

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΕΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

This issue is dedicated to all D-Day veterans, alive and dead.

Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

This issue came along after the newest addition to my camera collection, a Fuji s8200. I fell in love with it at Best Buy. Its big attraction is a 40x zoom. I first tested it in Henderson and within moments had the thrill of zooming in on things I could only have dreamed of. Unfortunately the Fuji has not solved the problem of horses ducking their heads or dodging sideways just as I push the shutter button. It has however, proven itself capable of getting striking pictures of the moon, which does not duck its head or dodge sideways. I have spent a fair bit of time playing with the camera. Its main strength is that huge zoom. The weakness is that the huge zoom makes the camera heavy. I expect it will do wonders to strengthen the muscles in my wrists and hands. It also does not run on a rechargeable battery but on double A's. I will have to stock up on batteries before San Antonio.

— Lisa

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The 59th Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **July 27, 2013** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Dewycolorintheline won by two lengths in a wire-to-wire victory.

The 88th Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 3, 2013** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Royalty for Life won, being never challenged. There were so many entries that there were three qualifying heats before the main race.

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

The 59th Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **September 3, 2013** at Tioga Downs in Nichols, New York.

The 68th Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **September 19, 2013** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio.

The 58th Running of the Messenger Stakes (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **November 2, 2013** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The Breeders' Cup World Championships will be **November 1-2, 2013** at Santa Anita Park.

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Printed on August 7, 2013

Deadline is **October 1, 2013**

## Reviewer's Notes

Maybe I should pride cats. Trying to organize one dinner is a nightmare, trying to organize several just makes it worse. Since I will be seeing family members I haven't seen in a long time (and some I might never see again) I have been arranging meetings, but trying to find a time and place convenient to all is hard.

Add to that our Faneds Feast and it becomes horrendous. At least thanks to the Internet I could find a place in San Antonio, but finding a time when people could show up is another matter.

As for those who do show up . . . notice will be given out in various media and particularly at the Fan Lounge. Thanks to John Purcell for his organizing and arranging, and we hope to see you there.

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Dragon\*Con is working at ridding itself of the Kramer problem. They are setting up a new company run by the non-Kramer partners and then to sell the old company to the new one. Now for the other issues. Ed Kramer isn't taking it lying down, either.

We may well have a Lunar National Park. Why can't we have access to it? This proposal seems to be another silly bit of posing.

**The Marching Morons to Idiocracy:** Jenny McCarthy is being considered for the position of host on *The View*, an ABC talk show. She is best known not for being 1994 Playmate of the Year but for being an anti-immunization activist.

My baby book contains spaces to enter when I had measles, mumps (my third birthday present), chicken pox, and so on. By the time my nephew and niece were born, there were immunizations for all those. Now that I have a grand-nephew, those diseases, and worse (e.g., pertussis, also known as "whooping cough") are coming back.

One of the biggest killers in the Civil War wasn't Yankee steel and shot; it was measles, as many recruits had not been exposed to it as children. Mumps in an adult male can cause sterility and impotence.

Jenny McCarthy is the most energetic — certainly the most visible — promoter of the fictitious link between autism and immunizations. Until it was renamed, the Anti Vaccine Body Count website, which lists deaths attributable to non-immunization, was called the "Jenny McCarthy Body Count" website. The count as of June 22 was **1170**.

We need Kornbluth now more than ever, to sear this idiocracy into the public mind.

**Toni Weiskopf** has announced plans for a biography of our very own **Wilson "Bob" Tucker**. She wants people to send in stories about Fandom's Uncle. Her intent is, beyond that, to create a history of fandom as a whole, as seen in the life and activities of one of its great driving forces.

It's something to look forward to. She

hopes to get it done in two years. If only I could reconsider those Tucker panels at TuckerCon where the audience and the panel were of like size. And what will the competition be? *Chicks Dig Browncoats: A Celebration of Firefly by the Women Who Love It?*

## OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Iain Banks**, also occasionally known as Iain M. Banks, on **9 June 2013**. Banks was best known in the field for his Culture series, the renowned space opera with a modern twist. He also wrote in the mundane field, but in Britain, where that Dan Dare sci-fi stuff is not so stigmatized.

We regret to report the death of **Richard Matheson** on **June 23, 2013**. Matheson was one of the old-timers from the fifties, on the cusp of the transit to the media, and indeed he was one of the noteworthy writers for *The Twilight Zone*. He was known for his novels, including *I Am Legend* (1954), *The Shrinking Man* (1956), and *Hell House* (1971).

E. L. Konigsburg

I remember her best as the author of *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs Basil E Frankweiler*, which is a marvelous book. It well deserved its Newbery. She actually won the Newbery twice, the second being for *View From Saturday*. *Frankweiler* is one of my favorite books. It's about two children who run away and hide out in the Metropolitan Museum.

— Lisa

## MONARCHIST NEWS

For unto us (for some definitions of "us") a Prince is born. **His Royal Highness Prince George Alexander Louis of Cambridge** came into the world on **July 22, 2013**. I guess "George" for George VI and "Louis" for Lord Mountbatten. "George VII"?

Not to be confused with the former Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, Field-Marshal **H.R.H. Prince George William Frederick Charles, Duke of Cambridge** [1819-1904].

**King Albert II**, King of the Belgians [Konig der Belgen, Roi des Belges, König der Belgier], abdicated the throne on **July 21**. He was succeeded by his oldest son, **Philippe**.

The Belgian royal house is the house of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha [yes, the same as Richard Duke of Gloucester and the former Bulgarian prime minister Simeon Saxecoburggottski], descended from Herzog Leopold [1790-1865], **King Leopold I** [r. 1830-1865], who had been the husband of Princess Charlotte of Wales [1796-1817], Prinny's child and until her death second in line to the British Throne after her father, who was later the Prince Regent and then George IV. (Leopold II was by the second wife, Louise of Orléans.)

**Kung Yu-Jen** [pinyin Kong Youren] was born on January 1, 2006 in Taipei. He is the senior 80th generation lineal male-line descendant of Kung Fu-tsu [pinyin Kong Fuzi], also known as "Confucius" (c551 BC[E] — 479 BC[E]). His father, the 79th generation descendant, Kung Tsui-chang [Kong Chuichang], holds the office of Sacrificial Official to Confucius. Until 2008, the office was cabinet-ranked.

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

Because of the impending deployment to Afghanistan, the British **7th Armoured Brigade** held its 75th Anniversary celebration on the week of July 28-August 3. The Mobile Division in Egypt became the 7th Armoured Division on **17th September 1938**.

The anniversary celebrations were attended by a small number of veterans from those days, along with other veterans from the intervening years. Now the World War II veterans are the fading old men.

They went with songs to the battle, they  
were young.

Straight of limb, true of eyes, steady  
and aglow.

They were staunch to the end against  
odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall not grow old, as we that are  
left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years  
condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the  
morning

We will remember them.

**Beth Pointer**

**July 17 1951-July 14, 2013**

Lisa Major

Thirteen years ago when I first became involved in the Greek Orthodox community here in Louisville I was not alone in my interest. There were twelve students in that very first beginning class. Two of us stuck with it all the way into the church, myself and Beth Pointer. Somehow I always thought we'd become two little old church ladies sitting in a pew together. It was not to be. Her health began to deteriorate and on July 14 she died. Her partner Cliff Amos had to bury her on her birthday. She would have been sixty-two.

## IT'S A GIFT

Commentary by Joseph T Major

Harold Bisonette (W. C. Fields) has as many if not more distractions than the average store-owner. His wife nags him, his neighbor's child torments him, and even at work a customer demolishes the store demanding kumquats. When his Uncle Bean passes away, he takes the legacy and uses it to buy an orange grove, sight unseen. There is a reason for not buying property sight unseen. Nevertheless, after immense travails, he finally gets what he wants, winding up triumphantly the Fields classic comedy *It's a Gift* (1934).

A later role for W. C. Fields was simply "The Great Man" in *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break* (1941), which might well be the story of the seller of the somewhat degraded grove (one tree) to Mr. Bisonette. (It isn't, though such evocative lines as "Bean-bag . . . ah, it's very good, becomes very exciting at times. I saw the championship played in Paris, many people were killed," lend the film a deserved piquancy.) Nearly fifty years later, Gregory Benford was proposing an alternate-history anthology of different career paths to be titled *The Great Man*.

In the Robert A. Heinlein Memorial Issue of Jim Baen's *New Destinies* (Volume VI/Winter 1988), Charles Sheffield told of the story he had begun for this anthology, a story that had been dropped when its subject died. The story would be titled "Shore Job" and would deal with Robert A. Heinlein's naval career. In an article written with Yoji Kondo, "Farewell to the Master", Sheffield gives a precis of his proposed story.

It was not quite like Larry Niven's "The Return of William Proxmire" (*What Might Have Been I: Alternate Empires* (1989), Gregory Benford, ed.). The similarities raise questions about who told what to whom and how much. Niven had time travel in the story, and in the real world may have been fortunate that he had money and had *New York Times* vs. *Sullivan* on his side.

Sheffield, like Niven, had Heinlein's naval career be un-aborted by early antibiotic treatment for his tuberculosis. Heinlein rises in the ranks, reaching the rank of Captain by 1944, when the story is set. Heinlein is also known as the writer of a Tough Guide to the Navy, an unofficial set of rules, a book that is privately and widely distributed in the ranks. Think "The Notebooks of Lazarus Long" crossed with *The First Hundred Thousand* (that being the real-life guide to life in a bureaucracy cited in *Glory Road* (1963; NHOL G.148)).

Captain Heinlein is commanding a PT Boat squadron based out of Britain. In the story proper, he is accompanying his subordinate on a rescue mission; the squadron is supposed to extract a scientist from Nazi-occupied France. After several days of

cruising in the Atlantic west of the Scillies, they get the "go" order, and head in to recover their man.

The recovery team goes ashore. Time passes. The Captain decides to go in and stage a rescue, against specific orders from his superior officer. He finds the team and the scientist, brings them to safety, and in the process observes and makes careful, meticulous notes on the German preparations to repel the impending Allied landings.

