

# ALEXIAD

(AΛΞΙΔ)

\$2.00

Recently I ordered a book from outside the United States. A few years ago when I ordered a book from Australia it took two months to get here. The English book is in my hands within three weeks. It is *Court of the Midnight King* by Freda Warrington, a fantasy about Richard III. It turns out to be well worth the wait. If you are of the Yorkist sect this one is a fun read. It is a bit pricey from Amazon. I ordered my copy through Abebooks, an excellent website where booksellers all over the world post listings of books they have in stock. My copy of the Warrington book came from a bookseller named WorldOfBooks in an English town named Goring by the Sea in Sussex.

— Lisa

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Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

The 139th Running of the Kentucky Derby was **May 4, 2013**. Orb

won handily.

The 138th Running of the Preakness Stakes was **May 18, 2013**. Oxbow won, while Orb faded and came in fourth. No Triple Crown this year.

The 144th Running of the Belmont Stakes was **June 8, 2013**. Palace Malice won.

The 59th Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **July 27, 2013** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 88th Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 3, 2013** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The 121st Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 6, 2013** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

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Printed on June 12, 2013

Deadline is **August 1, 2013**

## Reviewer's Notes

I used to dream of the travelling trufen.

They showed up for the con on Thursday, and stayed until the last of the last of the Dead Dog Party, rolling out on Monday for the next con. They slept heaped on each other in a single room, if not in the 24-hour Animé Room. Beyond that they never went to the program, never bought anything, only went from one party to the next.

And, they maintained, in spite of their never sullyng themselves with any actual sci-fi, they possessed the purest and most vibrant of trufannish experiences.

At least we still have the attitude.

The other day, while waiting for the library to open, I eavesdropped on an unusual conversation between two Whovians. One mourned that with the departure of the current Doctor, the show would have to come to an end, as there could only be twelve. The other said that they would find a way, as the show had been on the BBC since the thirties.

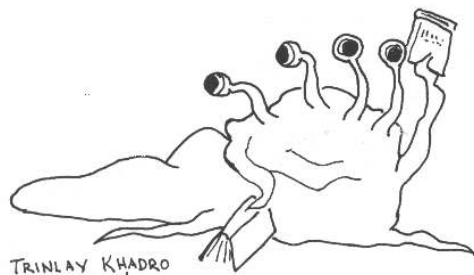
I haven't had so much despair since that time in high school when the two seniors were so absolutely convinced that the only reason STAR TREK had been canceled was that Nimoy had left the show for *Mission: Impossible*.

It's difficult to give proper citations in a conversation.

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



**Bill Patterson** has confirmed that Volume II of the Heinlein biography will be released next year. It has gone through a troubled process of publishing, as the volume was temporarily to be published as two, so Patterson expanded the manuscript and then had to cut it. Not to worry, though, as *Chicks Dig Their Little Ponies* will win.

In a discussion of Mark Steyn's discourse on real and assumed Irish Americans (think "Raibeard Earbin Hui Howard") the comment came up that not only were the stories of "No Irish Need Apply" less than true, but that often Irish were preferred. And immigrants from Slavic areas would Irishise their names to take advantage of this. "You there, pounding your shoe on the table, what's your name?" "Nicky O'Khrushchev."

Edward Jay Epstein's *The Annals of Unsolved Crime* (2012; Melville House Publishing; ISBN 978-1-61219-048-8; \$26.00) is an eclectic review, with short descriptions and his conclusion of thirty-four crimes running from the Abraham Lincoln assassination to the Amanda Knox case. Since Epstein does not discuss in any detail his reasoning, the conclusions often appear arbitrary. And some of them are downright peculiar, as when he believes the Helena Stoeckley confession to the Jeffrey Macdonald family murders. (Her alleged comment "Acid is groovy, kill the pigs" sounds more like the Archies gone deeply deeply wrong than anything an actual doper would say, and Stoeckley confessed after being questioned by Ted Gunderson, who in other cases proved archaeology to be invalid.) An interesting but not necessarily useful book.

If you can't write The Great American Novel, you can redo it, and David Poyer passes up Dan Lenson for a redo of *Moby-Dick* in *The Whiteness of the Whale* (2013; St. Martin's Press; ISBN 978-1-250-02056-7; \$26.99). Sara Pollard is trying to get away from a personal life that has taken a turn to the worse, with a trip on the *Anemone* to Save the Whales. Provided she can survive the trendy politics and the spoiled star who needs a

conservationist gig to restore her standing. Or, the ship-destroying weather that slowly tears the *Anemone* apart, not to mention the occasional hostility of the Japanese whalers. Poyer tells a grueling story of grinding destruction and human inadequacy.

## OBITS

**Andrew J. "Andy" Offutt**, Kentucky's pro and fan writer par excellence, died on **April 30, 2013**. Andy had a long career in both pro and fan worlds, being known as much as a fan writer as a professional, known as an author of heroic adventure with a roguish twist. He participated in a number of team-ups, including such things as the *Spaceways* spicy space operas, the well-known shared-world enterprise *Thievee' World*, and the like.

On a personal note, Andy had studied at the University of Louisville, and one of my professors remembered him fondly. Then, when I started work at the Air Pollution Control District, the director was a man named Robert T. Offutt. I remarked on the coincidence and he said, "Cousin Andy?" He admired Andy as a man who had made his pile in the insurance business and quit to write.

He hadn't been making it to cons much of late. Now we know why. We'll miss him.

We regret to report the death of the man who made so many fantasy dreams live on screen, the great Oscar-winning stop-motion animator **Ray Harryhausen**, on **May 4, 2013**. It almost seems another world, in this age of CGI, but Harryhausen pioneered those techniques using actual physical items. He was good friends with those other imaginative masters, Forrest J Ackerman and Ray Bradbury. Now they are together again.

We regret to report the death of **Jack Vance** on **May 26, 2013**. The honored creator of Big Planet, the Gaeen Reach, the little world of the Dragon Masters, and so many other exotic and special places began writing in 1945, after seeing many exotic and special places in the Merchant Marine.

E.L. Konigsberg, author of one of my favorite books, *The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, died on **April 19, 2013**. She was 83.

— LTM

## MONARCHIST NEWS

## JE MAINTIENDRAI

On **April 30, 2013**, the Prince of Orange succeeded to the Netherlandish throne as **King Willem-Alexander**, in succession to his mother, **Queen Beatrix**. The Prince is the first male monarch of the Netherlands since the death of **King Willem III**, who died in 1884. The King had originally intended to be Willem IV, and I haven't seen any explanation as to why the other

name was chosen.

The King is married to the former **Maxima Zorreguieta Cerruti**. They have three daughters, **Catharina-Amalia, Princess of Orange**, **Princess Alexia**, and **Princess Ariana**.

One of his godparents is Ferdinand Fürst von Bismarck, great-grandson of the Iron Chancellor. The Amsberg family (his father's) has a number of German ties, and one of the godfathers of the King's youngest brother **Prince Constantijn** was Axel Freiherr von dem Bussche-Streithorst, one of the three men who volunteered to be a suicide bomber to kill Hitler (the other two, for the historical record, were Rudolf-Christian Freiherr von Gersdorff and Eddie Chapman).

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

Report by Joseph T Major

Remaining is:

**Poland**

Józef Kowalski\* (113) 22 Pulk Ułanów

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

The Seventy-First Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Reunion, held this year at Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, Florida, will be the final one. The four surviving Raiders (three of whom were present) have concluded that they will no longer be able to make the public appearances required. The tontine bottle of cognac, meant for the last two survivors to drink, will be shared out in a private meeting sometime later this year.

'Here then at last comes the ending of the Fellowship of the Ring,' said Aragorn. 'Yet I hope that ere long you will return to my land with the help that you promised.'

'We will come, if our own lords allow it,' said Gimli. 'Well, farewell, my hobbits! You should come safe to your own homes now, and I shall not be kept awake for fear of your peril. We will send word when we may, and some of us may yet meet at times; but I fear that we shall not all be gathered together ever again.'

— *The Lord of the Rings*

On **March 22, 2013**, the Queen was pleased to present the Victoria Cross to **James Thomas Duane Ashworth**, Lance-Corporal, Grenadier Guards, for heroism in Afghanistan. The award was made for his bravery in an attack on a Taliban-held position in Heiland Province, in which his fire team eliminated the insurgents. Lance Corporal Ashworth was killed in the final moments of the battle.

He leaves a wife and two daughters.

## C'MELL

June 1996 — June 6, 2013



God, thank You for Your time.  
Here is a little kitty.

Somebody didn't want her any more.  
Lisa went to the shelter.  
Blue eyes met blue eyes.  
She put out a paw  
And drew herself into our hearts.

She had such soft fur  
Melting blue eyes  
And a quiet little purr.

She was a bit hard on the toilet paper.  
We learned to put it up.

She was big enough to hold,  
She fit right next to the heart,  
Her head could be cupped in a hand.  
Even if she did use her claws  
A little more than was convenient.

She thrived, she sulked.  
She would lie at my feet while I wrote.  
But that day, she didn't lie. She slumped.  
Her body was failing, after so long.

We tried. It wasn't doing any good.  
We let her go.

Hold on to her, please.

— Joe

"Our little life is rounded with a sleep"

Tuesday C'Mell was listless. We took her to the vet and were hit with the news that she had kidney failure. She spent two days in the hospital. Wednesday night the staff sent her home with us in hopes we could get her to eat and drink. She drank but she was not interested in eating. I put down a towel for her to sleep on in the bathroom and placed her on it. She gave me a look that said clearly don't be insulting and climbed onto the bed with some difficulty. There was a determined look on her little pointed face. Joe came to bed and repeated the procedure. Again she got into bed

and we shrugged. She slept between us for a while then moved back to the towel, which I had put close to food and water.

Thursday after work I brought home a bag of canned goods from the grocery store in the same mall as my library. She got down some of the broth from Friskies Beef and Gravy but then lost all interest in food.

We took her back to the vet Thursday night. She was no longer enjoying her life. The vet entered and began a spiel designed to ease us into ending her suffering. I interrupted and said I thought it was time to let go. I held her head while the vet injected the poison. Perhaps five seconds later all breath gasped out and her suffering was over. The journey of our lives together which had begun sixteen years earlier at Animal Control was over.

— Lisa

TIME CONSIDERED AS A TWEET  
OF SEMI-PRECIOUS TEXTS

Review by Joseph T Major of

2312

by Kim Stanley Robinson

(Orbit; 2012;

ISBN 978-0316098113; \$10.00;

Hachette Book Group; 2012; \$26.00)

**Nebula Award Winner****Hugo Award Nominee**

In Samuel Delany's "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones" (*New Worlds*, December 1968), the mysterious organization that HCE (a *Finnegans Wake* fan!) is involved with has a Earth-monthly code word that serves as identifier and Word of Power, the name of a semi-precious stone. How the code word got out is explicitly said to be mysterious; nowadays it would be tweeted and texted across the worlds (hacked into by authorities and free-lancers alike, but a SF story is so often of its time).

That same year, John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* had a strikingly different method of story-telling. A main plot was broken up by chapters describing various factors of the world of the story. Now *Stand on Zanzibar* has dated far more than "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones", whether it be its slightly overpainted Vietnam war, its concern for overpopulation, or its use of supercomputers. (Or the New Leftish terrorists who trade means of destroying institutions; here they're romantic young rebels, but had they been not New Leftish, they would have been evil villains to be hunted down like rabid radioactive pit bulls with syphilis and exterminated.)

Robinson has combined these in this story. Well, getting back to the roots can draw strength into a work. This is primarily the story of Swan, a member of a society like the one HCE is in, in a solar system like his, told in a fashion like that of the various people found to *Stand on Zanzibar*.

Mostly, Swan has to tour the various worlds of the Solar System, to find out what is really

going on. She begins on Mercury, where great cities move constantly to escape the sunlight, and indeed running before a constant dawn is a popular and pleasant hobby. Her journeys take her to the moons and planets, across a variety of worlds, a medley of methods of rule, a melange of means of travel. She meets with others, who go their own way, lives changed by this random encounter, into yet more facets of this great glowing jewel of a culture.

## VIKING BACKLASH

Review by Joseph T Major of

**SPACE VIKING LEGACY:*****The Tanith Gambit***

by Dietmar Arthur Wehr

(Amazon Digital Services; 2012; \$1.00)

Blame the management of Condé Nast. Many of the copyrights of stories from *Astounding* and *Analog* were not renewed, and the works have fallen into the public domain. Which means those who wish, in their various ways, to expand on the works of their favorite old writers can do so. The prospect of Arcot/Wade/Morey slash . . . well never mind.

The works of H. Beam Piper attract such attention, in part because of Piper's suicide. He died leaving the story in transit, as it were. Thus, his two principal series have recently been enthusiastically continued by enthusiasts.

The popular one seems to be *Space Viking* (*Analog* November 1962 — February 1963, 1963). Those who get past the pulpish title find a story that has some deep and dark insights into the nature of human action and governance; some petty, like the obtrusiveness of information services, and some very grand, as with the question of whether humanity is even governable.

Thus we have had John F. Carr's two volumes about the end of an era, *The Last Space Viking* (2011, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #3) and *Space Viking's Throne* (2012). Set in counterpoint, as it were, is Terry Mancour's followup, *Prince of Tanith, Princess Valerie's War* (both 2011, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #3), and a third to be published.

Carr's books, set a century after the events of *Space Viking*, describe how the League of Civilized Worlds of that book became the Empire of such later Piper stories as "Ministry of Disturbance" (*Astounding*, December 1958). Mancour's books are followups to the original novel, with further complications from the actions taken there.

Piper fan Dietmar Wehr had earlier done what might be called a grand tie-in work, "Genesis Two", a novella that tied together the stories "Genesis" (*Future Combined with Science Fiction Stories*, February 1951), "Omnilingual" (*Astounding*, February 1957), and "When In the Course — " (1981) to explain why the Freyans of Piper's future history are infertile with Earth humans. (Spoiler: the Martians of "Genesis" made a very last-ditch effort and created an interstellar drive, but their designs were still crashprone.)

The concept was interesting, if a little too close to L. Sprague de Camp's meticulous if not monomaniacal habit of tying up all the loose ends of Conan's career. However, Wehr lacked the writing skills to really develop the idea that well.

This work follows immediately on the end of *Space Viking*. In fact, it might be said to start as Chapter XXVIII of *Space Viking*, with Lucas Trask in the battered ruins of Marduk, figuring out what to do next, besides marrying Lady Valerie Horvath as fast as possible. (An excellent idea on its own merits.)

Somewhat less carnally, he also has to deal with the upset political balance of the Space Viking worlds. There are a lot of people out there who are not going to be happy with the new state of affairs, and they have weapons.

As the returning few find when they get to a very familiar scene on Trask's base of Tanith . . .

If Wehr could write at all well, this would be interesting. As it is, the work comes across as lame. John Campbell would have written a letter perhaps even as long as the manuscript explaining what was wrong and what could be done about it. However, for those really desperate for their semi-Piper fix, Wehr also has a sequel to *Junkyard Planet* (1963)/*The Cosmic Computer* (1964) out, *Cosmic Computer Legacy: The Tides of Chaos* (2012).

[For some reason, sequel writers seem to be driven to tie together those two works. Merlin the super-computer of *The Cosmic Computer* also features in Mancour's and Carr's books. Have they been reading *The Postman*?]

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FENIMORE COOPER  
Review by Joseph T Major of  
**HOW TEDDY ROOSEVELT SLEW THE  
LAST MIGHTY T-REX**  
by Mark Paul Jacobs  
(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$3.99)

In "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses", Mark Twain laid down a number of "rules governing literary art". Now, a great writer can break the rules and impress, but as always, the writer has to build on those rules before breaking them. The very first rule Twain expresses is: "**That a tale shall accomplish something and arrive somewhere.**"

One of the recurring themes of certain works is that of "at the end of the quest, the Faerie reset the venturers to their initial status and returned them home, unchanged by their wondrous adventures". In other words, a tale that has accomplished nothing and arrived nowhere. This theme recurs in such works as Michael Crichton's *Sphere* (1987), where the researchers use the power of the sphere to undo all the events of the novel.

Sometimes, the decision falls on the characters, who close off the gate to the wonders and rely on their mutual cooperation and the isolation of the place to keep the secret; thus *Almost Adam* (1996) by Petru

Popescu and *Neanderthal* (1996) by John Darnton, both of which have scientists suppressing amazing scientific discoveries out of a naïve belief that the wondrous others will be left alone. (Meanwhile, Roger McBride Allen's *Orphan of Creation* (1988), which took the same concept and had it **actually make a difference to the world**, was ignored.) In a world where the discovery of George Mallory's body on Mount Everest was world news before the discoverers got to their base camp, this has a serious problem fitting.

Thus this. As you know, Bob, in 1914 Theodore Roosevelt explored an untraversed river in Brazil, tracking it to its mouth, and causing the "River of Doubt" to be renamed the "Rio Roosevelt" in his honor. The expedition damaged his health and emotionally drained him.

Jacobs provides a thoroughgoing if not exhaustive recounting of this venture, with full and grueling explanations of the health hazards of the Amazon valley, the hostility of the natives, the problems of travel, and the many impediments to exploration. Beyond that, he has the expedition riven with dissent, with explorers bringing past flaws and having them become exacerbated under the extreme conditions of the expedition.

Next, he tosses in a legend of an ancestral survivor. The expedition, burdened with murder, rumors of atrocities, malaria, and other problems, is turned to investigate.

In a terrifying confrontation, a venturer proves to have a horrific past, and then an ancestral legend turns out to be frightenignly true. And then . . .

