

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

On Wednesday December 7 it will be exactly seventy years since the Day of Infamy. On that day I will pause to remember the sacrifice of Chief Water Tender Peter Tomich, who gave his life so that his shipmates on board U.S.S. *Utah* could escape from the sinking ship.

On November 6 I left my little Acer and birthday gift camera on the back seat of the car. A thief took the occasion to smash the window and remove both. For two years that little Acer had let me write and surf the net on trips. Now it was gone, probably to satisfy someone's drug habit. It was an expensive lesson in not leaving electronics in plain sight. Joe gave me the little netbook for Christmas two years ago. It hurts still to think of it being sold for drug money.

— Lisa

## Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Reviewer's Notes.....	1
Anne McCaffrey.....	3
Eclipse News.....	15
Horse News.....	8
The Joy of High Tech.....	9
Veterans News.....	15
Worldcon News.....	16
Book Reviews	
JTM Anderson, <i>Firestorm: Destroyermen</i> .....	3
JTM Breit, <i>The Burning Ages</i> .....	5
RD Caron/Hutin, <i>The Alchemists</i> .....	13
JTM Conroy, <i>Castro's Bomb</i> .....	4
JTM Conroy, <i>Himmler's War</i> .....	4
TW Fleming, <i>The Flying Visit</i> .....	11
JTM Grasso, <i>East Wind Returns</i> .....	3
JTM Hagen, <i>We Is Got Him</i> .....	7
JTM Krakauer, <i>Three Cups of Deceit</i> .....	6
JTM Malmont, <i>The Astounding, The Amazing, and The Unknown</i> .....	3
JTM Moskowitz, <i>Fantasy Commentator #59-60</i> .....	7
GCM Pratchett, <i>Snuff</i> .....	9
TW Smolin, <i>The Trouble With Physics</i> .....	12
JTM Whittington, <i>The Last Moonwalker and Other Stories</i> .....	5
Movie Reviews	
TW <i>Cars 2</i> .....	13
Fanzines Received.....	16
Random Jottings.....	2
Letters.....	17
Dainis Bisenieks, Cuyler "Ned" Brooks, Sue Burke, Richard A. Dengrove, Brad W. Foster, Alexis A. Gilliland, Robert S. Kennedy, Timothy Lane, Evelyn Leeper, Rodney Leighton, William H. Patterson, Lloyd Penney, George W. Price, John Purcell, Pat & Roger Sims, Alexander R. Slate, Joy V. Smith, Milt Stevens, Jim Stumm, R-Lauraine Tutihasi, Henry L. Welch, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster	

Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

Trivia..... 30

## Art:

Alan F. Beck..... 15, 29  
 Sheryl Birkhead..... 17, 20, 23, 27  
 Brad W. Foster..... 3, 22  
 Paul Gadzikowski..... 30  
 Alexis Gilliland..... 3, 5, 7, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 27, 29  
 Trinlay Khadro..... 2  
 Taral Wayne..... 13

Sir David Low..... 11

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) was **November 12, 2011** at Yonkers Raceway. Roll With Joe, the champion money winner for 2011, won.

Joe's Birthday is **December 24, 2011**Our Fifteenth Anniversary was **November 22, 2011**

Printed on December 12, 2011

Deadline is **February 1, 2012**

## Reviewer's Notes

Lastish I made a prediction about animé zombies. As a finale to November (a month we could have done without) we went to Best Buy to get the big electronics purchase changed to the promotional rate. Lisa wanted to get some DVDs for the family. And there it was: *High School of the Dead* [*Gakuen mokushiroku*].

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1685401/>

I imagined once that Core Fandom, or whatever it calls itself now, would eventually become two guys in their nineties in nursing homes at opposite ends of the country, but they don't talk to each other any more because of something one said or did to the other, but they can't remember what or when or where. But they are still holding to the true spirit of fandom.

Not that anyone else will. And conventions are also on the decline. Indeed, it seems hard to think of anything that's doing well these days, including us.

P. G. Meyers is having an interesting commentary on the *Commentary* literature blog, on the topic of "S.F. is Jewish, Fantasy is Goyish". Avram Davidson, anyone? Alas, as with most such pages, comment only after some effort as you have to go through controls to make sure the other readers aren't sidetracked to Stormfront or Radio Islam . . .

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Leonard Nimoy has attended his final STAR TREK™ convention; he announced his retirement from the circuit at a convention in Chicago that was being held to celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the series.

However, that convention was sponsored by Creation Entertainment, which to some of us indicates that his final STAR TREK™ convention was somewhat before that. Or perhaps he was given an ARC of *Chicks Dig Slash: A Celebration of Kirk/Spock by the Women Who Love It* and decided to get out while the getting was good.

Nightmarish scenario: The Ed Kramer incident causes a financial crisis in Dragon\*Con and Creation Entertainment buys them out, then makes a bid to buy WorldCon.

Among the old classics available for e-readers is Edward Lucas White's *Andivius Hedulio: Adventures of a Roman Nobleman In the Days of the Empire* (1921). This is a remarkable work by today's standards, an historical novel that actually tries to stick to the established history and not put in anachronistic characters, much less be a detective story. Rather, it's a tale of a man who unwillingly sees the underside of the Roman Empire, climaxing in a prolonged set of scenes where he is condemned to death repeatedly . . .

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8532>

It turns out that "Lee at the Alamo" could be read for free at the Tor.com site.

"Lee at the Alamo"

<http://www.tor.com/stories/2011/09/lee-at-the-alamo>

The comments include commentary from Turtledove himself!

Some of those works are apparently previews of longer ones, such as the other one I got, Geoff Ryman's "The Film-Makers of Mars". Which may be set in an alternate universe, since it has nitrate film being safe and no mention of next year's "John Carter". As the sole reviewer on Amazon.com said, the story "throws plausibility to the wind" but she seems to think that's a good thing.

John Carter

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0401729/>

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

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

Release date is March 9, 2012. The big criticism I've seen so far is that Dejah Thoris (Lynn Collins) appears to be tattooed, or at least painted with some Barsoomian equivalent of henna, and that John Carter (Taylor Kitsch) has long hair.

We still live!

The Posthumous Piper Phenomenon persistently proceeds. John F. Carr has brought out *The Last Space Viking* (2011: Pequod Press; \$42; Amazon Digital Services; \$7.99), a sequel to the original set in the reign of Lucas Trask's grandson. Terry Mancour (author of the ST:TNG novel *Spartacus*) has done more direct sequels, *Prince of Tanith* and *Princess Valerie's War* (both 2011; Amazon Digital Services; \$4.99). There seems to be quite a market.

Angie Butler, author of *The Quest for Frank Wild* (1 August 2011; Jackleberry Press; ISBN 978-0956927200; £25), the biography of the most experienced Antarctic explorer, has succeeded in her own quest for Frank Wild. That is, she found his ashes in a chapel in Johannesburg, and reburied them at the Grytviken cemetery on South Georgia near Shackleton's grave on **November 27, 2011**. Among the mourners were six Wild family members and the Honourable Alexandria Shackleton, granddaughter of Sir Ernest. As Anauaq Henson said when his father was reburied next to Peary, it is a good thing that those two are together.

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

We are all well, Boss.

An Italian woman was fined €32,000 for a parking ticket dating back to the consulship of Imperator Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus Augustus for the third time and P. Septimus Geta Caesar for the second time, the year DCCCCLXI AUC. The senior consul is better known as "Caracalla" after his style in cloaks. (Presumably Severus didn't want to put up with cries of "*Pater semper te optimi amabat!*") That's what happens when you leave the chariot outside the villa after sunrise, when vehicles are supposed to be outside the City.

(Prosaically, the officer entered the year as 208 instead of 2008. Why they didn't calculate the fine in sestertii I don't know. When they put in the right year the fine turned out to be €CIL.)

The screen on Lisa's laptop died. By a fortuitous coincidence, Best Buy had a sale and offered a Gateway laptop with a 1.5 GHz Celeron processor, a 15.6" display, 2 GB memory, and a 320 GB hard drive for . . . about the price we paid for the netbooks.

Which inspired me to go ahead early with this Christmas's plans and get a new Gateway

desktop. This beauty has Intel Inside, an i5 (quad-core) 3GHz processor, 8 GB memory, and a 1T hard drive. Now I've been transferring over files . . .

**Is This Really Necessary Department:** Now available for Kindle: *I, Robot: To Protect* by Mickey Zucker Reichert [based on characters and situations created by Isaac Asimov (and John W. Campbell, Jr.)] (2011; Penguin Publishing; \$11.99). "First in an all-new trilogy inspired by Isaac Asimov's legendary anthology, *I, Robot*." Makes one wish it were a thrilling prequel to the Eando Binder book, published by Oswald Cobblepot.

For something that will make your brains deliquesce and flow out your ears, go to:

<http://drfaustusau.deviantart.com/>

Then check out *The Call of Cthulhu* — Dr. Seuss style! How cosmically mephitic, squamous, rugose, and blasphemous!

## OBITS

## MONARCHIST NEWS

**Maria del Rosario Cayetana Alfonsa Victoria Eugenia Francisca Fitz-James Stuart y de Silva, Duquesa de Alba de Tormes y Duquesa de Berwick** married **Alfonso Diez Carabantes** in Seville on October 5, 2011. The "Fitz-James Stuart" comes from her ancestor **James FitzJames, Duke of Berwick**, the natural son of James II and Arabella Churchill, sister of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. The Duchess is also Spanish Duquesa de Berwick, while her first cousin once removed **don Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart, Duque de Peñaranda** is claimant to the English Dukedom of Berwick, which will become extinct unless he or his younger brother does something about it.

However, Francisco Franco is not dead. That is, **don Francisco Franco y Martinez-Bordiú, Señor de Meirás y Marques de Villaverde**, grandson of the guy you and Chevy Chase are thinking of. He is not heir to his mother's title of **Duquesa de Franco**, which will descend to his oldest sister **Maria del Carmen Martinez-Bordiú y Franco** and thence to her son **Louis Alphonse de Bourbon, Duc de Anjou**, the French Legitimist Pretender "Louis XX".

David Cameron has got the Commonwealth to agree to Númenorean succession. Protests from **Friedrike von Reiche** (the heiress of Victoria under said terms) and **Franz Herzog von Bayern** (the Jacobite heir) in 3 . . . 2 . . .

We note the death of **Leka Zogu**, claimant to the Albanian throne, on **November 30, 2011**. More on his colorful life nextish.

**Anne Inez McCaffrey**

April 1, 1926 — November 21, 2011  
 “Gone Away, gone ahead.”

SF legend Anne McCaffrey has gone between at age 85. Her dragons have not gone between with her but the Sf world is much poorer now. I don't remember when I first read *Dragonflight* but it has always been on my list of the greatest Sf novels.

Dragons live forever, but not so their creators.

— Lisa

**A THRILLING WONDER STORY**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE ASTOUNDING, THE AMAZING,  
 AND THE UNKNOWN**  
 by Paul Malmont  
 (Simon and Schuster; 2011;  
 ISBN 978-1439168936; \$26.00;  
 Simon and Schuster Digital Sales [Kindle];  
 \$12.99)

**DINO FACT-8**

You ever wished your favorite writer could live the stories he wrote? Well, here we go, with Heinlein, Asimov, de Camp, Hubbard, and many others joining in an epic tale of derring-do and heroism in a quest to discover the secret of the lost archives of Nikola Tesla. Perils proliferate, threats hover dangerously, and then too the normal problems of life go on, including what to do about the latest idea that JWCjr fired off at everyone.

The book follows on Malmont's previous work *The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril* (2006). It's a headlong adventure, with derring-do out of the pulps. And a most ill-assorted guard of heroes to pull it off. Like most pulp adventures, it falls apart if you look at it carefully, and some of the characterizations have their problems.

In a nice touch, when Elron meets the other writers, he tells them a complete, utterly self-aggrandizing, lie about his career. Not surprisingly, he's the one who gets packed off to the Pacific by himself.

Nitpick department; John Campbell's kamakaze think-tank wasn't set up until 1945, and Asimov wasn't involved. Calling the group here that is sloppy, if not outright lazy. 4SJ didn't afflict us with — er, invent the term “sci-fi” until 1954 (so it's about as old as I am). The title of the other magazine was changed to

*Unknown Worlds* in 1941.

Malmont has appended a most useful bibliography. Unfortunately, he just missed getting Bill Patterson's *Robert A Heinlein: In Dialogue With His Century* (2009; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #5) which would have done some good. A comparison with Jon Lellenberg's *Baker Street Irregular* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #3) is also useful.

This is a fun dream, and like most dreams doesn't quite stand up in the morning. I forgot to polish the clocks!

