clerk at the gas station had told us it was before the car wouldn't start. Still couldn't find the place. Instead we went to Best Buy and I got *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena*, the prequel with some scenes with Lucretia doing what Xena was always suspected of doing.

And so we drove home. Grant was at work, so I started the wash and we went to Logan's Roadhouse for dinner. The last time we'd done that there had been a thunderstorm and the power had gone out, so there was that. But it didn't happen again.

Got to bed on time. We had to go to work in the morning.

Miles driven: 200.3
Books read: *The Mighty Quinn* by Benjamin Kirstein

Total mileage: 492.3
Gas bought: \$92.65 + \$\$\$ for the starter

Thanks to Gil & Jean Thomas, James L. Major IV, Joe W. Giles, Robert Gallegher, AAA Nashville, and all the others who helped, and spare a few thoughts for the dead of USS *Bush*, April 6, 1945.

JOUSTING WITH WINDMILLS

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

[NOTE: I may be getting a few — or even more than a few — of the details in this essay a little garbled, mistaken, or otherwise screwed up. Not too many, I hope. But in any event, I'm pretty sure the main facts are correct.]

As I have mentioned at least a few times, my username reflects two of my passions — chocolate and science fiction. But as you may have also noticed, the overwhelming majority of my entries have a lot more to do with chocolate than they do science fiction. This time, it's definitely about science fiction.

As I sit here pounding away on my laptop, Renovation, the 69th World Science Fiction Convention, is taking place in Reno, Nevada. Unfortunately for me, I am still here in Louisville, Kentucky. But even though there is the slight matter of some 2100 miles separating me from the general revelry, I think my presence has been felt. (A phantom presence, perhaps, but a presence nonetheless.)

This actually started at last year's Worldcon, Aussiecon 4. During a meeting of the Mark Protection Committee (MPC) — the committee that oversees the various service marks of the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) — passed a resolution that states, "Members of the Mark Protection Committee and any of its subcommittees must agree to decline nomination for a Hugo Award presented in a year following a year in which that person served in whole or in part."

On the face of it, this resolution would appear to be an innocuous means of preventing potential conflicts of interest. But it irritated me for three reasons.

First, there is already an exclusionary rule concerning the Hugo Awards. It's Section 3.12 of the WSFS Constitution, which states, "No member of the current Worldcon Committee or any publications closely connected with a member of the Committee shall be eligible for an Award. However, should the Committee delegate all authority under this Article to a Subcommittee whose decisions are irrevocable by the Worldcon Committee, then this exclusion shall apply to members of the Subcommittee only." This particular section has been part of the WSFS Constitution for as long as I have been a member (for the record, that would be since 1991), and most likely much longer than that. From everything I have seen and heard (or perhaps more accurately, what I have not seen

and heard), this particular rule has done its job without any problem. And if there is some need to alter it, the WSFS Constitution does have an amendment process in place — Section 6.5, and I won't quote that here. Suffice it to say that, in my opinion, the MPC violated Section 3.12 with their resolution. The WSFS Constitution has the authority to determine who is eligible or ineligible for a Hugo Award in any given year; the MPC does not.

Second, (again in my opinion) the MPC's action also violated one of the Standing Rules for governing the WSFS Business Meeting. Specifically, Standing Rule 7.6, which states, "All committees are authorized to organize themselves in any lawful manner and to adopt rules for the conduct of their business, which may include conducting balloting by mail and limiting debate, subject to any contrary provisions of the Constitution, the Standing Rules, or instructions given to the committee by the Business Meeting." Attempting to determine who may or may not be eligible for a Hugo Award violates the "contrary provisions of the Constitution" clause of this Rule.

Along the same lines, I could also argue that the MPC's action violated Section 5.1.4 of the WSFS Constitution, which states, "Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of (in descending order of precedence) the WSFS Constitution; the Standing Rules; such other rules as may be published in advance by the current [Worldcon] Committee (which rules may be suspended by the Business Meeting by the same procedure as a Standing Rule); the customs and usages of WSFS (including the resolutions and rulings of continuing effect); and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised." Especially the "customs and usages" part. It has been my observation that the segment of SF fandom who is most likely to attend the WSFS Business Meeting has something of a reverence for tradition. Screw with that tradition at your peril.

Third, the resolution seemed to be directed solely at one person, Cheryl Morgan. Cheryl is a three-time Hugo winner; for Best Fanzine in 2004 (for *Emerald City*), for Best Fan Writer in 2009, and for Best Semiprozine in 2010 (for *Clarkesworld Magazine*, of which she is the non-fiction editor). She was also a member of the Hugo Award Marketing Committee (HAMC); a subcommittee of the MPC that, well, markets and promotes the Hugos. Based on what I have read, it is my understanding that Cheryl had contributed to the creation of the website for the Hugo Awards, and was the website's maintainer. When the resolution was passed, Cheryl was the only person who would be affected by its provisions. (Past Hugo winner Mike Glyer had been a member of HAMC, but not for the past couple of years, and he was the only other person who might have been affected by this resolution.) After the resolution was passed, Cheryl was re-appointed to the HAMC, but she felt obliged to decline in order to maintain eligibility for *Clarkesworld Magazine*.

I suppose the best way to describe my reaction when I read about what the MPC had

done was that my sense of justice was outraged. I wouldn't say that Cheryl and I are friends; we really don't know each other that well. I will say that our encounters have been cordial. I just found it irritating (to say the very least) that someone who has possibly done the most in recent years for the marketing and promotion of science fiction's most prestigious award being forced out by a group who, as I understand it, seems to place very little value in that marketing and promotion.

I knew that I wanted to do something. I like to think that I have something of the knight errant in me, though I am probably far more likely to resemble Don Quixote than Sir Gawain in the execution.

Despite realizing that this was one of those times when Something Needed To Be Done, it was a few months before I actually did anything. Part of it was that I knew it wasn't a particularly urgent matter. Even if I had done something in September or October, nothing would have come of it until this past week, anyway. After all, the WSFS Business Meeting only takes place once a year, at Worldcon, and nothing could be done until the Business Meeting.

Well, earlier this year, I contacted Kevin Standlee, SF fandom's Jedi Master of parliamentary procedure. I expressed my outrage at the turn of events, and asked his advice as to what could be done to reverse the actions taken. I knew that, as much as Kevin might have wanted to do something himself, he probably wouldn't, given his position as a member of the MPC. I also volunteered my services (such as they would be) to help reverse what had been done.

Kevin told me that the correct counter-action would be to submit a resolution to this year's Business Meeting. This resolution would be two-fold: First, it would reverse the action of the MPC, and second, it would instruct them not to take similar action in the future. Kevin also suggested that I get at least one person to second the resolution.

Another few months went by. I suddenly realized that Renovation was fast approaching, and that I needed to:

A. Write and submit that resolution to the Business Meeting staff, and

B. Get someone to agree to second the resolution.

(Not necessarily in that order, of course.)

For the second, I contacted Chris Barkley. I explained the resolution to him, and asked if he would be interested in seconding/co-sponsoring the resolution. He readily agreed, so the next step was writing the resolution, which I did based on a couple of suggestions that Kevin gave me. I emailed the resolution to the Business Meeting staff, and mailed a hardcopy to Chris, just in case they wanted something with an actual signature on it. Because of other things, I had forgotten to mail my site selection ballot for the 2013 Worldcon, and he was also going to deliver my ballot for me. (Thanks again, Chris!)

A day or so later, I checked the Renovation website, and I saw that the resolution was

indeed part of the Business Meeting agenda. And now it was just a matter of waiting for the fireworks to start.

And from what I can tell, “fireworks” seems to be the right word to describe what happened. Of course, I had to wait to hear from Kevin and Chris for news of what transpired during the Preliminary Business Meeting (which is when the resolution would have been discussed). I was also interested in hearing about Chris’s proposed amendment creating a Young Adult category for the Hugos.

I was able to get bits and pieces of information from the Renovation Twitter feed, and from what I could tell, the resolution had passed. The first in-depth report, though, came from Cheryl’s blog. There has to be a little bit of irony in that because, like me, Cheryl was not attending Renovation.

Quick version — the resolution passed. From what I read on both Cheryl and Kevin’s blogs, the debate was quite vigorous, including a debate on whether or not the resolution was even legal. The Business Meeting first decided that it was legal, and then approved it.

My contention in introducing the resolution was that if there are changes to be made in Hugo Award eligibility, they have to be made in the WSFS Constitution, through the normal amendment process. Well, there was an amendment introduced that would have done precisely that. As soon as that item came up on the PBM agenda, Chris lodged an Objection To Consideration, and apparently, most of those attending the Business Meeting had already had their fill of the subject, and they voted to kill the proposed amendment without debate.

Unfortunately, Chris’s proposed YA Hugo amendment suffered a similar fate when it came up on the agenda. The reason for this seems to have been that there wouldn’t be sufficient time to debate the proposal, given several of the items up for a ratification vote. I do know that Chris will be introducing the measure again next year at Chicon 7.

Yes, I’m feeling rather pleased as to how the matter turned out. I think I may still be blushing over Cheryl’s thanks on her blog. You know, sometimes when you tilt at windmills, the windmills fall down.

THE 2011 KENTUCKY STATE FAIR

by Carol Clarke

Since I have MS the only real way for me to see any of the fair was by renting a scooter. \$40.00 for 3 hours \$50 dollars of all day. Since 3 hours was all I could take 3 hours is what I go. We barely had time to see much of the fair. We left the rides to the kids. And went inside where it was cool. We also went on senior day to reduce cost so my mother got in for \$1 dollar with the 8 dollar parking. A saving of \$9.00 dollars for her. We went inside and somehow missed the photo and painting contest but managed to see the ugly lamp contest which was fun and I can say without regret “Boy were they some UGLY LAMPS.” But it was all in fun so it was ok. We also went to the lottery

both were you can buy 5 dollars worth of scratch offs and get a free spin on the wheel. I get 3 free spins and won a 3 dollar scratch off which I lost on. I Dollar scratch off which I also lost on and a tee shirt which wasn’t my size so I gave it to my mother who could fit in it. I seem to win a tee shirt every year some how and I always end up giving them to my mother. We then visited the junk booths. If you needed a leather wallet you could get one for \$10 dollars which is a good price. I paid a lot more for mine at a leather shop in Indiana. I sampled and bought lots of fudge. I got a really good bit that had vanilla fudge peanut butter and chocolate mixed together that was awesome. I totally loved it. I got some popcorn that was a little like caramel corn but when tasted let me down a little. Last year I bought my beta fish Alfred at the fair but this year I didn’t see a booth with fish for sale. I would have like to see what other kinds of fish they would have had. Alfred by the way is doing fine and enjoying being my favorite if only fish. I also got some pecans which were awesome. Yes I go to the fair to find food and eat. Mom bought some almonds which hardly made it home she loved them so much. When we stopped for lunch, Yes more food I got a real Italian Sausage which if you like true Italian Sausage was also fantastic. I added cheese fries with it which lack something so I would not recommend them. Then I made it over to the crowning booth of the fair. The endangered bird booth at the back of the hall. It had examples of live birds they had rescued. I love to watch the beautiful birds they bring to the fair. The small owls were so pretty. I always donate to the booth every year. Not much just a dollar but I find it worth it for the good work they do. I also signed a petition for the fairness campaign. Another cause I believe in. At the fair is the only time I run into these causes so I look forward to giving my 2 cents worth at the fair. I avoided causes I didn’t believe and zipped past them fast on my scooter. There were a lot. The health care area was interesting with very few free thing they normally give away. I found most of the booth over crowded and I had little time to weight but if you were interested they had an eye exam, and a skin cancer screening plus a mammogram vehicle there doing portable mammograms. So if you had health concerns it wasn’t a bad place to visit. Since I missed the photo’s and painting and quiet I can’t say much about it but I know they always have a great showing. I just didn’t have enough time. On the way out I got the fried Kool-Aid and Mom got the fried derby pie. The fried Kool-Aid was just barely ok. Nothing to write home about. But the Fried Derby Pie was magnificent. It just melted in you mouth with hot chocolate. I recommend it if they have it back next year. Over all I had fun at the fair. Even though I only saw a small portion of the fair. I think it would take two whole days to go through everything so make sure you hit the area’s you really want to see like if you like the animals make sure to hit them first. 3 hours went by in a flash and I was to tired to go on looking. But remember if you have a handicap that prevents you from walking far the scooter rental though expensive can make the fair so much fun. It bets

the alternative of missing half the fair just trying to get to one event. And if you are 55 remember senior day to cut down on the cost. Overall I had a great time.