And then, everyone agrees to suppress the story, ending with a final scene in which a last survivor destroys the only proof of the events.

Well, did the characters learn anything? If the world didn't change, at least the people should have. One or two were killed, but the others weren't that much affected, except maybe to be hit by the stupid virus. Why oh why would T. R. ever suppress the trophy of a lifetime and a genuine scientific discovery to boot? It needs a very deep justification.




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THE STALINGRAD OPTION  
Review by Joseph T Major of  
**DISASTER AT STALINGRAD:  
An Alternate History**  
by Peter Tsouras  
(Frontline Books; 2013;

ISBN 978-1-84832-663-7; \$29.95)

In C. S. Forester's "If Hitler Had Invaded England" (1960), the chronicler of Hornblower said "He must be given in this narrative every possible chance, but none of the impossible ones." Not paying attention to this is one of the reasons that other AH on Forester's topic are so often derided.

Keeping this in mind, when David Downing sought to write of *The Moscow Option: An Alternate Second World War* (1979) he did just that; have Hitler put out of action for six crucial months in 1941, leading to dramatic successes for the Axis . . . that in the end, still didn't enable them to win.

The introduction, by fellow historian Ralph Peters, praises Tsouras for having written alternate history that is not "implausible, historically superficial, emotionally naive, uninformed as to technical expertise, and, not least, written in so slovenly a manner that any remaining faith one has in our educational systems, whether in the United States or the United Kingdom, collapses like a pup tent in a hurricane." [Page xi] How well does this do?

It doesn't help when Tsouras ignores the results of the Channel Dash, and has all the German ships that made that daring return home be serviceable for the attack on PQ-17. Then, the Germans, in spite of being outgunned, produce a miraculous coordination between the Luftwaffe and the Kriegsmarine, resulting in the loss of two British battleships, an American carrier — and the capture of several merchant ships, complete with equipment, which is used to equip several German divisions.

That enables the German force striking for Stalingrad manages to pull off some remarkable accomplishments, followed by some even more remarkable accomplishments on the part of the Führer.

With Stalingrad taken, relinquished, and taken again, vast turmoil in the Soviet hierarchy, and the infiltration of the German high command by those less than supportive of the concept, the Führer's Indomitable Will brings him to the sight of his greatest victory, where someone is looking through a two-meter wide exhaust port . . .

As you can guess, the initial conditions seem to be less than entirely thought through. What happens does follow from that, but the conclusion does seem only the beginning of more turmoil and confusion.

And somehow Tsouras forgot about Operation Torch!

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FOR WANT OF AN AGREEMENT  
Review by Joseph T Major of David Row's  
**THE WHALE HAS WINGS:  
Volume I — Rebirth**  
(Amazon Digital Services; 2012; \$1.00)  
**THE WHALE HAS WINGS:  
Volume II — Taranto to Singapore**  
(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$2.99)



One of the standards of alternate history is Robert Sobel's *For Want of a Nail: If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga* (1973). Unlike most of the works before and after that, it was composed in the format of a history book. Sobel was a business historian (and there is a statement attributed to him that he went to the immense effort of writing each chapter in the style of a different historian).

David Row has followed this example and written a straightforward history of an alternative naval history. His point of departure is one that in retrospect seems so obvious that it seems hard to believe that the real-world alternative is not the alternate history.

Until 1939, the Royal Navy did not have control over its own aviation; the creation of the Royal Air Force in 1918 from the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service had put all British military aircraft under one command. Because of this divided use, the Fleet Air Arm, created in 1924 as an RAF command, had a low priority for new aircraft.

Row's point of departure, then, is to have an interservice struggle lead to the return of the FAA to the Navy in 1933. The Navy now gets its own development and procurement of aircraft, which leads to a somewhat more carrier-minded Navy. Thus the title; *The Whale Has Wings — Rebirth*.

This is not an unalloyed gain, and Row is quite honest about the problems of the costs of building ships, the resources for doing so (one item touched upon is that of having to order armour plate from the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia, which might have influenced the Sudeten Crisis more than it did).

And as well, it provokes a response; there is no *Victorious German Arms Syndrome* here, where one side makes absolutely no response to the changed circumstances. With all these new carriers, the *Kriegsmarine* advances the building of their ships *Graf Zeppelin* and *Peter Strasser*. Moreover, Row does not fall for the temptation of Nazi Supercompetence; the ships have the sort of problems our history indicates they would have, and the command is also as bothersome as it is.

When the war does break out, there are many changes, but no overwhelming one-sided victory. The British take losses, the campaigns go differently, a little better here, a little less good there. The fate of the French Fleet in Oran, for example . . .

In *The Whale Has Wings — Taranto to Singapore*, the expanded Royal Navy continues the struggle. They press their advantages, leading to a gradual acceleration of some events, and a comparative advantage in others. The description of the Battle of the Denmark Straits, for example, shows in action the problems of development and of interservice conflict. The Whale may have wings, but *der Wal nicht*. Perhaps Row is trying to counter *Luftwaffe '46 Syndrome*, or the magical super weapons (which, if

experience is any guide, would be more like the blip krieg of *My Tank Is Fight!* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #4)).

These are the first and second volumes of a projected four. Like Mike Hall, author of *The American World War* (reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #1), Row is previewing this work on the Internet, in his case on the *alternatethehistory.com* message board.

Those who like their AH to be novels, with "wild" elements, might not find this to be to their taste. Those who go for historical speculations following from a change would find it worth a look.

#### BATTLE OF POOR RICHARD

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### STONEWALL GOES WEST

by R. E. Thomas

"Book One of the Stonewall Goes West Trilogy"

(Black Gold Press; 2013;

ISBN 978-098889200; \$12.99;

Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$4.99)

"Brother Jonathan, why dost thou strike thy head so vigorously with that hatchet helve?"

The general looked at his blue-coated servitor. "The pleasure when I cease is immense. Why are you here?"

"I bear news from our King Geoffrey. He hast declared you grand master of the armies of the east, over General Thraxton the Braggart, Ned of the Forest, and the other commanders."

For answer the general began hitting himself again. "Rather should I abuse myself this way than that."

— Not from *Jonathan Goes East* by H. N. Turteltaub and Dan Chernenko

As Jackson has indeed lost his arm from that friendly fire at Chancellorsville, presumably A. P. Hill was not inspired by an angel to give his commanding officer a password. But he has been saved pneumonia, and in a desperate effort to restore the situation in the West, been given the task of overseeing the Confederate armies there.

To say this is unwelcome, much less unpleasant, is not surprising. The Army of Tennessee was one that set the mark for chaos in the high command. For the historian, this is in the late fall of 1863.

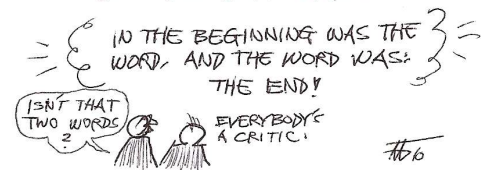
Thraxton . . . er, General Bragg doesn't take too kindly to being superseded, quits in a huff, goes away in a snit, doing his part for the war effort. This throws Jackson into a very disturbed situation, but one he can try to master.

It is more than a little ironic that the one commander who does manage to avoid bumbling and insubordination is doing so in hopes for even higher office after the war. Thomas depicts the "friction" of battle, of misunderstandings, misconceptions, and misleading views that make a plan doomed not

to survive first conflict with the enemy.

In spite of all this, Jackson manages to get a majority of his new subordinates on the same ticket, and deals out a startling defeat to the Union in southern Tennessee. But ahead lie the defenses of Ramblerton . . . er, **Nashville**. And one victory does not make a war, and there is more to be done when this series is . . . **To Be Continued**.

#### THE AUTHOR DEATH OF THE UNIVERSE



#### THE ADVENTURE OF CLEVELAND STREET

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### THE HOUSE OF SILK:

A *Sherlock Holmes Novel*

by Anthony Horowitz

(Mullohand Books; 2011;

ISBN 978-0-316-19701-4; \$14.99

Amazon Digital Services; 2012; \$2.99)

*Foyle's War* is one of those splendid British crime shows, about an inspector trying to investigate crimes and not be distracted by that little war going on. (He was in the South of England, yet somehow never got near Warmington-on-Sea.) The creator and lead writer was Anthony Horowitz.

He also writes mysteries, and in this one goes back to the root. It begins with Watson in retirement, explaining why he did not write this until now.

The case begins with a client, an art dealer worried that he is being stalked, and that his sister is dying. The case seems interesting enough and Holmes lays aside the fine morocco case to start in on this work.

If he had known that it might end up with a spell in the nick, cleverly framed for murder, he might have demurred. And Watson never did tell him who offered to help . . .

The plot is deeply moored in the Canon, with references to former events and places. Thus we see Dr. Percy Trevelyan, somewhat down on his luck now that his "Resident Patient" has been murdered. Or, more startling than the earth suddenly deciding to go round the moon, Mycroft Holmes uprooting himself from the Diogenes Club to tell how deep a mire Watson and his brother have got themselves in. Yes, the Baker Street Irregulars are involved. Indeed, one is too deeply involved.

For the case also involves a cryptic and covert place called the House of Silk. Those with certain needs go there . . . and end up getting trapped in its web.

The case not only spreads its tangled skein throughout the book, it is firmly enmeshed in the Canon. Unlike all too many recent writers of pastiches, Horowitz knows his Holmes. The conclusion has a certain satisfaction to it.

#### THE ROCKET OF 2012

Review by Joseph T Major  
**A NEW AMERICAN SPACE PLAN**  
 by Travis S. Taylor  
 (Baen; 2012;  
 ISBN 978-1451638653; \$15.00;  
 Baen/Amazon Digital; \$8.99)

*Rocket City Rednecks* is a reality show about the old American way, where a bunch of good old boys get together in a garage and knock something together. Since said good old boys all have at least one Ph. D. along with substantial expertise in engineering and space science, the "something" may be presumed to have some basis somewhat beyond the uneducated rural. Rather as if Homer and the Rocket Boys all went back to Coalwood to pick up where they left off.

This is an informative, but not particularly structured book; chapters cover the process of the International Space Station and its failures, the international (except for the USA) Mars simulation, the design and construction of their own test vehicles, and so on. The latter one hopes is somewhat less hazardous than the experiments performed by Jack Parsons and his group (hint: its name was "Suicide Squad"). It is also to be hoped that Taylor does not end up like Parsons in either his non-rocketry related activities or his demise.

There is a substantial amount of work being done, but to various diversified ends. The reader will note, for example, that no mention is made of Mark Zubrin's work on such things as long-term spaceflight simulations (see *Mars on Earth* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #5) and *The Case for Mars* (1996, 2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #1)). There may be an unrecorded quarrel here.

Taylor attributes the problems of space programs to the cycle of administrations; no politician wants to continue a program begun by a predecessor. There is something to that, but other attitudes also play a part. The long history of abandoned programs shows how as soon as a development has a problem, it is immediately jettisoned for a promising new technology, from DC/X to VentureStar to Orion...

Private development is furthermore hindered by investment considerations. The price of space falls into a gap in the range of acceptable financial commitments. Add to that the problem mentioned above, of abandoning a development at the first serious problem, and beyond that the cultishness of some proposals; think Rotary Rocket, as in *They All Laughed at Christopher Columbus* (by Elizabeth Weil, 2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 1 #6). Think of the sort of technological

wonders always announced to great acclaim and promise that have vanished without further trace, in other fields as well as this. There is a certain lack of concentration.

At least so far no one has been as dishonest as the con men of Cyril Kornbluth's "The Rocket of 1955" (1939, *Stirring Science Stories*, April 1941). And there have been no demoralizing accidents; Jack Parsons only blew himself up, and while doing special-effects work at that.

What bothers me is that space experimentation is being downgraded to reality shows. *Rocket City Rednecks* is being put somewhere in the vicinity of *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* and *Hardcore Pawn*.

#### YOU'RE SO VAIN by Joe

There was an annular solar eclipse on **May 9-10, 2013**, visible in Australia (West Australia, Northern Territories, and Queensland), Papua New Guinea (Milne Bay), Solomon Islands (Vella Lavella, Kolombangara, Gizo, Nusa Simbo, Ranongga Choiseul, and Kennedy; just missing the site of the sinking of PT-109), and Tarawa. The maximum annularity was 6 minutes 3.4 seconds, at 2° 12' 48" N, 175° 28' 18" E (east of Nauru, which like Howland Island saw only a partial eclipse).

The eclipse is part of Saros 138, which began on June 6, 1472 and will end on July 11, 2716. The next eclipse in this saros will be on May 21, 2031, and will also be an annular eclipse.

The next solar eclipse will be a hybrid eclipse on **November 3, 2013**, beginning off the coast of Florida and visible in Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo [the sometime Zaire], Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. The maximum totality will be 1 minute 39 seconds, visible at sea south of Ivory Coast and Ghana. It is part of Saros 143, which began March 7, 1617 and will end April 23, 2897.

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

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

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

#### TRIPLE CROWN 2013 by Lisa Major

So far it has not been a spectacularly exciting Triple Crown. Orb won a sloppy Derby but failed to win the Preakness on a dry Pimlico track. Oxbow won the Preakness under Gary Stevens. It may be the last Triple Crown winner for Stevens, whom I remember best guiding home 1988 Derby winner Winning Colors, third filly to win the Derby. (Elizabeth Moon wrote a book by that title. I wish she'd get around to writing the prequels, *Regret* and *Genuine Risk*.)

Grant's coworkers had a Derby thing going. He got assigned longshot Golden Soul, who actually managed a quite creditable second in the Derby. I myself had hoped for a win by Normandy Invasion, just so the D-Day veterans there as guests of his owner could have a big thrill. I hope they had a good time even if their horse lost.

Orb did deliver a long overdue victory to his cousin owners, Phipps and Janney. Janney had both the glory and the grief of owning the great Ruffian. The victory was also long overdue for trainer Shug McGaughey. Perhaps it made up somewhat for having his talented colt Easy Goer upstaged by the wrong side of the tracks Sunday Silence.

On Saturday Palace Malice avenged his sire Curlin's defeat in the Belmont. Malice is from Curlin's first crop which means that Curlin will be a very popular sire for at least several years.



The horse from Yucca Flats.

#### CHANGES IN THE COMIC BOOK WORLD

by Carol Clarke  
 (Spoiler Alerts)

There have been many changes in the comic book world at least with the two big companies, DC and Marvel. Starting 19 to 20 issues ago depending on how you count and by the time this comes out it will probably 21 to 22 issues ago DC restarted its whole universe. It started with the DC NEW 52. 52 new titles all starting from if not the beginning a new beginning for them.

They were broken down into kind of groups. First Batman inspired by the Frank Miller Dark Knight version had four titles to begin with Batman, Batman Detective Comics, Batman Dark Knight and Batman and Robin, under this were the Batman family of titles: Batgirl, Batwoman (An openly gay woman), Batwing (based in Africa) Nightwing (Dick Grayson the oldest of the 3 ex Robins) Redhood and the Outlaws (Redhood or Jason the 2nd Oldest of the ex Robins the 3rd being Jay or Red Robin of the Teen Titans) (Damien Wayne Bruce Son Of Batman and Robin frame was the 4th, was being the clue here) and Catwoman. In the opening issue of Catwoman she and Batman have a nice tumble in costume without finding out who the other really is. It was a little PG-13 or more tumble. Added to

this was Batman Incorporated (2nd Wave), Batman Arkham Unhinged (2nd Wave.) Batman Beyond Unlimited (3rd Wave?)

Next is the Superman Family Starting with Superman and Superman Action Comics, Supergirl, and Superboy, Followed by the 2nd and 3rd wave Smallville Season 11 (2nd wave) Adventures of Superman (3rd Wave) Superman Unchained (3rd wave) In this comic series Superman is young, works for the *Daily Star*, and wears jeans and tee shirts with his Logo on them.

The next big group is the team groups started by the Justice League (Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Cyborg), Teen Titans, Suicide Squad, Legion of Super Heroes, Legion Lost Justice League Of America (3rd Wave)

Then there is the Magical arm which is led by Justice League Dark then followed by Frankenstein Agent of Shade, Shade, Voodoo and I Vampire, Constantine (3rd Wave), (Who is British and nothing like Keanu Reeves version in the film) Both Voodoo and I Vampire have come to the end of their runs and are or were replaced with other titles. I, Vampire last issue is 19 which is sad I really liked the comic)

The Green Lantern group consists of Green Lantern, Green Lantern Corps, Green Lantern New Guardians and Red Lanterns.

There is a Nature group but I only know two titles that go in it ,Animal Man and Swamp Thing.

The rest are a hodge-podge of titles like All star westerns starring Johan Hex, Firestorm, Birds of Prey, Ame Comi Girl (3rd Wave) Earth 2 (2nd Wave) World's Finest (With Power Girl and the Huntress 2nd Wave) Dail H (2nd Wave) Flash, Aquaman, Injustice Gods Among Us (3rd Wave), Captain Atom, Justice League of America's Vibe, Demon Knights and Arrow (2nd Wave) Green Arrow And a bunch I am sure I missed. In all there were 52 titles in the first wave and I don't know how many in the 2nd or 3rd waves.

Besides Superman Wearing jeans and being young again here are some other things to note. Superman and Wonder Woman are dating. Black Carney and Green Arrow are dating. The lineup of Birds of Prey is completely different, Black Canary Starling Katana Batgirl and for a while Poison Ivy. Katana just left to join the Justice League of America. It's a great book and I will not spoil it any more for you But it's not Black Canary and The Huntress with Oracle anymore. Batgirl in this universe got over being shot by the Joker and is back to walking around. She still has her handicapped van and that is still in her past.