**GILLIGAN'S DESTROYERMEN**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**FIRESTORM: DESTROYERMEN**  
 by Taylor Anderson  
 (RoC; 2011;  
 ISBN 978-0-451-46417-0; \$25.95;  
 Penguin Publishing [Kindle]; \$12.95)  
 Sequel to *Destroyermen: Into the Storm*  
 (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #5)  
*Destroyermen: Crusade*  
 (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #6)  
*Destroyermen: Maelstrom*  
 (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 8 #2)  
*Destroyermen: Distant Thunders*  
 (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #3) and  
*Destroyermen: Rising Tides*  
 (2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #2)

When last we left Matthew Reddy and his gallant crew, there was trouble at both ends of his empire but relief in between. The Grik were still menacing the equivalent of Singapore, the Spaniards were confronting the British East India Company Empire in Hawaii, but Sandra Tucker had been found safe and sound.

The number of people traveling through the portal seems to have increased. Including one genuine hell-ship, with a number of Allied prisoners, including a first cousin of Matt Reddy. (I was hoping to see something interesting when they met; maybe next volume.) The destroyermen are getting some updates on the war they were expelled from.

Meanwhile, the former captain of the former *Amagi* is getting in some licks of his own. Instead of being dinner for the Grik, he is their air marshal. With dirigibles. (Did Japan even have any airships?)

Back in the eastern Pacific, the struggle against the Spanish colony is getting more nerve-wracking. *El sueño del Santo Oficio produce monstruos* [The sleep of the Holy Office produces monsters], as Goya would have put it, and some of these monsters are nasty. Including the natural ones.

This episode of the series has no big developments, merely progress. I suppose that's something. There is always the prospect of Party of Postponement Syndrome, or we defeated this bunch, but a bigger bunch that hadn't heretofore wanted to get involved is going to turn up for the next volume. (This was what ruined Forstchen's *Lost Regiment* books; the series foundered after the shift to RoC.)

There have been complaints about the writing style but I suppose some people are more interested in content than in presentation. Whatever, there will be more and one hopes it's something of a solution when this saga of paratime travel is . . . [To Be Continued]

**MAD ADM**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**EAST WIND RETURNS**  
 by William Peter Grasso  
 (CreateSpace; 2011;  
 ISBN 978-1461147268; \$12.95;  
 Amazon Digital Services [Kindle]; \$0.99)

In 1985, Robert K. Wilcox published *Japan's Secret War: Japan's Race Against Time to Build Its Own Atomic Bomb*. Beginning with a report from *Atlanta Constitution* correspondent David Snell, who published a story there in 1946 claiming that the Japanese had tested a atomic bomb near Konan (i.e. Hungnam) in their colony of Choson (i.e., Korea), Wilcox depicted a desperate effort that succeeded just too late for its builders.

That book is one of the more notable flights of fantasy of the war, somewhere between Operation SEELÖWE and the Pearl Harbor Conspiracy. Apparently Wilcox never bothered to get his science straight, and the Japanese nuclear weapons project was aiming at a target date of 1955; it was pathetically underfunded, ill-equipped, and short of resources.

Which is a bit of a handicap to this story, which begins with the said success — following a failure of the TRINITY test, not to mention an unexpected fire at Los Alamos which destroyed the uranium plant. (Maybe they'll call back the contractor Russell McNutt to rebuild the place — you know, the mysterious agent PERSIAN.) This puts the Japanese a bit closer to the status of Mutual Assured Destruction, or “MAD”.

Flushed with success, the Japanese now have the problem of a delivery vehicle. They could take it by submarine to some American port and detonate it there, but it seems unlikely the boat could make such a voyage. (See the climax of Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!* (1954) where the USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) is turned into such a device.)

However, they know the Americans are coming. Therefore, their second device is transported to a location near the beaches of Kyushu, where it will be set off once the invaders are ashore; what we now call Atomic Demolition Munitions, or “ADM”. The shock and awe of this destruction will bring the Yankees to the peace table and if not, well won't it be wonderful to have the nation destroyed like a beautiful flower?

The main story follows the efforts of

reconnaissance pilot John Worth as he flies over Japan in the American effort to find out what the enemy is doing. Here is Grasso's strength, as he has a deep and devoted knowledge of WWII aviation. You've probably never heard of the F-5, and you're probably thinking of the wrong F-5 if you have. This F-5 is the photorecon version of the Lockheed P-38 Lightning, the twin-boom two-engined long-range fighter. The author depicts quite strikingly the difficulties of such flight with the familiarity of one comfortable with that era of aviation. And Worth's plane is very appropriately named "*f-stop*".

Similarly, Grasso has a deep awareness of the inconvenience and "friction" of military affairs (not counting the one Worth has with a nurse), from lost orders to malfunctioning equipment to incompetent pilots with political influence and arrogance to boot.

In matters both in the field and higher up, there is a repeated effort for political spin. Cynically but realistically, one can see that such matters are possible, and indeed the double dealings involved add a striking note of all too grim and dirty realism to the plot.

One problem is the repeated comment that "there were only American airplanes in the air". I'm sure that Bernard Rawlings, Philip Vian, and the other crew and commanders of such vessels as USS *Robin* — that is HMS *Victorious* and her cohorts, pilots, and crew of the British Pacific Force, Task Group 38.7/58.7, might say otherwise.

The romance might be a little too pat. And similarly for the climax, where Worth, grounded by a damaged plane, carries out a daring special warfare assault to disarm the Japanese bomb . . . on the other hand, the covering-over of his derring-do and the undeserved honor awarded the arrogant pilot with political influence sound so very familiar to the experienced.

There is a tense problem, but I seem to recall that often flying stories have flying scenes in present tense, or otherwise shift to show the concentration and intensity that flying requires. It is offputting.

In spite of these, *East Wind Returns* is entertaining, absorbing, and an interesting look into the results of "what if the Japanese *did* get The Bomb"?

### HASTA LUEGO, CAIMÁN

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### CASTRO'S BOMB

by Robert Conroy

(Amazon Digital Services; 2011; \$6.75)

In *See You Later Alligator* (1985), William F. Buckley Jr.'s redoubtable secret agent Blackford Oakes is dispatched to revolutionary Cuba to work out some sort of deal. His code name for this operation is CAIMÁN, and he ends up being amused when various revolutionary compañeros up to Dr. Ernesto "Che" Guevara himself see him off with "*¡Hasta luego, Caimán!*"

Jack Kennedy could well use Blackie Oakes in this story. The Maximo Líder and his

compañero Che have decided that they need to play Civilization I. Or perhaps just the part that says "*¡Nuestras palabras se sostienen por las ARMAS NUCLEARES!*" That is, the Cubans have stolen four tactical nuclear rocket launchers from their Soviet guests.

Guantanamo, not quite yet invaded by illegal combatants, is going to be invaded by legal ones. At Christmas 1962, no less.

The scene switches between the ordinary people caught in the maw of war and the leaders responsible for running it. Conroy displays an understanding of the multiple demands on the political leadership, as JFK finds himself denounced by Barry Goldwater, disrespected by Curtis LeMay, and not quite supported by Lyndon Johnson. And then there are the Cuban exiles, with their "Bay of Pigs II — This Time It's Personal!" By comparison, the Soviets are models of cooperation.

Meanwhile, a medley of Americans are trapped behind enemy lines, escaping the invasion or being dropped in a spectacularly improvised and bungled rescue op. Here are the little people suffering the horrors of war, and Conroy makes sure the reader is presented with the prices and pains thereof.

While the prisoners conduct a regular Stalag XIII operation, able to bribe their way in and out of an improvised Cuban prison camp (and in the Conroy cliché, pretend to be Cubans — a little more plausible here since there actually are Cuban-Americans involved). In fact, they pull off a stunt that Colonel Hogan and the guys never even dared to try.

Not to mention the charming habits of the press, the leakers, and the independent activists. At least there weren't prominent artistic figures flying to Havana to show solidarity, or sit in possible invasion zones.

Ah yes, the invasion. Made necessary by Cuban aggression against the US, but worrisome by the presence of those nuclear warheads, under the control of a somewhat less genial Che. Which have an unusual additional searcher trying to get them. Or perhaps should I say, get them **back** . . .

I had thought the references to SEALs were an error, but the Sea-Air-Land Teams had just been created and were already operational in Vietnam then. That neither them nor the Special Forces can be of that much help demonstrates how such organizations, though useful, are not miracle workers. Now if they had only dropped in Blackford Oakes (how the CIA manage to hoax the leaker is a hoot).

Conroy has gone with the Kindle. I note that so far this book isn't listed on Uchronia, and indeed I only found it while looking at the listing for his other new work, *Himmler's War* (Baen, 2011 — also available for e-readers, if you have a Baen Free Library subscription).

### FOX ON THE RHINE

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### HIMMLER'S WAR

by Robert Conroy

(Baen; 2011; ISBN 978-1541637618; \$25)

Like so many fantasy books these days the alternate history novels *Fox on the Rhine* (2000, 2002) and its sequel *Fox at the Front* (2003) are novelizations of a wargame. The authors have a somewhat muddled idea of how the German *Widerstand* worked, too. Some of the other things they have Himmler doing when he ascends to power after the assassination of the Führer are somewhat odd.

Which doesn't mean the basic concept is unworkable, and it can be approached differently. Conroy deserves credit for the innovative approach he takes here. A B-17 falls out of formation over Germany, is attacked, and has to jettison its bombs. One of them lands in just the right place . . .

Delivering the Reich into the hands of Himmler (the alternative had some substance-abuse issues) leads to problems. He may not have the time right now to send out the *Ahnenerbe* to hunt down Indiana Jones, but he does have some reasonable ideas, such as dumping the phony-noble champagne salesman in favor of a real aristocrat diplomat. Or putting the armed forces into the hands of someone who knows his *Arsch* from a hole in the ground.

The subsequent deal for a *Unbeschreibliche Militärische Anordnung* ["unspeakable military arrangement"]; I sincerely doubt that "armistice" [*Waffenstillstand*] was a word any German could bring himself to use] with the Soviets may have a bit of a shortfall. Soviet tanks had a brief service life, in keeping with their method of employment, and the Germans may have just taken over 2000 clunkers (Soviet T-34s, and of the older designs at that) from the back lot of Uncle Joe's Finest Used AFV's.

Meanwhile, in spite of everything, the Allies are under strain. Conroy seems to be exaggerating British war-weariness here, as he did in *Red Inferno: 1945* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 9 #2 and V. 10 #4). The Germans, under no constraint to stand fast in France, are falling back, without any Mortain or other last-minute useless counteroffensive, to the Reich itself, behind the great barrier of the Rhine, where they can rebuild and wait for Der Tag.

Now sheltered behind the great river in the west, and the good will of Comrade Stalin in the East, Himmler begins to bring a project to completion. Not the dire forces of the World Ice, or the Ancient Aryan Knowledge that someone who knew of the *Ahnenerbe* would consider more his speed, but a project that was indeed very much feared. And a delivery system somewhat reminiscent of Turtledove's *Settling Accounts: In at the Death* (2007) to boot, one that seems to head off a future war.

In addition, there are the "little people", including an OKW staff officer's family which finds mutiny in the work force, a grounded pilot who learns tank warfare, a Para trapped behind the lines with two different sorts of escapees, and others, some of whom have very brief roles.

Not to worry, the favorite warrior of the era, at least in AH venues, appears, and indeed Otto Skorzeny seems to be both ubiquitous and efficient. I wish some of these people would discover Robert Frederick, Bill Darby, Aaron

Bank, Popski Peniakoff, Paddy Mayne, and the like from our side.

There are a number of small errors. George Marshall was Army chief of staff, not Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. There were two British parachute divisions, 1st and 6th. And there was sufficient Royal Navy transport in the Channel to take off any trapped units.

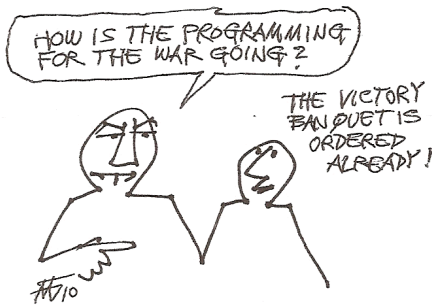
### KOSTA

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**WOLF HUNT**

(*The Burning Ages*)

by Sebastian P. Breit

(2011; Amazon Digital Services; \$3.99)



The literary perspective of the sociopath is of an highly intelligent, powerfully focused individual who carries out deeds without the restraint of scruple, and so can clearly outdo the morally-constrained other characters, until some random shot from the lone scorned hero brings him down. Being brilliant and charismatic, he not only is able to carry out his misdeeds without opposition from others, he attracts a band of loyal followers who share trust.