PRENATURAL FANTASIES

Reviews by Carol Clarke

Hit List by Laurell K. Hamilton. Anita is forced into her roll as Marshall Blake with Edward at her side. And they are hunting the Harlequin. Not an easy task. And with Edward come Olof and Benito Spottedhorse. Olof has his obsession with Anita which is not good considering he is a serial killer outside of the states or so his deal with the government says. Like the that three of her Anita Blake books she has really backed off of the sex scenes but they are still there. She still has to feed the Adore. But it tamed down form some of her earlier books. Which gives you more time with the plot of the hunting and killing of the Harlequin who are being led by the Mother of All Darkness, Mommy Noir. Though her body is gone she can take over her Harlequin and rain hell on Anita. I like the book. I love how Edward has changed into more of a family man. He has grown as a character in her books which is good. Olof is more dangerous especial after what happens to him in the book. Anita is interesting without her man men as back up to the story. But overall the ending left me saying WHAT! That can’t be how it ends. I like the book up to the end but like I said WHAT! I love Ms Hamilton’s Anita Blake books and haven’t missed a one but this one left me hanging. Maybe in the next book she will explain the consequences of this book. So I guess I am waiting for the next book.

Dead Reckoning by Charlaine Harris. The latest in the Sookie Stackhouse novels. Just when you thing Eric might be the man for Sookie a wrench gets thrown in to there marriage. Eric must marry another vampire making his marriage with Sookie null and void. She still see her way to help him take care of the regent of Louisiana. An evil vampire set against Eric and trying to make his life hell. There are new night clubs in Shreveport taking business away from Eric and Sam. Sam is barely holding his head above water with this new night spot owned by the Regent. Which effects Sookie’s job. Which is were a plan by Pam comes in. It kill or be killed in this story. And it all Vampire Politics. Washington has nothing on Vampire Politics. Overall it’s a good book just a little sad. I had just gotten use to Bill being out of the picture and was ok with Eric. Now what is the girl going to do without Eric or Bill protecting her. Not that Sookie hasn’t done well doing that for herself. Overall I felt a little let down by the book. Bill loves Sookie so much. Eric I thought did too but now I guess it another wait and see what the next book says thing just like the Hit List. And yes I will be reading the next book.

The Crystal Singer Trilogy by Anne McCaffrey and Michael Whelan. The first book in the series is *Crystal Singer* which is the story of how Killashandra Ree from a small back water

planet becomes a crustal singer. It's been 30 years since I read the trilogy and I found I loved reading it a second time so much I had to recommend it. If it been a while for you pick it up and read them all in order. *Crystal Singer* goes through the ends and out of what makes a Crystal Singer and the good and bad of the process. How the organism invades a person once on Ballybean and gives them extra long live and healing powers. It my change some so they have different abilities or maybe end something like deafness. It all depends on how the Organism it converted by the body. Killashandra is lucky and has a Milycan Transformation and is sent out to the ranges ahead of her class. Where she finally cuts Black Crystal the most expensive of the Crystal and the most valuable. Then the guild master who has become her lover sends her off to place the black crystal in a new communication set. It's an exciting story that keeps you on the edge of your seat. One of McCaffrey's better stories.

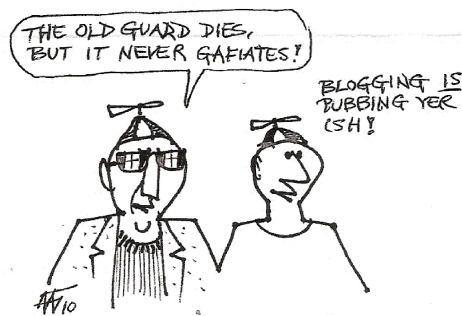
Next in the trilogy is *Killashandra* which is the story of how she is sent to a water world to install white crystal in an organ and a second assignment to see how the people feel about there being keep on the planet. Well at first her first assignment doesn't go so well because she is kidnaped by a Lars Dahl and taken to an Island to be held there with just a fishing hook and an instruction book. Being Killashandra that doesn't last long and she escapes the island and makes it to a more inhabited island where she tries to blend in and work on her second assignment. There she runs smack into Lars Dahl who doesn't recognize her. So she becomes loves with him to find out more. And falls for him in the process. So how or the other the government finds her and she brings Lars along to finish the organ. In doing so she Lars and Trag another guild member find the terrible secret of the planet the government doesn't want anyone to know they are using mind control on there people. Which is against galactic law. From there it a whining race to get everybody that needs to be off the planet and to a galactic law court to testify. It's a fun book and I enjoyed reading it again. Though I feel it is the weakest of the three novels in the series.

The third book in the series is *Crystal Line* by Anne McCaffrey. In some way I think it's the best of the three. Though you have to have read the other two for a lot of it to make sense. In the beginning of the book Lars Dahl and Killashandra are set off to examine a kind of sentient crystal like grow in a planet called Opal. They do experiments on it. With the help of a brain ship named Brendon. If you are familiar with McCaffrey Ship who book you will be familiar with the Brain and Brawn ships from her universe. After they do there experiments they get the use of Brendon and go off world to enjoy a fun time. While there they get the idea to try Ballybran Crystal on the Jewel Junk as they call it on Opal. So they go back and place small crystals in the junk. And it works. Then they go home. Where there first job is to go out singing crystal duet. And you get the feel again for the danger of crystal singing that was lacking in the second book. This leads to the death of the Guild Master and Lars taking over for him. Only Kil lashandra has trouble remembering that the old Guild Master

is dead. When she finds out Lars has taken over she doesn't take it well and runs off to a pleasure world where she can't quiet get Lars out of her system. One thing leads to another and she forgives Lars and tries his scheme to get Crystal singers to there sights more effectively. Then once again she is sent back to place crystal in the Jeweled Junk for a group of scientist. In doing so she has an accident that leads her to total recall of all her two hundred and fifteen years. In the mean time after she returns Lars is lost in a singularity accident aboard a B & B ship. She takes over as deputy Guild Master but won't lose hope that Lars is still alive. And yes you guessed it: it ends with a happy ending. It is a great book with a great pace. You get the feel what it is like to be a Crystal Singer. It's a fast paced book that keeps you wanting more. Now if Kindle would only release the rest of McCaffrey *Ship who Sang*, *Ship Who Searched*, and *City Who Fought* novels I would be one happy camper. I loved those books just as much as I loved the Crystal Singer novels. They really were good and fan to read after so long an absence. If you haven't read them do. If you have re-read them they are worth the read. And a lot of fun.

Just a note along with reading books I am reading the complete works of Edgar Allen Poe. A short story at a time. I was surprised to find he wrote several short science fiction stories. I am enjoying reading him a short story between each book I read and find his work very good. Just a thought on something you might want to try. I finished the complete works of Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that way and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The stories hold up well despite being over 100 years old.

FANZINES



Beyond Bree August 2011, September 2011
Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA
beyondbree@yahoo.com
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/bree.html>
Not available for The Usual; \$15/year, \$20
foreign, \$10/year electronic.

The Drink Tank #289, #290, #291, #292
Christopher J. Garcia
garcia@computerhistory.org
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Best Fanzine Hugo

You don't think he's a little excited

about that?

Fadeaway #24 August-September 2011
Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Road, Oxford,
MA 01540-2035 USA
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The Fanatical Fanactivist #2, #3
R. Graeme Cameron, Apt 72G, 13315 104th
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Fish Out of Water #443, #444, #445, #446, #447,
#448, #449, #450, #451
Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue,
Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

The Knarley Knews #139 July 2011
Henry & Letha Welch, 15290 Upper Ellen
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Lofgeornost #104 August 2011
Fred Lerner, 81 Worcester Avenue, White
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fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu

MT Void V. 30 #6 August 5, 2011 — V. 30 #14
September 30, 2011
Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge Drive,
Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA
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My Back Pages #5 August 2011
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Opuntia #71 September 2011
Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P
2E7 CANADA

The Reluctant Famulus #83
Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road,
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Southern Fandom Confederation Update V. 1
#25
Warren Buff, 22144 B Ravenglass Place,
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Visions of Paradise #168
Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd
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bsabella@optonline.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Zine Dump #28
Guy H. Lillian III, Post Office Box 163,
Benton, LA 71006-0163 USA
GHLIII@yahoo.com
<http://www.challzine.net>

WORLDCON NEWS

Hot off the presses...
and the Hugo winners are....



Hugo Awards

Best Novel

Blackout/All Clear by Connie Willis
(Ballantine Spectra)

Best Novella

"The Lifecycle of Software Objects" by Ted Chiang
(Subterranean)

Best Novelette

"The Emperor of Mars" by Allen M. Steele
(Asimov's, June 2010)

Best Short Story

"For Want of a Nail" by Mary Robinette Kowal
(Asimov's, September 2010)

Best Related Work

Chicks Dig Time Lords: A Celebration of Doctor Who by the Women Who Love It, edited by Lynne M. Thomas and Tara O'Shea (Mad Norwegian)

Best Graphic Story

Girl Genius, Volume 10: Agatha Heterodyne and the Guardian Muse, written by Phil and Kaja Foglio; art by Phil Foglio; colors by Cheyenne Wright (Airship Entertainment)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

Inception, written and directed by Christopher Nolan (Warner)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

Doctor Who: "The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang," written by Steven Moffat; directed by Toby Haynes (BBC Wales)

Best Editor, Short Form

Sheila Williams

Best Editor, Long Form

Lou Anders

Best Professional Artist

Shaun Tan

Best Semiprozine

Clarkesworld, edited by Neil Clarke, Cheryl Morgan, Sean Wallace; podcast directed by Kate Baker

Best Fanzine

The Drink Tank, edited by Christopher J Garcia and James Bacon

Best Fan Writer

Claire Brialey

Best Fan Artist

Brad W. Foster

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer

Lev Grossman

Congratulations to **Chris** and the other winners, particularly **Brad Foster** (who, it seems, won by one vote over a guy who only publishes on his website and sells tie-in stuff), **Chris Garcia**, Claire Brialey, and particularly **Christopher J. Garcia** the Podcast Slayer.