Back in Britain, he demands to be court-martialed for his disobedience. He presses this all the way to the top, refusing in the process a compromise of shore duty, as he is a professional sea officer who deserves no less. Finally, the President himself compromises, offering Captain Heinlein the task of supervising the investigation of the German rocket program. That he accepts.

It all seems very heroic, not to mention evocative of the noble Martian in *Double Star* (1956; NHOL G.128) who demanded trial, prosecuted himself, and won a death sentence. As Sheffield and Kondo note, all those who knew Heinlein asserted that this course of action was entirely in keeping with his personality.

This runs into a structural problem of writing. The protagonist of a story should be the principal actor, carrying out the actions that lead to the resolution of the plot. This conflicts with situations where the protagonist is a person of authority.

One criticism that was made of *STAR TREK* was that as commander of a substantial military combat spacecraft, Kirk was responsible for the operations thereof. Yet, because of the need to resolve situations, he was always going down on planets, often with other senior officers.

Now commanders do and have undertaken to do precisely that. There is in such situations always the problem of the commander being killed or incapacitated, thus putting not only the mission but a valuable asset at risk. It has been done, it can be done — but most of the writers who depict this don't do the background and plot setup to make it plausible.

Another concern is that of organizations. Middle-level officers who go to such efforts to commit career suicide don't get indulged like that. It is very ego-satisfying to say "I'm going all the way to the top!" This is disruptive to order and discipline. Captain Heinlein would get his court-martial, if he demanded it — and he would be convicted, his career wrecked, and the USNA Class of '29 reunions would have old officers saying, "Remember Bob? Whatever happened to him?"

The specific scenario comes across as a bit contrived. There are a number of considerations that make having an American torpedo boat squadron operating out of Britain doing covert-action extractions problematic. To begin with, the British did not look with any particular enthusiasm on American covert actions based from their country. They had their own people doing that, the Strategic

Operations Executive (SOE).

In any case, such exfiltrations were not usually performed by sea. There were Germans on the coast, which would prove a barrier to such efforts. The nuclear scientist Niels Bohr was flown out of Europe, from Sweden, in a de Havilland Mosquito light bomber, for example. Extractions from France were more commonly done by No. 138 (Special Duties) and No. 161 (Special Duties) Squadrons, RAF, using Westland Lysander light aircraft. There was also a covert transport effort conducted with the French resistance to get people out of Europe through Spain.

There was indeed an American covert-warfare torpedo boat unit, that operated in the Mediterranean. It reported to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the covert-warfare organization that was the ancestor of the CIA (which legacy would cause a serious structural problem in the CIA, but that is a different matter). As with such small-boat units, it was composed of wartime recruits, and commanded by one. (Who was distinguished in other fields of endeavor; Lieutenant-Commander Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., United States Navy Reserve.) Having a regular captain command such a unit would be less likely.

Again, such considerations are not impossible, but setting them up would require considerable justification and explanation of why such extraordinary exemptions were required and possible. There is a limit to what is plausible in such efforts, and the contrivances required can be noticed even by the reader who is unaware of the historical details.

So many such stories feature one real person and a flock of invented characters, given the necessary personalities and abilities to make the plot work (i.e., Sheffield's Admiral "Old Cockle" Moscheles, the officer ordering Captain Heinlein not to risk himself ["cockles" are British saltwater clams]). This is all very well, if a bit facile. Then too, it is possible to assume that all the historical people have been pushed into other careers by this particular change in history.

Who were the historical people involved? As previously said, an American torpedo boat unit that was assigned to do covert-warfare work would be assigned to the OSS, not the American Naval Forces Europe. The OSS officer in command of their efforts in Britain was David K. E. Bruce, who would later become a prominent diplomat.

Beyond that, the OSS mind-set was different. Colonel Bruce's superior officer, the famous (or notorious) William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan had flown to a covert-warfare base behind the Japanese lines in Southeast Asia, and would later go ashore on the day after the initial Normandy landings. It does not seem likely that with such a mentality directing operations, that a senior officer would be ordered not to go ashore, or that his self-destructing urge to demand punishment for doing so would be heeded.

And finally, Heinlein had a Friend in High Places; the Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations, the Man in Charge himself. Admiral Ernest J. King. Heinlein had been acquainted with King during his initial tour on the USS *Lexington*. In this alternative career, it seems improbable that such a connection would lapse. In civilian life, Heinlein kept it up, and in service such attention would be all the more desirable.

So, the more we know, the more the situation changes, and often in very different ways, but never close to the idea as given. Again, all these issues can be explained, changed, altered, or butterflied away. This requires considerable investment in explanation, more work than perhaps will fit.

Since the abandonment of the story, more background on Heinlein's life and health has become available. His military assignment was in gunnery; as a result Heinlein became trained on, and interested in, fire-control equipment. The mechanical computing of the 1930s was primitive by the standards of even a decade later, yet it was highly advanced for the time. A gunnery officer being put in charge of small boats? It is a standard of service legend that the Navy's personnel office investigates the skills and knowledge of officers and men, and then assigns them to tasks for which they are totally, if not uniquely, unsuited. But this is gripes. A gunnery specialist would far more likely be in gunnery, or given the rank stated, commanding a big-gun ship, a cruiser more likely, but he would have the sea command he is presented as desiring. There was also the seasickness problem to consider.

Then too, Bill Patterson's biography has revealed one almost embarrassing, certainly incapacitating, consideration that would seem to preclude such an assignment. In November of 1943, Heinlein entered a hospital for surgery — hemorrhoid surgery. The stress of his wartime work caused his system to break down. He spent three months having and recovering from various surgeries and some more post-operative time recovering. [This also collapses "Green Fire" (*Asimov's*, April 2000) which is in any case another proof that all too often SF is of its time.]

Again, all this can be altered, given various explanations due to changed circumstances. Circumstances have changed, which is the entire point of the story.

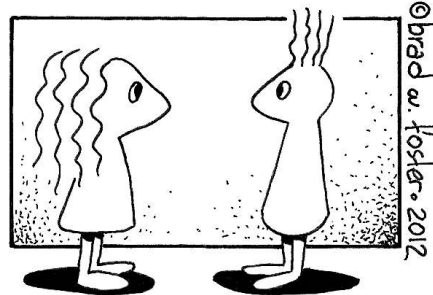
At this point the reader may wonder if there is any original world, or original Heinlein left. If the writer has to explain away such a substantial assortment of differences and difficulties, the world and the person alike become unrecognizable.

In his story, Niven solves the problem by skimming over it, so to speak. The career of Heinlein after his miraculous recovery from tuberculosis (surely no one would believe a story of a time-traveller coming aboard to stick him with a syringe of some miracle drug) is not elucidated, though the comment "the

Admiral won't permit it" indicates something. Yet, in some ways, the story is as much a temper-tantrum aimed at a political opponent as it is a speculation.

There is room for other alternatives in his life. Suppose, say, for whatever reason, Heinlein didn't enter into his ill-fated marriage with Elinor Curry in 1929? Then he would have had the Rhodes Scholarship, gone to Oxford, studied astronomy there, and run into J. R. R. Tolkien. Now that would be an interesting shore job.

## RELATIONSHIPS...



... WHO CAN REALLY EXPLAIN IT?

TO THE MOON, ALICE!  
Commentary by Joseph T Major

"Never"  
does not exist  
for the human mind  
... only "Not yet."

— *Die Frau im Mond*

The Baltimore Gun Club devoted substantial resources and effort to building the world's largest artillery piece for their lunar mission. Other explorers used sailing ships ("True History", (2nd Century AD/CE)), geese (*The Man in the Moone* (1638)), antigravity coatings (*The First Men In the Moon* (1901)), and so on. A little Frenchman with a big nose once listed seven different ways, but that was mostly so to distract someone while the girl he loved could get married to the guy he ghost-wrote love letters for.

An early movie on the topic was *Le voyage dans la Lune* (1902), by Georges Méliès. Méliès uses plot elements from *De la terre à la lune* and *The First Men in the Moon*, having the voyagers fired in a cannon, landing on the moon and meeting hostile moon men, then returning to splash down in the ocean.

It starts off with, apparently, Dumbledore making a presentation to the Hogwarts faculty. The entire ground crew of the cannon, except for the commander and the guy who lights the fuse, are women. The scenes on the Moon are early Monty Python and I kept on expecting the

sequence to end with a giant foot stomping out of the sky. Fortunately the moon men blow up when anyone hits them.

After Robert Goddard came down out of his cherry tree and Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky left class for the day (as Sir Arthur C. Clarke put it, the three intellectual pioneers of space were all schoolteachers, who must have been wanting to get away from something, and perhaps it was the same thing) it became clear that for now rockets were the only thing that worked.

Instead of a detailed discussion of their merits, let's just look at the mechanics of the launches of the two principal films that presented the idea. Then as now, the principal influence on the mass public for imagining this was the media. Fritz Lang, the already-famous director, chose to direct such a work. It wasn't that silly *French* thing, rather he worked it out according to scientific principles and got the advice of the best experts available, German of course: Professor Hermann Oberth and writer Willy Ley.

The result is *Die Frau im Mond*, or "Woman in the Moon" (1929). This isn't a "Mercury 13" situation, either. (That, you recall, was when a researcher did on his own a comparative study of a group of female pilots and someone got the idea that they were astronaut candidates.)

Wolf Helius the explorer learns that a scientist named Mannfeldt has a theory that there is gold on the Moon. (Now you know where Chester Gould got that idea for *Dick Tracy*.) That's one way to attract interest. He gets financing for a spaceship that will take him, Mannfeldt, his assistants Windegger and Friede, and a representative of a sinister American financial syndicate that has muscled its way in after an attempt on Mannfeldt's life, "the man who calls himself Walter Turner" [now if it had only been "Ted"].