Also all the issue 13 were issue 0 and were origin issues with spoilers for the next year. For the last few months 3 of the major groups have been involved in big cross-over stories. The Batman Family has been caught up in Death in the Family were they all were tortured by the Joker and it ended with them

not trusting Batman as much as they had before. And of coarse that also ended after the story with the death of Damien Wayne / Robin Batman /Bruce Wayne Son and all the Batman family issue 18 were titled Requiem dealing with his death in some way. The Justice League and Aquaman where dealing with the THORN OF ATLANTIS which led to people not trusting the league and the forming of the Justice League of America.

And finally you had H'el on Earth in the Superman family and a little with the Justice League. Mostly with Superman and Wonder Woman being a couple. You have Superman finding out about Superboy and Supergirl being fooled into siding with H'el for much of the run. Supergirl is still a stranger on this planet and still learning English. She doesn't know what to make of the human race yet. She really just wants to go home which is what H'el promises her and that it will not hurt the humans. Only when she learns the truth does she (not Superman or Superboy) save the day by Krytanian poisoning H'el and herself. DCs books are interesting and brought new life to old stories.

Marvel, trying to keep up restarted some of their best the last year with MARVEL NOW: Savage Wolverine 1, Wolverine 1, Uncanny X-Men 1, X-Termination part 1, Uncanny Avengers (Mix of Avengers and X-Men) 1, The Fearless Defenders 1, The Defenders 1, Fantastic Four 1 (The Original cast with Johnny Storm brought back from the dead and them lost in space with their kids), FF 1 (The Thing Suit, She Hulk, Medusa, Antman), The All New X-men 1 (The original X-Men bought forward in time), X-Men Legacy (Legend who is Professor X Son), Morbius The Living Vampire (I Vampire in the Marvel world) The New Avengers.

At the same time they are printing these and other new titles they are continuing some of their other titles as well as their Ultimate titles which have been controversies. Things like Peter Parker isn't Spiderman anymore; he was killed off and replaced in the Ultimate world. And retelling the Fantastic Four in a strange and new way that is more like how it came out in the movie.

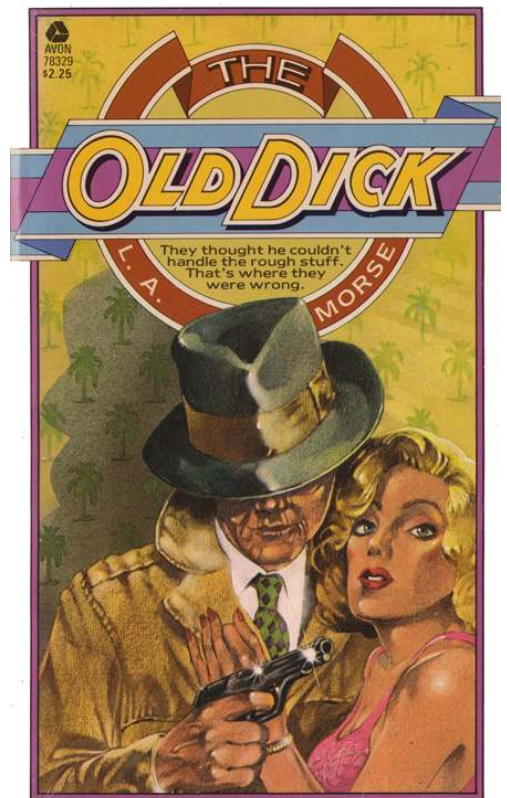
I am sorry but I haven't had time to read any of the new Marvel Now books, I have them just not the time It is hard enough keeping up with DC and Dynmate and Dark Horse. Dynmate has been printing some of the better books around. Things like Kevin Smith's Bionic Man, Dark Shadows, Dark Shadows Year One, Masks, The Spider, The Shadow, The Shadow Year One, Red Sonja, and Vampirella of all of these books I think the best is the Spider and The Shadow. With covers by Alex Ross on many of them they are among some of the best comic lit ever written.

And you can't forget Dark Horse which is printing Joss Whedon's Buffy the Vampire Slayer season 9 and Angel and Faith of the two Angel and Faith is really super and well done and keeps you guessing with guess stars like

Spike and Willow and well you just never knew who will show up as Angel try's to resurrect Giles from the dead out of his own guilt and Faith tries to be to grown up and not let him go too far out of the lines. It's just one of the best comics around. I wish his Buffy comic was half as good.

Anyway you have the DC NEW 52 and the MARVEL NOW to start over with and then you have great independent books by companies like Dynmate and Dark Horse and one I didn't mention BOOM! Who is doing Steed and Mrs. Peel which is worth a look for all you Avenger/Diana Rigg Fans still out there. Basically, now is a good time to pick up a comic book and have a read.

TRICKY DICKS  
Review by Taral Wayne of  
**THE OLD DICK**  
by L. A. Morse  
(1981; Avon; \$2.25)



Some years ago, I happened to pick up a used paperback. At the time, I didn't usually read this sort of mystery ... for that matter, I still don't. But who could resist a title like "The Old Dick?" Especially by a writer with the improbable name "L.A. Morse." I thought a moniker like that surely had to be a put-on. "L. A." (as in Los Angeles, home of hard-



boiled mysteries) and “Morse” (as in “code”) – what else could it be?

It turns out the name really *is* Larry Allan Morse, and he is the author of several other works, including *The Big Enchilada*, *The Flesh Eaters* and *Sleaze*. Although he was born in Southern California – as you might suppose of a writer in this genre – he moved to Toronto in the late 1960s. It should be possible to stalk the man and shake him down ... given a good enough reason.

Returning to *The Old Dick*, the novel is literally about an old dick – a tough-minded, elderly, ex-private investigator living in near hand-to-mouth retirement in Los Angeles – and his buddy, an equally hard-up, retired cop. Into their declining years intrudes a superannuated racketeer they put away years ago, who comes to them with a kidnapping problem. Through numerous unexpected twists and turns, the novel ends on a *totally* unexpected and satisfying double-double cross. The story is tough, the language cynical and the characters hilarious. You don’t often read about hard-boiled detectives who worry about incontinence or finding the right denture adhesive. The story isn’t played for laughs, though. There’s grief. Some of the twists are downright nasty and not in the least funny.

It’s exceptional for me to read a mystery that isn’t set in first century Rome or medieval London more than once, but I’ve not only read *The Old Dick* three times . . . I own *two* copies of the first edition.

I’m astonished that *The Old Dick* was never produced as a motion picture. It has all the goods. Both Jake Spanner and Patrick O’Brien are described in detail, making it hard to believe the author didn’t have the same actors in mind that I did. No one I know could’ve stepped into Jake’s shoes better than Art Carney. And as for the red-faced, huffing, puffing, overweight retired cop – who could’ve been better than Jackie Gleason? Lady Luck gave me the wink for the role of the racketeer, Sal Piccolo, as well. Abe Vigoda was perfect for it.

Since the book was written in 1981, there were six years in which *The Old Dick* could have been produced with the ideal cast. Then, unfortunately, Gleason took the long sleep in 1987. Not all was lost. A recast easily puts John Goodman in Gleason’s place. When Art Carney died in 2003, though, the chance to make *The Old Dick* – as it should have been made – slipped away for good.

There were a couple of times when I could have bought *The Big Enchilada*, but balked at the cost. A few years later and its funny how three bucks doesn’t seem like such a big deal anymore. Now I curse my stinginess. It won’t do to simply buy a later reprint, either. I’ve seen the covers. They stink. I’ll settle for nothing less than the first edition and the cover that matches my copies of *The Old Dick*, thank you. However, I may be missing little. The later books by Morse are about Sam Hunter, a more ordinary *young* dick . . . who has none

of the chutzpah of a genuine *old* dick.

## CONGLOMERATION 2013

April 5-7, 2013

Con Report by Joseph & Lisa Major



### Friday, April 5, 2013

We both took the day off. Naturally, I had a doctor’s appointment, complete with lab work. Nothing more wrong than usual.

We got to the Ramada, which is what it is now, about fourish. The dealer’s room and the consuite were open, which was all that mattered at the time.

Larry Smith didn’t have to buy two hotel rooms, so he was there, and we began accumulating books. Somehow I had managed to obliterate the memory of the title of *Crescent Moon* from my memory, but Larry remembered. Somewhat to my surprise, “Saladin Ahmed” really really is his name.

**Joel Zakem** and **Bob Roehm** were there, and they had a bunch of Spaceways books. I started reading one (yes, I bought it first), and realized that if the explicit sex were taken out, which was the whole point of the book and makes this speculation pointless, there would still be a decent story there. Silly me.

**Leigh Kimmel** and **Larry Ullery** were there as well. I liked the Edward and Béla shirt (hint: someone said to the Count, “Bring me the head of a **Sparkly Emo Vampire**.”) but it was out of print.

**Blackwyrn Press** had a large and active presence there, including their president **Dave Mattingly**, selling their books. More on this later.

There were a lot of the other old-timers there, old faces from the area. Not so many from Nashville, at least none came to eye. Maybe they are all saving up for Hypericon.

**Tim** and **Elizabeth** had arrived about the time we made our first loop. We agreed that our dinner would be at BD’s tomorrow. **Dave Herrington** explained why his work cycle excludes coming to club meetings here. When we were all younger we could drive 120 miles and do a full day’s fanning on four hours sleep after a twelve-hour workday, but that was then and this is now.

Then the phone rang. Grant’s weight-redistributing slipper had disintegrated, cutting open his foot. We went up to Charter

Communications and got him, had dinner, and then figured there wasn’t much point in going back to the con so went home

And so to bed.

Sunrise: 7:22 a.m.

Sunset: 8:09 p.m.

Weather: Mild, cloudy

### Saturday, April 6, 2013

Grant had been interested in a one-day membership, but with the foot and such didn’t figure it worth getting out of bed. So Lisa and I went off to have breakfast at Heitzman’s and drove down to the con.

There were worthwhile program items. For a con that focuses on gaming, there were a substantial number of presentations by the local small-presses. There was one for each of the four presses that had people there, and then mutual one where they asked people to pitch their works for submission. One woman who made her presentation had created a web site for the group she had described in her books. That was a little more than I could really try to match.

The dinner was nice, even though Leigh & Larry couldn’t make it and **Johnny Carruthers** didn’t. There was, after all, the prospect of the Masquerade.

Which was also nice. The costumes were all decent, and for a change the judges didn’t award every participant a prize. There were several steampunk costumes. **B. J. Willinger** did his customary master of ceremonies work, and things went well.

The Klingon troubadours played at intermission, making for a break almost more interesting than the show. **Qapla’**.

I don’t know what we would do if there were a midnight masquerade, as there had been once upon a time. As it was, there weren’t any interesting seeming parties, so we went home and saw to Grant.

And so to bed.

Sunrise: 7:21 a.m.

Sunset: 8:10 p.m.

Weather: Partly cloudy, mild.

### Sunday, April 7, 2013

Took Lisa to church, went to the con and talked for a while, went back and got her, went back to the con. Tail end stuff, though the Word was that they would be back next year. There had been some concern about that.

We settled up with Larry Smith. Our share of books was \$255. Not to mention getting several books from Blackwyrn and other publishers, or from Bob & Joel and Leigh & Larry. Not bad.

Larry had one thing I thought I would never live to see. I refer, of course, to the final book of *The Wheel of Time*. A lot of people hadn’t, including the author.

The room closed, we retired to the con suite and talked for a while, and about four figured it was time to push on, go home, get Grant, and



go out to dinner. Another con, another day, living in this world no way.

Then so to bed.

Sunrise: 7:19 a.m.

Sunset: 8:11 p.m.

Weather: Partly cloudy, mild.

— Joe

Since this is a local con we were not going to miss it. Larry Smith was there and we tried to make sure he did not regret having his stall there. I sort of wish now I had put *Song of the Vikings* on the stack. It did look interesting. I did get the latest Keldara book by John Ringo. Another interesting thing was a local publisher, a small press named Blackwyrm.

— Lisa

### CONGLOMERATION 2013 Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

Conglomeration was held over the weekend of April 5-7, 2013 at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in Louisville, Kentucky. We headed down on Thursday, since we wanted to get an early start and avoid the traffic woes. We made good time, and we got checked in at the nearby Quality Inn we were sleeping at (after the Ramada screwed up my husband's request for a disability-accessable room last year, we didn't want to give them any further business).

Once we had our personal belongings in our sleeping room, we headed over to the convention center to see if we might be able to get loaded in early and make Friday morning setup a little easier. Although they had the tables in place, they didn't yet have the keys, so they couldn't guarantee security. That's a concern I can completely understand, having stayed at a hotel past midnight in order to make sure the dealers' room was properly locked at Anime Crossroads.

So we headed back to our sleeping room to take it easy for the rest of the day. I made some pretty substantial progress on a key scene for a novel I'm working on. We also got on the Internet and caught up on stuff.

On Friday we got up early to get the hotel's free breakfast before heading over to the convention center to begin loading in. We were able to get a good parking spot, a second cart, and some good help, so we were able to get everything loaded in and set up with time to spare. I also got my art onto the art show.

Once the doors opened to the public, I started seeing a lot of my friends. We ended up talking about my writing and the historical and narrative logic of some of the things I'm doing with my principal alternate history timeline. We also had some sales, although Fridays are always slow days at this con.

After the dealers' room closed for the night, we headed over to the con suite and hung out for a while. However, there were no parties, so we finally gave up and headed back

to the Quality Inn and our sleeping room. I was a little disappointed, since the Xerps alien party used to always be held on Friday evening, and they always had great food. However, I later heard that they were sufficiently annoyed about having been shut down the previous year on a BS noise complaint that they decided not to come back.

On Saturday we headed back over to the convention center and dropped in at the con suite before heading over to the dealers' room to get our tables open for business.

At first sales were slow, and we were wondering if we'd be able to justify returning in future years. But then things picked up and we became steadily more confident that we'd at least made expenses, so we'd be able to come back if there wasn't a conflict with one of the larger anime conventions.

While I was going to the con suite for munchies, I saw a classic Cadillac hearse rigged up as the Ghostbusters car, complete with a digital signboard advertising their party that night. So I was quite happy to know that there would be at least one party.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed over to the con suite to hang out until the parties started. I got out my notebooks and tried to sort out some notes on my novel. We also got drawn into a political discussion about the ongoing crisis in North Korea.

Sometime after eight, they brought in a bowl of snack cakes, including Moon Pies. Because they are mentioned in my short story "Tell Me a Story" (in the anthology *Rocket Science*, edited by Ian Sales), I had to have one. I don't think they're something I'd buy for myself, but given the connection to my story, I might eat them again if they show up at a con suite table.

About that same time we started to hear a lot of cheering from the pool deck just outside the con suite. Apparently the University of Louisville basketball team had just won in the NCAA tournament, and their fans were going wild. Of course there were some basketball fans here in sf fandom too, but it was interesting to watch the excitement of another fandom that we would usually consider to be mundanes.

Then we headed up to the Ghostbusters party. In previous years they'd have snack foods, but this year they just had the bar. We hung around for a while and talked with some of the hosts, then decided to call it a night and head back to the other hotel to sleep. When we got back, the parking lot was crowded, a change from the emptiness of the previous nights. However, it looked like a lot of people had booked rooms in the hotel to throw parties for the game.

On Sunday we had to get our stuff out of our sleeping room and get checked out. Then we headed over to the con hotel to visit the con suite before we went to the dealers' room and opened our tables for business.

Sales were fairly steady, although they were

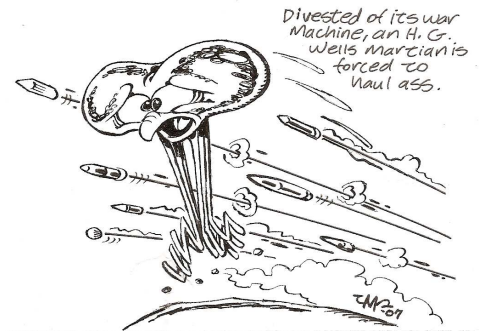
rather small. However, by the time we started packing, we were confident that we'd made money and would go home with a definite profit.

Once we got packed and started loading out, we were able to get some good helpers and get everything out relatively rapidly. I had some trouble when a couple of boxes didn't want to go in right, and then we had some quick showers come through as we were getting the last few items in. But on the whole we made good enough time that we were able to make one last visit to the con suite.

The dead-dog party was pretty low-key, but we got to hear some interesting stories from two US Marines who'd been in the sandbox during Operation Desert Storm. It came up as a part of a discussion about the failure modes of bureaucracy, and they had some doozies to tell, including tanks with fake armor and haphazard training that could've caused needless casualties.

Then it was time to head home. We went through a couple of areas of rain, but on the whole the trip was pretty good.

### WHO'S YER CON 2013 Con Report by Leigh Kimmel



Who's Yer Con is a small gaming convention held each year in Indianapolis. Historically it has been free, but as it has grown, it's become harder to do it entirely on the basis of voluntary financial donations, so there's a real possibility it may have to shift to a paid model in future years in order to move to an adequate-sized hotel, although the con hopes to keep membership prices as low as possible.

This year's Who's Yer Con was held over the weekend of March 15-17, 2013 at the Clarion Waterfront Plaza on the west side. At least this year the road construction on the I-465 I-74 junction was finished, so we didn't have to follow a confusing roundabout path to find it. However, because we were volunteering and had promised to come for the swag bag packing on Thursday, and were attending another event shortly before it, we had a little fun getting there in time.