Kosta Fotopoulos of Daytona Beach, Florida, would have believed this if he had been told such. He certainly believed himself the modern-day Stainless Steel Rat and Dexter combined. His most brilliant concept was the formation of the Hunter-Killer Club, a crack team of assassins-for-hire, available to governments and private individuals alike.

Unlike James DiGriz and Dexter Morgan, he is on Death Row in Florida. Not wanting to go through the formalities of a divorce, he had one of his subordinates break into his house and shoot his wife, whereupon he proceeded to kill the man. Such loyalty to underlings he had.

When the connection came out, another item that came to light was Kosta's brilliant scheme for ensuring loyalty among the Hunter-Killer Club; each member would have to commit a murder, record it on video tape (this was a few years ago), and give the recording to another member, to be used against the person in question should he betray the organization. Being a leader, he did that himself, to another of his subordinates.

Granted, the band of crack professional assassins were no more than the usual sort of drifters, hangers-on, slackers, and idlers who concentrate where unfocused excitement is.

Also such inducements as Deirdre Hunt, Kosta's mistress, who in spite of his guarantee that he would kill her if she took any other lovers, had a number. As in so many cases, real life fails to live up to the standards of literature.

One of the almost necessary characters, it seems, of time-travel fiction is the sociopath, the brilliant ruthless leader with loyal subordinates. In real life, to take the founding example, the character in question would have either founded the USCGS *Eagle* in mid ocean for lack of navigational skills, or should he have been so lucky as to get to Mykenai, had a life-changing encounter between his head and a copper ax. (Of course, the people he left behind would have starved to death after their fifth plebiscite over whether or not to violate the harmony with nature that the mainlanders so obviously had; the people of that place are *not* the sort who make the serfs pull on their boots, kick them in the teeth, and have the serfs cringingly thank the master for the personal attention that the author of that book would have them be.)

None of which has to do with the NATO task force that is being sent to restore order in Brazil in 2024. The world economy has been in the dumps for the past few years, and it's only getting worse.

Particularly when the force of German, American, and British ships sails into a time storm (Did any of these guys have a great-grandfather on USS *Walker*?) and they find themselves in 1940.

Florian Hallwinter, the German commander has a great idea. "Hey, let's go to Norway and help the *Widerstand* stop Hitler." His American counterpart Steven Flynn thinks that's a bad idea, and the two advanced forces proceed to have a brief but bloody fight.

While the German survivors proceed to Norway, capturing and sinking along the way, the American survivors make their way to the Canaries, where they get abused by the locals, repatriated to the States, and abused by the U.S. government. This is more "The Man Who Came Early" than *Lest Darkness Fall*. In fact, Breit makes it clear what his model is with a reference to "Admiral Birmingham" in 2024, and the presentation of past-timers as being repulsive is straight out of John Birmingham's similar series.

The German commander has a little more luck, and manages to pull off his little score quite nicely. But then, in the end, we see he has a brilliant sociable sociopath in his ranks . . .

Some of the scenes could have done with a little more second-reading, as when Breit has a Vice-Admiral commanding a cruiser squadron (and of one cruiser, at that). Similarly, Breit has a habit of stereotyped descriptions, and of using almost the right word.

When he has a Jewish officer on one of the German ships, Breit does have the others having some qualms, because of the many fine Jewish sailors who served Germany except during those times. However, Jews did not serve in the High Seas Fleet because you understand it would be inconvenient to provide a kosher diet. It was a matter of consideration. **Right!!!**

(Ironically, it now appears that not only Bernhard Rogge, captain of the Hilfskreuzer *Atlantis*, but also Admiral Günther Lütjens was a *Mischlinge* of the Second Class (one Jewish grandparent), which perhaps makes comprehensible Lütjens's signing the petition protesting the dismissal of Jewish sailors from the *Reichsmarine*. So much for the bombastic "Remember you are Nazis!!!" speech of *Sink the Bismarck!*. Oy.)

Breit follows the technothriller style of describing in detail the intricate weapons technology employed. It is fair to add that he shows an understanding of mere shipbuilding, or how to patch up a battered vessel. Captain Hallwinter comes across as a remarkably fixated and hairtrigger sort.

A sequel, *Clash of Eagles*, is in the works.

### ALZHEIMER'S AND THE SENATOR

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE LAST MOONWALKER**

and Other Stories

by Mark R. Whittington

(2009; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)

In Sir Arthur C. Clarke's "Death and the Senator" (*Analog*, May 1961) an opponent of space travel is faced with the problem of mortality, and with the restraints of its alleviation. He must come to the realization that some ideas have consequences.

**The Last Moonwalker:** Some forty years after the last moon landing, the last of the moonwalkers is brought into the loop for the new moon program. Some things never change, and we see the stresses of family life, the wonder of discovery, and the simple pleasure of seeing prospects. Not to mention the satisfying humiliation of a Moon Hoaxer. In the relationship of the moonwalker and his granddaughter we discover a world made new again. (2009)

**"The First Woman on the Moon"** This is a sequel to Whittington's *Children of Apollo* (2001; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #1). Or perhaps an "illumination"; the life story of Dr. Wendy Pendleton, the erste Frau im Mond (and I'm disappointed that Whittington didn't mention that film). The story paints an unsparing picture of determination and incredulous discrimination, of an individual with a dream and a goal. (2007)

**"Two Old Men"** This other work in the universe of *Children of Apollo* might well have been called "Alzheimer's and the Senator", though it has a happier ending. The rivals of the 1976 presidential campaign meet to learn they both have the same problem, and the one who opposed the means for the alleviation of it has to consider whether he, like Clarke's Senator Steelman, has forfeited his right to the treatment. (2008)

**"Dark Sanction"** These vampires don't sparkle and they aren't emos. They do have vampire hunters on their trail, and being a



vampire hunter in the Gestapo gives one interesting leisure and scope. No Frau Buffy here! Indeed, the fate of the fearless vampire hunter . . . well it's not enviable, and indeed the subtitle of that movie may give away the punch line. It is possible to live for centuries without becoming a letter-writing ninny. (2009)

**"Hurtgen Moon"** In which the grim campaign of the late fall of 1944 turns out to be even grimmer. Something attacked a squad of the US 9th Infantry Division, something from legend and fear. To which experts from the Great North have their own answer; if only the experts don't have their own issues. In this story Whittington finds himself, with a melancholy but not tragic resolution. (2008)

**"Witness to Apollo"** An observer of the Apollo Eleven landing shows that in spite of everything there is hope, and curiosity. (2009)

It's worth noting, in the petty end of things, that this book is properly proofread. Since there are no Russians mentioned, the badly mangled Russian names of *Children of Apollo* are avoided, much to the relief of those who know.

Note:

*Frau Im Mond*  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019901/>

### MY ATTAINMENT OF THE TEA

Review by Joseph T Major of

**THREE CUPS OF DECEIT:**

**How Greg Mortenson, Humanitarian Hero,  
Lost His Way**

by Jon Krakauer

(2011; Anchor Books (Random House);

ISBN 879-0-307-94876-2: \$9.95;

Amazon Digital Services; \$2.34)

"My collection of M's is a fine one," said he. "Moriarty himself is enough to make any letter illustrious, and here is Morgan the poisoner, and Merridew of abominable memory, and Mathews, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing Cross, and, finally, here is our friend of to-night."

He handed over the book, and I read: "MORAN, SEBASTIAN, COLONEL. Unemployed. Formerly 1st Bangalore Pioneers. Born London, 1840. Son of Sir Augustus Moran, C.B., once British Minister to Persia. Educated Eton and Oxford. Served in Jowaki Campaign, Afghan Campaign, Charasiab (despatches), Sherpur, and Cabul. Author of 'Heavy Game of the Western Himalayas,' 1881; 'Three Months in the Jungle,' 1884. Address: Conduit Street. Clubs: The Anglo-Indian, the Tankerville, the Bagatelle Card Club."

On the margin was written, in Holmes's precise hand: "The second most dangerous man in London."

"This is astonishing," said I, as I handed back the volume. "The man's

career is that of an honourable soldier."

"It is true," Holmes answered. "Up to a certain point he did well. He was always a man of iron nerve, and the story is still told in India how he crawled down a drain after a wounded man-eating tiger. There are some trees, Watson, which grow to a certain height and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity. You will see it often in humans. I have a theory that the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors, and that such a sudden turn to good or evil stands for some strong influence which came into the line of his pedigree. The person becomes, as it were, the epitome of the history of his own family."

— "The Adventure of the Empty House"

When he returned from the famous and dolorous *Belgica* Expedition in 1899, Dr. Frederick A. Cook had gained a reputation among the foremost in such explorations. He had distinguished himself in three expeditions, and in this one in particular. While the *Belgica* was frozen in, and the Antarctic winter was long and harsh, many of the men had begun to slowly go mad. Many of them, and some of the sane ones too, began showing the obvious signs of scurvy.

Cook applied his experience to the cause. In particular, he made a scientific conclusion. The Eskimos of his experience ate fresh meat. They did not go mad so; they did not suffer from scurvy. Therefore, if the men of de Gerlache's expedition ate fresh meat, which they weren't doing, they would recover. With the help of fellow explorer Roald Amundsen, he got the others to eat fresh penguin and seal meat. Lo and behold, the expedition was saved and Dr. Cook was the hero.

Greg Mortenson took a wrong turn coming back from K2. As a result, he saw a social problem, every bit as bad in its context as the physical problems the men of de Gerlache's *Belgica* Expedition suffered from was to them; a social deficiency disease as it were. He applied his version of fresh meat.

The villagers of the mountainous wilds of the border country of Pakistan and Afghanistan were unschooled. That is, they had no schools available. Back in America there was money. They could come together, if someone willing, understanding, charismatic, and hardworking would do so. Greg would try, though he did not know the way.

But all things come to him who waits, and he found a benefactor. From that, there came the Central Asia Institute, a charity dedicated to building schools in those lands. When initial efforts ran out, Greg determined to recount his own ventures in that field, and as a result, the long-running best-seller *Three Cups of Tea* (2006, 2007, 2008) came out.

From there Mortenson went from triumph to triumph, building hundreds of schools in the uplands of the Northwest Frontier, bringing

education to those who longed to have it. His speeches and lectures have moved millions of hearts and minds; his books, *Three Cups of Tea* and its follow-up *Stones into Schools* (2010) have moved and energized even more.

One of the great men of mountaineering is Dr. Thomas "Tom" Hornbein. On that glorious day, May 22, 1963, Hornbein climbed Mount Everest by the untouched West Ridge, coming down with the rest of the U.S. Everest Expedition party that had to spend that terrible night on the ridge, unprotected. Hornbein seems to have been the only one of the four trapped men not to be frostbitten.

In 1999 he accepted, a position in the board of CAI. Three years later, Hornbein quit, with some profound misgivings. Why?

Mortenson had what might be called a casual relationship with time. He could not be depended on to keep an appointment, which is bad enough in a business environment, but in climbing could be fatal.

Then it became clear he also had a casual relationship with financial matters. He kept no financial records, spending money with no responsibility.

Krakauer had been donating money to CAI; about the time Hornbein and some others resigned, he asked for some more secure controls. This doesn't seem to have made much of an impression on Mortenson.

The picture presented here is not a very engaging one. CAI pays all the expenses of Mortenson's promotional tours; he keeps half the royalties from *Three Cups of Tea* (the other half go to his collaborator) and all those of *Stones into Schools*. Krakauer wonders why instead of buying copies at an author's discount from the publisher, he buys copies from bookstores to sell at the lectures, but that keeps the book on the bestseller list, gaining publicity for the cause.

Beyond that, the *effort* of CAI is mixed. Far too many of the schools they have built are "ghost schools"; no teachers or students, used as anything but school buildings. Still, some are used for that cause, and that's better than nothing.

And then, it turns out that so many of Mortenson's moving stories of his experiences in Central Asia are fabricated, expanded-on, or contrived. Some of the people he met were profoundly displeased with Mortenson's picture of them and of his experiences with them.

Not to mention his proof of the sanctity of the Blessed Agnes Gongxha Bojaxhiu, (Hon.) O.M. Mortenson described how, in September of 2000, he had visited her chapter house in Calcutta, seen her body laid out for burial, and movingly made his farewells to her. Since Mother Teresa (as she is better known) had died September 5, 1997, either her body was indeed incorruptible, Mortenson got the date wrong . . . or he's making up the story.

Mortenson seems to have a casual relationship with figures; dates, finances, that sort of thing. He may just be someone who

never lets truth stand in the way of a good story. It may not be possible to build schools in the wilds of Afghanistan and Pakistan without some waste. He says that his dealings with Krakauer were brief and uncollegial.