The launch is near a remarkably large city, which seems a little hazardous. The mission is Direct Ascent, with the rocket going directly to the Moon. The rocket seems to have two stages. It is brought out from the assembly building to the launch site on a large crawler. Instead of a gantry, the rocket is lowered into a tank of water.

The design of the crew compartment seems a little haphazard. The crew seats are cots with about forty centimeters clearance over the deck. The control panel is upright between the two pilot cots, facing the camera very nicely but neither of the pilots, and we see Helius having to reach over his chest to flip the switch to fire the engine, discard the first stage, and otherwise control the flight.

Indeed, everyone except Friede seems to be putting himself at risk. Helius and Windegger have their arms lying over the frames of the cots, Mannfeldt is holding his pet mouse in a cage on his chest, and "Turner" tears at his shirt. All Friede does is fold her arms over her chest and breathe dramatically. Their outfits seem a little unsuitable, too; *they are all wearing ties*. Expecting a formal dinner with

the Grand Lunar, or something?

For dramatic purposes, Lang had title cards giving the seconds left to the launch. This idea was taken up by later researchers. Yes, it was the first ever countdown.

The launch is successful enough, but the rocket seems to be going improbably fast, and at about ten degrees to the thrust axis at that. And I won't mention little Gustav the stowaway . . .

The figures given for escape velocity are correct; though dramatically, focusing on the velocity and acceleration gauges in order to show the action comes across as a little dry. As opposed to the antics of the crew, which are very much silent-movie melodramatic acting-out. They are accelerating at 4g (40 m/s<sup>2</sup> to be precise) for eight minutes.

Incidentally, Oberth was supposed to build a rocket and launch it on the movie's opening day. It didn't work out. If you think you've heard that before, that was what they were doing to publicize *The Last Action Hero* (1993); some lucky kid would get a trip to Wallops Island to launch a rocket plastered with *Last Action Hero* ads, with Arnold himself helping push the button. There were delays and if it happened, no one ever said.

Twenty-one years later, George Pal figured he could do Fritz Lang better. Of course, he had the advice of the best expert available, Robert Heinlein. The result was *Destination Moon* (1950).

Dr. Charles Cargraves leads a team of aviation experts, engineers, scientists, financiers, and workers in building a moon rocket. In this he is opposed by a never-specified organization (the Kranjovian State Security Service? Helius Lunare Gold Bergbau Gesellschaft?), that stoops to sabotage and worse yet, lawsuits.

At the last minute, Cargraves, his partner General Thayer, and Jim Barnes the rocket construction chief have to get Joe Sweeney, one of the technicians, to be radioman for the mission. If he were any more Brooklynite he would be wearing a Dodgers logo on his space helmet. (When it became out of the question to have comic ethnic minorities as ordinary person relief, they were replaced with comic non-ethnic minorities.) At least he gives the others someone to explain things to, for the benefit of the audience.

The rocket is a single-stage-to-orbit Direct Ascent vehicle. (Nobody seems to have considered any kind of orbital rendezvous then.) Cargraves has given due consideration to explosions and built his launch base out in the desert. This means that there are still spectators, but not as many as Helius had for his launch.

Aside from the problems caused by legal complications, the launch seems to go reasonably well. The cockpit is also sensibly built, with couches built to protect the crew from acceleration, and control panels that the crew can actually see without having to reach

over the edges. They also have something approaching real flight suits.

The special effects crew put some effort into making the astronauts look as if they were under acceleration. The actors did a little, though I think the measure of their skill is somewhere between Heinlein's glowing words of praise and Pauline Kael's comparison of them to wood; the lead actors had subsequent careers as supporting characters in movies and television.

In these, we run into the problem of the principal actor of the plot. Helius and Cargraves are organizers and leaders. It seems improbable that they would also have the skills needed to participate in the first mission, or that they would even be considered. In "The Man Who Sold the Moon" (1950; NHOL G.079) the inability of D. D. Harriman to go on the moon mission he has organized, due to legal and financial considerations, is presented as a moving tragedy, Moses unable to enter the Land of Israel. There are other considerations; Harriman is needed on Earth to build the sustaining infrastructure to ensure that space travel is not a one-off stunt. (Then too, the story has to accord with the established background in "Requiem" (1939; NHOL G.012a; *Astounding* January 1940, NHOL G.012b). At least he has Maureen Johnson to go back to.)

Once on the Moon, in each film, due to a lack of consumables someone has to stay behind. One expects that Helius's sojourn on the Moon won't be long. There's gold there; Mannfeldt was right, and a romantic situation and rescue is in prospect. Fortunately, by some desperate measures, Sweeney's heroic self-sacrifice (he knew who would be needed to keep the outfit going) is not necessary.

Having the mission land on the far side is a way to engender drama, but it seems rather ill-thought. Helius had to land there because, according to the theory they were using, there was a livable environment on the far side of the Moon. Since there wasn't, the landings of Cargraves, his equivalents in the story "Destination Moon" (1950, NHOL G. 086), and others (e.g., the forcibly self-sufficient explorers of John W. Campbell's "The Moon is Hell" (1951)) seem to be poor planning.

By way of comparison, I watched the Apollo 17 launch. (It's on YouTube.) There was more organization. You didn't have James C. Fletcher the NASA Administrator asking Cernan, Evans, and Schmidt if they wanted to back out at the last minute. You didn't have the sheriff of Brevard County at the main gate with a judicial order.

The limits of special effects could be noted. Neither Lang nor Pal seem to have imagined how incredibly bright the rocket exhaust was, much less how the thrust to mass ratio would involve having a slow liftoff.

Imagination and speculation were meant to engender an interest in actually doing this sort of thing. Lang and Oberth, Pal and Heinlein,

were working together each in his own field of endeavor, to bring the concept before the public. If it didn't work out the way they wished it would, at least they tried.

*Le voyage dans la Lune*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0000417/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=my5PY0TqPQc>

*Frau im Mond*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019901/>

*Destination Moon*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0042393/>

Imagine Cargraves, Thayer, Barnes, and Sweeney, standing outside their ship, the Stars and Stripes planted in the lunar regolith, Cargraves saying solemnly, "By the grace of God, and the name of the United States of America, I take possession of this planet on behalf of, and for the benefit of, all mankind."

They look up and see Helius, Mannfeldt, Windegger, Friede, Turner, and kleine Gustav come bounding over a ridge, where they plant the Rot-Schwartz-Geld banner. Over the radio Helius's voice crackles, „Ich behaupte diesen Planeten im Namen des deutschen Reiches! Achh, ist das nicht schön!“ [“I claim this planet in the name of the German Reich! Oooh, isn't that lovely!”]

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FOXY LADY

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE CATS OF TANGLEWOOD FOREST**  
by Charles de Lint

Illustrated by Charles Vess  
(Little, Brown and Company; 2013;  
ISBN 978-0-316-05357-0; \$17.99)

Once upon a time, Lillian lived with her Aunt on the edge of Tanglewood Forest.

This is a beast-fable, an American legendarium of spirits and hants and other things beyond the natural, a story as was told to delight and reassure children, in the old days. The storytellers had half-remembered tales from the Old Country, half-understood stories from the old natives, and a half-comprehended desire to make them one.

Tanglewood Forest is full of cats. There are other powers, other entities beyond, not hostile or indifferent or helpful, just . . . there. Their own ways, their own interests, their own habits, and a little girl with no past, seeking for a life, to go among them.

Where she goes to sleep in the woods and wakes up . . . as a cat. From there her life gets complicated. Even when she returns to humanity, it gets complicated, and with one thing and another, she has to treat with the

powers of the woods to undo the turnings of her life.

There are few enough books like this, ones that do not seek to tell a tale of might, or a story of righteousness, but just understanding. Lillian is brought to understanding, and in the end, perhaps the reader will seek peace.

#### BEAT TO QUARTERS

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### *THE LOST FLEET:*

#### *BEYOND THE FRONTIER:* *GUARDIAN*

by "Jack Campbell" [John G. Hemry]  
(Ace: 2013;

ISBN 978-0-425260-50-0; \$26.95;  
Penguin Publishing (Kindle); \$9.99)

Sequel to *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the  
Frontier: Dreadnaught*

[reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #3] and  
*The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier:  
Invincible*

[reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #3]

At the end of *The Happy Return* (1937), Captain Horatio Hornblower shied away from making a personal connection, so to speak, with the powerful Wellesley clan. Besides, he was married already. (If you are overjoyed at the prospect of finding an unread Hornblower book, it was retitled *Beat to Quarters* in the States, so no luck.)

Jack Geary is in a political milieu just as complex as Hornblower's, and he happens to be Nelson and Wellington all wrapped into one. With, naturally, some politicians trying to bring him down, while others are expecting him to be the All-Highest Supreme Warlord. Oh, and his wife is there on hand, and for reasons of discipline, they have to sleep apart and alone. (Well, at least in the end Hornblower got Lady Barbara.)

Geary's command has explored strange new worlds, sought out new life and new civilizations, boldly gone where no human has ever gone before. Now they have to get back, past the treacherous Syndic, the difficult situation at Midway (see Hemry's *Lost Stars* series; the second book, *The Lost Stars: Perilous Shield* will be released by Ace on October 1, 2013), and the interesting problems of their means of transport.

And when they get home . . . it's bad enough that the reception is divided between Roman and Carthaginian modes (where a victorious general would be considered a threat to the republic). There are also the problems of other interests. As when the cute widdle cow-bears should have their freedom, and some animal lovers actually get that wish.

The value of Hemry's observations is that the hero who wins the battle that can't be won, and saves the day that can't be saved, is not able to win over every heart by his penetrating hero-light. Other opinions, existing social structures, and the mere ways of humanity have to be considered. This is a humanity spread across many worlds, with many

thoughts and many beliefs, not the "it was raining on the planet that day" sort of social structure. Geary should get his rest; but he can't, and he won't when this is . . . **To Be Continued.**

#### REFUGEES

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*THRAXAS AND THE ICE DRAGON*

by "Martin Scott" [Martin Millar]  
(Amazon Kindle Services; 2013; \$5.39)

A *Thraxas* novel

<http://www.thraxas.com>

<http://www.martinmillar.com>

When we left *Thraxas* at the end of *Thraxas Under Siege* (2005; 2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #6) he could count himself first chariot in the bad-luck race. Turai had just fallen to the Orcs, he had fled on a small and poorly equipped boat, with Lisutaris the sorceress, having to do without her tharsis, and Makri the half-Human, quarter-Elf, quarter-Orc swordfighter, who was mad at everyone. Oh, and there was no beer left.