I had an ankle bothering me, so rather than

try to do the packing walk at the swag bag packing stations, I worked on badge stuffing. We had a little trouble because the badges were alphabetized by first name, while the gaming schedules were alphabetized by last name. That meant we had to sort all the gaming schedules by first name to match them with badges. At least it wasn't as bad as the awful Duckton where all the badges were ordered by membership number and it took hours to get pre-registered members checked in.

On Friday we went there extra-early to help with dealer load-in, since it was something we knew quite well. However, as it turned out there wasn't anything for us to do for the first half-hour or so. Then, when dealers started showing up and we took initiative to help out, one of the senior staff took it upon herself to put us in our place with a very sharp criticism. Never mind how much experience we might have elsewhere, it didn't count here, so we'd overstepped ourselves and needed to be drawn up short. Neither of us found it encouraging to be treated like barely competent teenagers, and figured it might well be the last time we did any volunteer work for this con.

However, once the dealers actually started arriving and we had work to do, things became smoother. I ended up watching the door to make sure people who weren't dealers didn't come in until official opening. We presented it as a safety measure to protect them from getting injured while dealers were moving heavy boxes and displays.

Once the dealers' room opened, I really didn't have that much to do, so I sat at ops and wrote. An acquaintance dropped by to tell me some stuff and ask me what I'd heard, but I figured I'd just as soon stay out of other people's quarrels. So I just said that I'd heard a lot of things, but the only thing I'd been told officially concerned our own roles in the relevant conventions.

After supper, we went over to the open gaming area and looked at some of the logic puzzles the True Dungeon people had set up. I fiddled with one of them for a while, then talked with the game director about narrative in fiction and games, and how the first idea you come up with is often overly obvious and results in a shallow story.

After that, my husband found a pickup game to play and I did some more writing. By the time we left that evening, I had several pages of notes written on an effort to address a major logic hole in a novel I'm working on.

The cat was very happy to see us get home, mostly because she was hungry. So we fed her and turned in for the night.

On Saturday we didn't have to get up quite so early, so I had time to do a little stuff on the computer before we took off. We got over there in good time, and since I didn't have anything scheduled, I let con ops know I was available before settling in to write.

On the whole it turned out to be a

productive day for me, if a bit frustrating at times. I discovered that the entire chronology and presentation of one novel I'm working on will have to be rethought. I suppose it's better to find that out now rather than after I've written the whole novel.

In the evening we headed back home and took care of some stuff. We had some unwelcome excitement when the power flickered and crashed our U-verse router. Thankfully I was able to use the iPad to get on the 3G network and find out how to properly restart the router so we could get our phone and Internet working again.

On Sunday we headed back to the hotel for the last day of the con. I checked in at con ops, but they were all set for volunteers, so I settled in to do some writing. For the most part I was exploring the logic for one scene that was giving me a lot of trouble, hoping I'd then be able to thread my way through it.

While I was sitting there, I overheard a conversation between two senior staff that made me wince. Worst of all, the person who had done the problematical thing seemed to be quite proud of herself and think she'd handled the situation particularly well. Given that it concerned another group which was using a room in the hotel for a church service, I got exactly the opposite impression of her handling of the situation. Far from being exemplary, it had probably left that group with a very bad view of fandom, and the efforts of several individual congoers to explain what we were doing probably served very little to counteract that negative impression.

In the afternoon my husband's volunteer shift got canceled, so he went to play a game and I attended the question and answer session. After that we both went to the final raffle in which they distributed all the remaining prizes. He won some stuff, but I didn't. However, given that I'd won some stuff in the regular raffle, I wasn't too disappointed.

Then we headed home for the evening. I had some books I needed to ship, but I was tired enough that I decided I'd rather wait until Monday rather than make a stupid mistake and wind up having to placate an irate customer.

#### NEBULA AWARD WINNERS

##### Novel

**2312**, Kim Stanley Robinson (Orbit US; Orbit UK)

##### Novella

**After the Fall, Before the Fall, During the Fall**, Nancy Kress (Tachyon)

##### Novelette

**"Close Encounters,"** Andy Duncan (*The Pottawatomie Giant & Other Stories*)

##### Short Story

**"Immersion,"** Aliette de Bodard (*Clarkesworld* 6/12)

#### Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation

**Beasts of the Southern Wild**, Benh Zeitlin (director), Benh Zeitlin and Lucy Abilar (writers)

#### Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy

**Fair Coin**, E.C. Myers (Pyr)

#### Damon Knight Grand Master Award

Gene Wolfe

#### Solstice Award

Carl Sagan and Ginjer Buchanan

#### Kevin O'Donnell Jr. Service To SFWA Award

Michael H. Payne

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#### FANZINES



*Beyond Bree* April 2013, May 2013

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

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

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

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

*Broken Toys* #15, #16, #17

Taral Wayne

*The Drink Tank* #337, #338, #339, #340, #341, #342, #343, #344

Christopher J. Garcia  
[garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Fadeaway* #35 June-July 2013  
 Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Road,  
 Oxford, MA 01540-2035 USA  
[fabficbks@aol.com](mailto:fabficbks@aol.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*The FFix* #30  
 Steve Green

*Fish Out of Water* #528  
 Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue,  
 Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

*The Life of Rodney Year* 64 #3  
 Rodney Leighton, 11 Branch Road, R. R.  
 #3, Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia, B0K 1V0  
 CANADA

*MT Void* V. 31 #40 April 5, 2013 — V. 31 #  
 49 June 7, 2013  
 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>

*Opuntia* #261, April 2013, #262 May 2013,  
 #263 June 2013  
 Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta  
 T2P 2E7 CANADA

*The Reluctant Famulus* #93  
 Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road,  
 Owenton, KY 40359- USA  
[tomfamulus@hughes.net](mailto:tomfamulus@hughes.net)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*TNFF* 72.4 June 2013

*Vanamonde* #903-912  
 John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.  
 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

#### WORLDCON BIDS



Ah . . .  
 It's Hugo  
 voting time  
 in Fandom!

I don't feel like there's a lot to be recommended this year. There's another zombie novel, for example. Two were good, *2312* and *Captain Vorpatril's Alliance*, for

different reasons, and also had problems.

One of the "Best Fan Writers" nominees was a minor pro with a blog. And "fanzines" were similarly taken over. Not that the alternative is much different except as to gang.

Worst of all, there were **two** "Chicks Dig" books. In a year where there was a insightful analysis of the failure of movie publicity (*John Carter and the Gods of Hollywood*) and a witty, informed discussion of legal codes in invented worlds (*The Law of Superheroes*), that there were two vapid vaporings wuving their works nominated instead is not a good sign.

#### WORLDCON BIDS

2014  
 NASFiC:  
 Detroit  
<http://detroitin2014.org/>

Proposed Dates: July 17-20.

Phoenix  
<http://phoenixin2014.org/>

Proposed Dates: July 31-August 3.

2015  
 Helsinki, Finland  
<http://www.helsinkiin2015.org/>

Proposed Dates: August 6-10.

Spokane  
<http://spokanein2015.org/>

Proposed Dates: August 19-23.

Orlando  
<http://orlandoin2015.org/>

Proposed Dates: September 3-7.

NASFiC:  
 Houston

2016  
 Kansas City  
<http://kansascityin2016.org/>

Proposed Dates: August 18-22.

2017  
 Japan  
<http://nippon2017.org/>

Montréal

New York

2018  
 New Orleans  
<http://neworleansin2018.org/>

2019  
 Paris  
<https://sites.google.com/site/parisin2019/>

2020  
 New Zealand  
<http://nzin2020.org/>

The Helsinki, Orlando, and Spokane bids have all filed their papers for site selection, as have the Detroit and Phoenix NASFiC bids. Voting has been opened.

(I admit the prospect of all three WorldCon bids being chosen so there can be a month-long WorldCon has a peculiar desirability to it. Who would present the Hugos?)



#### ROBERT FROST MEETS FRANK ZAPPA

So, one of my friends posted this:  
 "It isn't necessary to imagine the world ending in fire or ice. There are two other possibilities: one is paperwork, and the other is nostalgia."  
 — Frank Zappa

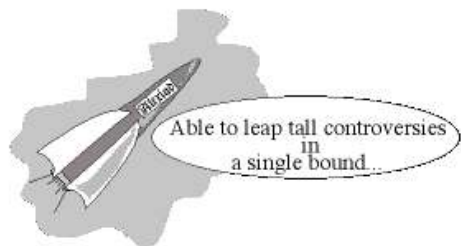
Which prompted this from me:

Robert Frost Meets Frank Zappa  
 by Chuck Lipsig

Some say the world will end in paper,  
 Others in dreams of the past.  
 Frankly, 'twould be one heck of a caper  
 To make the world end in reams of paper.  
 But if I wanted to make it last,  
 Nostalgia's destruction would be cool —  
 Long seminars about the past,  
 In a great school  
 Would be a blast.



## Letters, we get letters



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

Many thanks for *Alexiad*. I look forward to Joe's comments on the Hugo nominations. Remember: Seanan McGuire is indisputably the greatest writer of our age. Heinlein . . . Clarke . . . Le Guin . . . McGuire. The progression is inevitable! Also, there are no finer writers living today than those digging chicks. Digging chicks can *not* be criticized or questioned. Get with the program!

I don't think there will be a Chicks Dig Droogs: A Celebration of *A Clockwork Orange* by the Ptitsas Who Love It.

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Apr. 12, 2013  
Post Office Box 5323, Oracle, AZ  
85623-5323 USA  
[laurraine@mac.com](mailto:laurraine@mac.com)  
<http://www.weasner.com/>

Thanks for the latest (?) issue. I found the lettercol especially interesting. I was particularly impressed by Bill Patterson's very articulate LoC. I would certainly welcome a better spelling/grammar checker.

Richard Dengrove's LoC mentions Alzheimer's. This reminded me of a very interesting podcast I listened to not too long ago. You can find it at [http://www.voicebase.com/partner/voice\\_file\\_detail/120450](http://www.voicebase.com/partner/voice_file_detail/120450). Titled "Unraveling Bolero" (I believe the pun was intentional), it analyzes the repetitive nature of the composition. I don't want to say more, as that would kind of spoil the punchline, so to speak.

June 2, 2013

Your zine has been sitting on my desk ready for LoCcing for a while.

I thought I was at the same Loscon as Robert S. Kennedy, but it sounds like a different con. We were, however, both in the room when Lloyd and Yvonne Penney were being interviewed. I regret that we did not meet.

I'm going to attempt to read the Nebula nominees as well as the Hugo ones, though I don't know when I will actually accomplish this. I've attempted this in the past without complete success.

How generous of Kent McDaniel to allow readers to get a free download of his book.

So sorry to read of Lee Gilliland's unfortunate experience. I believe in Arizona it's illegal to even look at your phone while driving.

I remember when Nixon proposed the negative income tax. I thought it was a good idea. Have they instituted this under a different name while I wasn't paying attention?

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** 4/8/2013  
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring,  
MD 20907-8093 USA

Facebook fun?) But I refuse to believe that younger people don't read at all. It's just that the way we connect and the way they connect are completely different, and puts a wide barrier between them and us.

How do I know? I ask Lisa, or my brother and sister-in-law the professors with the new cat.

— JTM

From: **Cathy Palmer-Lister** April 13, 2013  
Ste. Julie, Quebec, CANADA  
[cathypl@sympatico.ca](mailto:cathypl@sympatico.ca)  
<http://www.monsffa.com/>

Thanks, Joe, I do enjoy reading *Alexiad*, though I seldom have time to write LoCs.

About the Hugo and Nebula award nominations, I don't at all understand what *Crescent Moon* is doing on the best novel ballot. I enjoyed it, but "good" is not "great". Not that it's a bad story, or poorly written, but I feel it is rather shallow. The ghuls are essentially zombies, and I'm really, really tired of zombies. I wouldn't have read it myself, (zombies on the cover) except that it was given away free at Chicon. The setting might be unusual for the North American readership, but there are no new ideas in it. Interesting that the three (three!!) episodes of *Dr Who* nominated for the short form dramatic presentation were written by Steven Moffat.

As Lloyd told you in his LoC, Con\*Cept is now officially dead. I picked it up when the con was on teetering on the edge in 2001 and chaired it until I "retired" last year. There just wasn't the staff to run it, and the very few who were still on deck had very different ideas on what direction we wanted the con to go. I'm saddened the new crew couldn't get it together, but honestly I think the end was inevitable. There will be, we hope, a new con coming in the next year which will probably be called Perception. It will be strictly literary, from what I hear. It's a risky undertaking in a mostly Francophone city, but if they work something out with Boréal (the French literary convention) it might succeed.

Re the obit for Wombat, Jan Howard Finder, he often came to Con\*Cept. He was known to most of Montreal's fandom and will be missed. Former Con\*Cept chairs told me he was a great auctioneer, but I never got to watch him "perform". It seems he had mastery of the "patter".

I will not be going to World Con this year, sigh. It's just too hot. I nearly died every time I stepped out of the hotel in Reno. I'm looking forward to London, though, and will probably spend an extra week enjoying the city. Looking at the bids, I'm surprised to see Japan. Seriously? Didn't Nippon 2007 lose a small fortune? I'd be interested in learning what this group thinks they can do differently.

Lose a big fortune?

I never thought I could display my beer geek knowledge in *Alexiad*, but Bill Patterson doesn't quite understand Paul Kalmanovitz's "achievement." Kalmanovitz believed that people were loyal to beer brands, and his strategy was to buy old beer brands, make them all in one place, and assume people would buy National Bohemian or Falstaff or Schlitz and he didn't have to advertize them. Pabst, which he controlled, was and is the nation's third largest brewer (although technically Miller and Coors didn't merge, but formed an "alliance") but its share of the market has fallen from 4 percent to 2 percent. It remains profitable because its advertising budget is nil, but 98 percent of beer drinkers would strongly disagree with Kalmanovitz's strategy.

As for "Elementary", it works and I like it once I realized that the character Jonny Lee Miller plays is *not* Sherlock Holmes, or at least the character Conan Doyle created, but someone else. I just think of him as "Sherlock House," and the show works for me. I know the creators of "Sherlock" have threatened to sue "Elementary," but "Sherlock" is trying to update Doyle's character and "Elementary" is trying to do something else.

Upon checking, I have found that there are six "Sherlock" and "Elementary" crossover stories on fanfiction.net. Only six?

John Thiel's reference to "the electronic version of *The National Fantasy Fan*" made me feel REALLY old. I duly went to efanzines and looked at it. This leads me to wonder why, in the age of the internet, the National Fantasy Fan Federation still exists. When I was in college, the N3F offered connections, letters, birthday cards, and tapes, and fun. What does it offer now? Why would anyone belong to it?

Joe. How to you know "people under 40 don't read for pleasure the way we do?" I could counter that I bet there are as many Millennials who like reading sf as do we crotchety Baby Boomers, but we don't know how to connect with them. There are some things about the way people in their 20s and 30s communicate that I won't ever fully understand. (Why is texting fun? Why is



Cool to see places like Helsinki and Paris planning bids. The Montreal bid will be launched officially in San Antonio, from what I've heard on the local grapevine. I've mixed feelings about it. A world con in your backyard may be easier on the wallet, but it's a boring place for a vacation. Joe, I never go off the beaten track in Montreal without my GPS. All those one-way streets! I once drove several blocks up St Laurent looking for a legal left turn only to told by a kindly trucker driving behind me that there were no legal left turns anywhere on its length! My husband will not drive into Montreal at all, not for love or money, even with GPS.

> And a sign at an intersection  
> with a black arrow pointing  
> upward/forward within a green  
> circle means NO TURNS. It cost  
> me Can. \$154 to find this out.—  
> JTM

Oh, that one is obvious. <wink> You should try understanding the parking signs. Everyone has a favourite horror story about parking signs that make absolutely no sense to anyone in any language and often contradict each other on the same street. I got a ticket in a parking lot even though I was in a "slot". Turned out there was a sign at the end of the row saying the last few slots were non-parking. So why did they have the slots painted on the pavement? The mind boggles.

Anyway, maybe we will meet again in Montreal. Take care, Joe!

From: **Rod E. Smith** April 22, 2013  
730 Cline Street, Frankfort, KY  
40601-1034 USA  
[stickmaker@usa.net](mailto:stickmaker@usa.net)

*Countdown* changed more than just the names from *The Pilgrim Project*. The movie use Gemini technology — which was far more capable and sophisticated than Mercury. There were actual proposals to use Gemini tech for a Moon landing if Apollo fell too far behind.

In the movie there were three dead cosmonauts, instead of one.

Oh, in my JOHT column, that should — of course — have been "glow a dull red" rather than "glow a dull read."

As for the potential good news mentioned in my previous letter, that fell through. A week after receiving the full ms the editor let me know it wasn't what they wanted. :-(

What, no zombies?

—JTM

Still have one novel undergoing the glacial evaluation process at Baen. The third novel was rejected.

Need to get busy, send out some stuff again and rewrite some other stuff.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** April 23, 2013

6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA  
19149-2128  
[darrells@comcast.net](mailto:darrells@comcast.net)

Two typos in my *Downton Abbey* piece. End of paragraph 4, next to last line, "called it" should obviously be "called in," and in the next line Crowley with an 'o' should obviously be Crawley with an 'a.' It's not you in particular, but I have noticed that ever since everybody switched over to computers, and fanzines began to consist of electronic files from a variety of sources pasted together, the practice of proofreading seems to have gone by the wayside. This is not to say that the editor should rewrite contributions, but he should correct obvious typos and query about less obvious ones. I find nowadays that the obligation to get it letter-perfect falls entirely on me. If I don't find the errors, no one will, and inevitably I do not find them all.