In *Scientists and Scoundrels* (1965), Robert Silverberg said:

... Perhaps something happened to Cook's mind during the dark, terrible winter he spent in the Antarctic aboard the *Belgica* in 1898-99. Until then, he seems to have been a thoroughly admirable character; after his return from Antarctica, we find him stealing dictionaries, lying about Mount McKinley, and finally inventing his conquest of the North Pole.

— *Scientists and Scoundrels*, Pages 139-140

Certainly, like Colonel Moran, up to a certain point he had done well, but then he had developed a certain unsightly eccentricity. After that, after all his many exploits, he had begun to act as if a thing were true merely because he had said it; that he was a man of such probity and presence that his unsupported word was proof. The Dictionary of the Yahgan Language, compiled by the missionary the Rev. Thomas Bridges, was presented for publication as by "Frederick A. Cook, Doctor of Anthropology". The Petroleum Producers' Association rested the proof of its reserves on the confirmation of its chief geologist, Dr. Frederick A. Cook, Explorer. Cook was a physician, without training in anthropology or geology. But he said it, so it was true.

Greg Mortenson has not climbed Mount McKinley or gone to the North Pole. He too gave his word about his exploits in Central Asia. Have people who want to help the less fortunate had Mortenson sell them a gold brick?



### SING OF JOHN, SING OF JOHN

Commentary by Joseph T Major on  
**FANTASY COMMENTATOR #59-60**  
*The Sam Moskowitz and A. Langley Searles Memorial Issue*  
 (Lulu.com; 2011; \$9.60)

What disgusts me is that while this history of a profoundly important figure in the field, composed by another profoundly important contributor, and published in honor of a third

fannish writer of some significance, should win the Best Related Hugo, it will probably be ignored while *Chicks Dig Sparkly Emo Vampires: A Celebration of Twilight by the Women Who Love It* will get a rocket.

It's been said that there is no need for a biography of John W. Campbell, Jr., since it's all in his letters. This seems a rather superficial comment. It is true that he did write.

Many of his letters were published in Perry D. Chapdelaine's two collections. But not all; and beyond that some sort of contextualization would be desirable.

One of Campbell's correspondents was Robert D. Swisher, a chemist who lived in the Boston area. Campbell wrote him at length, primarily about their shared interest in photography. However, personal incidents and work life did feature in his letters.

After Campbell died, Swisher sent the letters to his widow Peg. She eventually sent them to Chapdelaine, who in turn passed them on to Sam Moskowitz. And this is a simple recounting, with background supplied by Moskowitz, of this correspondence.

As Campbell progresses from author to editor, he describes the laborious process of actually selling a story; editorial requirements, and the sheer marginality of his existence. Even in the fifties, H. Beam Piper lived on a very small income (see *H. Beam Piper: A Biography* (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #6) for the grim details) and when Campbell brags to Swisher that he received a raise to \$50 a week, it shows. [Of course, in today's prices that's \$810/week.] Small wonder that he continually writes on outside projects.

As he moves up, he describes the process from the other side, the cultivation of authors and their lives. This means perspectives of the more important SF people he dealt with. Oddly enough, Asimov is hardly mentioned at all.

Not surprisingly, there is some discussion of the one guy who went off on his own tangent. At first, Campbell takes Elron at his own word, but after the war and after the experiment with a science of modern mental health, he seems to have realized that while there might have been some good ideas there, the man was a habitual prevaricator. (Note: the Operation Clambake website (<http://www.xenu.net/>) has the Freedom of Information Act release of Elron's navy record, which is rather at variance with, for example, the story given on being wounded in the Battle of the Java Sea.)

Naturally, the letters tail off in the late forties, so there's nothing about, for example, the effort to create the November 1948 "trick issue". Earlier references describe the writing of "All", the precursor of Heinlein's *Sixth Column* (*Astounding* January-March 1941; 1949; NHOL G.022) — and of some other works, including one that hadn't been mentioned beforehand. Since Campbell pitched the idea to Heinlein at a time when the Heinleins were living with the Campbells, the comment about "describing it over the telephone" seems to have been from the blurring of memory.

This is hardly complete, either as to span or

as to perspective. Beforehand there was little enough, and Moskowitz provided a useful, if personal, context. The scene in the introduction where he describes his regular trips to New York with Campbell, going in to work, is an interesting example of what more could be said. It is unfortunate that there could not be more, but this is a period of SF history that needs to be recounted while some still remember it.

Not that anyone will care, since *Chicks Dig Corsets and Goggles: A Celebration of Girl Genius by the Women Who Love It* will have a better chance for recognition and acceptance.

### MONEY IS REDY

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### WE IS GOT HIM:

*The Kidnapping That Changed America*

by Carrie Hagen

(Overlook; 2011;

ISBN 978-1590200865; \$27.95)

One of the many terrors of modern-day child raising is the specter of Stranger Abduction. The thought of the Precious Indigo Only Child being snatched by some drifter and taken off to be the wuv object of some pervert, or sacrificed by a Satanic Ritual Cult, has electrified and intimidated BOBO parents. Now, the Precious Indigo Only Child is overseen 24/7, forbidden to go outside without three remote monitors, a cell phone, and a Responsible Adult Supervisor closely observing every moment.

Very real parents have faced legal penalties for permitting their children to go to the other end of the block alone. It's endangerment, leaving the dear precious child open to the possibility of being snatched by some stranger. Yet, the vast majority of child kidnappings have been by the non-custodial parent.

In the sunny days of July, 1874, in the Germantown district of Philadelphia, such prospects and means were vaporings beyond even the extraordinary voyages of imagination of M. Verne or the romantic extravagances of the late Mr. Poe. Charlie Brewster Ross, age four, saw nothing out of the extraordinary when two kind gentlemen offered to take him and his brother to a store to buy firecrackers for their Fourth of July celebration.

When his brother came out of the store with the firecrackers, and found them gone, the trouble began.

It's commonplace to imagine the nineteenth century as some paradise of serenity. Or, contrawise, as a gehenna of oppression. Not quite. The Ross family had suffered financial ups and downs, and now had reached some sort of stability. And now this.

Over the next five months, the family had to deal with the early version of the celebrity culture, as aid and calumny poured in from across the country. Meanwhile, the authorities posed and postured. And then there were the ransom letters.

The problem of kidnapping is that it has to be an almost perfect crime; the offenders must get away without detection, yet must make contact with the victims. Hence the transfer of money is the most hazardous. (Not to mention

that the abductee will presumably be able to identify the criminals.)

So, Charley's father Christian Ross had to endure intermittent letters and reply to them with brief notes in the personals column of the newspaper. Not to mention constant advice from third parties.

The tone of the letters is revealing. The writer boasts that Charley Ross is beyond the reach of the authorities, yet will be restored to his parents within hours of the payment of a ransom. Indeed, the writer implies that this is the first effort at a career of kidnapping.

The only time Christian Ross tried to make a ransom drop, the signal described by the writers was not forthcoming. The next letter contained the lame excuse that the kidnappers had heard Mr. Ross had left town.

All this stalling and equivocation would tend to indicate that Charley was dead. Yet a subsequent note contained a quite explicit reference to a medical problem of his.

Then, in December, two burglars attempted to rob a house on Long Island, and were shot in the process. The one who lived a few minutes confessed to the crime and said that the dead man had been the one who knew where Charley Ross was. Which left the Ross family and the police at something of a dead end. At least they weren't accused of being the kidnappers themselves.

There was no closure for the Ross family. Various people emerged claiming to be Charley Ross; one even persuaded a New Mexico court that he was. But none was, and no trace of Charley Ross was ever found.

Kidnapping as a hazard of life is not uncommon in some cultures; one even hears of Filipino mobs informing their victims in advance, so that they can arrange for ransoms. But this may be urban legend. In the drug world, such measures are more common.

Sometimes these leak over. Kim Antonakos of New York liked to go clubbing where the bad boys were. One of them noticed and decided that he really could use a new Lexus, and her rich father would pay enough for him to get one.

After the snatch, he carefully delivered his ransom demand, making a call on a cell phone and spewing out the details. To the message on her father's answering machine; he didn't even listen as he spoke.

When Mr. Antonakos didn't reply to dead air, the "mastermind" had his boys get rid of their victim. She was already dying from being tied up in the unheated basement of the empty house, but not bothering to make themselves aware of her condition, they set fire to the place and killed her. (See *Burned Alive* by Kieran Crowley (1999) for the story.)

Charley Ross's abductors may not have been quite as incompetent as Kim Antonakos's, but their general disorganization and desperation is about the same. And similarly, the high self-esteem and elevated self-image they possessed.

On October 28 we went to see My Old Kentucky Home in Bardstown. It was

unfortunately too late in the year to see the play but we did have a nice tour of the mansion itself. Even better though were the museums in Bardstown. There was a natural history museum, a civil war museum, women's history, military history and Bardstown village. All the museums were well worth seeing and more entertaining than the mansion. Next day we went to the Horse Park, fun as always.

– Lisa

## EXTERMINATOR

by Lisa

One of the most improbable Derby stories has to be that of a big coarse colt foaled in 1915. He was given the name Exterminator in hopes he would exterminate his competition. In 1916 he was sold to a man named Cal Milam who nominated him to the Kentucky Derby. Also at the same sale, another man, Willis Kilmer, bought a fancy imported horse named Sun Briar with the intention of racing him in the Derby. Kilmer's trainer recommended a horse to help Sun Briar train for the Derby. McDaniel chose Exterminator. Kilmer did not think much of Exterminator but the big coarse colt proved able to keep up with Sun Briar in workouts. Shortly before the Derby Sun Briar came up sick. Kilmer would have canceled his Derby plans that year except that Churchill Downs legend Matt Winn counseled going with Exterminator instead. Exterminator overcame a muddy track to carry Kilmer's colors to Derby history. He would go on to win 50 out of 99 starts and become an American legend.

There was discussion of a match race between Exterminator and Man o'War but nothing came of the talk.

Exterminator raced until he was nine and spent 21 years in retirement until his heart gave out in 1945. He is buried in a pet cemetery in Binghamton, New York.

## AN ANKH-MORPORK COPPER'S LIFE ON THE QUIRE SNUFF

by Sir Terry Pratchett  
(*Discworld* Series #39)

(HarperCollins; Oct 2011; HC, 416 pp; ISBN:  
0062011847; \$25.99)

Review by Grant C. McCormick

Poor Sam Vimes . . . He loves his wife, the Lady Sybil Ramkin, with all his heart and all of his soul. She has given him **Everything**: the true love of a truly good woman, a family, wealth beyond count and measure, respect and prestige in the present, and hope for the future. And because of this, there is *very* little he can refuse her — such as a two-week vacation at the Ramkin estate in the country, The Crundells.

Located near the River Quire, which enters the Circle Sea at Quirm, a day or so by coach from Ankh-Morpork, near the edge of the Otarine Grass Country, The Crundells epitomizes the perfect example of the Privileged Class's Bucolic Getaway. In short, if there is a place on the Disc where the egalitarian and

populistic Sam Vimes would least like to be, it's there. Where he *doesn't* know his environment better than the back of his own hand. Where some of the locals see him as a High-Rank Nob, and others as the Master. For a solid sixtnight (weeks in the Ankh-Morpork calendar have eight days each).

But Sam is the Copper's Copper. As the Commander of the Ankh-Morpork City Watch himself has put it, 'Where there are Police, there is Crime.' With his trusty Man, Willikins, Commander Vimes discovers that all is not as it seems around his home away from home. Someone tries to frame Vimes for the disappearance of a local rabble-rouser and troublemaker, and it looks like someone or someones may have been murdered. Meeting a diverse and eccentric collection of the locals, from a writer (a veritable Bard!) whose works enthrall Young Sam (now 6) from top to bottom; to the local constable (who has almost as much actual experience as Young Sam); to a family of river-folk who are not at all inclined to listen to a landlubber. And all through this, he encounters Goblins. Legally vermin, masters of survival, and considered by almost all the disc to have no redeeming features whatsoever.

It strongly helps if you have read the previous *Discworld* novels, particularly those involving the City Watch (in chronological order, *Guards! Guards!*, *Men at Arms*, *Feet of Clay*, *Jingo!*, *The Fifth Elephant*, *Night Watch*, and *Thud!*). Most of the watchmen whom you have grown to know and love play important roles in *Snuff*, such as Sgt. Colon (whose fondness for cigars leads him to a problem with the bottle that he just cannot shake), Captain Carrot and Angua (keeping an eye on Ankh-Morpork while the Commander is away), Wee Mad Arthur (who plays a *very* big part in *Snuff*), and the rest of the crew (Nobby Nobbs [of course!], Cheery Littlebottom, Detritus, and [one of the newer additions] A. E. Pessimial). Many of our other acquaintances from previous books are there, as well, particularly the Patrician.