For the longest time the Best Semiprozine Category was rightly styled "The *Locus* Award", just as the Best Fan Writer was "The Langford Award" but things change. Just as Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form was "The *Buffy* Award" (and then *Buffy* was canceled just in time to miss it). So eventually the Best Graphic Story Award will cease to be "The *Girl Genius* Award" and something besides women in corsets and goggles building brass zeppelins will win. (Or, now that Foglio has taken the book out of contention for next year, the award will wither and die.)

Mike Glyer linked to various online discussions of the awards. What struck me was the venom of some bloggers who denounced the fan awards as "old people's awards". I suspect that the usual circumstances held true; they hadn't voted, hadn't nominated, and hadn't even been members of the con.

The Business Meeting apparently produced mixed results. Chris Barkley's proposed Best YA Work Hugo failed. The revision of the fan categories should move podcasts to their own category, if it gets passed in Chicago.

The voting had its usual anomalies. Bill Patterson's Heinlein biography got the most first-place votes but fell behind in the redistribution. So did Rachel Bloom's YouTube video "I Passionately Desire You to Form a Carnal Connection With Me, Ray Bradbury" but in that case the people who liked one of the *Dr. Who* episodes apparently also liked the other two that were nominated more than they did the other stuff. Bloom was trying to get people to read, instead of sit around and watch the telly.

We didn't even get eleven nominations this year. Grant, Lisa, and I all nominated us, too.

Sidewise Awards

Long Form:

When Angels Wept: a What-If History of the Cuban Missile Crisis by Eric G. Swedin

Short Form:

"A Clash of Eagles" by Alan Smale

The WorldCon for 2013 will be:

LoneStarCon 3

P.O. Box 27277
Austin, TX 78755-2277
August 29-September 2, 2013

<http://www.lonestarcon3.org/>

GoH:

Ellen Datlow
James Gunn
Willie Siros
Norman Spinrad
Darrell K. Sweet

Special Guests:

Leslie Fish
Joe R. Lansdale

Toastmaster:

Paul Cornell

Membership is \$160 attending (\$110 Young Adult, \$75 Child) with deductions for voters and presupporters.

The facilities will be familiar to those of who went to LSC 2. (Lisa's first WorldCon.) The Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center is not far from the Alamo and borders on the Riverwalk. San Antonio was a very nice city and we hope to enjoy it again.

For those who don't know who Willie Siros is, he founded the Adventures in Crime and Space bookstore and continues to run it as a website. He chaired two of the first conventions in Texas, Solarcon 1 and 2 and several more since then.

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

WORLDCON BIDS

2014

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

NASFiC:

Phoenix
<http://www.leprecon.org/phoenixin2014/>

2015

Spokane
<http://spokanein2015.org/>

Orlando
<http://orlandoin2015.org/>

2016

Kansas City
<http://kansascityin2016.org/>

2017

Japan
<http://nippon2017.org/>

New York

2018

New Orleans
neworleansin2018@gmail.com

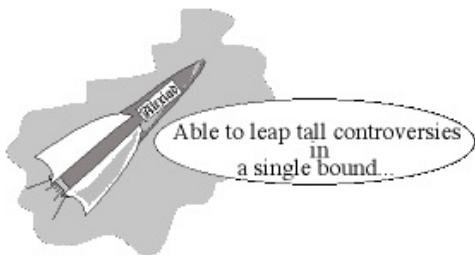
2019

2020

New Zealand
<http://nzin2020.org/>

There's also a Boston in 2020 at Christmas bid with a Facebook page. It could just be an excuse for partying, but considering how the Australia in 2010 bid started, I wouldn't commit myself. As for the organizers . . .

Letters, we get letters



From: **John Purcell** August 14, 2011
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j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Gotta get back on the writing locs track again. I have been so busy doing other things that I actually feel guilty about not writing locs to fanzines that I have read and enjoyed so far this year.

Looking down page one I just realized I missed the deadline for the next issue. Fout! Oh, well. I will just have to be more timely the next time around. Even so, there are a couple things in this particular issue that I want to comment about. To whit:

I am glad that you read and reviewed the Best Novel Hugo nominees in this issue. Sad to say, I have not read a single one of them, so I really appreciate it when folks not only have read the nominated works, but review them as well. It gives me a good idea of what the field is like right now and whether or not a book sounds interesting enough to me so that I'd track it down at the local library and read the danged thing. So far the Connie Willis book *Blackout/All Clear* piques my interest. Then again, I do enjoy her writing; she has had quite amazing run of award nominations and wins for these past twenty years, hasn't she?

Speaking of books, have you read any of Gail Carriger's Parasol Protectorate books? She is the writer Guest of Honor at Fencon VIII/DeepSouthCon 49 at the end of September in Addison, Texas, and I have been reading the series this summer. The first two books are done — *Soulless* and *Changeless* — and I need to renew *Blameless* before I start reading it. They are fun; not great literature, but an interesting and entertaining take on vampires, werewolves and Victorian England. *Heartless*, the fourth in the series, was just published at the beginning of July, and on her website is listed *Timeless*, the fifth book in the series, slated for publication next March.

As always, I enjoyed reading of the Holmes/Doyle Symposium, an event I would love to attend some day. Must keep it in mind, finances willing, of course.

And I thank you for a lengthy and entertaining loccol. Due to the lateness of this loc, I shall refrain from making any comments, but as usual, it is the best part of *Alexiad*. Do keep it up, please. So I look forward to your next issue, and I shall do

my best to respond in a more timely fashion.

Now that Worldcons distribute the "Hugo Nominations Package", with excerpts if not the entire texts of nominated works, Worldcon membership pays for itself.

— JTM

From: **Patrick McCray** August 14, 2011
Webb School of Knoxville, 9800 Webb
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USA
Patrick_McCray@webbschool.org

As to the one person's confusion . . .
There was no ringed planet in *Source Code*. It was in *The Quiet Earth*.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** August 22, 2011
6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA
19149-2128 USA
darrells@comcast.net

Contrary to what Taras Wolansky would have you believe, I keep up with the news and science fairly well. My "daily newspaper" is the BBC website, which I became accustomed to after my new computer offered it as a default page. I am also an NPR listener, so I get a lot of BBC there too. So maybe I have a more international perspective, since American newspapers don't necessarily carry reports about the impact of global warming on Bangladesh or in the Andes, or even about the droughts in Australia or wildfires in Greece, Russia, and Spain.

Then there are newspapers. Today's *Philadelphia Inquirer* carries a story about how Inuit people in Greenland are participating in the Global Warming Hoax as they are forced to give up their traditional lifestyle, since it is no longer possible to drive a dogsled out onto the ice to get near holes where seals come up. Within living memory, the ice was several feet thick. Now it is only a couple inches, and unsafe. Ocean ice forms months later than it used to, sometimes as late as February. The hunters are shooting their dogs, which they can no longer feed. Areas which used to be covered with ice are now exposed rock. The Inuit are aware that this is going to bring the oil industry into their region, but they know what happened in the Gulf of Mexico and are worried about it.

You can tell this must all be part of the evil Liberal Establishment Press because there is a cartoon on the editorial page (by Tony Auth) showing Governor Perry of Texas dressed as a cowboy, facing down a horde of animals and birds and even a few ambulatory trees which are rushing toward him beneath a blazing sun. Pasted in at the top is a newspaper clipping with the headline: PLANTS, ANIMALS SEEKING HIGHER, COOLER CLIMES AS THE GLOBE GROWS WARMER. The Governor is exclaiming, "You've all fallen for the hoax!"

Considering that Texas has just suffered through over a month of triple-digit temperatures, I wonder how seriously the Texans are taking Gov. Perry.

In the real world, global warming is

happening. Any working biologist can indeed tell you about plants and animals moving north as the climate changes. My brother is a top entomologist, so he may know more about how this is influencing North American butterflies and moths (and their foodplants) than almost anybody else does. There is some room for debate about how much this is affected by human activity, but we cannot help but notice that there have been a lot of changes in the past hundred years or so, since heavy industry really got going. I do not think this is entirely a coincidence. Nor do most scientists.

The real question is why the deniers are telling these lies. For some it is obvious. The polluters, industrialists and the like whose profits might be threatened by stricter enforcement of environmental protections, hire politicians to try to get those protections removed. Since anti-environmentalism is a major plank of the Republican platform, one hires Republicans for this purpose. Tobacco companies have always behaved the same way, often hiring the same politicians and lobbyists to create disinformation about the harm THEY'RE doing.

Mind you, I am not accusing any *Alexiad* correspondents of being liars. Some may be genuinely deluded or misled by the disinformation campaign, but meanwhile the process goes on all around us. In the long run, I think that global warming denial is going to be remembered as one of the great and disastrous delusions of our time.

I would actually agree with Taras that Gore Vidal has become increasingly a crackpot in his old age. Still a brilliant writer, but Vidal wants us to believe that the entire Cold War was a hoax perpetrated by Truman to keep the Military Industrial Complex happy, as if Stalin with nukes had nothing to do with it. He also does indeed seem to believe that Roosevelt for sinister purposes suckered the country into entry into World War II by allowing the Pearl Harbor attack to happen. He conveniently declines to speculate on the consequences of an Axis victory if the U.S. had remained neutral. In his hatred of Roosevelt we can see Vidal's own family prejudices. Apparently his grandfather, the blind senator, was an opponent of Roosevelt. His father worked for Roosevelt, but I think that ended unhappily. (You could look this up in the standard biography of Vidal.) Vidal is an important voice on the American literary and political scene and an entertaining one, but I do not think everything he says needs to be taken as gospel. I still recommend his essays, particularly the older ones. "American Caesar" is an important and timeless warning for all Americans. When Vidal said (during that casting call for *The Best Man*) that "Ronald Reagan would never be convincing as president," I am sure he meant it literally at the time. Reagan, the actor, in 1962, did not seem right for the part. In retrospect it makes a great conversation-starter or joke, so you can understand why Vidal repeats it, but I think he would have to admit that Reagan grew into the role over time and later played it quite convincingly. This happens with actors all the time. Boris Karloff was a minor player until he was about 40, when the role of the Frankenstein

Monster turned his career around.

Maybe Vidal and Kurt Vonnegut should have testified for David Irving at the libel trial.

— JTM

Cartoon or T-shirt idea: Show the Earth from the perspective of looking down on the North Pole. With a series of lines and dates, show the shrinkage of the polar cap. Caption: WHERE ARE THE DAMN LIBERALS HIDING THE ICE CAP?

GEORGE PRICE: While we can't control tsunamis and it isn't feasible for Japan to do without nuclear power, I think you must admit that it was sheer stupidity to put the Fukushima plant where it is. It's not as if we don't know where the fault line is. It is to the east of Japan, underwater. That means that any tsunami is going to hit Japan from that direction, moving from east to west. There is no fault line underwater between Japan and the mainland of Asia. Therefore if the plant had been built on the other side of the country, or even high on a hill, it would have been fine. But putting it in a low-lying area on the eastern coast, right in the path of tsunamis is not a good idea at all.