Schweitzer, if you can't find all the errors why do you expect us to?

— LTM

On the same page, I am afraid our friend Taras Wolansky is coming very close to genuine Islamophobia when he says that the difference between Christianity and Islam is that what puts you in the lunatic fringe of Christianity is in the mainstream of Islam. As with any group, we should pay more attention to what Muslims do than what they say, and if we are observant we note there are something like two billion of them, most of whom lead perfectly respectable lives without supporting terrorism or even attempting to kill gays on sight. Keep in mind please that the Bible says quite explicitly that a man who has lain with another man as if with a woman has committed an abomination and must be stoned. The Word of God, for both Jews and Christians, but I don't see a lot of them actually following this. The Bible also condones slavery, opposes women's equality, and contains much else which by the standards of our current values is evil and repressive. Let us also not be blind to how suddenly some changes have come about. Within the lifetime and even adult memory of most of *Alexiad's* readers, homosexuality was still classified as a disease by psychiatrists, and attempts to "convert" homosexuals into heterosexuals were not scams by religious nuts, but standard medical practice. There was a time not all that long ago when the idea of legalized gay marriage would have seemed almost too fantastic for some decadent, weird future society imagined in satirical science fiction, and when the idea that known gays should be allowed to be scoutmasters in the Boy Scouts would have seemed too obscene for words. The idea that a city or state government should withdraw funding from the Boy Scouts because they don't allow avowed homosexuals in their ranks would have seemed beyond possible thought. Yet that happened in Philadelphia a while ago. The Boy Scouts lost use of a

city-owned building because they would not change their policy toward gays.

What those of us who have had a functioning memory within the last thirty years must note is that these attitudes have changed very suddenly, almost like a switch being thrown, although of course under the surface it must have been building for a while. Hey remember when *The Boys in the Band* was hot stuff and controversial and all the news coverage of the lead actor always put his wife and kids in the shot to emphasize that he was just playing a role, and not one of Them?

Now, those of us who have our eyes open toward the world scene should also not be surprised that these changes have not come at a uniform rate, in every society in the world, and that attitudes still differ widely. Not all Muslims want to kill gays. Not all Muslim countries have this requirement in their legal codes. Remember that the trial of Oscar Wilde was little over a hundred years go, and British lesbians only got off the hook because Queen Victoria refused to believe that any English woman would do such a thing.

It still seems to be a revelation to some Americans, but not all Muslims want to conquer the world, kill infidels, or support Al Qaeda. It was not all that long ago, half a millennium or so, when the Ottoman Empire, whose sultan was also Commander of the Faithful, was a sanctuary of tolerance to which most of the Jews who were expelled from Spain fled. (This expulsion was done with spectacular and sadistic cruelty. The fleeing Jews were not allowed to take their children with them.) At a time when the Muslim lands were tolerant of all sorts of Christian sects, Europeans were burning one another at the stake and fighting large scale wars over such questions as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. (Not the only issue, but that is a major theological divide between Catholics and Lutherans.) It wasn't all that long ago that the Catholic Spanish massacred the Florida Huguenots to prevent Protestantism from taking root in their part of the New World. It was even more recently that American revolutionists, invading Canada, lost the campaign and completely failed to win hearts and minds because most of the invaders were Puritans from New England whose avowed goal was to extinguish Popery in North America. (This was explained to me by a French Canadian. It is a viewpoint you do not get in American history books. DID you ever wonder why the French Canadians, who had only been conquered by the British 12 years before, so consistently sided with the British in the American Revolution, even when France came in on the American side?)

The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude by Bat Ye'or [Gisèle Orebi Littman] (1996)

The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts

to Solemn History, Andrew G. Bostom, ed. (2008)

But I return to the argument of numbers. If violence and the support of terrorism really were orthodoxy in Islam and the world's two billion Muslims took this seriously, surely the rest of the world would be overwhelmed by now. Then again, if Christians and Jews took the "stone the gays" passages in the Bible seriously, there wouldn't be very many gays left either and the survivors would not be campaigning for their marriage rights. So, what is wrong with this picture? Yes, there are bigoted, violent Muslims who join Al Qaeda and its affiliate organizations. Yes, too, there are bigoted, violent "Christians" who join Neo-Nazi groups, the KKK, and "Patriot" militias. There also seem to be, if you've been following the news from Burma lately, bigoted, violent Buddhists who have definitely lost touch with their Buddha natures.

Obviously Taras also has not read John Grant's *Denying Science*. Yes, the planet is warming, rapidly. Yes, the ice caps – both of them – and glaciers are disappearing at a record pace. No, the planet is not heating up uniformly. This is understood. The failing Gulf Stream, for example, is losing its ability to keep Britain warm, so Britain is likely to get colder. This is already observable, as in that remarkable photo taken from space the winter before last in which we saw the entire Island of Britain, from end to end, encased in snow and ice. But I still want to know what the Liberals are doing with all that ice. If the planet is not warming, but millions of tons of ice are disappearing from the polar caps and glaciers – perhaps due to fiendish injections of antifreeze by radical environmental groups – where are they hiding it? Meanwhile, catastrophic storms become commonplace and sea levels rise.

On the matter of taxes, Taras does sound a bit more like a mainstream Republican, although this explains why the Republican Party has drifted so dangerously to the lunatic fringe. If people who make less money but still pay taxes on their income draw more than their "share" from tax benefits (which they do not uniformly, any more than the warming Earth warms up uniformly), then his solution would seem to be to cut benefits for the lower-income population in order to safeguard the interests of the rich, in effect to transfer wealth from the poor to the rich, which has indeed been part of the Republican agenda for some time now. Indeed, that and anti-environmentalism seem to be the two major planks of the Republican platform these days.

I will have to agree with George Price about the 1968 Baycon. I wasn't there. I was 16 years old at the time and not allowed to go travelling trans-continental distances by myself, but I heard about it a week later from Philadelphia Science Fiction Society members who were there. Yes, the Farmer speech was

long and dull, but everybody thought it amusing when Mack Reynolds brought it to a sudden close by standing up and giving thunderous applause. The banquet was apparently not very good. There had been riots in Berkeley a little while earlier, and there was a considerable police presence on the street, but I have heard of no altercations between fans and the police. This was also the convention at which the SCA made its public debut and held a tourney on the hotel lawn. This caused much wonderment and delight. Someone took some snapshots and passed them around, and somehow I came into possession of the pictures and still have them. There indeed you can see an armored Poul Anderson and Randall Garrett doing battle for a lady's favor, against two burly knights who ultimately won the bout. (I need to find these photos again. If someone from the SCA would get in touch with me, I would be willing to send them scans of these historic photos. Either that, or maybe I will put them on Facebook.) This is of course anecdote, not history, but I did not hear any serious complaints about the convention from people who had attended it. As for the copious quantities of weed, well that was a norm at the time. It was not uncommon into the '70s to see marijuana pipes passed around politely at parties, the one the host might pass out drinks. Maybe into the '80s. I can remember this at some pro parties. Given that Silverberg's *Tower of Glass* was not published until 1970, it must have been at a later worldcon at which he, punningly, dubbed the convention hotel "Tower of Grass."

He got the idea from seeing the 800 Building here in Louisville, which is next to the Main Library.

— JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** April 23, 2013  
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA  
93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* V12 #2, Lisa talks about the TV show *NCIS*. When I first heard of the show I thought of National Crime Information Center which is an FBI operation. I'm sure the Navy has some criminal investigation capability, but I've never heard of that particular organization. There are lots of naval personnel in LAPD Harbor Division. If any of them become victims of crime, the matter is investigated by the LAPD. The only possible exception would be if the crime occurred on the Navy base itself or on a Navy ship. There is also a City of Los Angeles Harbor Police that patrols the non-navy docks. I once did a study and found there were 108 police agencies in Los Angeles County.

I don't like shows about crime and don't watch them. Back when I tried to watch such shows, they usually irritated me within a few minutes. Television and movie makers commonly don't know any more about police

work than they do about science fiction. On most of these shows, police are represented as self-righteous creeps. Nobody would want to work with people like that. Also, every case is a bleeping vendetta. That just isn't a healthy way to do business.

I got disillusioned with detective novels after reading a lot of true crime. It never seems to happen that Miss Scarlett, Colonel Mustard, Mrs. White, Reverend Green, Mrs. Peacock, and Professor Plum go in together to hire a detective to find out which one of them killed Dr. Black.

On the other hand, Joe Wambaugh depicted police types accurately. In fact he depicted actual individuals. I later worked for the guy who was the model for the prissy vice sergeant in *The New Centurions*. He was a prissy assistant chief by the time I worked for him. I can understand why people enjoyed annoying him. He was that sort of a person.

I've met my share of odd people during my career with the LAPD. Of course, some of them might consider me one of the odd people. It's a relative thing.

There was the guy at Van Nuys who read the newspaper every day looking for evidence of the impending end of the world. He would drop by my office to let me know of his findings.

Then there was Nick. We were out drinking beer when he told me about his time as a numbers runner for the Mafia in Buffalo, New York. Had he not been forced to join the Navy by a judge, he thought he probably would have become one of the good fellas.

Then there was Karl. He was a former member of the Hitler Youth. He had only been seven years of age at the end of the war, so I doubt he committed too many atrocities.

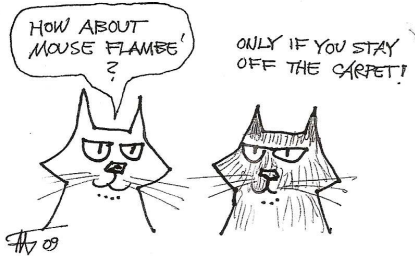
Then there was Gayleen. She was a dizzy blonde to end all dizzy blondes. I remember the time she came in my office with a jar of testicles. Of course, there was a reasonable explanation. She was taking a veterinary class off-duty and wanted to show some of her handiwork. On another occasion, I was walking across the lobby at Van Nuys when Gayleen was working the front desk. I happened to overhear part of a motherly lecture she was giving to a biker babe who was at the desk. "If you want to keep a man happy, you have to learn how to give good head." I just kept walking. I hear nothing. I see nothing.

Then there was Bobbie. She was my secretary at Van Nuys for a year or so. I'm afraid she had a rough life and had really snapped. God was talking to her in her head all the time. I could tell by her expression when God was talking to her. She one told me Satan also talked to her, but he couldn't say "In the name of Jesus Christ." As usual, I didn't see or hear a thing.

Of course he wouldn't say that. Advertising the competition?

— JTM

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** Apr. 20, 2013  
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA  
<http://www.alexisgilliland.org>



Thank you for *Alexiad* 12.2, which was waiting for me after Lee drove me home from my colonoscopy. Late last year my doctor, who was a year my senior, decided to retire, and so in February I transferred to Lee's doctor for my annual check up. Among other things she wanted me to have a colonoscopy because it had been five years since my last one. The results were a few small polyps, all easily removed, with a recommendation to come back in three years but I find the procedure stressful and am more inclined to wait until my new doctor orders me back for another, hopefully in five years or more. Cat stuff, Pest, age 13 plus, had stopped eating and running around, so on the 5th we took her to the vet and when the x-rays showed lung cancer, we had to have her put down. Lee took it very hard, but on the 16th we went over to Pet-Smart (Pets-Mart?) and came home with Mehitabel, like Pest a black and white female, about a year old, to complete our menagerie. On day one Squeak was being pretty territorial, but by day three she appears to be coming around as Mehitabel gets settled in.

Our condolences at the loss of Pest.

And our congratulations on the adoption of Mehitabel. May she have a long and healthy life in your household.

— LTM

So what took Lee so long to get a new cat? Last year, after the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic*, we were having dinner at Freddie's Beach Bar and Restaurant, and she suggested that maybe they could have a *Titanic* memorial dinner at Freddie's next year. The waiter thought that was a great idea, and first thing you know we were discussing it with Freddie, who liked the idea because the middle of April didn't have much happening,

but, alas he didn't know much about the *Titanic*. No problem, says Lee, I'm an expert, and she brought in a menu — the second-class lunch buffet on the day of the sinking, which Freddie's kitchen could handle. So the project was on, and there was a lot of work, not to mention changes and corrections made in the run up to the day, but it was a huge success. For Sunday, Freddie's (maximum capacity 75) usually has ~15 customers, but for the memorial dinner there were 85 (many of whom, including Freddie and Lee were in costume) drawn by the decor and the ambiance — there was a trio playing period music, and the food. The TMD is on for next year, albeit with some minor adjustments.

That was how ConCave did so well its first few years; it was at a resort that didn't get much winter business, so they liked filling up the place. Even if it meant hoisting Annette Carrico by hand to a second-floor con suite, as there was no elevator.

— JTM

Taral Wayne reviews Pixar's "Brave" at some length, and we agree that it was dumb fun, with the three little brothers serving as comic relief. However, I thought it was driven by the mother/daughter conflict rather than the more common boy/girl trope, which might explain why all the men, not being germane to the plot, were oafs. "Brave" was coherent and well written in the sense that A) it bears thinking about, and B) all the loose ends were tied up. Taral seems more concerned about what it could have been, describing a noncommercial alternative that would never have passed the editorial review board.

Bill Patterson thinks that safety is bad for business? Well, no. In context I was talking about the credit crisis, and those rules intended to keep the economy (including business) safe from wholesale bank failures and other economic chaos. Patterson has misread my meaning as suggesting that business should be safe from marketplace competition, which would indeed be a bad thing. Also, businessmen performing public service in the regulation of business goes back at least to the turn of the 20th century, not the 21st as he seems to imagine, and I would not describe that as "a state of incredible corruption of government," but rather as government with the advice and consent of the governed. I will agree that our present system leaves a lot to be desired. Transgressing CEOs ought to be afraid of jail time, rather than merely (maybe) having their corporations pay a fine (at stockholders expense) while leaving their overly generous bonuses untouched. DOMA to the contrary notwithstanding, marriage has a number of purposes besides reproduction, and an unstated advantage of homosexual marriage is that will reduce the number of homo- and hetero-sexual pairings, which are often unhappy if not

downright miserable. Allowing people more freedom to find a suitable partner seems likely to increase the general happiness, which is a good thing.

Taras Wolansky notes that the climate is failing to warm the way it was supposed to. Maybe, maybe not, the climate is doing whatever the climate does; the failure has been in our models seeking to predict it. Why might the climate be pausing at a near record high level for the past decade? We don't know, but in that same decade about 10,000 cubic kilometers of Arctic sea ice has melted (see PIOMAS Sea Ice Volume) which might have sucked up enough heat to keep the climate from warming further. If that is the case, when the Arctic sea ice reaches its new equilibrium the climate will resume warming. Anthropogenic CO2 has raised the baseline from 280 ppm before 1750 to about 400 ppm in 2013, and is on course to pass 500 ppm by the end of the century as the *Economist* article he quoted makes clear. Proven reserves of fossil fuel are sufficient to reach 2,000 ppm if we keep on using them. As, I am afraid we will have to do, since about a third of that fossil fuel is used to grow and distribute food. So, the population increases, it has to be fed, and the CO2 levels will keep on going up since no future catastrophe is going to be worse than having a preventable famine today. And the climate? We humans may have nudged it off the pre-r/so equilibrium, but at this point natural forces are in charge, and I doubt if we can reverse it.

That should do for now.

From: **C. D. Carson** April 21, 2013  
Post Office Box 1035, Fort Worth, TX  
76101-1035 USA  
<http://www.lunarcc.org>

Herewith you will find a reproduction of "The One-Way Manned Space Mission" by Cord & Seale, which I take to be the principal technical basis for *The Pilgrim Project* (which I have read — a copy is on my shelf at this hour). My apologies for the lack of clarity in some of the illustrations, which are little better in the original printed journal. To get a suitable copy for reproduction on the Luna Project Data Book, I found myself in the uncomfortable position of purchasing and disassembling a bound volume discarded by a library.

If people will write alternate history stories, couldn't they choose more interesting points of departure? For example, what if the French and Germans having felt no need to oblige Nicholas of Russia by assisting in his intervention, Article II of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, had been permitted to go into full effect? I take that as the beginning of the series of (real or imagined) backstabs which left the Japanese convinced that the Western Powers would never negotiate in good faith, and their only course was open war.

Or what about this one? Willy Ley remarks, in a piece written for *Galaxy* which I

have in his book *For Your Information — On Earth and In the Sky* (see p. 131 of the Ace Star paperback edition), that Russian astronomers, working from the supposition that the 1908 Tunguska event was caused by the impact of a cometary body, and attempting to calculate its orbit in order to see if any previous observations could be found, determined that a minor change in the elements, delaying its arrival by five hours, would have dropped it right onto downtown St. Petersburg.

I've seen that remarked on in the [alternatethehistory.com](http://alternatethehistory.com) group and before that in the Usenet alternate history groups. Vampires coming from the future to fight zombies are more popular with editors.

— JTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** April 23, 2013  
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia,  
PA 19143-3310 USA

What's in a name? I have wondered if Armand Hammer would still have had an "I'll show 'em" approach to life if he had been a Joe or Jim. Yet I must now deem Tamurlan(e) a name of ill omen. It was Timur the Lame, among Central Asian conquerors, who notably had the people of conquered cities slaughtered and their heads piled up. Yeah, but what about those put-upon jades of Asia, who could draw but twenty miles a day?