Fortunately, Millar has been able to publish electronically, and we can now find out what happened next. They are rescued (otherwise it would be a short-short story, fir all that Lisutaris can tickle fish without even having to touch them) and head inland to a conference on the question of how to take Turai back from the Orcs.

Before long, they all have problems, not the least of which is Lisutaris's drug problems. (And she scowls at *Thraxas* for catching up on his consumption of beer the first day they were ashore.) Makri enters the local swordfighting contest and she even gets to wear a little more chainmail than usual. *Thraxas* gets a job, too; a woman was run down by a carriage, and the friend she was going to meet suspects murder.

With gladiatorial cheating, political intrigue, financial trickery, and the need to get back on a proper beer diet, there is a lot going on here, and *Thraxas*, in spite of being no longer what he had been (as the Baroness he had once known as a barmaid and been notorious for their bathing in a public fountain together noted) is tasked with pulling it all together so he can try to get home again. Providing he survives the frantic telling of how that battle really went with friends old and new . . .

#### PIRATES OF THE ANTILLES

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### *BOURSES DE VOYAGE*

[*Travel Scholarships*]

by Jules Verne

Translated by Teri J. Hernandez

Edited by Arthur B. Evans

Introduction by Volker Dehs

(Wesleyan University Press; 1903, 2013;

ISBN 978-0-8195-6512-9; \$29.95;

Kindle; \$23.99)

"*Une Voyage Extraordinaire*"

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/wespress>

The young boarders from the Caribbean Islands attending the Antillean School must have been less than totally thrilled at the great prize their academic accomplishments won them; a trip home. Perhaps the 700£ grant from the woman who set up the trip helped reconcile them to it. (For nine students that comes to 77£ 15s 6½d each with 1½d left over; you would think it would be an even amount.)

Their vessel would depart from Queenstown in Ireland. The security of the Irish Constabulary would seem to earn them the scorn that Sherlock Holmes cast upon their London colleagues, for a group of pirates, captured in the Pacific by the Navy, brought to Ireland for trial, have broken custody and are at large, seeking a new vessel with which to resume their careers.

It shouldn't really be surprising that the two groups meet. The presentation alternates between the pirates, striving to get to the ship, and the students, somewhat clueless. Indeed, their supervisor, the high-comically meticulous Mr. Patterson, the school's accountant, is remarkably clueless.

Then, the ship *Alert*, with its crew of pirates and passenger-list of students, is becalmed off the coast of Ireland. The crew is exceedingly on edge, which is not really surprising considering that they killed the existing crew and got the bodies over the side before the schoolboys arrived. Since the young passengers were given a full tour of the ship, that was a stroke of luck.

Then, the wind comes up (as the somewhat unfortunate sailor Donald Crowhurst said, sailing ships have destinations, not estimated times of arrival) and the *Alert* is off. The passage across the Atlantic is uneventful, the only issue being whether to pitch the passengers over the side and head for the Pacific now, or wait until they get the payoff and then do it.

What ensues is a tour of the Antilles, demonstrating the various colonial holdings. This includes Dominica (much more recently the site of the filming of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the target of the comic-opera "Bayou of Pigs" coup) but not Grenada. The Swedish student, by coincidence, is there to watch the transfer of the Swedish colony of St. Barthélemy to France. This gives a specific date for the story; March 15, 1878. (The odd, or somewhat one-sided anyway, result given for the plebiscite for a transfer to France, 350 for, one against, was what actually happened.)

The cruise finally winds up on Barbados, where the students meet their benefactor Mrs. Seymour. Not with a couple of incidents along the way, when people make enquiries about old friends on board, unusual occurrences in Queenstown, and the like, all of which the captain manages to explain in a somewhat plausible fashion. The pirates seem to have a lot of patience.

After giving the boys their reward, their benefactor sends along someone else she wants

to help, Will Mitz, a sailor who is looking for a better job in Britain. This proves useful when he figures out the pirates' plan. Now events get thrilling as the students lock the pirates in the hold of the ship and sail back to the authorities, in the middle of a storm.

This only gets worse when someone belowdecks sets the ship on fire. The students, their benefactor, and their escort escape in the longboat, while the pirates go down with the ship. Jack Sparrow would be grieved.

They return to the Antillean School, famous, wiser, and with an adventure to count on. And an invitation to go to Patterson's wedding to his ex-wife.

It seems that he didn't want to leave her lingering if he disappeared at sea, so they got a divorce before he left, and now they're remarrying. A provisional *Get*, anyone? (Some Jews would grant their wives a provisional divorce under similar circumstances; Bathsheba's husband Uriah the Hittite is supposed to have given her one before the peeper arranged to have it become moot.)

*Bourses de Voyage* is not quite as "dark" as some of Verne's other works from this period; e.g. *Maître du Monde* (*Master of the World*, 1904), where Robur has gone mad. The students seem less individuated than most, with the leading characters being Captain Harry Markel and the rest of the pirates, Mr. Patterson (who is a orderly man, like Phileas Fogg if not even more so), and their final rescuer.

Some of the settings seem to be a bit off. It seems hard to imagine an English boarding school where no one is interested in sports. At the other end of society, anyone who went into an Irish pub full of shadowy types and declared "The Constables!" would more likely provoke a stream of comments of which the least profane was "'Oo's the bleedin' toff nah!'" instead of a sudden irruption. Was this translation close to the original?

The principal goal of the book is the travelogue showing the history and society of the various colonies of the Antilles. Popular science was one of Verne's goals; consider his dismissal of *From the Earth to the Moon* (1901) for Wells's use of a fantastic anti-gravity compound, while he himself used real technology and meticulously made all the calculations in *De la terre à la lune* (1865).

## TURNING THINGS AROUND

Review by Joseph T Major of

**GRAY TIDE IN THE EAST:**

*An Alternate History of the First World War*

by Andrew J. Heller

(Amazon Digital Services; 2012; \$2.99)

Once upon a time, I was talking with Leah Gadzikowski's daughter about her classes. She said they were taking up the beginning of World War I and it was boring. I found that a lapse of educational process. Indeed, one of the crucial elements was attended with dramatic police escorts, a wild head of state flinging his arm about and demanding a drastic review of strategy, and the all too perceptive resigned comment of "Your uncle would have given me a different answer." [Or more properly „Ihr Onkel hätte Mir eine andere Antwort gegeben.“]

Barbara Tuchman [*The Guns of August* (1962)] and Robert Massie [*Dreadnought* (1992)] have described the dramatic events of Imperial Germany's last pause at the brink of the abyss, where the German Ambassador to Britain sent a message to his boss, the All-Highest Supreme Warlord, saying that the British would remain out of the war if Germany did not invade Belgium.

On the basis of this, Wilhelm demanded of his Chief of the Greater General Staff that the army should leave Belgium alone, turn the trains around, and divert its strength to crushing Russia. Moltke the Younger, the said chief, said that the plan had been initiated and could not be diverted.

Except that, after it was all over, Herman von Staab, the former chief of the Railway Section of the General Staff, wrote a book about how it could have been done.

Which this novel turns into a narrative. Or perhaps, an assemblage of scenes from the narrative, following the stories of individuals as they participate in the great campaign against the Russian tide. Turtledove's telling a story from diverse perspectives has become more acceptable these days.

The Russians find themselves outmatched; their French allies are frustrated on land and harassed at sea. Heller could have devoted a little more time to discussing how the Germans conducted at-sea replenishment, as he has the High Seas Fleet blockading the French Atlantic coast, and even (with the help of their Austrian and Italian allies) the Mediterranean coasts.

One hopes that the fire-eating First Lord of the Admiralty who has a chapter to himself did mention to the First Sea Lord the need for keeping observation on the German ships transiting the Channel, just in case they turned to starboard and began covering the discharge of troops; the sort of thing that General Sir George Tompkins Chesney, KCB, CSI, CIE, M.P. (Oxford (C)) had feared forty-some years ago (*The Battle of Dorking* (1871)). There was a certain lack of enthusiasm for a conflict in Britain, understand, and Heller draws on that,

perhaps a little too much. While not mentioning such "Details" (by Poul Anderson, *Worlds of If*, November 1956) as the Irish problem, either.

Meanwhile, abroad, French colonies find themselves invaded by advisors. Cochinchina, Tong-king, Annam, Laos, and Cambodge, for example, where more local people, or closer anyhow, offer to come in and relieve the French of their burdens. Can you say *Hij ni ch sana basho de jigoku?* ["Hell in a very small place"]

The frustration of isolated France, the concern of neutral Britain, the land-grabbing of expanding Japan, and the inquiries of far-off America contribute to the German campaign in various ways, and the prospects of the war seem to be just a bit grim, yet Heller argues, much to the point, that the results of this war would be somewhat more favorable for most of the world. Britain, for example, would not have been financially cored-out. And others would have been saved their own problems; i.e. the heroic *stabsgefreiter* of the List Regiment whose valor is described here would have become a triviality. (Well, the French too, but somebody has to make a sacrifice.)

It's a different sort of speculation and inquiry, and takes into account the diversity of the world.

WARNING

## HISTORY GEEK SECTION

I did a checklist of the naval considerations. It seems to me that the British would come out better in the naval race in this world.

The Germans, assuming something approaching historical building rates, would end the war with two *Bayern* class battleships launched and two more under construction, and four *Mackensen* class battlecruisers under construction.