But Samuel Vimes and the Lady Sybil are the two most important members of the cast, and in *Snuff* you truly see why Vimes's rise to greatness began with his marriage to her. Her wealth was significant, but the Lady herself is the reason. In *Snuff*, you see how she and Vimes are each the perfect complement for the other.

On aspect of this book is that a significant portion of it is set on the River Quire, Old Treachery, so named because of its unpredictable and dangerous behavior. Vimes's time in the riverboats on the Quire gives parts of this book a distinctly Twainian feel. Before it ends, you will see if Old Treachery lives up to its name.

A mystery that revolves around tobacco products (including, yes, snuff) might not be politically correct these days, but Sir Terry has never been a man who lets political correctness rule him. But then, neither does Sir Samuel Vimes.

Most highly recommended.



## THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

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

### Faster Than a Speeding Bullet

In many ways, the history of speed is the history of human technological development. While this article will mention aspects of the overall history of speed, there is one class of object which will be focused on. That's because this class of object has such a long history of being pushed faster and faster that it has become synonymous with speed.

Bullets long predate firearms. Cast lead sling bullets go back well over two thousand years. There are cast 4th Century BC sling bullets with a winged thunderbolt imprinted on one side and "Take that" in Greek on the other. (Additional mottos found on ancient sling bullets were "Ouch," "For Pompey's backside" and even dexta (Catch!).) Lead is denser than rocks, giving more punch on impact, and lead bullets cast in a mold were consistent in weight, and therefore behavior in flight. However, there was a huge variation in both slings and bullets used by different slingers. Some of the latter were more than half a kilogram. (Forget about slinging it, just dropping it on someone could kill them!)

Maximum velocity of a bullet or stone from a sling is under a hundred meters per second, likely well under. Many learned modern texts claim velocities of around 30 m/s initial velocity, but this contradicts both ancient accounts of range and effect and modern tests. These latter agree that a good slinger is capable of more than twice that speed. (Arrows from a powerful bow can slightly exceed 100 m/s. I believe the modern record is nearly twice that, using specialized equipment. However, arrows have more aerodynamic drag and slow more quickly than sling bullets.) Even with the mechanical advantage of the longer radius of throw offered by a sling, the human arm just couldn't manage anything much faster. There were other ways to launch bullets, some of which combined sling pouch and bow. None were much of an improvement, at least in terms of velocity. However, that changed with the adoption of firearms.

It needs to be noted that before the age of modern science, measuring the speed of fast-moving, small, flying objects was pretty much impossible. There were wild speculations on how fast sling bullets went. Some accounts claimed they became white hot from air friction! (The practice by some armies of heating clay sling bullets before launching them to hopefully start fires among the enemy may be the root of this myth.) Firearms only made things worse.

The first really good method to determine bullet velocity appeared in a book published in 1742, called *New Principles of Gunnery*. It was written by Benjamin Robins, an English mathematician with an interest in ballistics. This was a very influential book, among other things

introducing military men to Newtonian physics.

For his work, Robins invented the ballistic pendulum. His first version was a heavy iron weight with a wooden board covering its face. The bullet was fired into the pendulum weight and was embedded in the wooden board, transferring all momentum in an inelastic collision. This caused the pendulum to swing along a curved scale. Measuring the swing and doing some math gave the velocity of the bullet.

Robins' initial velocity measurements were so much higher than expected that he wasn't certain he believed them. He reviewed his procedures and his equipment and repeated the experiment. The velocities remained high.

That was not the only astounding discovery (for the time) made by Robins. He determined that the air drag force on a bullet was many times more powerful than the force due to gravity, and that it rose sharply with increased velocity, which upset many preconceptions. Robins' book started a chain of firing tests, instrumentation developments, and so on. It also contributed to the development of artillery towards the end of the 18th century and was responsible for introducing calculus to the syllabus of many military academies. In fact, Benjamin Robins is considered one of the founders of modern aerodynamics and the father of modern gunnery. Before this book appeared, gunnery was simply a matter of guesswork, though it was often educated guesswork. After this book was published, gunnery became an exact science. The work was so influential that the famous Swiss mathematician and physicist, Leonhard Euler, himself translated this book into German.

The ballistic pendulum worked and was fairly accurate, but there were problems. Even for handguns, the rig was massive. Kinetic energy increases in direct proportion to the increase in mass and with the square of the increase in velocity, so rifles greatly added to the problems. Cannon — their projectiles no faster but far more massive — were much worse than rifles. In 1781 a ballistic pendulum was constructed, intended to measure the velocity of cannon balls weighing just 1.4 kg; it had a pendulum massing about 315 kg.

During the period of 1842 to 1847, Major Alfred Mordecai from the United States Army tried to determine the muzzle velocity of larger guns using a ballistic pendulum massing over 4215 kg. This was mounted between two large brick towers. This could only measure velocities for 32 pounders at most. It was estimated that a ballistic pendulum to measure velocities for the largest weapons then in use would require towers as large as those on the Brooklyn Bridge!

Later methods measured — through various means — the time required for a bullet to traverse a carefully measured distance, the most successful ones using electricity. Most modern devices — usually called chronographs, because the heart of each device is a clock capable of accurately and precisely measuring tiny intervals of time — use this method, though many start with light. Photosensors detect the reduction in ambient light as a bullet passes

over the beginning of the measured distance to start an electronic timer, and the similar event at the end of the distance stops the clock.

Early black powder firearms had muzzle velocities under 300 m/s (which is a fortunate coincidence, because at speeds much higher than this pure lead begins to strip off and deposit in the bore). Later black powder guns generally topped out a little under 700 m/s, and required either hard lead alloy bullets or a paper-patched ball to avoid leading the barrel. (Note that many muskets — smoothbores without rifling — had bores deliberately larger than the bullets. The patch filled in the gap to make a seal, as well as reducing leading. Also, given the long and widespread history of black powder firearms, the range of variations is huge. Therefore, these statements should be taken as generalizations.)

More powder won't increase velocity by much over this, and requires either very strong firearms or a huge risk. One reason for the non-linear speed increase is that kinetic energy increase, mentioned above. Doubling projectile velocity (in a very simplified situation) requires four times the chemical energy. Even loading four times the powder behind a bullet won't actually double the velocity, because of multiple, limiting factors. For example, a short barrel provides less working distance. However, a very long one may result in a slower muzzle velocity, due to the drag of the bullet down the bore as the gas behind it expands and exerts less force. Maximum velocity results usually come from a bore length designed for the powder charge, or vice versa.

More modern propellants made achievement of velocities over 600 meters per second not only practical but easy. By the early Twentieth Century velocities for lightweight bullets in front of large powder charges were exceeding 900 mps. Specialist firearms — such as early anti-tank rifles — could exceed this, though at the cost of a very short service life. Today the absolute best performing normal rifles can just break 1300 mps.

However, also working against high velocities for bullets is the fact that a projectile propelled by expanding gasses can't move any faster than the speed of expansion in those gasses. That speed in turn depends on the molecular weight of the gasses and the chemical energy released, which in turn depend on the composition and temperature. Bullet velocities can approach the burn rate of the propelling powders but never exceed or even match it. Given the inefficiencies involved with transferring energy to a projectile, that means 1350 mps is a rough, practical limit. The absolute limit for smokeless powders appears to be around 1600 mps, and for that you need specially formulated propellants and carefully designed firearms.

One trick to increase bullet speeds is the squeeze bore. For this, the bore of the firearm is tapered, and the bullet designed to squeeze smaller as it traverses the length. Again, this technique is very rough on the gun, which consequently has a very short operational life.

Another trick is the discarding sabot. A

tough but light casing (aluminum and some polymers are common) encloses a long, slender, dense projectile. This gives a large base area for the expanding gasses to work on, but once the projectile leaves the bore the outer casing falls away. This gives a very aerodynamic shell moving at very high speed.

Gas propellants have been evaluated for artillery and tank guns. Besides providing a faster speed of combustion and a lower molecular weight, this would also allow tailoring the muzzle velocity by injecting just enough propellant. However, so far this trick hasn't provided enough benefit to compensate for the disadvantages. The biggest one being the need for new or modified equipment.

While these techniques do provide significant increases in projectile velocity, they still are limited by the speed of combustion of the propellant.

One of the most difficult things to convince early critics of rockets about was that a rocket could exceed its exhaust velocity. A rocket gains velocity by a different mechanism than bullets do. A well made rocket can, in fact, make a change in velocity much greater than the exhaust velocity. Because of this people have long thought that a rocket gun would prove superior to a conventional firearm. (How long? Buck Rogers was using a rocket gun in the late Twenties, and was likely not the first.) However, the acceleration of a rocket is inherently lower than that of a bullet (though some rockets have been flown which pulled hundreds of Gs, that pales before firearms, which can accelerate a bullet at tens of thousands of Gs).

The (in)famous Gyrojet pistol and rifle were seriously limited by this. The weapons were smoothbore, the spin provided by angling the rocket ports at the rear of the projectiles. Those "bullets" were rather large, since they had to carry their propellant with them. They didn't reach maximum velocity — or maximum spin — for some distance after leaving the muzzle. This made them less effective at short ranges than a traditional firearm the same size and weight, since they were still gaining speed. Because they didn't spin up to full speed until some time after leaving the muzzle they were also much less accurate at a distance. Finally, once the fuel burned out you had a low-density projectile with a large frontal area. This was not conducive to velocity retention.

Rockets do have advantages, of course. They got us to the Moon, after all. They have also given us the fastest speed (relative to the Earth) for any large object humans have made. The Stardust sample-return capsule was the fastest man-made object ever to reenter Earth's atmosphere (12.4 km/s at peak). This was faster than the Apollo mission capsules and 70% faster than the Shuttle.

This brings up an interesting point. More people have walked on the Moon than have driven faster than 1200 kph. Going fast in space is easy. Without friction you just keep building speed for as long as you can produce thrust. On the ground, you have multiple sources of

friction. Especially if you're on wheels. Friction eventually balances thrust, setting the ultimate limit for speed.

Aircraft remove all sources of friction save for air resistance and internal engine friction. Small surprise that early aircraft soon eclipsed the speed of automobiles and planes. Today, the fastest manned aircraft to fly is the SR-71, which could exceed Mach 3. The X-15 rocket plane — actually a winged suborbital spacecraft, rather than an aircraft — came close to Mach 7. The Shuttle (or Space Transportation System Orbiter) hit Mach 25 (8,200 m/s) during reentry. In orbit, it was actually traveling at around 8,100 m/s. To reenter the atmosphere, the Orbiter fired its Orbital Maneuvering System rockets — the smaller nozzles at the rear — to slow below orbit speed, removing about 300 mps. However, as it dropped it picked up speed from the fall; hence the reentry velocity being higher than the orbital velocity. (These numbers will vary depending on the Orbiter and the mission flight profile.)

Most reading this probably know that a few ground vehicles have exceeded the speed of sound. You're probably also aware of the first supersonic flight. However, how many of you know the first object to exceed the speed of sound (~330 m/s)? It wasn't a bullet. Many early firearms could throw bullets faster than this velocity, even muskets. However, they came much later than the accomplishment.

The first man-made object to have exceeded the speed of sound was likely a piece of rope or cord. You see, the crack of a whip is the sonic boom produced when the tip exceeds the speed of sound.

Kinetic energy is still a very good way to do damage to a target. Researchers — for both military and civilian applications — have tried multiple tricks to give bullets a higher velocity than a chemically powered gun can provide.

The technique of using a gaseous propellant was mentioned above, as well as its limitations for field deployment. Researchers in laboratories are a bit less constrained than artillery or tank crews, and have used this concept to produce high velocities. However, they have also come up with another trick which works even better. For such things as studying asteroid impacts, they use an explosive charge to drive a piston into a tube of hydrogen gas, which then launches the projectile. Because of the extremely low molecular weight of the working fluid, these light gas guns can reach muzzle velocities in the low end of potential impacts, and are improving steadily.

A device which is a combination of traditional gun and jet engine is the ram accelerator. The launch tube and projectile effectively form an inside-out ramjet. The tube is filled with a fuel-air mixture, and a propellant charge starts the projectile forward. The fuel-air mixture compresses as the projectile moves down the bore, and ignites once past the constriction, the detonation forming a standing shockwave on the rear shoulder of the projectile. The pressure from this forces the shell down the tube. Since the combustion is

moving with the projectile, you don't have the propagation speed limitation of conventional firearms. This concept was originally developed with the intent of replacing sounding rockets, which gives you an idea of the muzzle velocity. Accelerations of over a hundred thousand Gs and muzzle velocities of over 5,000 mps are expected for the larger, longer ram accelerators.