Old Armand decided that his religious name was "Judah Maccabee". If he had been Yosef or Ya'akov, he still would have been the State Security's bagman. He inherited the job from his dad.

Elegant variation: in my first (very goshwow) LoC to a prozine, I didn't want to repeat the word "issue" — but the effect, seen in print, looked inelegant. I have lately been reading parts of the third volume of Shelby Foote's *The Civil War, a Narrative*. He tells the tale with verve . . . but, weary of repeating names, he kept varying them with epithets. Home state, whether North or South, was his usual standby, and he found the color of Sherman's hair a godsend . . . but I'd say some imp or devil was at work . . . I found the Harry Potter books unreadable by reason of the Tom Swifities.

In a commentary on a mediocre story in *Astounding*, James Blish referred to the "Said Book", a list of alternatives to the word "said" for use in describing dialogue. Then, it appeared in Bel Kaufman's *Up the Down Staircase*!

Typos in my letter: the play is by Harris, and I could have sworn I pegged Albia as not kicking ass. In proofreading work, essentially reading for sense, I've had to add or delete that word several times.

Are we enamored of existing evils, or do we wish to replace them with others? On sexuality, I see no evil in children being offered the straight dope, in a matter-of-fact way — in school, as it might be. In the welter of stuff that Hilary left to be cleaned up by me, I found a worksheet with all kinds of words that I had to discover on my own. Whatever he might have asked his mother, he never asked me. Just as well; my feeling is that anything I know from experience is none of anybody else's business. Seeing him in the company of an earlier girl friend, I only remarked that since I did not take him to be a complete fool, I had no comments or advice to offer. He was old enough, and what they did behind closed doors was their own business.

I'm all in favor of tradition, forward and backward; as a person displaced from my homeland with my (divorced) parents, I felt rather at sea. My father was generally in some proximity but did not count as an influence. After Betsy and I were married, he came to live with us and in time found some fulfillment as a grandfather. I was able to care for him until his final health crisis, when he was removed to the hospital where, after a few weeks, he died. At the expense of the General Motors that was.

Marriage connected me up with a bunch of in-laws, some of whom still abide in this vicinity. Betsy used to travel to reunions of her Kirk maternal relations; good people, but, well, mundanes, all of whom have vanished from my ken, as have the descendants of two of Betsy's sisters. I know slightly more about Hilary's ancestors than he does. A small blackened silver salt shaker was found to have the engraved date 1889 and initials obviously those of a great-grandfather. Betsy and not any of her siblings was the keeper of family relics, for many of which there are no stories, no clear provenance. Lots of photos, few of them labeled. What Hilary does with all these things will be his affair.

There are even a few Latvian things, including a blanket woven in traditional designs.

I have seen a few estate sales, or dumpsters filled with the accumulations of people who died without heirs, or any heirs that could use the stuff. When I lived in Minneapolis, I read in the paper of the death of an unrelated Bisenieks, a complete loner unknown to the Latvian community. All very melancholy. Here I can bring up the subject of same-sex marriages (or civil unions) that might leave no heirs of the body. For that matter, this can be the fate of traditional marriages. How shall adoption be handled in law? What feeling of belonging the adoptees have will always depend on individual character. The ancient Romans and the Japanese are known for the practice.

Human nature being what it is, there will never be an end to furtiveness. Acts undertaken in bad faith may damn well be furtive (until scandal erupts), but it would be well if good-faith actions in the sexual sphere did not have to be carried on furtively, with feelings of shame and lessened worth. Who should be an outcast? At whom should we cast stones? How many sigmas make a deviant?

From: **Joy V. Smith** May 2, 2013  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-  
0341 USA  
[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)

Lisa, I started watching *NCIS* later also, but I think I've caught up. Are you aware that the pilot was on *JAG*? *NCIS* and *Person of Interest* are my favorite shows now, along with some of the home shows on HGTV.

Yes, I knew *NCIS* was a spinoff from *JAG*. I think it's a very different show, though. I doubt that Abby would have made it in *JAG*.

— LTM

Speaking of Lone Ranger and Johnny Depp, I saw a picture of him as Tonto, looking at Silver (I assume) in today's paper. I've never heard of Armie Hammer, btw.

*The Pilgrim Project* (AH of the space program) sounds interesting, though I rarely read AH. I'd rather read the facts and not wonder how much of something is true — ditto for Hollywood movies...

At the time, it was a possible future, though like many such works it's become an AH. It would have certainly been a more interesting world.

— JTM

Re: *The Nanking War*: Have you ever read *Underground Retreat* by Maribelle Cormack and Pavel Bytovetzski? It's for younger readers, but it introduced me to that time period and the Chinese/Japanese conflict.

No, I have not but I will order it

I enjoyed the con reports and the piece on Emergency Lighting, which I'm more aware of because we have to be prepared for power outages after hurricanes. We've got lanterns, flashlights, and candles — even sconces.

Re: the *Brave* review by Taral Wayne. Actually I don't think you were harsh enough. It was very disappointing! And very annoying.

More fun and facts in the LOCs; the Flashman story was interesting and fun, and the apps cartoon was funny.

From: **Lloyd Penney** May 11, 2013  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 2B2 CANADA  
[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)  
<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>



It's well before the deadline, but it's never too early. Here's (I hope) an extensive letter of comment on *Alexiad*, whole number 68.

I never really watched *NCIS*, but what little I did, I usually saw Gibbs smack McGee on the back of the head for some reason, and I would change the channel. Recently, Marina Sirtis was announced as joining the cast of this show, so I expect she will portray a character exactly the opposite of Counsellor Troi from *ST:TNG*.

Hope you enjoyed the Kentucky Derby . . . it made news up here with a Canadian-owned horse placing second.

The ConCave con report...indeed, many Jophans have put their publishing quests behind them, because we need to carry with us medications and sometimes wheelchairs or other tools to help keep us mobile and alert. I have a cane I sometimes use for costuming purposes; soon, it may become an everyday tool.

Now to see Robert Kennedy's Loscon 39 report . . . we did have GoH panels, they weren't well attended, but at least they were held. We had fun with everything we were given to do, and other things as well. We had heard that many of the gophers who had promised to help out at the convention had bailed out, so we offered our services to the convention, and I took about half a dozen loads of soda up to the con suite, and a lot of prereg bags to the registration area. We also got much of Jerome Scott's art show equipment into the art show room, and Yvonne helped to set Jerome's records.

I never did see the Disney/Pixar movie *Brave*, but the main character, Merida, was perhaps plain, but in many ways a true warrior. Now that the movie is well past, and the settings and characters are becoming party of the Disney merchandising juggernaut, Merida is being redesigned and prettied-up for public consumption. Taral's review confirms that my choice not to see the movie was the right choice to make.

I have now been hearing about the launch of another Montreal bid . . . many of the local Toronto fans who currently work on other bids have now launched the Montreal bid with other Montreal fans, and 2017 seems to be the operating year. They are now accepting \$20 bills being thrown at them, but I think they plan to make the general announcement at this year's Smofcon, which is in Toronto this coming December.

My loc. . . . I can only tell you what's happening here in local conventions. If you have a point in asking what will happen to Dragon\*Con under the Kramer scandal or to the SDCC, please make it. I care little if anything for Dragon\*Con or SDCC, and I suspect that even if Kramer did not exist, the conventions would eventually collapse because of their sheer size and enormous quantity of time and labour needed to make it run. My cataract surgery date of May 9 did not happen; instead it was renamed a consultation

meeting, and it looks like after the usual round of appointments, my cataract will actually come out around June 11.

There are a number of who we might call "traditional fans" for whom DragonCon is becoming the con of the year. It is cheaper, it has more tracks, it has huge costumed parades . . . . The enterprise seems to be too big to fail. Recall, Slanted Fedora cons went bankrupt, but CreationCon still seems to be going. Maybe because Paramount bought them.

— JTM

We're getting ready to head out to a little birthday party, so I will wind it up and fire it out to you. Many thanks for this, wish this had been a little longer, and see you with the next one.

From: **Jerry Kaufman** May 11, 2013  
[JAKaufman@aol.com](mailto:JAKaufman@aol.com)

This letter of comment is not happening. It's not meant to be.

I started last week but ran out of time before I could finish the first paragraph — we were about to head down to Portland for a long weekend at Corflu. So I abandoned it.

Today, I sat down again, about an hour ago, and began the letter again. I finished it — three or four paragraphs on three topics. I proofread it, added a thought here and there, and lifted my finger to hit send. Everything went black. Well, everything on the computer, at least. It immediately came back on, but the loc was gone.

So believe me when I say I appreciate that you keeping sending *Alexiad* this way, without much response. I do go through each issue looking for bits that catch my eye.

Suzle and I plan to attend San Antonio — she's running a subsection of the Facilities Department — so I expect we'll meet there.

Come to our dinner.

— JTM

From: **Jim Stumm** May 8, 2013  
 Post Office Box 29, Buffalo, NY  
 14223-0029 USA

George W. Price: Whatever causes a person to be born gay, whether genetic or developmental, it seems to be a natural phenomenon that recurs in every generation. It would be more objective and less judgemental, rather than calling it a defect, to call it a common variation, like red hair or blue eyes.

You say that it's a defect like bad eyesight. But it's no disability for the person who is gay. A man being horny for other men is a yen that can be easily satisfied. You say it's a defect because it precludes reproduction. Yet precluding reproduction is not considered a

defect in heteros. E.g, we don't say that elderly hetero couples should not marry even though they are too old to reproduce. We don't find fault with hetero couples engaging in sex practices that can't result in pregnancy, or using contraception.

But then you admit that homosexuals can and do reproduce, which means that being gay does NOT preclude reproduction. But you say they can only do it by behaving in a hetero way.

That's just a manner of speaking. Of course they can only do it by behaving in the way humans have to behave in order to reproduce. And being gay doesn't prevent them from behaving in that way. It only prevents them from enjoying it. But people do all sorts of things they may not enjoy in order to achieve some desired result, e.g. working at a job they don't like in order to get a paycheck.

The only thing being gay really does preclude is feeling sexual attraction for a person of the opposite sex. But gays make up for that by feeling sexual attraction for persons of the same sex. This is just a difference, not a defect.

The main problem gays encounter is due to the prejudice of some other people. So the "defect" of being born gay falls into the same category as the "defect" of being born black.

SUPREME COURT: SCOTUS has 2 relevant cases before it this session. One is DOMA, the Federal Defense of Marriage Act. This should be struck down. Any Federal marriage act, whether it is pro or anti gay, should be struck down because the Federal Govt has no Constitutional authority to legislate in regard to marriage, which is entirely a concern of the States.

The 2nd case concerns California voters approval of an initiative that outlawed same sex marriage in California. Opponents brought suit claiming this violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. In my opinion, the SCOTUS decision should be based on the original meaning of that clause. When Congress passed, and States ratified, the 14th Amendment, they certainly did not mean the equal protection clause to apply to same sex marriage. So this suit should be rejected and California's ban on same sex marriage should be allowed to stand, until voters or legislators in that State change it.

I agree that marriage is entirely a State issue and each State should be allowed to make its own decision about whether same sex marriages will be allowed to take place in that State. But there's a kicker that you probably won't like, namely the Full Faith and Credit clause, Art IV Sect 1. This means that every State must accept as valid the legal proceedings of every other State regarding marriages, divorces, contracts, State court orders, etc.

Long ago, beginning in the 1930s, Nevada made divorces easy to get in that State, at a time when a divorce was hard to get in many other States. So people began to travel to Nevada to get a divorce, then return to their

home State. This would have been useless if that divorce was valid only in Nevada. But because of Full Faith and Credit, Nevada divorces had to be accepted as valid in all other States.

Another present-day example: Many States do not allow first cousins to marry, but such marriages are legal in NY. So every year some first cousin couples travel to NY to get married, and then return home. Their marriages must be accepted as valid in their home States even though they could not have been legally married there.

The relevance to same sex marriage should be obvious. As long as gay couples marry in a State where such a marriage is legal, the validity of their marriage in other States, even in States where they could not legally marry, must be accepted due to Full Faith and Credit.

This has not yet come before SCOTUS, and if it does, although the meaning of the Constitution is clear, the Justices may try to find some way to weasel out.

Richard A. Dengrove: You say you read something written by Robert Bork and he did not mention the opinion of the Founding Fathers, instead basing his argument on his feelings. The opinions of the Founders are of historical interest only, except where they end up in the words and phrases of the Constitution and Amendments. True Constitutionalists (originalists) are concerned with the original meaning of the words and phrases of the Constitution and Amendments, since this meaning, and no other, is what the Constitutional Convention or Congress passed and States ratified. I don't know much about Bork, but there are many conservatives who wave the Constitution around when it suits them, but depart from it when they want the Federal Govt to pass laws that the Constitution does not support, such as DOMA or Federal drug prohibition. I suppose that's better than liberals who do not want the Govt to be limited by the words of the Constitution at all. Among sitting Justices, Antonin Scalia claims to be an originalist, yet he has voted for Federal drug prohibition, which is not one of the enumerated powers given to the Federal Govt. Clarence Thomas is the more consistent originalist, having voted against even drug laws, which he may personally favor.

Justices should interpret the Constitution in the sense that they should determine the original meaning of the relevant clause in the body of the Constitution or Amendments and apply that to the case before them. They should not make decisions based on their feelings or what they may themselves prefer concerning the issue at hand. That's wrong whether it's done by liberal or conservative judges. That sort of thing should be left to elected legislators. On the other hand, the Supreme Court should not simply rubber stamp acts of Congress or the Executive Branch if they go beyond what the Constitution allows.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** May 19, 2013  
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,  
Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA  
[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

Once again, I am commenting on *Alexiad*. This time, the April issue. I was glad to read reviews of such books as *The Pilgrim Project*, *Bowl of Heaven*, *Alone on the Ice*. Also, I enjoyed *The Joy of Hgh Tech*. If I didn't comment on them, and even if I did negatively, it doesn't mean that I didn't enjoy Joe's reviews and knowing about them.

I also read with interest the report of a death on the second page. In addition, I agree with you it's sad that Richard Geis has died at age 85. He was a legend in his own time. Of course, I could never correspond with him. When I sent a LOC to him, I, being the blabbermouth I am, mentioned I worked for the government. And he, being a firm believer in government conspiracies, avoided me.

By contrast, Hank Searls writes about hope, the hope for space travel, in *Count Down*. He strands people on the Moon, and has Russian cosmonauts acting like super enemies of the United States. Also, he makes the most daring missions in space secret. However, you're right, the reader finds him more credible than Philip Roth, whose incredible history carries on his inner war with his Judaism.

So old novels can be more realistic than many newer ones. Other novels, short stories, etc. that can be more interesting than the current mainstream can be found among Amazon's Digital Services. You seem to admit this now, Joe, when, before, you just saw the hole and not the donuts.

And, yes, the Amazon online books are not edited as well or as polished as more conventional books.. However, they are more likely to serve as the source for new ideas, plots, characters, and themes. Whereas much of the publishing industry, for fear of its life, is hidebound and only interested in publishing proven sellers.

I predict they will achieve greater success than the British and Aussie Antarctic explorers. I gather the British and the Aussies, in general, really didn't know what they were doing. They did their all for Mother England or the archetypal Outback. However, the Americans and Norwegians had experienced far more cold weather and ice, and knew better how to prepare accordingly.

I'm sure Horatio Nelson might have disagreed. He was on the Phipps Arctic Expedition of 1773, which went north of 80° N to the Sjuøyane. (It's said he had a Teddy Roosevelt moment trying to club a polar bear to death after his musket misfired.)

Not only do I have to disagree with Brits and Aussies about their cold weather prowess; I also have to disagree with Taral Wayne about

his view of *Brave*. Not that the scriptwriters of *Brave* didn't weight it down with political correctness. It is just that these days, you have to ignore all the p.c. that gets thrown at you. Otherwise, what movies, TV shows, etc. can you review?

Anyway, while the heroine of *Brave* is heads and tails more accurate than her wouldbe suitors in archery, she is far from perfect; so the p.c. is far from unrelenting. She has to clean up the mess she made by dealing with that witch, and transforming her mother into a bear.

While I disagree with Taral and Brits and Aussies, I have to agree with Rod E. Smith. Checking for magnitude keeps your ass from spending mucho additional time in a sling. In fact, I aced the Federal government's PACE test by checking for magnitude. That guaranteed success in its math section; and paved a way, at the time, for a government job.

On the other hand, I have to disagree with Murray Moore's letter that Jim Marrs ranks as our most conspiracy ridden authors. It does not sound that he can hold a candle to the author who found a relationship between the Washington Monument and AIDS. It had to do with the Masons and numerology.

More seriously than with Murray, I disagree with Jim. Stumm. For one thing, he claims that Germany in the '20s and France in the '50s ended hyperinflation by basing their currency INDIRECTLY on the gold standard. What does he mean by indirectly? As far as I can tell, few currencies have ever been based on the gold standard. 100%. And, as far as I can tell, anything less to Jim is the equivalent of being a little bit pregnant.

As for currency issued by banks, I have to agree that a bank could insulate itself from the inflation in the currency of other banks. However, that was not my point. No, my point was that the bank cannot insulate itself from the failures of other banks. If much of the rest of the economy is in shambles, the banks' customers, and the bank, are going not be making as much.

In addition to having disagreements with Jim, I have disagreements with George Price. As I told Jim, my understanding is that this country has never been on the gold standard.. Early on, it was on a gold and silver standard. Of course, not all the silver was used for the silver standard; just enough to keep prices where the politicians wanted them. If they wanted higher, they could increase the silver used in the silver standard.