The British would have two *Queen Elizabeth* class battleships launched, and four more under construction, along with eight *Revenge* class battleships under construction, ships the equal or superior of their German equivalents. Given the comparative fleet sizes with which the two countries started the war, the Germans would be falling behind. (In our time-line, one *Queen Elizabeth* and one *Revenge* were cancelled, while two *Revenge* ships became the battlecruisers *Renown* and *Repulse*.)

Moreover, the Germans would need a more substantial army to control their new acquisitions and prepare against French retaliation. So Britain would be in an even better position regarding fleet buildup. Not that that would stop concerns about it.

Also, presumably, the Japanese 8-8 Plan would go on, though the only ships under





construction then were the *Nagato* and *Mutsu*. They might be a little pinched financially, though. The U.S. would likely go ahead with the *Tennessee* and *Colorado* class ships, along with the *Lexington* class battlecruisers, noteworthy for having seven stacks, and for having one be USS *Constitution* (CC-5), for which the historic sailing frigate was renamed *Old Constitution*. (In our time-line, the design of the *Lexington* class ships was revised, and then four were canceled and two became the aircraft carriers *Lexington* and *Saratoga*.)

Some kind of Naval Limitations Treaty may be in order. Either that, or a *Great Pacific War* (by Hector C. Bywater (1925)).

#### THE WHENABOUTS OF BURR

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE DOMINION'S DILEMMA:**  
*The United States of British America*  
 by James F. Devine III  
 (James F. Devine III; 2013;  
 ISBN 978-1481150354 \$2.99)

So it's self-published. It seems to lack the usual problems of such; for one thing, the book is adequately proofread.

The solution that makes up the point of departure seems miraculous, but it is not overly implausible. The difficulty is that it post-dates the initial battles in what in our time-line is the Revolutionary War. Moreover, it does seem a particular burden for Parliament.

Yet it's very simple. The colonies of British America become "States" of something called the United States of British America, with representation in the British Parliament. Gad, it's almost as bad as electing *Irishmen*!

You will recall the Sidewise Award-nominated *Columbia and Britannia* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #4) which had a similar solution. Devine does not take his narrative quite so far.

In return, though, he does confront head-on a problem which none of his predecessors seem to have dared consider. About the closest to it is an oblique reference in Alan E. Nourse's *The Universe Between* (1951, 1965).

The problem is that of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Which would cause just the slightest difficulty in certain regions of British America . . .

Devine seems stuck on parallelism. Some of it is plausible; the same people, somewhat older, would be involved. Other points are a bit much, though nothing quite as bad as having the national anthem of British America being set to the tune of that unsingable drinking song "To Anacreon In Heaven". Still, the USBA flag has stars and stripes.

And the Governor-General of the USBA is that grizzled veteran of the Peninsular War, Andrew Jackson. Now there is room for writing, say, a story of how the USBA riflemen helped doom Boney's boys in Spain (imagine, "How the Brigadier Outshot The Peux-Rouge Natty Bumppo"). Perhaps

Devine could do it.

Jackson still believes that This Union, It Must Be Preserved. So do the authorities across the seas. They dispatch a very important representative, who happens to know the difference between Biloxi and New Orleans — Wellington, that is.

Other factors intervene. In that Nat Turner spirit, in response to Parliament's offer for gradual compensated manumission, a group of freedmen resolve to force the governments to grant freedom now — by kidnappnig Wellington and holding him for ransom. This makes the grand plan of the People's Front of Judea to overthrow the Roman Empire in a year seem feasible by comparison.

And meanwhile, the seceded states form a confederacy and levy armies, to wage a true war of independence. Britain has to cut its commitment — things in India and so on — and so it's the USBA against itself.

The government has to call in an old marker. A recluse in the upper reaches of the Colony of New-York, in fact, one Aaron Burr.

With internal strife, secession, the resurgence of less-than-credible old-timers, and the usual problems of life, the USBA seems to be in quite a predicament. But we won't find out more until this story is . . . **To Be Continued.**

ALL IN A DAY'S CRUISE  
 Review by Joseph T Major of  
**STORM SURGE (DESTROYERMEN)**  
 by Taylor Anderson  
 (RoC; 2013:  
 ISBN 978-0-451-46454-5; \$26.95;  
 Random House Digital (Kindle); \$9.95)  
 A "Destroyermen" Book

What is so worthwhile about this book, in spite of the seemingly inexhaustable flow of replacements through the Vile Vortices [the worldwide subsidiaries of the Bermuda Triangle], is that the enemy is not just another faction of the Party of Postponement, or a more powerful portion of the existing foe that just hadn't bothered to get involved up to now. The Grik are sticking in the fight after winning a few victories; and the other-world Spanish Empire is the foe of their new ally, the other-world British East India Company.

Similarly, the crew of the *Walker* and their later-arriving associates are not resolutely advancing the flow of technology. The Grik and the Imperials are being fought with armor clad steamboats, tinfoil-string-and-baling wire airplanes, and the like, augmented by a few and declining items of equipment from 1941, not steampunk-style helicopter gunships, medium range ballistic missiles, and wire-guided torpedoes.

Fighting two wars at the two ends of a dominion is not the most unstressful of lives, and there is a great world out there, with many powerful and unpleasant parts to it. Some of which seem to be coming to their own understandings, and others working up to their

own confrontations. And while the story works on, one can worry that both protagonist and writer alike may have too much to handle, but for now, all we can do is wait and see what happens when this is . . . **To Be Continued.**

POW! WHAM! BIFF! SOCK!

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE PRINCE OF PARADISE:**  
*The True Story of a Hotel Heir, His Seductive Wife, and a Ruthless Murder:*  
 by John Glatt  
 (St. Martin's Press; 2013;  
 ISBN 978-1-250-03572-1; \$26.99;  
 Macmillan (Kindle); \$11.04)

. . . Bruce Wayne watched the large round man and tried to determine his scheme. He was cheating, but how? This vacation from Gotham, touring the splendors of Miami and the Fontainebleau Hotel, was still getting him into crimefighting.

The man seemed to stiffen. He quit dealing the cards. After a moment, he nodded. Then he reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a checkbook. He said, "I apologize humbly. I have been cheating you," and began to fill out a check.

A familiar voice purred in Bruce's ear. "Make it to the Gotham Womens' Rescue Center. He was going to give the money to charity, anyway." He turned and found himself confronting a catface clasp on the front of a bikini, which itself cradled a very familiar figure. She ran a long finger down his back in a familiar gesture. "Bruce here gives back a lot to the community."

Then she looked up, out on the beach. "What is *she* doing here?"

He looked and saw another familiar woman, in a red-and-black swim suit, flying blonde poofs of hair either side of her head, her lithe body going through incredible acrobatics on the sand. A thrill ran through his body, anticipation mixed with concern.

The woman behind him said, "Things are quiet in Gotham now. I wonder what's going on?"

— Not by Ian Fleming, Cubby Broccoli, or Bob Kane

Ben Novick, Jr. was the son of a very assimilated man. It's the custom not to name a child after a living relative.

Ben Novick, Sr., or in full Benjamin Hadwin Novick, son of Hyman Novick, emigrant from Russia, assimilated. He also built the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami, where they filmed the card-playing scene in *Goldfinger* (1964). The Fontainebleau might well be a proper place for Goldfinger to go to meet some people; for example, Meyer Lansky made telephone calls from there for reasons of privacy. Frank Sinatra, a frequent performer



there, bought his goombahs. And drug smugglers operated out of a suite. Did I mention the whores?

Little Binyamin bin-Binyamin grew up in an environment designed to warp him past the point of humanity. The hotel staff knew that the boss's son should get whatever he wanted. He had no siblings and no friends his (or perhaps any) age.

So what did this spoiled brat do with himself once he became of age? He became a reserve policeman! And, apparently, a decent one.

When he wasn't being a cop he was running Amway conventions. You can guess he knew how to deal with hotel people and he made good money in convention management.

Having all the money he needed, he indulged a youthful enthusiasm. Namely, buying Batman memorabilia. Ben was known to all the dealers and he got top picks. He went to conics conventions and collected like crazy; his primary interest was the sixties TV show.

He may have known how to deal with hotel people but not others. His first marriage broke up. His second wife was an immigrant who had learned American ways from a fellow stripper. Um hm. This does not sound like a promising relationship.

As when, in 2002, she had him tied up and threatened to kill him. For some reason he abruptly dropped the divorce he had initiated, which may have had something to do with her knowing about his collection of amputee porn.

Then, in 2009, she found a couple of guys, let them into the house, and they proceeded to kill him. Using dumbbells to smash his chest. *The Valley of Fear* this isn't.

Not surprisingly, the accomplices caved, she went on trial with them, and she was convicted. Perhaps having had his mother killed beforehand to ensure that she would get all of his estate was a contributory factor. (The coroner had previously declared the death the result of an accident, another triumph for forensic medicine.)

Perhaps in the end that deficient socialization did leave Ben open to being exploited. The acumen he used in management might have been well applied to his personal life. (However, we all think Bruce should open up more with Selena . . .)

#### SAVING A TRUST

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**SHERLOCK'S HOME: THE EMPTY HOUSE**

"A Collection of Short Stories and Poems in Support of The Undershaw Preservation Trust"

Edited by Steve Emecz

(MX Publishing; 2012;

ISBN 978-1-78092-225-6; \$16.95;  
MX Publishing/Amazon Digital Services;  
\$9.39)

<http://www.mxpublishing.com/>  
<http://www.sherlockology.com/>

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

The home Sir Arthur Conan Doyle built for his wife is crumbling to ruin, while the owner hides and dithers. The Undershaw Publication Trust is working to amend that error, and this book is one of their efforts to attract notice and funds.

The prefaces are by the patrons of the Trust, including Mark Gatiss [yes, Mycroft from *Sherlock*] and Stephen Fry. The stories are more devoted than anything else. It's interesting to note that some of them are *Sherlock* based, most being of the original Canon, though. One or two break the fourth wall, as it were.

More on the history and current affairs of Undershaw might be useful. One would think, that with the continuing interest, that the place would make a good bed & breakfast (as it had been), but there might be some structural problem that isn't being mentioned.