The stresses involved in such a device are stupendous. When asked what would happen if the blast from the initial propelling charge flashed past the projectile and ignited a detonation in the fuel-air mixture, one of the developers stated that no malfunction of the launcher was worse than normal operation. The last I heard, ram accelerators were still under development.

When chemistry won't do the job it's always a good idea to try physics. Electric cannon are still not quite at the deployment stage, despite being worked on for about a century. One major problem is dumping enough electricity fast enough into the launcher to do the job. Having the launcher survive such treatment is even more difficult.

Some electric launchers work like a solenoid, and are often nicknamed coilguns. These work by using electricity to generate a magnetic field which interacts with the projectile much as the rotor of an electric motor does with the magnetic field produced by the windings, except the force generated is linear rather than circular. They are simple and generally easy and cheap to build, but have lower performance than some of the other alternatives.

Another version of electromagnet launcher is the railgun, so named because the projectile is positioned between two conductive rails. This works very much like a linear induction motor, and can be thought of as a variation on that device. These launchers are very hard on their rails, and rarely shoot more than three times before needing refurbishment. Much of the research on these is focused on improving the working life.

Some use the electricity to vaporize material at the rear of the projectile or on the face of railgun-like rails, turning it into an electric rocket. If the material becomes a conductive plasma, no physical contact between projectile and energy source is necessary, eliminating that source of drag. Because the power is coming from outside, the projectile can actually be supplied with more energy than an equivalent volume of chemical propellant would produce. Any propellant container on the rear of the projectile can be dropped once the launch is over, reducing drag.

For all of these, the energy supply is the limiting factor. Which is likely why the US Navy has made the most progress with fielding a large working electric gun. If you're on a ship, getting enough electricity for your weapon is greatly simplified. Especially if that ship is nuclear.

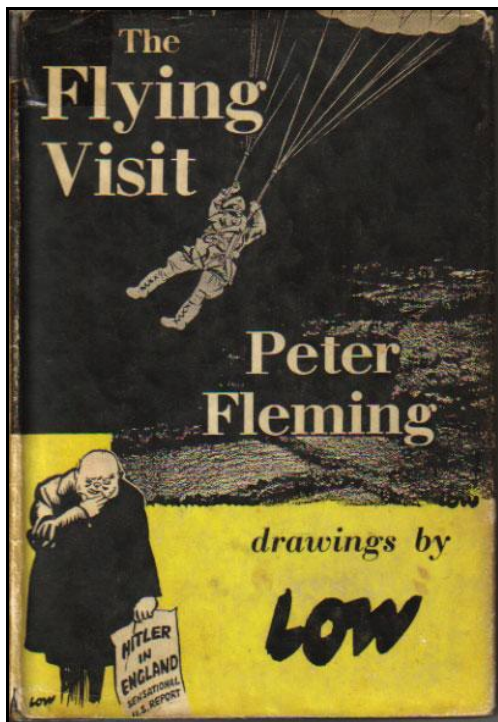
Studies have been made of using ground-based lasers to supply energy to large rockets, in a variation on the theme of the third

version of electric cannon described above. The on-board propellants — perhaps plain water, but more likely hydrogen — would be chemically inert or at least far less toxic and energetic than chemical propellants. The lasers might be electrically or chemically pumped; the exact nature of the power source is irrelevant. They would beam energy to the working fluid, heating it to vapor and possibly even dissociating the molecules. This would provide performance much higher than any current chemical rocket, while also improving safety.

So there you have a very brief overview of the history of speed and how it is produced and measured. This runs over three thousand words (somewhat longer than typical) yet has just barely scratched the surface. If there is sufficient interest I may go into more detail on certain aspects of the human quest for speed in the future.

### FLYING LOW

Revisiting a Little Known  
Alternate History Novel  
by Taral Wayne



It's been years since I first read this book. I bought it from a collector in Ottawa for a mere five bucks, and read it cover to cover the next day.

It wasn't difficult. At 128 pages of large type and with illustrations by the renowned WW II political cartoonist, David Low, reading "The Flying Visit" takes little stamina. If not a very long book, it is a droll one... and full of extremely uncanny predictions about the unfolding war!

To start with, the book was written by Peter

Fleming, who is the older brother of 007's creator, Ian Fleming. Brother Peter wrote travel books mainly, no spy stories, and no novel that he is much remembered for. Brother Ian, of course, is famous the world over for James Bond. But he is not much remembered for his travel books.

David Low was arguably one of the most famous political cartoonists in history, and an inspiration to any illustrator who wishes to rise above the abysmal level of draftsmanship of Gary Trudeau. Low's cartoons of the Nazi menace and Britain's brave defiance will live forever . . . or at least as long as Popeye. Immortality is relative, after all.



In summary, the book begins with Adolf Hitler in a moment of introspection, wondering whether or not he really understands his adversaries, the British. Partly to satisfy his curiosity, and partly because he realizes that it would be a terrific propaganda stunt, he orders a Luftwaffe plane to carry him over the British Isles. Unknown to Hitler, conspirators have concealed a bomb in one of his thermos of vegetable soup. When it explodes, the plane is destroyed and der Führer is the only survivor. His parachute lowers him into a mud puddle somewhere in the Chiltern Hills, near Oxford.

Wandering alone, hungry and very dirty, Hitler accidentally intrudes into a costume party in a small village, where he is awarded first prize for his splendid impersonation of the German dictator. He cannot understand a word of what is being said around him, of course. But a sharp-eyed miss realizes that Hitler is the *real* Führer, and locks him safely in a loo until the authorities can be notified.



Absurd as all this is, the discussion in Whitehall over what to do about having the Führer under lock and key are even more absurd. The Germans have produced a double, who is working overtime to keep up a pretense that the beloved leader is still on the job. The British Cabinet risks looking as though they were taken in by a hoax if no one believes *they* have the real Hitler! Their solution is as silly as the initial premise. Reasoning that the real Hitler is more a menace to his own side than to the British, they parachute him back into Germany... into another mud puddle, to be precise.

Peter Fleming wrote this bit of light-hearted nonsense in early 1940. The war was only months old — France had been overrun, but the invasion of Norway had only just begun. For the British, it was still possible to think of the hostilities as just a big war, with reason still in charge and the enemy still human. The torpedoing of civilian ships at sea, the Blitz, forced labour, Auschwitz, the massacre at Lidice and human experiments all lay in the future.

Yet "The Flying Visit" makes some startling predictions about the war over the next few years. I'm sure they were all coincidences, but they are still uncanny.

In Fleming's novel, Hitler planned to fly over London for propaganda purposes in March, 1940. History tells us that a little more than a year later, the Deputy Führer, Rudolph Hess did exactly that! Hess flew over Scotland, rather than Oxfordshire, but like the fictional Führer, he arrives by parachute and had vague ideas of contacting a local member of the peerage who he imagines is friendly to Nazi ideology. He was quickly captured, and the war cabinet notified of it. Unfortunately for Hess, he was not returned to Germany and — beginning with a short stay in the Tower of London — spent the remainder of the war in captivity.



1. The fictional Führer's plane is destroyed by a bomb concealed in a thermos of vegetable soup. Almost exactly two years after the bomb in the story exploded, a bomb was carried aboard Hitler's personal Condor 200 by Lieutenant Colonel Heinz Brandt. Brandt was a volunteer, working for elements in the army who opposed the Nazi

regime. The bomb was disguised as a box containing two bottles of Cointreau rather than the more prosaic thermos of vegetable soup, but the parallel is nonetheless striking. Hitler's luck held, unfortunately. The British pencil detonators, normally reliable, failed to set off the explosive.

2. Wandering forlorn in the English countryside, the Führer in "The Flying Visit" decides to shoot himself! He is luckier than the real Adolf Hitler, who in April 1945 succeeds splendidly in the act of self-destruction. The fictional Führer is frustrated by an automatic full of blanks, thoughtfully provided for him by aides familiar with his suicidal streak. One difference, though. This Hitler is squeamish about shooting himself in the head, and aimed for the heart instead. The real Hitler wasn't and didn't.
3. You might say that the Second World War began earlier than planned. The Wehrmacht repeatedly warned Hitler that they would not be fully prepared to begin a general war until 1942 or 1943. But the ever-confident Führer pressed on with his plans to annex the Czechs and invaded Poland, kindling the war at least three years ahead of schedule. By remarkable coincidence, on page 47 of my copy of *The Flying Visit*, Hitler muses about his conversation with the British Prime Minister once he has revealed himself. He imagines he will lay the groundwork for peace, guaranteeing the British their sovereignty and a few token remnants of empire that Germany has no need of. "And then, in 1943, perhaps, he would show the British what it meant to incur the enmity of Germany..."
4. Another eerie correspondence between fact and fiction is that the author quite pointedly shows Winston Churchill to be the guiding influence behind the British government in "The Flying Visit." What's peculiar about this is that Neville Chamberlain is still Prime Minister in early 1940, and Churchill only First Lord of the Admiralty. Yet Peter Fleming already seemed to know who was really going to call the shots as the war progressed.

At that point the string of unerring predictions ended. I found nothing more in "The Flying Visit" that foreshadowed other events in the Second World War. One wonders what went wrong. Which took the wrong turn? The novel? ...or the war?

## TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

Review by Taral Wayne of  
**THE TROUBLE WITH PHYSICS:**  
*The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next*  
 by Lee Smolin  
 (Mariner Books; 2007;  
 ISBN 978-0617818683; \$15.95;

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (Kindle); \$8.77)

Every now and then, a crack opens in String Theory. Although it has been the darling of particle physics and cosmology since at least the early 1990s, and the theory has been elaborated in several unforeseen directions, String Theory *still* doesn't explain a damn thing! Moreover, it remains as unprovable today as it did twenty years ago. No wonder scientists are beginning to wonder if they aren't groping up a dark matter alley.

Not long ago, the editor of another fanzine threw a question to the readers. What was the Higgs particle and why was it so important to theoretical science? There are fans and there are fans. Some are media and some are literary. But, this was the sort of challenge that no fan of the geek variety can resist . . . so I wrote a loc.

I *could* probably write a proper article on the Higgs particle, and why it's nicknamed the God Particle, but it would only mean looking the subject up on Wikipedia and paraphrasing. Any number of other science-geeks in fandom could do it.

The Reader's Digest version (from memory) is that there needs to be another, higher-dimensional field in which the associated particle is the Higgs. Depending on the rest energy of the Higgs, the physical properties of other, more commonplace, particles is fixed at the values we see in nature. In principle, the Higgs particle could have *any* rest energy, and create different universes with different physical laws — hence, "The God Particle". It just happens to have the energy it does and we live in the universe we do for no particular reason. No evidence of it has been found, however. Nor is the theoretical necessity for the Higgs particularly strong — though attempts *have* been made to tie the Higgs to the Inflationary Model of the early cosmos. Particle physicists feel there is a slender possibility that a very low estimate of the rest mass of the Higgs (the one that made *our* universe) might fall within the upper limit of energies that can eventually be reached by the new Large Hadron Collider at CERN.

The Higgs particle is only one of a number of stumbling blocks in modern cosmology. Not the least is the problem of how to explain why galaxies rotate as solid objects and not as a collection of independent stars, and how this has led cosmologists to assume the existence of an invisible, undetectable "dark matter" that only exerts gravitational influence exactly where needed to explain our ignorance . . . but does absolutely nothing else.

The same with "dark energy" — which exists mainly to fill in a gap of understanding about the expansion of the universe.

Then there are branes, a baroque extension of String Theory that demands we accept the existence of an infinite number of alternate universes that may only be different from ours in as small a way as my not making the typo at the end of this line.

See . . . String Theory isn't so hard. But the condensed milk version is very, very

approximate, and if anyone is really curious, they should go to the Wiki article. I also recommend a book called *The Trouble with Physics: The Rise of String Theory, the Fall of a Science, and What Comes Next*, by Lee Smolin.

According to the author, string theory has produced nothing but tangled knots since it came into fashion, more than twenty years ago. Not only has it *not* solved any problems, it has caused more, in fact. String Theory is *unprovable in principle!* The theory *itself* says almost as much, but prefers to state that there are infinite solutions to the equations. Of course, infinite solutions means there are no *preferred* solutions, which is no solution at all. It predicts nothing, it solves nothing, it explains nothing. The book goes on to show that so many of our most esoteric theories — dark matter, dark energy, branes, quantum loops, inflation, and so on — are all so tied together that if *one* goes, they all go. It might well be that our theoreticians will have to go back to 1950 and start over! Beware MOND!