In short, money supply and prices were no less administrated than now.

The U.S. was on the gold standard from 1873 until 1933, at \$20.67 per troy ounce. From 1933 until 1971, the dollar was exchangeable for gold, but not by private individuals. The final price was \$35 per troy ounce, as Carson Napier observed when he referred to 59¢ dollars. Germany

went on the gold standard in 1924 and off it in 1929. The French New Franc of 1960 was a revaluated one, tied to the Bretton Woods currency system.

— JTM

With the gold standard, I finish my letter. I have written about one subject that keeps cropping up, conspiracy theories, and, one because of Joe's interest, Antarctic explorations. However, I also included lots of subjects that are one time deals. The gold standard, I hope, rates as a one or two time deal.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** May 23, 2013  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA  
93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

Thank you for Vol. 12, No. 2. Also, thank you for printing my previously missing (from Vol. 1) letter (January 20, 2013).

I was scanning the Science Fiction New Book Shelf at the library when I noticed *Doktor Glass* by Thomas Brennan (Ace Books, 2012). It's "An Alternate Victorian England" novel. Normally something that would be marginal in my interest. But, something told me to check it out. It was quite enjoyable.

Some years ago (2001?) I read *The Seven Daughters of Eve* by Bryan Sykes. Starting with Sykes company I have done something like five DNA tests (with four different organizations), basically for general information and for genealogical purposes. Recently I did testing with 23andMe which includes health. One of their tests is for Neanderthal DNA. Given the recent commentary in *ALEXIAD* concerning there being some Neanderthal DNA in we Homo sapiens it was thought it might be interesting to see if I have any Neanderthal DNA. Well, what do you know? I have 2.8% Neanderthal DNA with the average of persons tested by 23andMe being 2.7%. They offer T-shirts with a picture of a Neanderthal and one's percentage so I purchased one. It's great to be above average. ☺

I'm sure Ponter Boddit would be pleased to know that. Maybe even Ayla, too.

**Lisa:** Interesting commentary by you concerning the TV program *NCIS*. *NCIS* is one of my favorite programs and if I were limited to only one TV program this would probably be it. Glad to know that you too are addicted to the program. The lead character Leroy Jethro Gibbs is played by Mark Harmon, son of Tom and former UCLA quarterback. Without him here would not be a program. Gibbs is a retired enlisted Marine. Anthony DiNozzo is more of a would be lady's man than an actual one. Ziva David

was a Mossad agent on loan to *NCIS*. She subsequently resigned from Mossad, applied to be an actual agent of *NCIS* and was accepted. Probably applying for U.S. citizenship too. Her father was the head of Mossad. He was murdered while in the U.S. at the head of *NCIS*'s home along with the wife of the head. Yes, David McCallum is still going strong and a major character in *NCIS*. Well, you no doubt know what happened in the latest episode. We can look forward to future shows.

**Rodford Edmiston:** Good article "Emergency Lighting". One of those new bulbs has mercury in it and is dangerous. If it breaks you are to leave the room, come back later and put it in a bag. The proper disposal of it along with burned out bulbs is to take it/them to a hazardous waste disposal place. Most people will not do this and will put it in the trash just like with incandescent bulbs, thereby polluting the environment. I well remember the heat generated by lanterns. While in the Boy Scouts on a camping trip in Joshua Tree National Park I had one next to me while starting to get into my sleeping bag. I felt very warm. As soon as the lantern was turned off it suddenly became very very cold. I have purchased several of the new battery operated lanterns and they seem to be quite adequate for my needs in case of a power outage.

**Taral Wayne:** So, what did you really think about the movie *BRAVE*? ☺

**Lloyd Penney:** A good number of years ago I had cataract surgery. My Driver's License no longer says that I have to wear glasses. I do wear glasses when driving at night because it is a bit harder to see. I also wear glasses to watch TV and movies. Also, I purchased a pair of reading glasses. I can read ok without them. But, with them is better. I do not wear glasses while working at my computer. I hope that your cataract surgery turns out to be as successful as mine.

**Murray Moore:** Many years ago (20?) I read an excellent book about Adolf Hitler. One of Adolf's grandmothers worked for a wealthy family the name of which I don't remember. But, it wasn't Rothschild. She became pregnant. The son of the family was suspected as being the father. The family was Jewish. A cousin with the last name of Hitler married her and made the boy legitimate. The boy grew up to become the father of Adolf. If true (and that appears to be the case) then Adolf was one-quarter Jewish. I have never seen any mention of Rothschild. I would not pay any attention to anything from Jim Marrs.

That's something put about by William Patrick Hitler, trying to blackmail his uncle. Indeed, there's no record of the Leopold Frankengerger who was supposedly the real father of Alois Hitler the elder.

— JTM

**Richard A. Dengrove:** Do you really think

that lending institutions would make home loans to people who were not really qualified unless they were being pressured to do so by the government? Contrary to what you apparently believe Barney Frank does bear responsibility for the housing market crash. I don't know about Nancy Pelosi. But, you missed then Senator Chris Dodd. By the way, it looks like the government may be at it again.

From: **Murray Moore** May 31, 2013  
1065 Henley Road, Mississauga  
Ontario L4Y 1C8 CANADA  
[murraymoore@gmail.com](mailto:murraymoore@gmail.com)

Your note about the sinking of your father's ship, Lisa, the U.S.S. *Bush*, 68 years ago, reminds me that a length of the interstate highway in Missouri on which we drove recently is dedicated to the memory of American submariners. In Kansas City we walked around your national World War I museum. I did not know why the museum is in Kansas City: a guess, because of Kansas City's central geographic location in your country. My second guess was that Pershing, the American name on the monument, had a Missouri connection. Hah! I just checked. General of the Armies John Joseph "Black Jack" Pershing was born in Laclede, Missouri.

Quote of the Issue, Joe, is your "The presentation comes across as ignoring the forest, not for the trees, but for the leaves."

On Feb. 24, in the summary of the day, leaving ConCave and returning home, you record "Miles driven: 182.8. Books Read:" two titles. Wait: how is this possible? Even if Lisa does all of the driving, reading two books in a day during which you return from a convention is remarkable.

Joe can read very fast. There is time to read at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

— LTM

Marc Schirmeister deserves more space than given his art this issue, particularly the cartoon printed on page 12, in which Marc's descriptive text is at best the equivalent of two points. Bad Majors.

Any time that I have the thought that I want to be a convention huckster, I will re-read a Leigh Kimmel con report, and forget about it.

"Orlando will have the problem of shutting out people who don't want to, or can't afford to, stay at the Poopy Panda Palace and eat at the Poopy Panda Pub." Isn't the Orlando bid the Worldcon bid with free parking and cheap hotel rooms?

Free parking, yes. Cheap hotel rooms, I think that depends on your definition of cheap. And there being a lack of independent eateries nearby adds to the problem.

— JTM

I am a Detroit NASFiC supporter, despite having recently read the non-fiction book *Detroit: An American Autopsy*.

Robert S. Kennedy and George Price: I expect that you are aware of more shootings in your country than I am. But I wonder: why do I in Canada never read/hear of a shooting in your United States during which someone not a police officer shoots the shooter? I believe in your country are more guns in civilian hands than there are civilians. I am confused: aren't all those firearms for self defence?

Driving in Spain must be a pleasure. Going by the sample driver test questions shared by Sue Burke, few drivers pass the written examination.

From: **George W. Price** June 1, 2013  
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL  
60690-3228 USA  
[price4418@comcast.net](mailto:price4418@comcast.net)

April Alexiad:

Lisa confesses addiction to the TV show *NCIS*. My wife too — it looks like she has it on whenever she's not specifically interested in something else. *NCIS* is her default. The USA channel seems to run *NCIS* marathons most days and evenings. (By the way, does a national cable network run each program at the same time nationwide, or might USA in Chicago be showing something different from USA in Louisville?)

I've never watched an *NCIS* episode all the way through — I'm a reader, not a viewer — but I see it on my wife's TV when I walk by. I notice the character Abby because of her twin ponytails, one on each side. Looks like she's trying to grow horns.

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I spotted another typographical oddity, this time in Rodford Edmiston's "The Joy of High Tech." In three places there's an underline before and after a word that apparently should have been in italics, thus: "They have to be hot." Is this your WordPerfect misinterpreting the codes commanding a change from regular face to italic and back again? Or is it Mr. Edmiston's way of indicating what should be underlined or italicized, even if *Alexiad* won't actually do it? (And I still haven't found out what's with your WordPerfect and non-hyphenating justification.)

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Jim Stumm agrees with me about the Community Reinvestment Act, but not when I said that my rule would be that "if the borrower didn't repay, the lender got stuck." He points out that the lending banks "sell the mortgages they initiate to Fannie or Freddy as fast as they can. So it's Fannie or Freddy (i.e. taxpayers) who stand to lose if the borrower doesn't repay."

Quite right. I meant, but didn't say clearly enough, that I would abolish Fannie and Freddie and never allow pushing losses onto

the taxpayers. I'd let private companies buy mortgages from banks, and even bundle them for sale as mortgage-based securities, but only if all parties know with absolute certainty that there will be no taxpayer bailouts, and if a mortgage isn't repaid, it will be the mortgage holder — or the securities holders — who will eat the loss.

In his response to Richard Dengrove, Mr. Stumm says, "Currency issued privately has nothing to do with banks being too big to fail," and mentions ways in which "banks, companies, and private persons could insulate themselves from the harmful effects of the over-issuing (inflation) of a private currency by some bank."

It is exactly to prevent such insulation that governments enact "legal tender" laws that force creditors to accept inflated government money. Likewise, governments abhor contracts with a "gold clause" letting creditors demand payment in gold if they distrust the paper currency. When our rulers want to rob us by repaying debts in depreciated paper, they damn sure won't let us escape by using gold or private money.

Mr. Stumm also suggests that Social Security and Medicare and other forms of welfare should be means-tested, saying "The rich don't need the Govt to help them provide for their own needs." Right on! I understand that when Social Security was first proposed some 80 years ago, it was to cover only the poor. The scheme was extended to everybody just to get middle-class support for its enactment. Having it universal also makes it much harder to ever cut back, because almost everybody will resist, not just the poor.

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Dainis Bisenieks wonders about obscure inventors, and asks "To whom do we owe the modern cargo container?" I don't know the inventor's name, but I think I know who inspired it: The International Longshoremen's Association. I've heard that the container was invented specifically to stop cargos from being looted on the docks by longshoremen. To be sure, the ILA as such did not steal — but the union did its considerable best to shield its thieving members from being fired, let alone prosecuted. The solution was the container, which prevents the longshoremen from handling, or even seeing, the actual goods being shipped.

The container also has its downside: smuggling is easier because you can't see what's inside — the contents may bear no resemblance to the bill of lading. Or maybe that's an upside in some cases.

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Richard Dengrove says that I "claimed that the Financial Meltdown was due to the Community Reinvestment Act, because it forced banks to grant minorities mortgages." Quite so, with one minor correction: It wasn't that the CRA forced granting mortgages to

minorities per se, but that it forced granting "subprime" mortgages to people who couldn't repay, many of whom were minorities. Subprimes are a bad idea for whites, too.

As a sidelight, note that had it been true that minorities were being rejected primarily out of racism, and not because they truly were bad risks, this opened a marvelous opportunity for progressive investors such as the pension funds of government workers unions. They could have set up their own mortgage subsidiaries to lend to those who were being discriminated against, and made themselves a potful of money when the mortgages got repaid on time and in full. I leave you to decide if they did not do this (a) because it never occurred to them, or (b) because regardless of their progressive rhetoric about racism, they suspected that the said minorities really were bad risks.

Mr. Dengrove says that he understands why I and my ilk "love this explanation. . . . It blames the Meltdown on the Federal government and Liberalism." So it does, and so it should. He also says, "In fact, I can't understand why he didn't embrace it before. . . . [H]e could have used this theory to blame Barney Frank and Nancy Pelosi as well." Here now, I resent that! I did say it before. I did, I did! See my letter in the Feb. 2009 *Alexiad* — I've been blaming the financial crisis on the government since it started. And I blamed it specifically on Barney Frank and others of his ilk. So there!

Speaking of Mr. Frank, it is very ironic that "Dodd-Frank" — the legislation that is supposed to prevent future meltdowns — was concocted by the very people who were in the forefront of causing the last meltdown by refusing to revise the CRA and curb Fannie and Freddie from buying toxic mortgages. I expect Dodd-Frank to provoke more crises than it prevents.

To disprove my theory, Mr. Dengrove says, "As the Meltdown approached, one would have expected the banks to be screaming bloody murder that that Act was bankrupting them. . . . [But] such screams were nonexistent."

This collapses on the simple point that the banks were confident that the toxic mortgages could be passed on to Fannie and Freddie, and that in any case the government would bail them out as being "too big to fail." And they were right, weren't they? The government did indeed bail them out.

To be sure, probably most mortgage lenders didn't really think much, if at all, about how risky their course was. That's a prime characteristic of a bubble: the confident belief that "This time it's different" and the traditional rules of prudence no longer apply. And when the regulators are pushing them to go along with the bubble, rather than pricking it, that only confirms them in their faith that there's no danger. So why should they worry?

I see the Great Meltdown as an object lesson in what can happen when the regulators too have swallowed the Kool-Aid and adamantly insist that everybody go along with



the bubble. They scornfully deny that it is a bubble, and punish those who try to hang back and be prudent.

That's why government regulation of business should generally be limited to preventing coercion, fraud, and public endangerment, without second-guessing business policy decisions and striving to "do good."

In this case, the seminal mistake of the Federal government was in trying to help fulfill "the American Dream" by making home ownership more affordable. The ratio of renting to owning is not any of the government's business, and should have been left entirely to the decisions of private citizens as to what each thinks best for his family and his purse. And yes, I would abolish the FHA; it should never have been created. Good intentions, bad results.

The proper role of the government is to make sure that the citizen's decision is not being coerced, such as by violence against blacks moving into "white" areas. As to whether a black can afford to live in that neighborhood, that should be entirely between him and the seller. And the prospective lender should be left to decide how likely the mortgage is to be repaid, and not have to worry about whether it fills a government quota.

An excellent book on the Great Meltdown is *The Housing Boom and Bust*, by Thomas Sowell.

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On a different subject, Mr. Dengrove says, in response to my assertion that the Constitution should not be changed by reinterpretation, that "In our legal system, the idea is that the judges will interpret. As opposed to the German system, where justices are supposed to follow certain principles in making decisions."

Let's not confuse "interpret" and "reinterpret." A judge "interprets" how the law should be applied to the particulars of a given case. That's not the same as "reinterpreting" a law to mean something which no one had previously supposed it to mean, and maybe even directly contrary to what it had always been taken to mean. That's what I object to.

The Supreme Court may soon decide if it is unconstitutional for a state to forbid same-sex marriage. It is argued that such a ban discriminates against homosexuals by denying them "equal protection of the laws." Now that's my idea of a blatant reinterpretation. As I argue in the April *Alexiad*, traditional marriage laws do not discriminate against homosexuals: they have exactly the same right as heterosexuals to marry a person of the opposite sex. The litigants want the Court to reinterpret (not interpret) the traditional laws to completely alter the meaning of marriage as a heterosexual institution. And I very strongly object to that. If we are to have same-sex marriage (which I don't want), the right way to

get it is by passing state laws and possibly amending the Constitution. The left way to get it is to "reinterpret" and pretend that somehow the Constitution now means something that nobody ever imagined it meant before.

From: **AL du Pisani** June 5, 2013  
945 Grand Prix Street,  
Weltevredenpark 1709, REPUBLIC OF  
SOUTH AFRICA  
[du.pisani@telkomsa.net](mailto:du.pisani@telkomsa.net)

My apologies for not writing sooner. This have been a difficult year in some respects. In that I feel a distance between me and people I have been relatively close to. I do not know how much of that have been my own perception and feelings, and how much have been life getting in the way of my social life. And of course, how much of that was due to the other people being themselves, and withdrawing from me.

A series of unfortunate events have led to me attending less SFSA meetings than normal, and to cut the time I was at meetings short as well. With a couple of people I like moving overseas for a year, this is getting me down a bit.

On the good news side, I have finally, after driving my previous bakkie for nearly 15 years, bought a new bakkie. Bigger, more powerful, more comfortable, and slightly heavier on the juice. I am so looking forward to a long and happy relationship.

Unfortunately, this will finally kill of any tentative plans to visit a US based Worldcon in the next couple of years. This may be well, because between my state, that of organised SF, and the world economy, the next couple of years are going to be dicey.

I have recently read a comment by Jerry Pournelle to the effect the one of the people that he worked with stated that a society in extremis tend to produce weird crimes. I have to take accept that, since South Africa have been plagued with weird crimes since I could recall.

The current media circus is regarding Oscar Pistorius, who shot and killed his girlfriend. Main issue at stake is the question if it was deliberate or by accident. I am already tired of the case, merely from having to suffer through the week long application for bail, and the one month long media fest where all the vultures descended on the story, and any related thing that they could think that they could convince the public is linked. I am avoiding the newspapers and magazines even more than normal.

Now you understand what it was like to endure the O. J. Simpson trial.

It looks as if we are in for one more lesson on "Why Socialism does not work." Too bad the people that knows better have to suffer all the same. Because there are always people

benefiting from selling that old lie, I suspect.

My nephew got his degree earlier this year. My mother and other sister came up to the graduation ceremony. Very interesting, in a somewhat disturbing way. He got a 4 year B.Mus. degree, at a ceremony for the faculty of the Arts. In my opinion at least half of the people who received Ph.D. degrees were writing absolute twaddle.