This is a piece of history that can be restored, and it's nice to see that those who have gained from being connected to that history are willing to lend their names to this.

(The cover shows four Holmeses; left to right, Rathbone, Cumberbatch, Brett, and Cushing. Says something, I suppose. All they need now are Gillette and Wontner.)

#### GIVING THEM UP

by Lisa

Last week I put a copy of Robert Silverberg's *To Open the Sky* into the cull box. I didn't like doing it but I had no particular desire to read it again. More and more I find there are fewer and fewer books I want to read again.

This payday I will pick out one book to replace with a digital copy. It is likely that the book will just sit on the shelf anyway. It might as well sit on a digital shelf. I would like to live a more minimalist lifestyle. I don't want to part with physical copies of my favorite books, such as the Black Stallion books and the Misty books. But as I get older, having less stuff becomes more attractive. I am taking small steps toward this.

There are three books waiting to go into the cull box. I have set the goal of one box gone every week. I wish I could say I did not still have the urge to acquire stuff but I do. I still eye piles on junk day but I am working on controlling the desire to take things from the piles.

#### IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT SHOT

by Lisa

Hobby photography is largely a quest for the perfect shot. Catching animals on film is not an easy thing especially with birds. Once near Grant's job a pair of the big Canadas flew right over the hood of Joe's Taurus. It was the shot of a lifetime. I swung the big Fuji up but

the geese were gone even as I swung the camera up. Sigh. I have some shots of the big Canadas but nothing that spectacular. I got these shots at church and almost overreached myself in the desire to get good photographs. The geese, though fairly tame, are still wild animals and to be treated with respect. A bird with a five foot long wingspan can inflict some serious damage if it feels threatened.

#### BREYERFEST 2013

by Lisa

We went to Breyerfest and wandered through a bazaar of model horses and horse accessories. I brought home several models and books. I took many photographs, some of which are passable. Several vehicles were decorated with Breyerfest or bust. There was at least one Breyers on board. For those of you unacquainted with Breyerfest, it's the model horse version of Worldcon. It is not on nearly the same scale as Worldcon but it attracts model horse fans from all over the country. Breyer models predominate but other makers can be found. It is held in two locations in Lexington, a hotel and the Kentucky Horse Park. (Where else would model horse fans meet?) We didn't make it to the hotel this time. There are sales also at the hotel and sometimes they have really interesting models at good prices.

#### THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

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

#### Lighting

As superstorm Sandy recently demonstrated, our modern world is not exempt from natural disasters. Throw in accidents, equipment failure, deliberate sabotage and who knows what else, and sometimes I marvel that things work as well and consistently as they do.

Anything which removes access to electrical utilities — including simple wilderness camping — also takes away the light those utilities can be used to produce. One of the more persistent efforts of humanity is to develop better and more convenient light sources. This isn't surprising when you consider how useful artificial illumination is to us. Lighting provides both practical and psychological benefits: It helps you see, it helps you be seen and it helps you be at ease.

From the time our ancestors first used fire, making light also meant making heat. Even many electric lights — including the incandescent bulb — create significant heat. (After incandescent bulbs were banned on one area, an imaginative entrepreneur tried importing them as "Ninety-seven percent efficient heaters." It didn't fly.) Incandescence is an easy way to make light; just heat something until it glows.

Incandescent bulbs work by heating a resistance to incandescence in a controlled manner. (Hence the name.) They *have* to be hot. Fluorescents are nearly the same age as incandescents, but until very recently their greater efficiency didn't compensate for their initial expense. Fluorescent lights produce far less heat and are more efficient overall. They function through a different mechanism, using electricity to excite a rarefied gas into producing ultraviolet light. This, in turn, excites a phosphor coating on the inside of the bulb, which glows in response. The process requires high voltage, both to start and to continue. Part of the breakthrough making compact fluorescent lights an economical replacement for incandescent bulbs is modern electronics. These greatly reduced the size, weight and cost of the circuitry needed to start and run the compact fluorescents.

Just as compact fluorescent bulbs began having their heyday, though, other technologies started moving in to replace them. Now, besides LEDs there are things like gas discharge and electroluminescent lights. It should be noted that both fluorescents and LEDs — in fact, all commercially available sources of electrical light — still produce waste heat. Just far less than standard incandescent lamps, halogen bulbs or — an extreme example — arc lights.

Most people in developed nations have primary lights — those they normally use — which are connected to their electrical utility. Portable illumination sources are usually secondary for them; things used short term for convenience, or medium- or long-term for emergencies. These portable light sources have also benefited from recent technological advances. Today there is a large assortment of self-contained lighting devices to choose from. Of course, you should make your choice *well before* the power goes out or you need to find your dog at night or check in a dark corner, or you're likely to remain in the dark for the duration.

Fire, is the obvious solution for producing self-contained light. Candles and lamps are reliable traditional methods for seeing in the dark. Just be certain there are no flammable fumes — such as natural gas — around before lighting up. Also, keep in mind that even a single candle can produce a great deal of heat. That can be an advantage in cold or cool weather, but if the power outage occurs on a warm Summer evening with no AC and no breeze . . .

Candles work well, as long as you keep their disadvantages in mind. The main one being that unless you have a candle lantern, you're dealing with a completely open flame. A slight gust can blow them out, and if knocked over they can start fires. You can even cook over them, to a very limited extent. If you acquire candles for emergency lighting be certain they are unscented. The last thing you need is to discover you're allergic to the scent used, or how annoying even a pleasant

scent is to breathe in an enclosed space for hours on end.

Candles can be made from a variety of substances, from beef tallow to straight paraffin. Bayberries — also known as candleberries — are still used to make some candles, though the physical and chemical characteristics of the wax they produce make it less suitable than modern paraffin or paraffin-beeswax mixtures. Given that paraffin is a petroleum byproduct and can have desired characteristics designed in, it and the mixtures with beeswax are generally the most suitable for nearly every modern candle type. Beeswax by itself generally has too low a melting point for hot areas. However, blending some with paraffin improves the physical and chemical characteristics of the candle, and also provides a nice scent.

Chemically fueled lanterns and lamps of various types are more contained and easier to regulate than candles. Some even have a built-in sparker for ignition. Best of all, you can refill them. Just remember that these, too, generate more heat than light. I strongly recommend a good kerosene lamp, especially those with mantles. These have a thorium dioxide-impregnated mantle — an inverted bag on a wire frame — which is placed over the more familiar wick after that is lit. These act as afterburners, both allowing more of the fuel to be burned and reducing fumes. Also, heated thorium dioxide gives off a nice, white light.

Pressure lanterns give off more light, due to the fuel being forcibly injected through an orifice into the flame holder as a vapor or very fine mist. The majority of these also use thorium impregnated mantles. The most familiar types are the Coleman "white gas" (naphtha) lanterns, but there are other brands. Some pressure lamps run off automotive gasoline (much safer now that tetraethyl lead has been eliminated) and others use kerosene. A few pressure lanterns are multi-fuel capable.

A good kerosene lamp can run for many hours without refueling. Pressure lanterns generally don't provide light for as long as wick lanterns, but that's because they're burning fuel at a higher rate to produce a more intense light.

One drawback of all combustion light sources is that they use oxygen. They also produce carbon monoxide, though with modern designs CO and noxious fumes are minimized. (The curl of a candle's wick is deliberate; it increases the burning efficiency and reduces smoke and fumes.) However, besides combustion there are also other methods of generating light through chemical reactions, and some of those are much less hazardous than anything with a flame. This includes being safer to use where there might be natural gas or other flammables in the air.

Chemical light sticks are very handy, and come in a variety of colors and brightnesses. (Just remember, the brighter, the shorter the duration.) However, they are quite variable in their shelf life. The same type of light sticks

bought at the same time from the same manufacturer should all last at least to the expiry date (though some makers don't put those on the package, giving the false impression that they store indefinitely). However, whether they'll work well much past the date marked is a roll of the dice. A year beyond and half may work fine and the other half not at all.

This is supported by personal experience. I made a bulk buy of some standard eight hour light sticks several years ago. (By the way, the duration is a bit arbitrary. The sticks will gradually dim after activation, but continue giving off some light for much longer than the rating. The value given is likely to some point of intensity.) A couple of years back — well after their expiration date == I decided to test those remaining from that batch, after I tried to use one and it was completely dead. Some worked fine; some were completely dead; some glowed but dimly. I'm not sure of the mechanism by which lightsticks fail, but they do have a limited shelf life.

Lightsticks are a good choice for power outages of a few hours, especially if extra heat is not desired. However, they can't be recharged or refilled, which makes them costly for extensive use. They come in claimed durations ranging from five minutes to twelve hours. They also come in a variety of colors, including white (and even infrared). Just be sure to buy good quality ones and pay attention to the expiration dates.

Until the invention of white LEDs (all LEDs are actually monochromatic, giving off light in a very narrow band of frequencies; the "white" ones are actually ultraviolet LEDs in a phosphor coated capsule, the same method used in fluorescent lights) flashlights were a very poor choice for more than short-term lighting. Today, we have a vast assortment of LED flashlights and lanterns which produce plenty of light for long periods on one charge of battery. They emit little heat, they are generally inexpensive and are very reliable.

Moreover, modern flashlights come with a huge assortment of potential features. Variable focus, variable light levels, variable flash rates — including automatic SOS signaling — solar charging panels, and on and on. Some made for police and security use have a special rapid strobing feature which can render someone helpless through disorientation and nausea. These are popular with prison guards. Modern aluminum alloys and polymers mean today's flashlights are lightweight, handy and very, very rugged.

Even good flashlights are poor choices for lighting a large room or campsite. A few — like the Maglights — can be converted to modest lamps by such measures as unscrewing the head. LED lanterns are a better choice for this function. Again, these have a wide variety of features available, including charging ports for cell phones.