(That's Modified Newtonian Dynamics to you — a rather intriguing theory that gravity weakens with distance only to a certain degree and then plateaus. Beyond umpty-ump thousands of light years, the gravitational slope flattens and remains level at all distances beyond. With MOND, a large system of independent stars such as a galaxy *will* rotate as a solid object. The problem with MOND is that there isn't the least shred of evidence for it.)

One very troubling factoid mentioned by the author is that there have been no significant advances in theoretical cosmology or particle physics in an entire generation. We've been living through the most unproductive twenty years of theoretical physics in modern history. Whether or not String Theory and the rest are right or wrong, that in itself is a worrisome bit of data, Mr. Data. It is heresy to the scientific establishment to reject the standard model. Yet most scientists believe they are in a state of almost constant theoretical revolution!

There are indications that — if premature — they may be right, nonetheless. With the operation of the LHC just begun, things are not adding up as they should. The Higgs particle doesn't seem to be there. The window of masses that theory predicts for it is closing fast, and only a narrow gap remains. If the Higgs doesn't turn up soon, it must be in some realm beyond human reach for the foreseeable future. Worse, the LHC seems to have observed neutrinos that arrived at the detectors before the speed of light allows. It may only be a calibration problem . . . but what if it *isn't*? At the other end of the measuring stick, light appears to have arrived from the edge of the observable universe at different speeds from different parts of the sky. Sure, tricky explanations have been given to show how dark matter might gravitationally lens light of different wavelengths, so that blue photons and red photons from the same source might arrive on Earth at different times. But photons from 14 billion light years in *this* direction instead of



that direction? Nobody has a clue what this means.

My hope is that it means we might at last remove String Theory and Magic Invisible Phenomena as obstacles from our understanding of how the universe really works. Maybe we are on the verge of a revolution in thinking. Rubik's Cube Theory of Everything, anyone?

I'm serious. I'm going to write a paper. As soon as I've read up on the subject in Wikipedia, that is.

### ALWAYS KICK THE TIRES!

Review of *Cars 2* by Taral Wayne  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1216475/>



I watched *Cars 2* the other night. To tell the truth, I was prepared for an inferior sequel. Nothing I had seen in the trailer suggested that it would be anything but "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." But I was not, I repeat *not*, prepared for how truly dreadful it was.

The *Rotten Tomatoes* rating was 38%. That would be a perfectly fine rating for a Don Bluth film, even a welcome turn for the better for the overworked *Madagascar* and *Open Season* franchises. But 38% is a good deal less than *half* what the audience should expect from Pixar. What went wrong?

One doesn't have to look much farther than Larry the Table Ham. In fact, its rather hard to see around him, he's so resolutely on center stage. Lightning McQueen... remember him, the star of the first *Cars*? He appears in the sequel mainly to affirm that Tow Mater is perfect as he is, and need never improve on being a pig-ignorant, redneck hillbilly.

Not everyone found *Cars 1* to their liking – the leap from people to talking cars is a hard one for many viewers who are not animation fans to begin with. Still, I found it magical. It didn't take me long to forget that these were metal shells on wheels that you run by filling with gasoline, and to accept them as an unfamiliar sort of human being. I even

wondered what sort of car I would be, if I lived in this movie. (I was never able to settle on anything more flattering than a 1950 Studebaker Champion.) Each of the characters was lively and interesting, if not always deep. Used sparingly, even the rundown tow truck had his moments as a believable second-string character.

*Cars 2* was nothing but a multi-million-dollar Saturday morning cartoon starring Tow Mater, a character likeable only in small doses. Every other character introduced in the first movie was given a walk-on part, a line or two, and then was gone until the credits began to roll. Even McQueen was relegated to feeding his friend straight lines, while the "ugly American" ran amok in a frenzy of parochial stupidity.

Compare stories. In the first *Cars*, a conceited popular hero learns humility, and the value of life in a slower lane. In *Cars 2*, Tow Mater learns that it is okay to be stupid, intrusive and lost in one's own need for immediate gratification. Though the plot involves a sort of World Grand Prix, held in three different cities, strangely, even the race sequences recede into the background. Most of the plot is an absurd spy story that does less to add luster to the genre than Johnny English or Austin Powers. Characters that you forget are cars and not people are sacrificed to gimmicks such as rocket packs in the trunk, pop-up arsenals of automatic weaponry and paraglide wings that deploy by voice-activation. This was Inspector-Gadget-class espionage! At the exciting conclusion of the adventure, when the archvillain is revealed and his plot foiled, I had to ask myself, "Do I care?"

Nope. The story was far too contrived to give a damn, and the environmental lesson to be taught was much too conflicted to make any sense. So... the "green" fuel was a fake, check.

The villain was plotting to discredit it, check. Then he could sell regular petroleum that he just happened to own the world's largest reserve of. Let me think about that a moment... check. And that was why "green" fuel was good... because it was faked... Uh... Isn't there a lapse in the logic here, somewhere?

The animators went all out on creating the world for *Cars 2* using the three-dimensional technology of *Coraline*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Avatar* – so one wonders why it seemed so flat and static then. Even with spy cars swinging themselves around in the air like Doctor Octopus on a bender, and 300 k.p.h. race cars whizzing through the streets of Tokyo and the Mediterranean coast of Italy, *Cars 2* seemed more like a series of landscape paintings. You know the sort... they probably hung in your grandmother's house, in the hall or the kitchen. The light was always golden and the architecture clung picturesquely to rocky promontories. Like those paintings, the cities in *Cars 2* hung in front of your eye, lifelessly. Nobody lived there. Nothing was behind the lavishly detailed facades.

When Pixar made *Cars 1*, they were inspired. It was plain that the artists and animators had fallen in love with the world that created Route 66, the empire of the auto that

once spread across the land and could only be found today in isolated pockets of Backwater U.S.A... in deep decay. They resurrected that world for the first *Cars*, and their love shows in the mundane details – dust, rust spots, oily rags, traffic cones, peeling pink stucco and flickering neon signs. The story built on those details to illustrate the worth of an older world, its vanished wonder and the fabric of lives once lived.

What insight did *Cars 2* impart to the audience? That spies are exciting, and that if someone is your friend their inappropriate behavior doesn't matter.

It's easy to guess what the inspiration for *Cars 2* was – not Route 66, not NASCAR, not even to embellish the success of the first movie.

Someone in the head office noticed that Tow Mater appealed to the under-12 audience, and if they made a movie around a guaranteed draw, they might have another hit on their hands. Pixar pandered to the lowest common denominator – the audience that made it possible to film 12 iterations of *Land Before Time* – to go to the cash register one more time with a property that had run out of marketing potential.

*Cars 2* is the first Pixar film the studio should have been ashamed to put their name on. Let's hope it's their last. The reputation the studio earned for itself in its first ten films hasn't been thrown away – yet. It is probably not even in much danger as yet. But the history of any large organization shows that, inevitably, the corporate rot sets in – the suits begin to dominate creative thinking, which shifts from originality and serious purpose to bottom lines and targeted markets. Pixar is one step closer to becoming McPixar. Their next film should tell us how quickly we can expect the studio to arrive there.

### THE ALCHEMISTS

by M. Caron and S. Hutin (1961)

Reviewed by Richard Dengrove

A friend of mine gave me this paperback. He came upon it in a used book store. I found it a popularization. Often popularizations don't rock the boat and they don't tell anything you didn't already know. All part of a dumbing down process. That it is calming and familiar is apparently attractive to the masses. Why, they ask, read a book you haven't read before?

It isn't attractive to me. Instead, I much prefer this popularization which fights topical tigers and sweeps up new facts in its wake. Having found such a book, I won't cross it off my list because the authors mark themselves as occultists who hold a candle for alchemy. Rather than following the party line, being believers has motivated them to dig up far more knowledge than many writing for a buck would.

In this review, I will first deal with what interested me most and then what interested me less. What interested me most was what got me angry. I admit, usually, anger makes me toss a book away, but Caron and Hutin filled me with good anger that made me think and do research.

What made me angry were Caron and



Hutin's theories. Theories and explanations are not their forte. However, as I said, erudition is. And here the two are separate. Caron and Hutin aren't really interested in supporting theories with the vast amount of erudition they bring to play.

This is too bad because I can see problems with their theories right away. The biggy problem entails forgetting the historical context. Not that authors who marshal their facts haven't been equally guilty of the same vice.

For instance, Caron and Hutin are big on claiming that, to transmute lead into gold, alchemists had to be spiritual within themselves. Men bound to matter would always come away empty handed from the quest. That is certainly what the alchemists believed – and, given the era being discussed, big deal.

Here, Caron and Hutin ignore the social context: what everyone had to proclaim. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, people had to proclaim that all skills required spirituality. Even that kissing cousin to modern science, natural philosophy contained a good shot of theology. In understanding nature, natural philosophers had to claim they had found God.

In addition, Caron and Hutin's explanations give me another bone to pick: namely, only the Traditionalists, who followed traditional formulas, could transmute lead into gold. Fat chance a Puffer would, who learned solely from experience.

Here they ignore another aspect of the social context: the canon did not actually provide you with the secret to transmuting lead into gold. The canon Traditionalists inherited was suitably vague, and often written in a code of puzzling allegories, where the author often admitted a vital key had been omitted. After reading it, Traditionalists had to descend to Puffery, as it were, and work the bellows, if only to discover the secret behind the canon.

In addition to finding fault with the spiritual context of alchemy and its dichotomy, I find fault with Caron and Hutin's origin for alchemy. Caron and Hutin doubt alchemy originated in China. They are in good company too: most scholars side with them. Their reasoning? There was no way for Chinese astrology to reach the West.

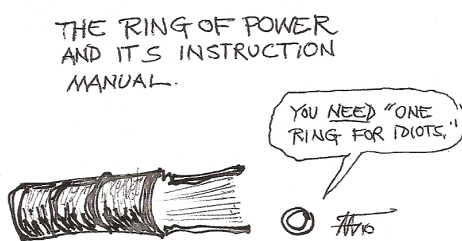
So how do I have alchemists piercing the impermeable wall between China and the outside world? They didn't have to. The Chinese had diplomatic and trade relations with Rome by 166 AD. Thus, when the first alchemical treatise in the West was written by Zosimus of Panopolis around 300 AD, a Chinese origin wouldn't have been spectacular. In fact, there is actual evidence that alchemy was dragged along the silk road from China. It isn't as if Chinese and Western alchemy are different animals. Despite himself, another author, Holmyard lets drop many parallels between the two: for example, the search for immortality, the transmutation into gold, the use of mercury, and the emphasis on spirit and perfection.

Having demolished – I hope – Caron and Hutin's ideas about spirituality, dichotomies and

the origin of alchemy, I feel confident that Caron and Hutin are weak on explanation.

As I said earlier, that doesn't mean they do not reveal strength otherwise. For instance, their erudition is amazing for popularizers. They give information which the odds of finding in other popularizations is infinitesimal.

Such tidbits include info on the alchemists of the 19th and 20th Centuries. A side branch that nearly all popularizers and most experts omit. If they fascinate me, why not rate them on my interest meter higher than their explanations? These merely interest; the explanations actually got me angry. They raised up real interest.



From the 19th Century, they discuss a Tiffereau and a Jollivet-Castelot. I was going to say wannabe alchemists, but what they really aspired to was being new Newtons. Even though one at least was an occultist, both believed they could transmute lead into gold using scientific principles. Thus, Caron and Hutin refer to them as Hyperchemists.

According to them, both gentlemen claimed at least one transmutation of lead into gold. However, replication eluded them. It didn't sound promising that Jollivet-Castelot's transmutation involved a cigar and cigarettes.

On the other hand, Tiffereau admitted replication eluded him. A mark in his favor; but, given his claims, not enough. It is not astonishing in the least their colleagues regarded both of them as nut cases.

On this subject, the authors Caron and Hutin cleave to their party-of-two line and accuse these Hyperchemists of having failed because they lacked spirituality.

They do not say the same about an alchemical denizen of the 20th Century. They only sing his praises. In addition, they rarely tell us much about him, and thus whet our imaginations.

My appetite whetted, I found out from Wikipedia that he started taking on disciples in 1921, he disappeared in 1926, and the Nazis and Allies both searched for him at the end World War II. This whetted my curiosity that much more. Unfortunately, further curiosity was to be unrequited.

I am talking about Fulcanelli. While I had never heard of him before, he apparently was a well-known modern advocate of Medieval and Renaissance alchemy. Strangely, his day job was as a physicist, according to Wikipedia.

What Caron and Hutin do say is he believed the spiritual side of transmutation far more

important than the chemical side. And, for them, that enabled him to have actual transmutations under his belt. Transmutations Caron and Hutin betray not the slightest doubt about.