ROBERT KENNEDY: No one willing to explain the ending of *Inception*? Not a problem. The spinning top, it has been explained, is a test of whether or not the hero is awake or in yet another dream state. Therefore, at the end, when he seems to have happiness, everything depends on whether or not the top will begin to wobble. The director intentionally builds suspense on this point, but in the very last few frames, the top seems to be wobbling. So it is an underplayed, but happy ending.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** August 23, 2011
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Thank you for *Alexiad* 10.4, which arrived in the usual way shortly after my birthday, a birthday marked by going out and getting long-needed hearing aids. Can I tell the difference? Not really, but I've largely stopped asking Lee to repeat what she just said, so the difference must be there. Other stuff was an outdoor gas leak, which the gas company promptly came and repaired. The old connection running into the gas meter had apparently corroded since it was installed forty-odd years ago. We hope the replacement lasts as well.

Taras Wolansky is technically correct when he says that fossil fuels will never run out. However, the time may come when they are no longer economical to use, and the substitutes available may be insufficient to meet the world's demand, a demand which is currently supplied by seven billion tons of coal per year and 85 million barrels of oil per day, or about five billion tons per year. Trees never ran out, but wood from trees became so expensive that people began burning that nasty coal which had the virtues of being cheap and abundant. Coal may never run out, either, but burning that nasty uranium, the most likely substitute, is not a popular option. Yes, it would free up fossil fuels for transportation, but atomic power scares people, in spite of the fact in normal operation it is clean and safe. In normal operation burning coal sends far more radioactivity and poisons into the air, including 44 tons of carbon dioxide for every 12 tons of carbon burned.

Which segues to the subject of global warming, of which Taras appears to be cautiously skeptical. However, there is a scientific consensus that it is not only real but also driven (at least in part) by human activity, namely burning fossil fuel. A 2010 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences surveyed 1,372 climate scientists to find that 97 to 98 percent agreed that humans were contributing to global warming.

I took Lee over to the doctor's office at ~1:15, and she was finished at around 1:45, and while we were waiting for the elevator on the 8th floor, there was this 5.9 earthquake. So we walked down eight floors, which didn't help Lee's hip and knee. However, beyond a book or two, we sustained no damage (and the books might have been knocked down by the cats.).

None of my relatives were bothered, either, even the one whose father moved there because it was a safe place (he had his own ways of knowing).

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** August 27, 2011
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In *Alexiad* V10 #4, Lisa notes the passing of the local Borders Bookstore. The same thing happened where I live. They sold off as many books as they could and the fixtures as well. Borders wasn't just the largest bookstore in Simi Valley. It was the only bookstore in Simi Valley. As far as I could see, they always did good

business. There were always a fair number of people in the store anytime I visited, and the check-out line always seemed to have three or four people in it.

Joseph's "Thoughts on a Bookstore Closing" were a little confusing. I'm glad there were no satanic rites were associated with any bookstore closings in Louisville. I've noticed satanic rites tend to be decidedly un-nice.

While satanic rites do happen, they are far more common in fiction than in real life. However, I do remember one situation where satanic rites were alleged. In 1986-87, I was the budget coordinator for the LAPD Office of Operations. Back in those days, the Office of Operations was running through a million dollars a day to keep operating. Devonshire Division was one of the 18 geographic divisions in the LAPD. It is located in the northwestern corner of the San Fernando Valley, and it was the least active police division in the city. At the time, the captain was a notorious dingbat. Captain Dingbat submitted an interim budget request for more patrol officers because people were performing satanic rites in the hills on the north side of the division. Since I received many really silly budget requests, I read some of the sillier ones to the other people in the office. Someone commented there was nothing but bunny rabbits. From that day forth, the bunny rabbit cultists of Devonshire was an office joke. The things they do for Easter are eldritch in the extreme.

You could have cited H. Beam Piper's "Temple Trouble", where the faith of Yat-Zar required the sacrifice of bunny rabbits. But then, you'd have to call in the Paratime Police, and as you know having another agency investigate means they take all the credit.

Joseph must know by now, that the reports of StarShipSofa's victory were a bit premature. Not only did StarShipSofa not win, but a new category of Fancasts is now in the works. I suspect the new category will be obsolete in a few years when something new comes along, but that is a problem for another day. You may have heard that Chris Garcia almost exploded onstage when he received the Hugo for best fanzine. That story is correct.

I propose we nominate that speech for the Best Dramatic Presentation — Short Form Hugo.

The graphic novel fans may be inheriting the woes of fanzine fandom as *Girl Genius* wins again. *Girl Genius* is the graphic story that is read by people who don't read graphic stories. It's also quite good. The graphic novel fans may complain there are better products out there, and that may be true. However, most of us don't see them. They wanted a Hugo category, and they have a Hugo category.

The business meeting this year was confusing even to the people who usually understand such things. The proposed Young Adult Novel category was rejected on procedural grounds. I'm not sure what the grounds were, but maybe *File*

770 will explain it to us.

I don't think there was ever a time when Hugo voting wasn't limited to the members of the worldcon. There was at least one incident of outright ballot stuffing, but that involved buying memberships for ghosts. The person doing the stuffing did not win. He knew how many votes he had, but he didn't know how many votes there were.

I recall when *ERBdom* won the Hugo. Some people didn't like it, but I heard enough other people say they thought it was a good fanzine to make me believe it was a valid win.

Joseph's description of playing Civilization IV sounds familiar. I'm still back on Civilization III. I thought I was going to have to update when I bought a new computer, but it turns out that Civilization III will run under Windows 7.

**I never can do as good in that as
I could do in Civ I, where many
times I conquered the world.**

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 27, 2011
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I miss the Barnes & Noble (north side) here, but we still have a Books-A-Million (south side). B&N did lots of business, and everyone misses it. You'd think that just their little snack shop would have helped keep them afloat. I heard — it's just hearsay — that the landlords were going to raise their rent. In any case, that big, freestanding building is still empty.

Lots of war book reviews this issue; I enjoyed your explanation of the deployment in The Wizard of Pung's Corners review. And it sounds like a fun trip to Chicago and the Field Museum and horse exhibit, etc. (I've always had a soft spot in my heart for eohippus. Did you see the little guy in *Valley of Gwangi*?)

**Well, Hyracotherium would make
a nice house pet.**

The Valley of Gwangi
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065163/>

**For the film-history minded, it
was Ray Harryhausen's last
prehistoric-themed film.**

Excellent article on terminology (The Joy of High Tech). I learned a lot, but I still need a chart with arrows to understand where the dark side of the moon is. And thanks to Johnny Carruthers, I learned about Godiva's Ice Cream Parlor Truffles. I wouldn't go out of my way to look for them, but a taste would be interesting.

More info and ideas in the LOCs. The airship history is interesting. To Robert S. Kennedy: I also enjoyed *Babylon 5*. I wonder why they're not rerunning it. Thanks, Joe, for telling me again who John Galt is. (Where can I file that?!)

Thanks to Sue Burke for her report on the Crown Jewels in Vienna, and I loved your fun LOC, Sue! And I enjoyed The Huck, The Witch,

and The Wardrobe, Joe, and look forward to the sequel.

**See Tom Sawyer, Dawn Treader,
where Tom, Huck, and Jim go after
the seven lords . . . "Tarnation, in all
my born days I never before seed a
rat so big."**

— JTM

(Btw, I read a story excerpt the other day in which someone stole the prince's crown jewels. The author got a lot of mileage out of that.)

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** August 25, 2011
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Earthquake, what earthquake? I was home at the alleged time; nothing shook, rattled, or rolled. It is true that workmen were noisily excavating for a gas line next door, but even so . . .

You are familiar with the Remarkable Law of Coincidence as Exemplified by One-Legged Men Wearing Blue Baseball Caps. In a telephone chat with an auld acquaintance, she mentioned a book that she had read years and years ago; our pooled efforts identified it as *The Keeper of the Bees* by Gene Stratton-Porter. The next day came Fred Lerner's zine, in which that book was briefly described. And that same day I saw a reference to the author in John McWhorter's book *Doing Our Own Thing*, on the modern sensibility as it has affected language and music. Some books by G S-P had descended in the family, but I looked at them after Betsy's death and found them so little to my taste that I de-acquisitioned them. Everyone speaks like a book — as McW noted.

Vienna and Prague seem to have been popular destinations this year; Fred Lerner told of his trip at length. (A goodly number of years back, several of my acquaintances were in Padstow . . .) Maybe the next visitor to Vienna can look in on the museum of the Erste Österreichische Spar-Casse, if it still exists. It exhibits coin receptacles, piggy banks and the like. Included are several 19th c. American banks with figurines that propel the coin into the slot with an arm or a slide. The coins seen on them in 1963 were shiny new American cents. A picture that needed straightening; I set it straight six years later when I brung 'em some Indian-head cents as a present. Oh, I have no doubt that they were added to the exhibit, but the report of a witness would be pleasant to have. Can anything more picayune and remote from the Schatzkammer be imagined?

I have long been twitting Darrell Schweitzer about overuse of carven in his stories, and here it is in his letter! It is, like dwell, an Official Management Term, and is typically presented by curiously.

From an obituary in *The Economist* I learn that another veteran of SOE has died at an advanced age; Nancy Wake, who worked with the French Resistance. Her French husband was among the non-survivors. For her elusiveness, she was known (to her enemies) as the White Mouse. The details given are no doubt from a book — which I will make no special effort to find. Of what she did after the war there is nary a

word; the obit ends with the remark that "life would never be as good again". The Lords Juss, Goldry Bluzco, Spitfire, and Brandoch Daha would have understood.

**But what would she have done if
Sophonisba offered her that rerun
deal? I'm reminded of what Lord
Alexander said about that sort of
offer to the future Lord Stockton
at their last meeting: "Oh no. We
might not do nearly so well."**

— JTM

When did I first read Fletcher Pratt's *Civil War on Western Waters*? Decades ago, when my father still lived in Saginaw, Mich., I would borrow it from the library there as often as I visited him. It was high time to read it again, and at last I have my own copy; cost me ten bucks locally. I know that anything at all can be found on the Internet, but it's no fun that way. One ceases to be a collector and becomes an owner. A search among actual physical books also turns up things of which the existence was not suspected. For instance, *International Literary Houses*. Or *Impressionist Gate* by Susan Herbert.

As for Pratt, *Road to Empire*, the first of his Napoleonic histories, has never yet come my way. I have alluded here to *Hail, Caesar*, with Vercingetorix introduced in saga style.

Recently reviewed somewhere was a book on Supervolcanoes, which I shall have to look for at the library. After asteroids, this seems to be the next hot topic. I want to get the lowdown on the Campanian ignimbrite eruption, some 39,000 years BP. It is known that the Bay of Naples is a caldera, of greater age, and Vesuvius has grown up inside the ruins of an earlier volcano that one day went blooey. And then there are volcanic islands that collapse.

Meanwhile, I await a mere hurricane.

From: **Taras Wolansky** September 2, 2011
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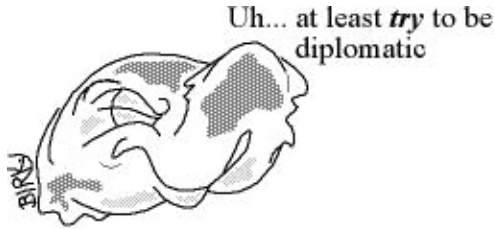
I had to look at it more than once before I noticed it, but I see I warped time from the Eighties to the Oughts, setting Ronald Reagan's re-election in 2004, and the Iran-Contra scandal in 2007, instead of 1984 and 1987, respectively. And I was twitting Darrell for getting his facts wrong, too!