One type of non-electric lighting not often seen today is the gas mantle wall fixture. These

can use propane or butane from self-contained or household tanks, or even natural gas from a utility line. As with the mantle lamps mentioned above, they have a thorium-impregnated bag around the nozzle, and give off a clean, white light. Many are rated for indoor use, and can be switched between fuel types by changing an orifice. They are most commonly used for isolated cabins or permanent camps, where hauling in propane tanks is easier and more efficient than running a generator.

Besides choosing which light source to acquire (having more than one type is a good idea, too) you need to decide whether to go with something strictly for emergencies or a more general light source which can also function well in a power outage. Having an assortment of types on hand is useful. These can include a general, handy light source for short term use (including looking to see what just knocked over your trash cans) and medium and long-term types for extended loss of utilities.

As mentioned above, some flashlights can function as lanterns. If power outages are rare in your area and you need a good flashlight anyway, two or three those could carry you through. This is especially true if you keep a supply of batteries for them on hand, or have a way to recharge them. Most people would be better off choosing one or two good quality, general-purpose flashlights — plus a few cheap ones to keep in handy places around the house — and another light source to illuminate whole rooms during outages. If you live in a location with frequent, extended blackouts, you should consider getting a generator . . . or maybe moving. :-)

Something which sees regular use is probably more rugged than something intended only for emergencies. Of course, the purely emergency equipment is likely simpler to use and more reliable than regular equipment, if only because it *isn't* used until an emergency.

Some more unusual light sources include radioactive isotopes in phosphor-lined capsules. The radiation source is usually tritium, which has a half life of twelve and a third years. This application is not as exotic as it sounds. The technology behind this is rugged and safe, and has been used for decades to provide illumination for firearm night sights, watches and many other items. However, these lights are expensive, and not really appropriate for area illumination.

Of course, some isotopes glow on their own, a few purely from the heat they release. The safest of the latter is plutonium 238. Decaying plutonium primarily gives off alpha particles, which are stopped by a few inches of air or the layer of dead cells on the outside of your skin. That's right; you can hold a chunk of plutonium in your hand with little danger from ionizing radiation. From that cause, plutonium only becomes a serious health risk when it comes in direct contact with living

tissues. Of course, with Plutonium 238 there is another risk. This is so active it glows a dull red from the heat of its decay. While such a lump could be used directly to create illumination, far more common is to use that heat to generate electricity. That is then used to produce light or perform whatever other task is needed.

This leads us to the very exotic realm of radio thermal generators, or RTGs. These have had some terrestrial use, but their most common application by a huge margin is for space probes going places where photovoltaic panels aren't practical. The New Horizons probe to Pluto is a prime example. These units are simple heat engines, and not nuclear reactors. They contain a radioactive heat source — usually plutonium 238 — and that natural heat is used to generate electricity. Pu 238 has a half life of 87.7 years, so is not the limiting factor on service life. (The Voyager probes' RTGs have gradually deteriorated in output, but that is mostly due to other factors.)

While RTGs have been used on Earth to generate electricity for lighting, that isn't really a practical.

Hand-cranked flashlights have been around for decades, but most have not been very functional. Today, with better rechargeable batteries, high-rating capacitors and high-efficiency superultrabright white LEDs the better quality ones are quite practical for short-term illumination needs. Many can be charged by other means — such as a photovoltaic panel or a variety of plugs. Once charged (by whatever means) they can even be used to charge a cell phone or other device.

Given the huge variety of various types of good quality, affordable illumination available today, there's no excuse not to have something on hand when needed. Or, better, several somethings.

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#### PERCEIVING PERCEPTION

Review by William H. Patterson  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1714204/>

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Last year, Eric McCormack came back to series tv with TNT's *Perception*, playing a diagnosed paranoid-schizophrenic college professor of neuropsychiatry (i.e., brain-physiology as it influences behavior, personality, etc.). He consults with the FBI, working with Special Agent Kate Moretti, a former student. In the first season, he seemed more-or-less stable, the hallucinations that go along with his condition giving him clues — sometimes quite subtle — to the crime mystery he is working on. Toward the end of the season, he began spiraling out of balance, and it was revealed that his best-friend, Natalie Vincent, was actually a hallucination. He went back into voluntary confinement for treatment.

The show was sometimes clever, hinging on Pierce detecting rare neuropsychiatric conditions. McCormack, best known for his long-running role as Will in the sitcom *Will & Grace*, is immensely likeable. The rest of the

cast were, as is usually the case, somewhat nebbishy, including LeVar Burton as Paul Haley, a long-time friend who is now dean of Pierce's college. The situation invites comparison to *Elementary*.

I watched the season 2 premiere of *Perception* this past week on Hulu (which will become relevant later on). This story introduces Scott Wolfe, another very likeable actor though one who had never had the same degree of success as McCormack, as Moretti's ex-husband, a prosecuting attorney who is both arrogant and incompetent — a combination that is always sure to win my regard (not). Not particularly due to Wolfe, I found this episode highly offensive.

The story turns on Pierce's equivocal expert evaluation of a murder suspect who seems to have made a complete change of personality after he accidentally shoots himself in the head and survives. Pierce finds him competent to stand trial — but that the injury was effectively a prefrontal lobotomy, and that the person who committed the murder no longer exists. This actually presents some interesting legal issues, since all the legal tests of identity hinge on things that don't really have anything to do with identity in the psychological sense. The old *Boston Legal* show might have done something interesting with this, along with its usual bedroom comedy and foolery, but *Perception* is not up to it. They threw it away in favor of vapid buffoonery that was just . . . embarrassing.

The story was what is technically called an "idiot plot" -- that is, a story that does not work unless all the characters are idiots.

In the first place, it is completely impossible that a paranoid-schizophrenic, no matter how learned and how recovered, would be hired as an expert witness by any competent lawyer. He is simply too vulnerable to attack to be safe to put up as a witness. The Scott Wolfe character was a drooling idiot, uncommonly incompetent.

It is also completely impossible that Moretti, a sophisticated police/FBI officer, would propose a recent mental patient as an expert witness in any case — unless she were trying to sabotage her ex-husband's case. She is either a drooling idiot or malevolent, not merely disgruntled, beyond the ability to sustain any sympathy for her character.

It does happen sometimes that the defense turns a prosecution witness. Since the defense attorney did not know about the recent institutionalization, he is excused from being an idiot.

It is also possible to impeach one's own witness — but it is not done like that; there are rules that have to be threaded about how it's done. This procedural minefield is not important to the story — but the writers have to be aware that the audience have been watching courtroom procedural dramas for decades now. The *Law & Order* franchise alone has been running for 23 years and counting. The disrespect for the audience involved in not

bothering even to ask is troublesome.

This is surpassed by a much more egregious problem: it is completely impossible that a competent attorney would impeach his own expert witness on the grounds of mental instability — because it is far, far too dangerous for the attorney: it calls into question the prosecutor's motives for putting a nutjob on the stand in the first place. Defense stands up and says this prosecutor wants to win so badly that he's sabotaging the process — prima facie evidence he's running a vendetta under cover of a prosecution. At the very least, it would get the case declared a mistrial, on the spot, possibly dismissed entirely. At the most, it might get him disbarred, depending on how badly offended the participating court officers were. And they have a lot of reason to be offended. This is incompetence heaped upon the initial incompetence of providing a conflicted expert report to the opposition in the first place and in the second place making no preparations to counter it. This is drooling idiot incompetence — Marsha Clark and Chris Darden incompetence — and again, after decades of courtroom procedural TV shows, could you really not foresee that the audience would know this?

There is also then the minor point that this accusation was raised on what seems to be redirect, but there was no cross-examination to establish that he is or is not on meds, and going over the diagnostic processes that led him to his conclusion — which would then be supported by another more credible expert. So you have just thrown legal procedure out the window, for the purpose of making a half-baked narrative that shames the name "story."

The subplot with Dean Haley trying to get Pierce to act as his "wing-man" was sitcom-moronic, completely unbelievable, and nauseating.

But the crowning insult was that the show sabotaged its main character. I am inclined to dub this the "Gregory House Syndrome."

The story arc in the first season of Pierce sliding into schizophrenic fugue state was believable and sympathetic. When you bring him back mismanaging and neglecting his meds — the mismanaging could be gotten around, but once he knows he's having hallucinations again, if he doesn't get to his practitioner immediately, then he is willfully doing it to himself, and he's culpable, and he's an active danger to everyone around him. This is not a sympathetic situation, and the show has jumped the shark.

Normally I would give them a one-time pass for even this egregious set of mistakes for the first episode of the season, on the hope that they might improve with later episodes, or at least not trip so much over their own lack of respect for the audience, but as I say I was trying to watch this on Hulu, as I don't have a tv any more, and they loaded every commercial break with 7, count 'em 7 commercials, 3.5 minutes of the same

commercials every time, for every commercial break, and that was too frustrating to be borne. I won't be coming back for more episodes.

## FANZINES

### Askew #5

John Purcell

### Beyond Bree June 2013, July 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 #18

Taral Wayne

### Dewachen May 2013, June 2013

Trinlay Khadro, Post Office Box 240934,  
Brown Deer, WI 53224-0934 USA  
[trinlay63@wi.rr.com](mailto:trinlay63@wi.rr.com)  
[trinlayk@gmail.com](mailto:trinlayk@gmail.com)

### The Drink Tank #345, #346

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

### Fish Out of Water #538, #539, #540, #541, #542, #543, #544, #545

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

### The Life of Rodney Year 64 #4, #5

Rodney Leighton, 11 Branch Road, R. R.  
#3, Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia, B0K 1V0  
CANADA

### MT Void V. 31 #50 June 14, 2013 — V. 32 #4 July 26, 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 #264, #265

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

### Pablo Lennis, July 2013

John Thiel

### The Reluctant Famulus #94

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

## 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/home.html>

2019

Paris

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

2020

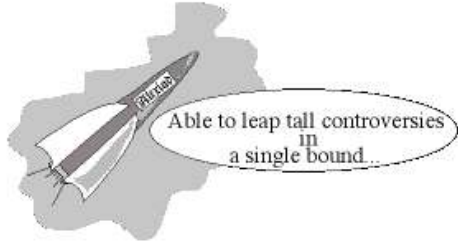
New Zealand

<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.