So much for the hyperchemists and a modern day thaumaturgist of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Since this book surveys alchemy overall, Caron and Hutin also give information about earlier eras. The notables then don't interest me as much as the hyperchemists or Fulcanelli. I have read about them often enough. However, though less the three moderns, they do interest me when Caron and Hutin go into depth.

Like they did on the 14th Century alchemist Nicholas Flamel. So much depth that they come away noticing that the actual evidence for his transmutations is slim to none. Most authors, even skeptical ones, have studied Flamel in less depth, and take a more favorable attitude toward his transmutations. Apparently, unlike Caron and Hutin, they do not realize that accounts of them come from much later sources.

As do accounts of how he donated his virtue-begotten gold to build Cathedrals. As do accounts of his involvement with Jewish Kabbalists. And of the book with the mysterious writing, which ultimately yielded the Magnum Opus, i.e., an authentic transmutation.

Now we come to the second person in the Flamel equation: his wife, Pernella. While she has a basis in historical fact, it remains puzzling why her reputation rivals his.

Other authors, Caron and Hutin write about in less depth but still some. For instance, the Medieval scholars Raymond Lully and Albertus Magnus.

Not so strangely, they show the same skepticism about their alchemical accomplishments. For instance, they come out and admit Lully wrote none of the alchemical works attributed to him. Rightly or wrongly, his reputation rests on a device to line up premises and make syllogisms.

As for Albertus Magnus, Caron and Hutin point out that that proto-scientist doubted transmutation could be done.

So much for Caron and Hutin's skepticism, astonishing in a popular work. And, I suspect, totally uncharacteristic of them. Not only is their norm to believe in wonders; but to act as antiquarians, who mix legend and fact, and leave their readers to sort it out.

This is what happens apparently when they haven't investigated a subject in depth. And, it shows when they relate dribs and drabs about broad areas. Here, personages of alchemical history receive little more than a paragraph. For that reason, I find these alchemists less interesting than their in-depth brethren.

This is especially true of those non-alchemical alchemists, the charlatans. Yes, Caron and Hutin do not deny what is obvious: alchemy, from the Middle Ages on, has been riddled with charlatans. They also admit some had the chutzpah to bilk imprudent crowned heads of state, and risk punishments. About which the less said about the better.

In fact, they start their list of charlatans with

the 16th Century George Sabellicus, whom some have considered the historical Faust. If they had read further about him, they would have found that while he boasted of excelling in other arts, he didn't say anything in particular about alchemy.

A charlatan made in Sabellicus' silhouette if not his image was the 18th Century rogue, whom other authors have described as silver tongued about all things occult, mystical and magical, Cagliostro. There were some differences, though. For example, his repertoire did include alchemy.

Where Caron and Hutin fall down is on another aspect of his life. Unlike Sabellicus, he was able to built up from small confidence games to megawumpus sized ones. That included being involved in the Affair of the Diamond Neckless, which some historians claim contributed to the guillotining of Louis XVIth.

In addition, Caron and Hutin's list of charlatans include the 18th Century Casanova. You wouldn't know from their thumbnail sketch that he observed alchemy more than he practiced it; or wrote an incredible number of volumes about mischief he wrought ages 14-19.

He differed radically from Sabellicus and Cagliostro in another way too: he was not always on the swindling end. Often he was as confused about alchemy as was his pigeon. That was especially true in one incident where a marquise, a lover of his, claimed to have transformed herself into a man through alchemy.

This is only the beginning, not the end. Caron and Hutin's list of charlatans includes a myriad of others as well. Of all of them, I can say that they would have written an even more interesting book by providing the details of a few of these charlatans' lives.

Of even less interest is the section on the alchemists tools. There, Caron and Hutin discuss apparatus with puzzling names. For instance, the athanor and aludel, furnaces; the pelican, a receptacle with two glass pipes leading back to it; the philosophical egg, a retort, which carried all the ingredients for a transmutation.

The pelican, I gather, did indeed resemble a pelican, and the philosophical egg did indeed resemble an egg.

What makes this topic less interesting is that while you know what the charlatans did, you aren't too certain about these widgets. By explaining their uses in alchemical experiments, perhaps a wouldbe writer could reverse this.

Another strategy for making this section more interesting would have been answering how these arcane modus operandi developed into the ancestors of the test tube and retort of modern chemistry. Something all authors I have read agree on; but none has traced it.

Less interesting than even the section on modus operandi is the one on the tomes that transmitted alchemical knowledge. They must have ended up mystifying wouldbe alchemists in an already mystifying subject. They certainly mystify us moderns. The alchemists' tools at least look useful.

What mystifies are the Allegories, metaphoric stories that were said to allude to the alchemical process. The rationale being that evil people (read low class) would not be able to penetrate them and the world would be safe. A typical Medieval attitude that seeped into the Renaissance and beyond.

Given the importance attributed to these Allegories, I can understand why Caron and Hutin want us to experience a few. Unfortunately, since they strike us as total jabberwocky, and didn't really strike the alchemists of old a lot better, they have reminded the reader more of a data dump than a learning experience.

Since I have ended by dealing with the least interesting aspect of this book, Allegories, I might be leaving you with a bad taste about it. Because it is a book I liked, I have saved one matter of interest till last even though it should have taken its rightful place after the hyperchemists, the illustrations.

Caron and Hutin more than make up for any crime against humanity in their book's copious, curious and often beautiful illustrations. They must have mined several libraries to pack this cheap paperback with these scintillating adornments.

With that upbeat note, I can tack an ending on this article. I have touched on Caron and Hutin's subjects from their hypotheses to alchemy's allegories, and added a high note afterward. I can summarize my feelings toward the book further by reiterating my words at the beginning: it is both learned and fun, although, as I said, I wouldn't take Caron and Hutin's explanations too seriously.

---

**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

According to a CNN article, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, with some 2700 members out of the estimated 8000 survivors of the original 84,000 present, has voted to disband as of the end of the year, on the grounds that the membership is aging and members with the energy to serve as officers are hard to find.

---

### **THE POLAR EXPRESS**

by Joe

*The Polar Express* (book by Chris van Allsburg (1985); movie by Robert Zemenkis (2004)) is about belief in the concept of Christmas. A boy who comes to believe (played

when grown-up by Tom Hanks, who in an Alec Guinness moment also plays five other characters ["Kind Hearts and Santas"?]) is taken by the Polar Express to the North Pole (although apparently they never get out of Nunavut).

The problem is that if I'd done it:

The Pullman porter would have been Matt Henson, and his assistants would have been Utaq, Ukkujaq, Iggiannuaq, and Sigluk ["Ootah, Ooqueah, Egingwah, and Segloo"], the Inuit on the Polar Party.

Then the Hero Boy would have met the Railway President and Chairman, Robert E. Peary, and the Vice-Chairman, Richard E. Byrd.

After which, he would have gone to the locomotive, which was being driven by Robert A. Bartlett, while the firemen, Umberto Nobile and Roald Amundsen, quarreled.

And before going back to his berth, he would have found a hobo riding the rods — Frederick A. Cook.

I am just a bit too esoteric, I guess.

**Welcome to the hardware.**



©Alan F. Beck

---

### **YOU'RE SO VAIN**

by Joe

There was a partial eclipse of the sun on November 25, 2011, visible in Antarctica and the neighboring seas, including South Georgia, where two days later Frank Wild was buried in the Grytviken cemetery, and in Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Northern Cape Provinces of South Africa, Tasmania, and most of New Zealand. The maximum duration was at 68° 36' S 82° 24' W, in the Bellinghausen Sea, off Alexander I Island. It was part of Saros 123, which began on August 16, 1087 and will end on October 8, 2367.

The next solar eclipse will be on May 20, 2012. It will be an annular eclipse, beginning off the coast of Guangxi [Kwangsi], passing through Guangzhou (Canton), Fujian, Taiwan, Kyushu, Shikoku, southern Honshu, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and ending in Texas. The longest duration of annularity will be at sea south of the Aleutian Islands, at 48° 51' 53" N, 176° 29' 4"

E, for 5 minutes 36.9 seconds. It will be part of Saros 128, which began on August 29, 984 and will end on November 1, 2282. It will also be the first of two solar eclipses in 2012.

The next solar eclipse after that will be a total eclipse, occurring on November 14-13, 2012 (the track crosses the International Date Line), visible on land in Australia (Northern Territory and Queensland). This eclipse will be part of Saros 133, which began on July 13, 1219 and will end on September 5, 2499.

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

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

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

## FANZINES

### *Argentus* #11

Steven H Silver

[s.hsilver@comcast.net](mailto:s.hsilver@comcast.net)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>

### *Askance* #25 December 2011

John Purcell, 3744 Marielene Circle,  
College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA

[j\\_purcell54@yahoo.com](mailto:j_purcell54@yahoo.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *Banana Wings* #47 September 2011

Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer, 59  
Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 7ES,  
UK

[fishlifter@googlemail.com](mailto:fishlifter@googlemail.com)

### *Beyond Bree* October 2011, November 2011

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA

[beyondbree@yahoo.com](mailto:beyondbree@yahoo.com)

<http://www.ccp.unt.edu/bree.html>

Not available for The Usual; \$15/year, \$20  
foreign, \$10/year electronic.

### *Dark Matter* #5, #6

Nalini Hayes

[darkmatterfanzine@gmail.com](mailto:darkmatterfanzine@gmail.com)

### *The Drink Tank* #293, #294, #295, #296, #297, #298, #300

Christopher J. Garcia

[garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *eI* #58 October 2011

Earl Kemp, Post Office Box 6642,  
Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 USA

[earl@earlkemp.com](mailto:earl@earlkemp.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *Fadeaway* #25 October-November 2011, #26 December 2011-January 2012

Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Road, Oxford,  
MA 01540-2035 USA

[fabficbks@aol.com](mailto:fabficbks@aol.com)

### *The Fanatical Fanactivist* #4, #5

R. Graeme Cameron, Apt 72G, 13315 104th  
Avenue, Surrey, BC V3T 1V5 CANADA

[rgraeme@shaw.ca](mailto:rgraeme@shaw.ca)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *File 770:160*

Mike Glycer, 705 Valley View Avenue,  
Monrovia, CA 91016- USA

[Mikeglyer@cs.com](mailto:Mikeglyer@cs.com)

<http://file770.com/>

### *Fish Out of Water* #452, #453, #454, #455, #456, #457

Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue,  
Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

### *The Fortnightly Fix* #24

Steve Green

[stevegreen@livejournal.com](mailto:stevegreen@livejournal.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *It Goes on the Shelf* #33 November 2011

Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA  
30047-4720

[nedbrooks@sprynet.com](mailto:nedbrooks@sprynet.com)

<http://home.sprynet.com/~nedbrooks/home.htm>

### *Joel's Debris* #12

Joel A. Zakem,

### *The Knarley Knews* #140

Henry & Letha Welch, 15290 Upper Ellen  
Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033-7814 USA

[knarley@welchcastle.com](mailto:knarley@welchcastle.com)

<http://tkk.welchcastle.com/>

### *MT Void* V. 30 #15 October 7, 2011 — V. 30 #22 November 25, 2011

Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge  
Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA

[eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net)

[mleeper@optonline.net](mailto:mleeper@optonline.net)

<http://leepers.us/mtvoid>

### *The New Port News* #260

Cuyler "Ned" Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane,  
Lilburn GA 30047-4720 USA

[nedbrooks@sprynet.com](mailto:nedbrooks@sprynet.com)

### *My Back Pages* #6

Rich Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg,  
Maryland 20885-3120 USA

[rw\\_lynch@yahoo.com](mailto:rw_lynch@yahoo.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *One Swell Foop* #5

Garth Spencer

### *Opuntia* #71.1A October 2011, #71.1B November 2011

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

### *The Reluctant Famulus* #84

November/December 2011

Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road,  
Owenton, KY 40359- USA

[tomfamulus@hughes.net](mailto:tomfamulus@hughes.net)

### *Southern Fandom Confederation Update* V. 1 #26

Warren Buff, 22144 B Ravenglass Place,  
Raleigh, NC 27612-2936 USA

[warrenmbuff@gmail.com](mailto:warrenmbuff@gmail.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

### *Visions of Paradise* #168, #169, #170

Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court,  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023 USA

[bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

We regret to report the death of Robert M.  
"Bob" Sabella on **December 3, 2011**.

## 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](mailto:neworleansin2018@gmail.com)

### 2019

### 2020

New Zealand

<http://nzin2020.org/>

There is some concern over the Orlando bid, since the chairman announced the bid *before* he went to his first WorldCon ever. And other things. However, the Spokane bid has also been classified as "weak". Oh boy.