It's amazing to think Reagan was first elected more than 30 years ago — where did the time go? "Those were the days, my friend . . ."

The death of Borders: One of the problems a brick-and-mortar book store has is that the books physically deteriorate on the shelves. I noticed this a few nights ago when I visited a Borders, selling SF at 50% off. I was tempted by both the hardcover and trade editions of *The Unincorporated Man* — but they must have spent months on the top shelf, under fluorescent lighting, because the paper had turned a nasty shade of yellow where it was exposed.

BTW, Books-a-Million is moving into some Borders locations.

Things “incomprehensible to the next generation”: Play Diana Ross singing “Love Child” to an audience of inner-city high schoolers. (70% of black kids are born out of wedlock — and that’s counting suburbia.)



I’m old enough to have seen Woody Allen’s *Sleeper* when it was first released, but I no longer remember who were “the A&P gypsies”.

One of the funniest moments in one of the funniest films ever made, *The Court Jester*, is when Danny Kaye sings an inappropriately impudent song and the royals kick him, making the song skip and repeat like a phonorecord.

It’s the role of the historian, the critic to explain stuff like this. For example, when Jane Austen writes in *Pride and Prejudice* that the town gossips would have preferred that the runaway Bennett daughter had ended up “secluded in a farmhouse or come upon the town”, she means “pregnant out of wedlock or thrown out by her family and become a prostitute”.

Which is one of the things I did in the Hugo-nominated Heinlein’s *Children*, available from Advent: Publishers and NESFA Press (adv.).

Analysis of Frederik Pohl’s “The Wizards of Pung’s Corners”: As an experiment, the story was translated into Chinese and then back into English, with bizarre results. It’s in a collection of Pohl’s stories.

The translator was F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre. For what it’s worth, the “Fighting Two-Two-Twains” were from Hawaii. Or at least James A. Michener’s book of that title.

The Joy of High Tech: “the people who named the electrical poles” were Benjamin Franklin.

The importance of context: Jack C. Haldeman’s book, *Vector Analysis*, was classified in mathematics by the Library of Congress and given the subject heading, “vector analysis”. It’s actually an SF novel about a biological vector.

Darrell Schweitzer: Oddly enough, the cover of *Prince Valiant Fights Attila the Hun* (at Amazon.com) has him fighting on horseback with a sword, wearing chain mail, not plate armor. Though his left foot is clearly planted in an anachronistic stirrup.

On the relative intelligence of two Presidents: when JFK met Khrushchev, JFK was beaten into the ground. (The contempt Khrushchev developed for JFK led directly to the building of

the Berlin Wall and the Cuban missile crisis.) But when Reagan met Gorbachev, Gorbachev left bleeding.

Take a look at Chris Matthews’ 1988 book, *Hardball*. As Tip O’Neill’s chief of staff, Matthews was something like the Democrats’ field marshal. He describes how Reagan repeatedly outmaneuvered the Democrats and stole their issues. Remember, Reagan got his agenda through a Congress controlled by the opposition.

The 2001 publication of Reagan, *In His Own Hand* should have finished off the puppet myth once and for all. It reproduces the manuscripts, with crossings-out and insertions, of 670 radio commentaries Reagan wrote in the 1970s.

I remember listening to those while delivering newspapers.

Regarding the “crossings-out and insertions”, in an on-line debate with a notorious Net holocaust denier, he claimed that “If Pearl Harbor was a surprise, what genius came up with the brilliant ‘a day shall live in infamy’ [sic] overnight?” Fortunately, a picture of the original manuscript of FDR’s speech was online — showing where he, or someone, had crossed out “live in history” and written in the other phrase.

— JTM

On the “phantom airships” of the 19th century, I thought that one of the many failures of the film, *Cowboys & Aliens*, was that it did not draw on that tradition.

I think you’re exactly right: as with China during the Mongol conquest, ancient Egypt’s vast population made sure that the Arab invaders were absorbed by the natives.

Finally, it’s certainly possible that the opening of the Northwest Passage — for a couple of months each year, anyway — will prove to be one of the benefits of global warming.

Alexis Gilliland: When I used to listen to the Rush Limbaugh show with some regularity, I got the impression that he thought the anthropogenic global warming (AGW) theory an example of man’s hubris. And there’s something to be said for the “fart in a hurricane” view; i.e., that the natural processes that drive climate are far more powerful than anything we puny humans can do.

Or, perhaps, too puny to stop what we started: Penn Jillette (of Penn & Teller) was out promoting his new book on atheism the other day. He’s pretty much an agnostic on AGW. (When people ask Bill Gates about it, he points out, Gates is noncommittal — and goes on giving his money to other causes he considers more important.) Even if the AGW hypothesis is accurate, he said, it may be like putting a truck in neutral on the top of a hill, and giving it a push: yes, it’s your fault; no, you can’t stop it!

I don’t particularly pursue this one issue; I simply read *Science Daily* almost every day. One of the things I’ve learned from there, over the last few years, is that science is still learning the basics of how the climate works. Thus, it’s no surprise

that the models failed to predict the flattening of the temperature curve since the mid-Nineties. I’ve also noticed that the headlines often oversell the contents, sounding like something is actually happening when, according to the text, it’s a projection somebody is making. I’ve also noticed that when scientists report results which appear to undermine the AGW/disaster scenario, they feel compelled to do a little kowtowing toward the idol, as it were — a sign of the intimidation and politicization reported by dissident climatologists.

Robert S. Kennedy: To the best of my recollection, at the end of the movie, *Inception*, Leonardo DiCaprio’s sleazy industrial spy is finally reunited with his children — except it’s probably a dream/illusion.

The film’s fallacy is its dream-within-dream scenario (really a disguised version of fantasy “dimensions”). It posits certain rules about how you enter a dream in the real world, but then imagines that the same rules hold if you enter a dream when you are already in one. But the dream version of the dream-entering machine doesn’t really exist: it and the “second-level” dream are really just new features of the dream you’re already in. It’s as if you expected an airliner in a dream to behave exactly like a real airliner.

It gets worse when the film posits that time moves faster and faster, as you go down from dream level to dream level. All these faux levels are actually parts of a single dream running in a single brain — which can’t operate any faster than it already is, neurologically speaking.

From: **Lloyd Penney** September 4, 2011
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Many thanks for whole number 58 of *Alexiad*. It’s a hot night, and I’d rather do nothing . . . so I might as well write a loc, right?

I may have to go with an e-book reader as well. I will still indulge myself with used books (I now have four good sources of used SF locally), but when it comes to e-readers, I can look at the Nook and the Kindle, and there is also a Canadian model, the Kobo. I would hate to think that if order to read the books I want, I’d need all three models. I’m old-fashioned, I want a good bookstore to go to. We’re lucky that the Chapters/Indigo chain still seems healthy, and we still have a dedicated science fiction bookstore, Bakka-Phoenix.

The common e-reader file format, an equivalent of Rich Text Format (.rtf), is EPUB (.epub). Gutenberg has that but for many books it also has Kindle (.mobi) files.

— JTM

Thank you for running my book review on the Mike Resnick book. It did first appear in Vol. 1, No. 3 of *The Dominion Dispatch*, edited by Adam Smith. Any reaction to it so far?

We did go to Reno, and we had a fine time. Good fanzine lounge, dealers’ room, panels and

Hugo ceremony, just to mention a few highlights. We also got into a lot of walking from the hotel to the convention centre, and back. There was a Faneds' Feast, but we were not able to attend because of panels we were on. What are your reactions to the Hugo winners? Many of us joked that Chris Garcia's acceptance would be nominated for Best Dramatic Presentation - Short Form next year.

Great illo from Paul Gadzikowski . . . I look forward to his starting up his Arthur, King of Time and Space webcomic.

This may not have been the letter I wanted to write, but I am afraid it must do for the moment. I look forward to the next issue so I can redeem myself. Take care, and see you with the next issue.

From: **Jim Stumm** September 3, 2011
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo NY 14223-0029 USA

Rodford Edmiston: I really enjoy your columns, but I usually have no comments, since you know so much more than I do about your subjects. But I do have a couple points to make about your Aug 2011 column.

Concerning dinosaurs, you refer to a URL that is more than 4 lines long. Do you think anyone can type all that without a single typo? When I give directions to a website, I tell my readers the easiest way to get to it. This usually starts with some phrase to type into google, followed by instructions as to what to click on. This is something a reader can actually do. The one advantage of your long URL is that it takes up less space than my more long-winded instructions.

Another phrase like "dark side of the Moon" that we may find in old books is "darkest Africa" also referred to as "the dark continent." This may give uninformed readers the impression that there is somewhere in Africa where the sun never shines. Or that it refers to those parts of Africa in which most of the residents have dark skin. Actually it referred to parts of Africa that were unknown and unmapped, that is, unexplored by Europeans. It's probably good that these confusing phrases about Africa seem to have fallen from current usage. Like you, I prefer to write "far side of the Moon" to avoid confusion.

But I must respectfully disagree with your naming of centuries, for the same reason of avoiding confusion in less than sharp minds. Many people seem to think that the 13th century, for example, means those years that begin with 13. I find that I am much less likely to be misunderstood if I refer to those years as the 1200s. This is also shorter to write. To me, 1800s means the years that begin with 18, which is just right. I don't understand why you say that the years 1811 to 1899 are not literally 18 hundreds. This also avoids the issue of whether the century begins with 1800 or 1801. Most of the time it's not necessary to get into that issue. We just need a clear indication of what years we are referring to. It's clear that 1899 is the last year of the 1800s, and 1900 is the first year of the 1900s, regardless of what century they belong to. Perhaps most people can remember that the century just passed was the 20th and the one before that must be the 19th, but confusion reigns when referring to

centuries long past, like the 12th or the 4th. It's much clearer to refer to the 1100s or the 300s.

Alexis A. Gilliland: Snowstorms aren't in the same league as the disasters I mentioned because they seldom cause any loss of life or property damage. And it's not likely that snowstorms had much to do with Buffalo's population decline since the weather was the same here when Buffalo's population was rising, up to the 1950s. Lake effect storms are not very severe despite the impression you may get from national news who, with their usual breathless exaggeration, make a big deal about how many inches of snow have fallen. But there are 2 points they never mention: Lake effect snow is always light, dry, and fluffy, like feathers, easy to plow, easy to shovel, and there's usually not much wind, so it just drifts down. A few inches of heavy, wet snow is worse than a foot of lake effect snow.

Secondly, much of this snow that's said to have fallen in Buffalo actually comes down, not in the city, but in the snow belt south of the city, where the ski slopes are.

Many cities in the Great Lakes area "rust belt" have suffered a loss of population similar to that of Buffalo, so it isn't unique to this city, or even to NY state. The cause of the population loss was generally jobs lost when heavy industry collapsed in this area. The cause of that must have been regional, or perhaps some policies of the Federal Government. Jobs lost to right-to-work states indicate that strong labor unions in this area were a factor.

Some retirees move south seeking a better climate (if you prefer 100 degree days and drought), but most people leave here because they can't find good jobs, now that the steel mills are history, and the waterfront is a pale shadow of what it used to be back in the glory days when the Port of Buffalo was one of the busiest in the world, third largest port in the world in 1899, according to an item I saw recently in the newspaper.