My nephew seems to be making sort of a living off music. But is also studying further. I already feel like the least educated of my siblings, and now it looks as if the next generation is going to continue in getting educated. At least I hope so, my nieces are just starting school. I expect the coming realignment in the concept of the school to happen during there school-going years.

I am ready more than I have been for a while. Some new stuff, lots of old comfort reading. And almost all of it in electronic form. Getting books in paper is getting to be a schlep.

Thank you for *Alexiad*. I always read and enjoy most of what appears in it, even if I cannot remember from day to day when I read what, written by whom.

You are welcome. Thanks for a different perspective.

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** June 5, 2013  
calle Agustín Querol 6 bis - 6D 28014  
Madrid, SPAIN  
[sueburke@telefonica.net](mailto:sueburke@telefonica.net)  
[mount-oregano.livejournal.com](http://mount-oregano.livejournal.com)  
[amadisofgaul.blogspot.com](http://amadisofgaul.blogspot.com)

I'm counting down the days until the end of the school year, June 20, when I will quit teaching English as a foreign language to Spanish teenagers and start working full-time as a freelance translator and writer. I earned a Diploma in Translation from the Institute of Linguists Educational Trust after a seven-hour exam in January and now hold a Masters-level certification. Better than that, I can earn three times what I was making teaching.

I've already begun work: I'm helping bring the best Spanish-speaking science fiction authors to English-speaking readers. The anthology *Terra Nova*, published by Sportula, should be available at online stores like Amazon very soon. I translated four of its seven stories, outstanding work by top authors from Spain and Latin America – the Cuban zombie story is hilarious, political, and disturbing. The book includes a comprehensive essay about the state of science fiction in Spain.

In the last issue, George W. Price wrote that "There would be no euro crisis if those governments had lived within their means and not borrowed far beyond their ability to repay." Not so. In fact, in 2008, Spain's government had a budget surplus. As the BBC explains here (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16290598>), the crisis was caused by private-sector debt, not government debt. Specifically, the

crisis arose in the financial sector as a result of its own actions, and this was true in both Europe and the US. But the costs of the private sector's bad behavior have been socialized. Spain has spent the equivalent of 5.2% of its 2012 GDP on bank rescues, accounting for fully 10.6% of its current public debt.

As the economy sinks deeper in to depression, government revenues fall, and austerity measures are imposed by Germany to cut government spending to avoid greater debt, which deepens the depression by suppressing internal consumption: "austericide," as it's known, or economic suicide caused by austerity. Spain, under orders, is trying to economize government spending in creative ways. Now its unemployment offices offer jobs preferentially to people still receiving unemployment compensation – only one out of six – to get them off the rolls. In Greece, children are no longer being immunized. And in all the peripheral Eurozone countries, still-rising unemployment is forcing well-educated, ambitious young people to leave in droves, another form of economic suicide.

Taras Wolansky quoted the first two paragraphs an article in the March 30 issue of *The Economist* to dispute global warming. But he failed to quote from the third paragraph: "This does not mean that global warming is a delusion."

On a more literary topic, Madrid is holding its 72nd annual Book Fair in Retiro Park, a few blocks from my house, from May 31 to June 16. Since the start of the crisis in 2008, sales at the fair have been falling steadily although Spaniards claim to be reading more. This year 600 authors will be signing books, but the organizers have yet to figure out how to incorporate electronic books into the fair.

From: **Taras Wolansky** June 5, 2013  
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H,  
Jersey City, NJ 07302-3787 USA  
[twolansky@yahoo.com](mailto:twolansky@yahoo.com)

Hi, Joe. Hi, Lisa.

*Lisa:* Like you (and many, many other people) I picked up on *NCIS* only when it went into syndication. That's what turned it from a mere success to the number one show on the air (not counting so-called reality programs and talent shows).

Early on the producers realized that women increasingly control the proverbial TV dial. So Gibbs, who was supposed to be a playboy with a different redhead on his arm in every episode, was given a Tragic Past, in which he lost his True Love and their little daughter. They replaced a relatively plausible woman ex-Secret Service agent with an Israeli Mossad superwoman. (Women viewers love to see women beating up guys on TV.) I can just imagine the show's writers saying to each other: "People will believe anything if it's Mossad!" And then there is Abby, goth

mistress of all sciences, a fantasy figure for geeks of all genders.

Mind you, both actresses are very good, so I don't mind overlooking the implausibility of the characters they play. Also, the show runners have their cake and eat it, too: the women usually dominate their male counterparts, but two silverbacks – Mark Harmon as Gibbs and the wonderful David McCallum as pathologist "Ducky" Mallard – rule their respective domains.

Another show I found in syndication and can strongly recommend is *The Mentalist*. When the mischievous and sharp-witted protagonist is accused of being a psychic, he bluntly replies: **"There's no such thing as psychics."** Can't say I particularly like the serial killer storyline: like Jethro Gibbs, Patrick Jane also has a Tragic Past in which he lost his True Love and their little daughter – except the character was conceived that way from the beginning.)

*Tara Wayne (review of Brave):* **"In most eras the role of women was to do what she was told . . ."** This is not entirely true; but nonetheless I often feel a little queasy when I read a story about time travel into the past with a female protagonist.

Phyllis Eisenstein's *Shadow of Earth* (1979) is an example that sticks in my mind. To give her female protagonist a chance in a backward alternate time line in which the Spanish Armada won, Eisenstein makes her fluent in Spanish, and beautiful – and the spitting image of a lost heiress (or something like that), so she is adopted by a noble family.

Then you really won't go for Diana Gabaldon. About the most realistic scene from her first book was the one where the handsome Highland hunk (with the secret weakness) beat up the time-travelling Englishwoman (who filled his secret weakness and mastered him). And when I see a Highland Romance with a clean-shaven, ripped-abs Wuv Object cover, I count it another modern folly.

But really, how different is it today, around the world? Is feminism anything more than a temporary fad in a dying civilization? When I watch what is happening in the Muslim world, even as that world spreads to Europe and America, I come to the depressing conclusion that, in any society, women have only the rights that men are willing to give them.

Back in the 90's, before George Bush defeated the Taliban, I sometimes wondered, if we have to have terrorists, why don't some women blow up a few very deserving Taliban leaders? But they never did, and never do. In real life, what few women terrorists there are invariably serve their oppressors.

*Bill Patterson:* **"They had what C.S. Lewis called 'clubbability'".** I've known

some fans who are clubbable, but unfortunately the criminal justice system takes a dim view of that.

As the general subject is already under discussion, this may be a good time to ask: what changed Robert Heinlein's view of homosexuality, in just a few years, from the traditional Freudian/Darwinian position to the libertarian (as it were). I've long surmised some military guy he respected must have come out to him.

*George W. Price:* Look up "sexually antagonistic selection". It refutes your argument that exclusive homosexuality cannot be hereditary. This kind of selection also explains why men have breast tissue. The selective advantage for women outweighs the disadvantage for men; that is, male breast cancer.

We humans, like all organisms, are evolutionary works in progress. While there will be evolutionary pressure in the direction of eliminating both breast tissue and attraction to men from males, while keeping both traits among females, the tangled developmental pathways may make this difficult or impossible.

*Alexis Gilliland:* Ouch! Glad to hear Lee's okay.

**"Mormon obligate homosexuals . . . choices being either to leave the church or commit suicide."** A curious blind spot: you left out celibacy. Which is, I think, the traditional Catholic (and Protestant and Jewish and Muslim) position. Just as a faithful spouse is expected to turn away from all sexually attractive people but one, so the faithful gay Catholic is supposed to turn away from all sexually attractive people *period*. Such individuals often ended up in the priesthood by default, with results that are all too well known.

Cover of the May, 2013 *The Atlantic*: **"WE WILL NEVER RUN OUT OF OIL"**. The author makes two points. First, that estimates of oil and gas reserves have been repeatedly made laughable by advances in extraction technology. Second, that plans are under way, especially in Japan, to mine the methane clathrates at the bottom of the ocean.

As always, your cartoons are a highlight of the issue.

*Robert S Kennedy:* Google "haven episode guide" to get a synopsis of the *Haven* finale.

*Richard A. Dengrove:* Few people realize that Winston Churchill didn't just warn us about Hitlerism and Communism. His third great warning was about Islam. And sure enough, just as many liberals got Communism wrong, they get Islam wrong as well.

Islam is set against all the freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment. Freedom of speech. Freedom of the press. And, most of all, freedom of religion. Though (again, like the Communists) on the road to Sharia law they will readily make use of the freedoms they wish to destroy.

Is a tolerant Islam even possible? I think so. Trouble is, Islam has been evolving away from tolerance for nearly 100 years. Look at

what's happening in Turkey and Egypt, to name just two.

**“[Robert Bork] did not, at any point in his brief, mention the opinion of the founding fathers.”** This is strange because the very first source I looked at, the usually liberal Wikipedia, says Bork “was best known for” arguing that “constitutional adjudication” must be “guided by the framers’ original understanding of the United States Constitution.” What you read, I suspect, was not a brief by Bork, but a deceptive attack piece *about* him.

As a kid, I collected “Tom Swift, Jr.”, up to about #28, I think – when I jumped straight into grown-up SF (Van Vogt, Heinlein, Vance, De Camp) without the usual phase of reading YA stuff (except the Heinlein juveniles). I can recall no political content in Tom Swift, Jr. but, after all this time, I don’t remember much about the books. If the villains were Communists, then I commend the publishers.

Number 28 was Tom Swift and the Mystery Comet (1966). Looking at the synopsis, it has remote-control sampling probes and concern about the comet hitting the Earth. The sampling is by teleportation: “Mr. Scott, six samples to beam up.” “Aye, Mr. Swift.”

— JTM

From: **Leigh Kimmel** June 7, 2013  
[leighkimmel@yahoo.com](mailto:leighkimmel@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.leighkimmel.com/>  
<http://www.billionlightyearbookshelf.com/>  
<http://www.starshipcat.com/>

I’d intended to get this to you right after we got back from our spring campout sales event, but life intervened. We got back to find our house had been broken into, and there was glass all over the sunporch. At least this time they hadn’t gotten in and stolen anything, since the security system seems to have scared them off. However, it still meant the difficulties of getting the mess cleaned up and the window glass replaced, which hasn’t been helped by our handyman’s glass man being somewhat flaky. The joys of subcontracting.

And as if that wasn’t enough, we were having a recurrence of a roof leak, so I’d asked the handyman to also get us an estimate on repairing it. Except he found that it wasn’t just an ordinary leak — something had been tearing up the shingles. And then we heard scratching sounds in the ceiling over the bedroom. So we’re now dealing with a wildlife removal company, which determined it was a raccoon and installed a one-way door in its hole. After a day of silence, in which we were thinking we were rid of the critter, we heard more scratching. Turns out the raccoon had torn up the one-way door, losing a fair amount of fur in the process, and gotten back

in. Since we have reason to believe we’re dealing with a mother animal that has a nest full of kits, we now have an ultrasonic device up there, and the opening has been left open so she can remove her own kits and set up housekeeping elsewhere (hopefully in a hollow tree somewhere, but given the number of vacant houses in this neighborhood, I’m thinking it’s likely it’ll be another attic, especially if she grew up in an attic and thinks of attics as proper places for nesting).

The kitchen door had a cat flap. The realtor nailed a board over it before we moved in. We think Elfing the cat had got used to coming in through the door during bad weather, so was used to being in the house (but then the kids from the nearby school also got in, reaching through the door to unlock the lock, and they smashed lightbulbs in the bathtub as a going-away present.)

We’re pretty sure Elfing didn’t smash the lightbulbs or take ice cream bars from the freezer.

— LTM

I particularly found your review of Hank Searls’ *The Pilgrim Project* fascinating, because last year I wrote my own review at <http://billionlightyearbookshelf.com/reviews/pilgrimproject.shtml>, largely in response to Ian Sales’ review at:

<http://spacebookspace.blogspot.com/2009/06/pilgrim-project-hank-searls.html>

Ian, who is also the editor of the anthology *Rocket Science*:

<http://www.mutationpress.com/contributors1.html>

and published my short story “Tell Me a Story,” concluded in his review of *The Pilgrim Project* that “the colonel” was intended to represent Scott Carpenter, which would mean that his rank title was a red herring. However, on reading the novel, I concluded that the character couldn’t really be correlated to any of the Mercury astronauts, and was most likely intended to be a composite figure that represented them as a group.

However, you’re not the only person who has interpreted the character of the Colonel as being Grissom. There used to be a wonderful discussion on one of the posts at Beyond Apollo:

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/beyondapollo/>

in which one of the discussants described writing a scenario in which he actually went through with it, spending an unspecified

amount of time alone on the Moon — and then turned the story tragic, with White and Chaffee coming to retrieve him and instead crashing and killing all three astronauts. My first reaction was “say what, do you think the universe is out to get those guys? That God, or Zeus, or Cthulhu has ordained that their lives are forfeit for humanity’s hubris?” And then I wondered if the discussant in question felt that to imagine a world in which they \*don’t\* become martyrs to the space program would be somehow disrespectful, an act of erasure of their heroism — in which case I’d be in deep, deep trouble, because the existence of a world in which they escaped the Apollo 1 spacecraft in the nick of time is one of the essential parts of my current novel in progress. (Unfortunately, that post has since been deleted, taking the entire wonderful sequence of comments with it).

Of course you certainly have a point about how Searls, writing at the time, would have to make up characters — or at least blur their identity sufficiently that they couldn’t be singled out with definite accuracy as living people. That is one advantage to writing alternate history decades after the event, although in my own alternate history, most of the space-related novels take place decades after the point of departure, and most of the historical-domain characters appear only in flashbacks and in some of the chapter-opening epigraphs.

And I too feel the disappointment of what has happened to our space program. It’s the big reason why so much of my writing since July of 2011 has been set in an alternate history, and as time goes by and it seems like our decisionmakers are determined to founder what’s left of our space program, I find myself time and again wishing I could emigrate to that world instead of having to watch this one progressively lose more and more of its space capacity, and the death of the dreams of my childhood watching the Apollo moon landings.

About a dozen or so years ago I wrote a posting on UseNet (you remember UseNet, don’t you?) predicting gloom and doom, with Cape Canaveral being condos, the ESA site in Guyana a Club Med, and so on. Another poster shot back that there would soon be jumpin’ space programs from all the countries plus abundant private space. I don’t like being more right.

— JTM

#### WAHF:

**Lloyd Daub**, with various items of interest.

**Pat McCray**, with thanks.

THE REPORT ON THE  
EXTINCTION OF THE  
INTELLIGENT INDIGENES OF  
BD-12770437-3  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

... the investigation involved the development of a process for recovering the electronic records of the extinct race, as other records had deteriorated due to natural forces and the passage of time. Since these methods had become the primary means of information storage, the process should have made determining the content more possible, but this was counter-acted by the terse, incompetently-executed, and often mindless content of a high proportion of the communications, which were made further incomprehensible due to the limited length of each comment ...

... it is unclear whether the process which brought about the discontinuance of relations between the genders of the race was due to political or mystical-belief-structure factors. Whichever was the cause, such relations had virtually ceased.

Two scientific developments of that period appear, from the evidence available, to have been produced to replace such relations. Whether the impetus to create such antedated or postdated the beginning of the other process is not yet clear, but further analysis is being conducted.

The one development was of a genetically modified disease. Its symptom was that the afflicted person became unable to consume any other sustenance save circulatory fluid.

The result was to make the afflicted person somehow supremely desirable for a relationship which filled the emotional needs heretofore filled by reproductive-security relationships. The afflicted person was described as possessing not only superior attraction, but superior intelligence, will, and endurance, while being utterly servile. (It is not clear why some reports of this infection ascribe the not yet comprehensible term "sparkling" to the infected ones.) Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the one gender came to prefer partners with this affliction.

Due to their need to consume circulatory fluid, the infectees displayed the ordinary pattern of predators towards prey, exacerbated by the comparative absence of counter-predators. After exterminating their prey, they became extinct themselves from lack of sustenance ...

... the other project was to create a means for animating the corpses of deceased individuals. A powerful strain of nanites was developed which fulfilled this program.

The living members of the species endeavored to destroy the animated corpses through various primitive means of combat. While these were highly functional, the nature of the nanites meant that the combatants were speedily infected themselves.

Surviving records indicate that the combatants exhibited unusually high levels of pleasure at these combats. It would appear that the hypothecated goal of replacing the emotional needs for reproductive-security relationships with a surrogate was more than adequately fulfilled by this effort.

The nanite-infested entities could not adequately resist the natural processes of decay. When the last survivors of the species were infected, the infested individuals quickly succumbed to dissolution ...

... many of the surviving records indicate enthusiasm for these processes. It is unclear why this race should have become so suicidal. Further study is indicated to determine how the spread of enthusiasm for such processes can be prevented among our races.

Introduction of such concepts, covertly, into the cultures of potentially dangerous opponents cannot be dismissed. Such a powerful weapon must be used carefully and with adequate oversight ...

Co-Editors:	Lisa & Joseph Major
Co-Publishers:	Joseph & Lisa Major
Writers, Staff:	Major, Joseph, Major, Lisa, & McCormick, Grant
Tech Staff:	Grant C. McCormick

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

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

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## ALEXIAD

c/o Lisa & Joseph Major

1409 Christy Avenue

Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA

[jtmajor@iglou.com](mailto:jtmajor@iglou.com)

<http://efanzines.com/Alexiad/index.htm>

Rediscovery by Paul Gadzikowski