Joseph Major: My great grandmothers maiden names were Buhler, Gardner, Haas, and Brutscher. But I know that only because I've done some genealogy. I also have copies of the mortgage my grandparents, Theodore Vollmer and Cecilia Krieger, took out in 1929 to buy the house I grew up in, from the Krieger estate, after Cecilia's parents both died in that year. They paid 50% down and agreed to pay \$12 per week for 10 years to pay off the balance. The mortgage was with the Community Savings and Loan around the corner from their house. I was told that during the Depression of the 1930s, when my grandfather worked as a part-time cleaner in a movie theater because he couldn't find work in his trade as a machinist, the S and L agreed to let them pay the interest only, \$4.50 per week, for some time. Perhaps banks should do that today as an alternative to foreclosure and eviction. They finished paying off the mortgage during the 1940s when my grandfather was again able to find a job as a machinist. I used an inflation calculator on the internet to find that the payment of \$12 per week in 1929 was equivalent to \$550 per month in 2006.

When my parents moved to

Frankfort in 1963, they turned down a \$125/month rental and eventually settled on a \$100/month rental. That house would have enough space for us and Grant and the cats and our books, but the heating costs . . . The rent works out to \$736 a month in 2011 dollars, which is a lot, but for South Frankfort! I have a picture of it taken not that long ago.

— JTM

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Sept. 16, 2011
Post Office Box 5323, Oracle, AZ
85623-5323 USA
laurraine@mac.com
<http://www.weasner.com/>

Okay, so I'm still behind. These things take time.

I enjoyed reading your reviews of three of the Hugo nominated novels. Your opinions varied a lot from mine. It took me until about half way through the book to figure out what *The Dervish House* was all about. After that it was interesting and had some new (to me) ideas; but I didn't think a book that took me that long to get into deserved an award. I was very impressed by *Feed*. I didn't expect to like a book about zombies, but I found it very well written. As always, I enjoyed the Connie Willis books but didn't think these were as good as some of her other ones; frankly *All Clear* was a bit of a let-down.

On the other hand, Grant McCormick seems to be a lot more enthusiastic about *Cryoburn* than I was. Of course, I enjoyed it; but I didn't think it was as good as some other Miles Vorkosigan books.

I hope your nose is all better from the surgery that kept you from Reno.

It's healed up, but still feels a little numb. I'll know more next year and for sure in four and a half years.

— JTM

As always, Alexis Gilliland discusses the major issues of the day in a very sane manner. I always enjoy reading his analyses.

As far as I know, there hasn't been a version of Word Perfect for the Mac in aeons. When I used it in the past, I liked it. I've downloaded a copy of Open Office. After I've installed it, I'll find out how that compares.

From: **Sue Burke** September 17, 2011
calle Agustín Querol, 6 bis - 6 D, 28014 Madrid, SPAIN
sueburke@telefonica.net
www.sue.burke.name
mount-oregano.livejournal.com
amadisofgaul.blogspot.com

Last summer, a Bollywood production crew came to the Andalucian town of Alájar, population 771, none of whom had ever heard of Bollywood. The cast and crew were going to film a big song and dance number for a movie during several nights in the main plaza. They apologized in advance for being noisy.

On the first night, it was loud, so on the second night, the townspeople came to see what the fuss was about: a Hindi-Spanish flamenco song called "Señorita." On the third night, they came dressed in their best flamenco fiesta costumes (everybody has one in Andalucía) prepared to join the party. They were happily welcomed, giving the segment its multitudinous, exuberant atmosphere, and the mayor, María Carmen Osorno Sevillano, can be seen dancing with the stars. (I'm not sure about the cultural authenticity of the mechanical bull in the segment, though.)

The song reached number 1 on the charts in India this summer, and the movie, "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara" (Life Cannot Be Relived Again) opened July 15 and became a bigger box office hit than the final Harry Potter film. It tells the story of three young (and incredibly handsome and well financed) Indian men. One is about to get married, so they come to Spain for sort of a road trip/bachelor party/coming-of-age film.

They agree that each will pick some adventure they will all do together. So they go deep-sea diving at the Costa Brava, skydiving in Seville, and throw tomatoes at each other at Buñol's La Tomatina festival, recreated with 500 extras and 16 tons of tomatoes airlifted from Portugal. The two bachelors meet some charming local girls and fall in love, and the road trip manages to follow a route through Spain's most gorgeous scenery, like the bridge over the gorge in the city of Ronda.

Finally, they test their courage running with the bulls in Pamplona — shot the day after the real fiesta ended using tame bulls, along with 40 experienced runners and 300 locals as extras. The film ends with the boisterous fiesta in Alájar.

A critic for the Hindustan Times called it "a game-changer for Hindi films" and another said it was "one of the best feel-good movies of the year."

But the people who feel best about the film are the Spanish tourist boards who collaborated with it. The marketing head of Turespaña said the intention was to sell the idea that "Spain is a place worth getting to know" but "the only way to transmit a relevant message to a fragmented audience is to use good stories."

It seems to have worked. The number of Indian tourists coming to Spain since the film debuted has already tripled.

The movie as been released in the US and Canada, but oddly, it has not been shown in Spain yet. I think movie-goers here would dance along with the finale.

The movie website:
<http://www.znmdthemovie.com/>

You forgot:
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1562872/>

But did they have any
Anadalucian dynamite?

—JTM

"Señorita":
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ubxxLntYBo>

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** September 18, 2011
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA

93010-2451 USA
robertk@cipcug.org

Thank you for Vol. 10, No. 4.

Renovation was quite enjoyable. Sorry that Joe and Lisa could not make it. They were missed. My niece Sheila, her husband, and their son were there for the whole convention. On Saturday my nephew David showed up with his wife and three children. This made it somewhat of a family reunion and it was wonderful to see all of them. They are all from Idaho. I stayed at the Atlantis because it has a direct bridge connection to the Convention Center. If I had known how far I had to walk just to get to the bridge I would have stayed at the Peppermill and taken the free WorldCon bus to the Convention Center. Speaking of the busses, they were full size and great. I did take the bus one time to the Peppermill. The person or persons involved in *Renovation* who are responsible for the busses are to be congratulated. Having been involved in arranging for busses at my Navy ship reunion I know that they are expensive. Milt Stevens and I had a nice conversation. After one of the sessions I ran into Martin Morse Wooster. It was a surprise because Martin had not been sure he would attend. We had a good conversation. I never did see Taras Wolansky even though he was definitely there.



One of the sessions was "A Trip to the Creation Museum" produced and narrated by John Scalzi. Apparently a few million dollars were spent creating this museum. Dinosaurs existed with humans. Dinosaurs were small and were taken on the ark. The Earth is only 6,000 years old. Etc. To believe this in spite of all the rational evidence to the contrary almost belies belief. What an incredible waste of money. It did not, however, deserve Scalzi's ridicule and sneering presentation nor the almost constant laughter of the vast majority of the audience. It is truly sad and more accurately deserves compassion.

Worse yet, another guy is building a replica Noah's Ark up in the Kentucky hills. Preparing for After the Rain (by John Bowen, 1958) no doubt.

A much enjoyed session was "Capitalism vs. Socialism" with Dani Kollin, Eytan Kollin, and somebody (whose name I do not remember) pulled from the audience to take the Socialism side because there was no one scheduled to take that position. I don't know if that person really

supported Socialism or if he was playing Devil's Advocate. But, he did a good job of upholding the position. Just prior to the session I told Dani that the title should really be "Freedom vs. Socialism" and he replied that they would get to that.

The most exciting happening was Chris Garcia's acceptance of his HUGO for Best Fanzine (*The Drink Tank*). Joe has suggested (seriously?) that Chris be nominated for Best Dramatic Presentation – Short Form. I read the rules (Article 2, Section 3.3.8) and Chris's actions on receiving the HUGO would seem to make him eligible. So, Chris, it is my intention to nominate you for Best Dramatic Presentation – Short Form—"Acceptance for Best Fanzine HUGO by Christopher J. Garcia". I urge all of you who will be nominating for the HUGOS next year (for 2011) to also nominate Chris.

Very bad news – After first apparently canceling then renewing *Eureka*, the SyFy Channel has apparently finally canceled it. Another excellent show they can add to *Farscape* and *The Chronicle*.

Pat McCray: I rented *Source Code* and gave it a 4.5 on my rating scale of 1-5. My only problem with it was the ending and the ethical question of permanently taking over the mind and body of another person.

Rodford Edmiston: Another very enjoyable "The Joy of High Tech". I was especially taken with your commentary regarding 12 AM and 12 PM which is one of my pet peeves. Yes, 12 Noon is 12 Noon and is neither AM nor PM. I do think that a case could be made for calling 12 Midnight 12 PM. But, recording devices can't seem to work using Noon and Midnight. So, they have to call one AM and the other PM.

Steve Green: Thank you for your comments regarding Torchwood in response to my comments. Even though I watched the first season on DVD's obtained from the library I thought the first season was incredibly lame. The library does not seem to have the second and third seasons. I'll see if at least the third season can be obtained at Blockbuster.

R-Lauraine Tutihasi: Thank you for clarifying that Kage Baker was a woman. Also, thank you for agreeing with my frustration concerning the word gender having replaced sex.

George W. Price: You are, of course, correct that the single word "Countdown" is the title of the series and not of a book. I've now read *A Desert Called Peace* and *Carnifex* (all 920 pages). *The Lotus Eaters*, and *Countdown: M Day* have been purchased, all of which I will get to as soon as some other reading is done. I previously had requested these books from the Camarillo Library on Interlibrary Loan. Instead, the library actually purchased them. Maybe there is an SF Fan at the library.

Taras Wolansky: Sorry to have missed you at *Renovation*. About FDR and Pearl Harbor. I have a rather extensive collection concerning Pearl Harbor and the start of our involvement in WW II. It is quite clear that FDR and other high government officials were maneuvering to get the Germans and/or Japanese to attack us in such a manner as to get the United States into the war. As far as the Pacific was concerned FDR wanted

the Japanese to attack the Philippines. I realize it is hindsight, but why would the Japanese attack the Philippines first leaving our Pacific Fleet whole in Pearl Harbor? I do not think that there is any doubt that FDR and other high government officials knew that a Japanese attack was underway. Did they know it was Pearl Harbor in time to have warned the Navy and Army Commanders? Who knows? I have my own opinion. But, I don't think that we will ever know the truth for sure.. Two books that I highly recommend are *Scapegoats: A Defense of Kimmel and Short at Pearl Harbor* by Captain Edward L. Beach, USN (Ret.), Naval Institute Press (1995) and *Cruise of the Lanikai* by Rear Admiral Kemp Tolley, USN (Ret.), Naval Institute Press (1973) and Admiral Nimitz Foundation (1994).

As for *Dr. Who* and *Torchwood*, I have enjoyed *Dr. Who* when I've been able to see it. Since I only have basic cable it's been some time since it was last seen. For *Torchwood*, see my comments to Steve Green.

What's that about a glass hand?

Joe: I first saw Harlan Ellison™ at a regional SF convention in Los Angeles in the early 60's. At a WorldCon several years ago (I don't remember which one) I sat next to him at lunch in a food court. I did not say anything to him. But, what's he have to do to a glass hand?

Obviously, I'm ignorant about this glass hand thing so somebody please explain.

"Demon With a Glass Hand"
The Outer Limits, October 17,
1964
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0667812/>
Written by Harlan Ellison™.

— JTM

From: **Rodney Leighton** September 6, 2011
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3, Tatmagouche,
Nova Scotia B0K 1V0 CANADA

Thanks for the last couple of issues of *Alexiad*. June issue was postmarked July 18 and arrived in my mailbox July 27. August issue came in the normal seven days.

It's been a stressful time for me. Work started off very well this year; I was making good money, well, perhaps not by many people's standards but by mine and things were going well. The postal disruption was annoying although I confess that I did think that since there was no mail coming I didn't have to write anything. At work one day I thought: "Things are going too well; it's going to go to hell." Sure enough, shortly after I finished the job I was on, missed a week due to other people and then landed in a job from hell, possibly the worst silviculture job I have had in my 37 years of doing the stuff. Money was disappearing, saws were breaking, I was fluttering near nervous breakdown territory. Went to work every day. No energy to type after I got home. Finally got out of that but the next job was none too doog, and most of the funding has vanished. Now I am off for awhile.

Ah, quit whining!

Prenatural Fantasies by Carol Clarke was fun to read. Gal writes like an enthusiastic teenager so I suppose she is not. I quite liked that column; if

I happened on the books I think I would enjoy reading all those she wrote about. Not a normal feature of *Alexiad*; books written about I would want to read. I hope she writes some more.

Actually, Joe, believe it or not you wrote about some books in that issue I thought I would like.

Hey, there was a SF con in Halifax a month or so ago. Don't know anything about it other than it was there.

I can't recall ever being aware of many Canadian fans reading fanzines. Back in the day when I was getting lots of the things and locating them all there was myself and the ubiquitous Lloyd Penney. *Banana Wings* would invariably have Murray Moore in the locs or WAHF section. Finding another Canadian was rare. Now that I get very few and only write letters occasionally it's all up to Lloyd. Well, no; I am sure Dale Speirs reads all the fanzines he gets and one would assume Taral reads his and likely that nogood so and so Graeme Cameron . . . aah, Jesus, the old Rodney Leighton is trying to escape!

Shall we go catch him?

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** September 25, 2011
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL
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price4418@comcast.net

August *Alexiad*:

During your trip to Chicago you visited friends, ate at Beans and Bagels, and "had to cross the track of the CTA Brown Line." I presume that's the Beans and Bagels at Leland and Rockwell, since that's where the elevated train tracks come down to run at ground level for the Brown Line's last mile and a quarter. This is one of the few stretches where the "elevated" trains have grade crossings, and the only one that's deep inside Chicago; the others are near the city limits or in the suburbs. Three newer lines run at ground level in expressway medians, but have no grade crossings. Another Beans and Bagels is right next to the Brown Line elevated station at Montrose Avenue, which is where I change from the train to the bus taking me home. I've never eaten there.

Those ground-level tracks can be dangerous, since the trains are powered from a third rail, not an overhead wire. The tracks are fenced off and the third rail is interrupted at street crossings — the trains coast across — but there are no barriers to stop pedestrians from turning and walking into the right of way and then stepping on the third rail. Some years ago a drunk strayed onto the tracks, and got killed in a freak accident. Not by stepping on the third rail, but by urinating on it. He found out the hard way that a stream of urine is salty enough to conduct electricity. Six hundred volts DC! Chicagoans know well why "touching the third rail" is a good metaphor for dangerous political actions.

As the man said, "Just think of it
as evolution in action."

It was only about 15 years ago that Chicago's rapid transit lines became color-coded. Before

then they were mostly named after the areas they served. Which reminds me of one those meaningless coincidences that make life interesting. As a youngster in the 1940s I noticed that the trains on what is now the Brown Line had a "wood" and a "Park" on their destination signs in both directions. Northbound it was "Ravenswood / Albany Park" and southbound it was "Englewood / Normal Park."

You also noted that "Chicago has two newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times*. They are both tabloids now." No longer. As of Labor Day, the *Tribune* switched back to broadsheet. After 162 years as a broadsheet, the Trib changed its weekday newsstand edition to tabloid in 2009, apparently in hopes of better competing with the *Sun-Times* for bus and train riders who didn't want to wrestle with a big paper. However, the *Tribune* continued its broadsheet edition for weekday home delivery and for Saturday and Sunday newsstand sales. I don't know if the tabloid improved newsstand sales, but if so it wasn't enough to offset the expense of publishing in two formats on weekdays — they've gone back to all-broadsheet.

* * * * *

Rodford Edmiston ("The Joy of High Tech") expounds on the importance of correct terminology. He says that "Time designations such as 12 AM or 12 PM are nonsense" because "AM" and "PM" mean *ante meridian* and *post meridian*, i.e., "before noon" and "after noon." Right on! My preferred usage is "12 N" (or "12n.") for noon. As he says, midnight is both 12 PM and 12 AM, so to avoid ambiguity we must give the day: 12 PM Monday is the same as 12 AM Tuesday. Better still, just say "midnight," which we generally understand to mean the end of the old day. Or we could use military time, in which 2400 of the old day is also 0000 of the new day.

Correct terminology is particularly important in political discussion, where obfuscation abounds. Two obvious examples:

- (1) There is no such thing as a "semiautomatic assault rifle." In all the world's armies, a gun must be full-automatic to qualify as an "assault rifle." Misapplying the term to semiautomatic sporting rifles of military appearance is a shoddy trick used by gun-control advocates to make such weapons sound more fearsome.
- (2) "Inflation" originally meant the undue expansion of the money supply. Increasing the amount of money in circulation substantially faster than the economy is growing makes prices and wages spiral upward to absorb all that new money. The modern redefinition of "inflation" to mean only the wage-price spiral allows the politicians who control the money supply to escape the blame for the rising prices that are the direct result of them inflating the quantity of money. Thus they conceal cause and effect and shift the blame onto "soulless corporations" and "greedy unions" who are really only responding

rationality to the excessive growth of the money supply.

* * * * *

Typographical note: In Mr. Edmiston's essay, your word-processing program refuses to break the phrase "obsessive-compulsive" at the hyphen, although that is the obvious place to end the line, and there is plenty of room to do so. This forces the words on the preceding line to stretch way out, with both letter-spacing and wide word-spacing. The offense is repeated near the end of the review of *How I Killed Pluto*, where "semi-autobiographical" is not hyphenated. Apparently your program not only won't insert hyphens, it won't even use those that are already there (so-called "hard hyphens"). Doesn't look good. Please consider resetting the program parameters.

* * * * *

First, I thank Darrell Schweitzer for clearing up the minor mystery of his address; the "66445" was a typo for 6644; I was fooled by the fact that it had appeared in several issues of *Alexiad* so I had assumed it was not a typo.

Having cleared up one mystery, Darrell presents me with a greater one. He says that, contrary to my opinion, *Prince Valiant* did indeed have serious anachronisms in armor and weapons. He cites *Prince Valiant Fights Attila the Hun* (Hastings House, 1952, a book with prose text heavily illustrated from the comic strip). In this book, Darrell says, "our hero and his knights, complete with mail and plate armor and jousting lances, fight at the battle of the Catalaunian Plain alongside Aetius. The Romans, in finest Hollywood tradition, are all dressed like 1st century Praetorians." Well, that's plain enough. The problem is that I have this book, and have just now gone through it page by page and have found no plate armor, nor any Romans dressed in 1st century style, nor any mention of Aetius (though I did not read it word by word, and might have missed something). Darrell, would you give me page citations? I suspect you have confused this with some other book.

Turning to the question of why, in my opinion, modern Egyptians don't look like the pictures of ancient Egyptians, Darrell doesn't think there is all that much difference. On the other hand, C. D. Carson tells me that "The Arabs have been in the ascendancy in Egypt, & the Copts in decline" since the time of the Islamic conquest. This seems to imply that the Coptic Christians are racially different from the Arab Muslims. Is the difference noticeable enough that Arabs can tell Copts by sight? That would make it easier for the Muslims to persecute the Copts. In any case, it seems that any changes in Egyptians were very gradual, with no abrupt displacement or destruction of the populace.

Darrell also disputes the theories of "Afro-Centrists" about the race of the Egyptians; in antiquity there was a sharp distinction between the Egyptians and the sub-Saharan black Africans, and there still is. I am reminded of the time some years ago when an exhibit at Chicago's City Hall (while we had a black mayor) showed Cleopatra

as black! Good God! Black pride is all very well, but it doesn't justify ignoring the plain historical fact that Cleopatra was of strictly Greek ancestry. The Ptolemaic dynasty even practiced brother-sister marriage to avoid any chance of diluting their bloodline by mixing with the natives they ruled over.

The Afrocentric argument is that the unknown concubine who was the mother of Ptolemaios Neos Dionysos Theos Philopator Theos Philadelphos [Ptolemy XII Auletes] was African, therefore his daughter Kleopatra Thea Philopator [Cleopatra] was African, and in their sense, too, instead of looking like Theodosia Burr Goodman.

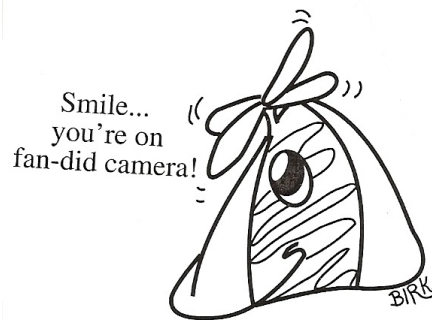
— JTM

* * * * *

Taras Wolansky says "We're never going to 'run out' of fossil fuel; indeed, the idea of 'running out' is bad economics, as what actually happens is the price simply goes up, causing substitution of other energy sources on the demand side, and increased production on the supply side." Quite right.

When the fear-mongers have hysterics about how our oil supply has "only" twenty years of proved reserves, we should remind ourselves that "proved reserves" has a specific economic meaning. It is not just the total of oil (or whatever) that we know we've got; it means the known total that is profitable to produce at the current price. When the price goes up, the proved reserves figure goes up, because it now includes deposits that were already known but too expensive to produce at the old lower price. And when the proved reserves run low, that is the signal to step up exploration and find more. So "proved reserves" is always a twenty-year supply, more or less, because that's the industry's planning horizon.

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** September 26, 2011
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
20882-3422 USA



I'm trying to cobble a loc together, using the new-to-me-old Macbook. The newest Mac OS will render all (or almost all) my files inaccessible; so I am trying to find ways around

the issue. Right now I am simply typing as text and then will try to import it into the Freehand file — knowing full well that when/if I ever upgrade to Lion those FH files will be unopenable (such a word?). Sigh. In the meantime I am looking for some drawing program that will be compatible and also open FH. To date I have not found anything. Second sigh.

There is a Barnes and Noble, but it is not all conveniently close or accessible. Necessity may make me reassess that evaluation. I visited the local Borders within a week or two of the announcement of the closing — then steadfastly managed to avoid it as the bones were picked clean. A moment of silence if you please.

Congratulations to all the Hugo winners — interesting fannish results. Interesting to note the potential new category that will encompass Sofa ...

Gee, I never saw Whoopi's real name written out before — just thought it was "Karen". I like the look of the "Caryn" spelling.

Caryn Elaine Johnson
<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000155/>

Ah, trying to follow vegan guidelines makes reading the candy reviews painful — so many items I want to try but aren't vegan. Sigh.

Seeing the passing of Terry Jeeves mentioned reminds me how much I miss his presence — he was a fan of all "reasons" (pubbing-editing-writing-drawing — sigh).

Brakes went out on the car again within a month — this time I knew that low flying jet sound undecided to go directly to a dealership. The car has years but not miles on it. However, when I googled the model and asked other owners the comment was: "It is a great car but you have to treat it like a slow child and baby it — that often means that only a dealer knows the tricks of getting work done right." So far, two for two — a routine grease and oil job locally resulted in an oil leak — research showed this model requires an OEM (very emphatically owner comments said either buy them on line or get them from a dealership but get them) crush washer. I went one step closer and asked the garage to please put in a washer — I did **not** say OEM — and the leak got smaller. When the brakes were re-done at the dealership I asked them to put in the crush ring — they did — end of problem.

I find it interesting to note that **Buffy** is back on a new show — I think the name is *Ringer*. What I find interesting is that people who watched the first show seem to, pretty much, automatically intend to watch this one. Okay, I admit, the tape of the show will go on the pile — but I tend to tape pretty much all new shows just to see for myself ...

Ringer with Sarah Michelle Gellar
as Bridget/Siobhan:
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1819654/>

Incidentally, the name is pronounced "shevawn" and is the Irish Gaelic version of "Joan". I have a character named that in two of my unsaleable novels.

— JTM

Okay — let me see — I may or may not have any internet connection and the PO may or may not stay afloat. Any suggestions?

Shame on me — I have to echo my enjoyment of the back page parodies — and my lack of mentioning that fact. I should know better, in re — fanart usually is not mentioned, but I hope it is appreciated — and I myself should have said something sooner without a “nudge” from Lauraine.

Okay — now I have typed for a while — let me see if I can somehow get the words into letterhead parked elsewhere. Well, I think it worked — now to see what actually prints out!

As always — thanks!

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** Sept. 28, 2011
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring, MD
20907-8093 USA
mmwooster@yahoo.com

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 58. I see from *The Zine Dump* that there was a Fan-Eds Feast, but I wasn't invited and didn't know about it. I'm not complaining, since I didn't know I was going to Renovation until July (thank you, Cheap Downtown Casino Hotel!) and no one knew I was there, since I registered at the door. I thought it was an average Worldcon: I had a good time, but I had a good time at Nolacon II, which was the worst Worldcon I've ever been to. (My chief memories of Nolacon II were that I ended up getting really sick eating Thai-Cajun food — it was my fault, I ate Thai-Cajun food! — and that First Fandom wore out its welcome very quickly at the Hugoes by wasting an hour at the Hugo awards giving each other prizes.)

And speaking of the Hugo ceremony — Jay Lake and Ken Scholes were the lamest toastmasters I can remember. I kept yelling during some of their painfully unfunny routines, “The hook! Give them the hook!” I am also looking for any Hugo voter who will say, “I read all the Best Related Book nominees, and *Chicks Dig Time Lords* is better than the Patterson biography of Heinlein because . . .” I'll settle for someone who will explain why women who spend too much time watching Doctor Who is a more important subject than the authorized biography of one of science fiction's greatest writers.

Them's writin' words...
if it's a feud you want,
it's a feud you'll get!



Lisa: I don't know that the death of Borders showed that ebooks are winning. I will miss Borders, there was a branch a mile from me. I thought Borders was badly managed with bad

customer service. I liked it more than Barnes and Noble, however. What Borders's demise does teach us is that the way for a bookstore to survive is to have lots and lots of signings. The reason why Politics and Prose in Washington seems to be thriving is that they have over 25 signings a week. And of course people who come to the store to pick up an autograph will try other things. Politics and Prose also has tons of book clubs.

As for Darrell Schweitzer's claim that Ronald Reagan's career and successful rise to the presidency was somehow due to sinister media-manipulating masterminds, one must ask: a) Who were these people? Darrell does not mention a single name and b) What did they do, exactly? I'm willing to entertain Darrell's argument, but he has to actually name some of Reagan's mysterious controllers and then explain what they did.

He's in touch with his inner Geis.
REG said, you will recall, that Al "I
am in charge" Haig was the
mastermind behind Reagan.

— JTM

I tried a Hershey Air Delight bar (thanks, CVS, for the freebie) but didn't realize until I read Johnny Carruthers's review that it was just a repackaged chocolate bar. This doesn't strike me as one of Hershey's better marketing ideas. I'd much prefer original ideas for candy bars than repackaged ones.

From: **Jason K. Burnett** October 3, 2011
Post Office Box 18496, Minneapolis, MN
55428-8496 USA
brithistorian@gmail.com

First things first — my new address is:

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It all went down like this: At the end of March of this year, the owner of the house we were renting told us that the house had been sold. On April 1, we met the new owner, who collected our rent and gave us 60 days notice to vacate the premises. Given the recent drop in housing prices and the tight rental market in the Twin Cities, we decided our best bet was to try to buy a house. Of course, as anyone who's bought a house can attest, 60 days is not a lot of time to buy a house, especially when you're working on a tight budget. Consequently, when the last day of May rolled around, we were still in the process of buying a house — we had found our house and gotten our offer approved, but we were still in the process of getting our financing set up. Of course, the new owner of our old rental wanted to take possession and move in on June 1, so from June 1 until we closed on the new house of July 21, we were technically homeless. I say technically because we were able to find an expensive hotel with weekly rates so at least we had a roof over our heads, but the fact remained that all of our stuff was in storage and we were living with 4 people and a dog in a single hotel room. And, since I normally work at home, I was also working from

that hotel room.

But at any rate, on July 21 we closed on our new house. We decided to keep getting most of our mail, especially zines and magazines, at the PO Box, since it saves things from getting crumpled in the mailbag and folded when put into the mailbox. I'm now back at school, going to a distance learning program to get my certification as a history teacher. It's a pretty stressful program, but it's only for a year and a half, so I figure I can survive anything for a year and a half.

For obvious reasons I haven't had time to do much reading recently, but I am very pleased to note *F&SF* is now available on the Kindle. This was my major disappointment upon first buying my Kindle, and I'm glad to see the situation has been remedied. I'm also glad to see the publishers of *F&SF* have decided on what I think is a more reasonable price than what the publisher of *Asimov's/Analog/EQ/Hitchcock* went for.

So that's what's been going on in my life. I've greatly enjoyed getting *Alexiad* during this difficult time, as it kept me feeling connected with the outside world.

Take care, and I'll talk to you later.

We're glad we kept you in touch.
Will you be able to make it to
Chicago?

— JTM

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Bill Patterson, with thanks. Best wishes to Bill for a speedy recovery.

Rich Lynch, with thanks and a copy of *My Back Pages*.

Joel Senter, with thanks.

Nic Farey, who appreciates those who still do hard copy.

So . . . we hope to be able to make it to ChiCon next year. For what it's worth, I told my cousin Dana that I would buy her a daily membership (let's hope they have them!) and she could enjoy the art show. Now, who will really be missed is Trinlay Khadro. Does anyone have any idea about how we can get her there?

And now for some fun . . .

THE PRODUCERS II

Theatrical producer Max Bialystock (Nathan Lane) and his partner and accountant Leo Bloom (Matthew Broderick) recoil from their difficulties on Broadway by going into the resort business. Following their business model, they locate the worst possible architect they can find, a man whose last project ended with the client firing him and turning the building into a boarding school for exceptional children. However, their chosen man, Howard Roark (Paul Johansson), has some ideas of his own . . .

A. B. and J.

... Number Fourteen looked down on the limp body on the couch. The monitors were connected to the machines, and in turn, the imagery of the man's dreams filled the screen before him.

"We will now introduce the third factor," she said to Number Two. The tape labelled "C" was in the machine, now she pushed a button and it began to run.

They watched as Number Six, in his dinner jacket, made his entrance into Madame Engadine's party. He mixed with the others, speaking in that light, untroubled manner that they had seen in the previous two sessions.

Then he stood there, in the middle of things, arms out, and said, even more cheerfully, "This is a dream — y party!" They both jumped at that. Number Six had been hinting that he knew something was going on.

Number Two was under pressure. The last plan had not worked. If he failed this time ... he watched, drinking another glass of milk to calm his tormented stomach, as the "dream — y party" progressed. There was no sign of "C", no idea who he might be, or even she. The hostess?

In the background, as Number Six flirted with the hostess, they could see her butler going to the door to welcome in another guest. And then it happened.

The roar of a shotgun crashed out. And with that, the dream turned to a nightmare. The man who entered was a horror, disarrayed hair of some unnatural verdigris colour, chalky face with deep scars around its ragged red mouth, and wild black-rimmed eyes.

He hoisted the gun and shouted, "Good evening, ladies and gentle-men!"

Other men with guns, in clown masks, rushed in after him, holding the partygoers at gunpoint. The first man went to the buffet and took an hors d'oeuvre, saying between bites of the prawn, "We are tonight's entertainment!"

With skewer in hand, he walked over to the guests, saying, "I have only one question: Where is John Drake?"

At gunpoint, he took a glass of champagne from one of the female guests, threw the wine into the air and pretended to drink from the empty glass before throwing it aside, then went on down a line of appalled guests. "Do you know where John is? You know who he is? You know where I can find John? I need to talk to him about something, just something, a little ..."

This last was addressed to one of the partygoers, with a hand on his face. Then the intruder said, "No," and left him to the attentions of his underlings. The next one, however, was Number Six.

"You know, I'll settle for his loved ones," he said, in that eerie, somehow familiar, tone.

"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or intimidated by thugs. My life is my own."

The intruder began to walk off, saying over one purple-clad shoulder, "You know, you remind me of my father." Then, with inhuman speed, he turned back, grabbed the back of Number Six's head, and thrust a knife into his mouth, saying with a vicious tone to match his look, "And I **hated** my father."

Number Two had been wondering if this were "C". Now he was merely utterly bewildered.

Number Fourteen said, "I'd better intervene." She pushed a button, lifted the microphone, and said, "Stop."

She appeared on the screen, in an expensive, low-cut green dress, calm, unbothered, saying "Stop."

The intruder pushed Number Six into the arms of his flunkies and began to walk towards Number Fourteen's avatar, running one hand through his hair, saying, "Well, hell-o, beautiful! And you are beautiful."

He clutched Number Fourteen's avatar in a strong grip, put the knife to her mouth and said, "Well, you look nervous. Is it the scars? Want to know how I got them?" She struggled in his grasp as he rambled on, "Come here. Hey! Look at me. So I had a wife, beautiful, like you, who tells me I worry too much. Who tells me I ought to smile more. Who gambles and gets in deep with the sharks ..."

Number Two felt a sinking feeling as the scenario spun completely out of their control. And from the twitching the sleeping Number Six was making, he did not seem pleased either. They might lose him!

The telephone rang, and he flinched. Slowly, unwillingly, he reached for it. He had never seen Number One and now ... "Sir?"

A slow mocking laugh came over the line. "And I thought ... *my* jokes ... were bad."

— Not created by Bob Kane or Patrick McGoonan

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

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

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