## Letters, we get letters



From: **Bill Patterson** June 18, 2013

I never really warmed to Matt Smith as Dr. Who, so now that he is leaving the show I am somewhat indifferent — to the issue as well as to the show.

Well, I blow lukewarm about the show in the first place, as it has been a particularly low grade of children's fantasy for most of its existence, of which the most that could be said was that it was better than *Sapphire and Steel* — though, of course, that sets the bar very low. Very, very low.

I watched the reboot of *Dr. Who* periodically in 2007 and followed some story arcs with interest and was entertained by some of the stuff they did with the increased production values. And then I just dropped away. *Torchwood* grabbed my interest, particularly after the second season finale, and so I went back to catch the Captain Jack story arcs but couldn't work up any sustained interest. And then Tennant left the show and, as I say, I never really warmed to Matt Smith. Nothing wrong with him, of course -- but the memory of him playing Christopher Isherwood was . . . unsettling. Can't say quite why: I never had the slightest difficulty separating the prior Doctors from the actors' other roles — oh, look, there's Dr. Who in Darrowby, and he's got a real doctor's medical bag! Step away from that calf, Doctor!

Half my jokes depend on that. "Let me send Sherlock an email for the answer to that riddle, damn I can't get a signal in this cave!" "You must kill the seven clones of Obi-Wan before you can become a Sith Lord."

I assume we'll get the obit for Iain (M.) Banks next issue, since he passed away on June 9. A fair lot of comment will ensue, no doubt.

Martin Morse Wooster — I'm delighted you know the Kalmanovitz saga — and how on earth did you come to have that obscure bit of trivia under your belt?

Kalmanovitz came to Joe Alioto shortly after acquiring Pabst, initially for a particular

case, though it evolved into taking over his entire litigation load (something we really were not set up for and it didn't last long). He had a sprawling ranch-style house on Paradise Cay (the Marin headlands) where I came for a month or perhaps it was six weeks to organize the hundreds of his litigation files. You could open any of a row of sliding doors that went on for sixty feet or so and be on the deck looking at Berkeley 8 miles across the Bay.

Yes, yes, I know he didn't believe in advertising; he certainly told me/us often enough, and that's what I meant by saying he treated beer as a fungible commodity — manufacturing it in one location and then relabeling it for different markets.

The problem I had with this philosophy is that it is essentially betting on people to be completely nonreflective sheep following a brand (brand loyalty, as you say) no matter how the product is degraded. It doesn't work that way, though. People, even in the great nonreflective mass, do wake up periodically and ask themselves "why am I drinking this piss water when Corona is just as cheap and tastes better — and comes in a twelve-pack."

I also have a problem with the strategy on philosophical grounds because it focuses the business aspects on something other than the product, which is the great besetting sin and keystone fault of corporate-style business in the late twentieth and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Alexis Gilliland. Who? Me? I did not say anything that could rationally be paraphrased as "Bill Patterson thinks that safety is bad for business." Nor, it is clear, did I "misunderstand" what you said, though there are certainly things to disagree with. Trying to read your comments as a direct response and disagreement to my comments creates the (entirely justified, I'm afraid) impression that you are an apologist for corporatism. That is, I don't know whether that's what you intended. I think not. I hope not. But reading it that way is entirely justifiable. Particularly the astonishingly naïve (I hope) "Also, businessmen performing public service in the regulation of business goes back at least to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century . . ." I suppose you are prepared to justify the Black Plague of the fourteenth century as performing a "public service" in increasing the wealth of the survivors, one plague being as good as another.

(And, no, I do not think "unbusinessed" government is any more desirable than the vile "partnership of business and government." Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was an attempt to realize the great socialist goal of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have "management by experts." You can read H.G. Wells singing the praises of the concept, if you wish.)

Joy Smith: you may have seen Armie Hammer before without being aware of it: he played both the Winkelvoss twins in Sorkin's *The Social Network*. ("I'm 6'5", 240 lbs, and there's two of me: I think I could take him if I wanted to.")

And now the Lone Ranger movie has spectacularly bombed. It was Johnny Depp's project and he got all the good lines. Naturally this means that Armie will be box office poison from now on.

Jim Stumm: There's are several questionable assumptions underwriting your comments to George Price about the "defect" quality of homosexuality (George's comments are completely rebarbative, so don't take this as a defense). That a person is "born gay" is vulgar cant; nobody really knows what goes into it. In particular the so-called "gay gene" is a particularly mindless, tabloid journalism take on the biology reported. It's as likely to be a coping mechanism

In the second place you treat it as a binary thing, hard-edged categories, and it really isn't. There's a spectrum or continuum, and it would be more accurate (though not completely accurate, still) to say that about half the population leans toward hetero attractions to greater or lesser degree and half the population leans toward homo attractions to greater or lesser degree, and it's a binary category only for the extreme ends of the population curve — the third sigma (ironically, "standard deviation") probably. Those are the people for whom it might be true that "the only thing being gay really does preclude is feeling sexual attraction for a person of the opposite sex."

There really isn't any other way to account for Kinsey's remarkable findings, no matter where you choose to put the numbers.

There's also the imponderable that "gay" has been turned into a cultural category in the U.S., as rigidly enforced within the "community" as anything that comes from outsiders. So the real question is "what do you mean when you say that?"

Taras Wolansky: LOL. I, too, have known many fans — and many libertarians, for that matter, I have thought of as eminently "clubbable."

Hmmm. So far as I know Heinlein never changed his "view of homosexuality"; you may be generalizing from incomplete data. In his fiction, various characters at various times, in various contexts made remarks that touched on the subject, but in every single case, the remark was a reflection of the character/time/situation; trying to read it back to Heinlein's opinion doesn't really work.

From the relatively few remarks I've run across in the voluminous correspondence, I believe Heinlein's position could be stated as he [may have] tried it (per a somewhat ambiguous remark in one of the forewords in *Expanded Universe*) but found it not for him but had no negative feelings about it one way or another and felt neutral to those who found it to their liking. That is, he regarded it as a matter of one's taste, and *de gustibus nil est disputandum*. His later recollections of his time in Greenwich Village in 1930 suggest he had that opinion (substantially) as a twenty-

something. As a popular writer, when the subject came up it was in the context of “what the market will bear” — not pandering, but, well, think of it as like the kind and amount of sexual content he could get into *Astounding* versus, say, his rewrite of an *Astounding* story for *Revolt in 2100* in 1953. He always taught by degrees when he judged only degrees were possible.

I’m not entirely sure what time frame you are looking at, but I can give you a direct quote from a letter written in 1962, i.e., just after *Stranger* was published:

You mentioned “homosexuality.” I’m a bit ashamed of the gentle sideswipe I gave the subject — my only purpose was to take it out of the argument, as it opens such a large package, so charged with emotion in this culture, that I wanted to eliminate it, not have it distract from the main argument.

But, speaking to you privately, I have no moral objections to homosexuality or homosexuals, none at all, and I am strongly of the opinion that the harm connected with it is culturally imposed and not innate. Oh, I would not hire a homo for the State Department nor for any sensitive job — but simply because the mores of our society are such that as a homo is easily blackmailed and also may well feel more loyalty to his in-group than to the society, because he (she) is of a persecuted minority.

But moral repugnance? So far as I can see, the behavior of homos is harmless and none of my business. I habitually smoke cigarettes — a habit at least twice as “dirty” and ten times as harmful — or perhaps infinitely more harmful, since cigarettes are probably harmful and homo play probably is not.

The only thing shocking to me about homosexuality is the shocking way in which we persecute these eccentrics.

I suppose that should be expanded to say that the most shocking thing about the American culture is the fashion in which it tends to persecute all eccentrics.

And a bit later, to a different correspondence and in reference to a different subject:

To be sure, homo activity, male or female, does not make babies . . . but we don’t seem to be short on babies these days (about 230,000 appreciation per day the last time I checked) and, anyhow, thousands of babies are produced by women who are ca. 90% Lez in their activities and only occasionally prone to diddle. (Or

supine, as the case may be. Or as may be.) And a hell of a lot of men who are practicing homos are fathers — I can think of at least two among my own friends; one has five children, the other has two. Both are unusually good fathers, too.

\* \* \*

The relatively few times in my life that I have felt homo twinges towards a man that man has been, physically, not effeminate but somewhat female-ish in certain characteristics — not hairy, clean with an impression of scrubbed cleanliness as well as the fact, mouth and features rather sensuous — i.e., an ersatz woman but not swish. I guess when you come right down to it I’m “queer” about women; big hairy males don’t send me. But I haven’t the slightest emotional or intellectual prejudice against homo play . . . and if I do find myself sexually attracted to a man, and he to me, I won’t try to resist the impulse; I’ll simply try not to get caught.  
u.s.w.

And eleven years later, to still another correspondent — after both *I Will Fear No Evil* and *Time Enough for Love* had been published:

I think I find Gay Lib distasteful for much the same reasons you find Fem Lib not to your taste: Each is raucous. Not that I am disdainful of either one; they are doing valiant fighting for personal freedom.

But you say: “— most of the Women’s Lib women strike me as pretty unfeminine creatures—” to which I will add that most of Gay Lib bother me because they are so blatantly swish — i.e., my distaste for them is aesthetic, not moral. A completely homo male shows no outer differences from a ‘straight’ male unless the homo intentionally advertises his inner preference, and the same is true of the completely butch female homo. In both cases there is no way to spot them . . . [sic] unless they choose to be spotted. I learned this half a century ago [which would place it while he was in high school in Kansas City] and countless times since then. The notion that there are certain stigmata by which a ‘straight’ can spot one is poppycock, a silly but widely believed myth. (I recall a case of a very high Federal official a generation back — queer as a 3 dollar bill but as arrogantly masculine in manners and appearance as a cock turkey with his tail spread — but his entourage always included at all times Secret Service men whose prime job was to keep him out of trouble — or, at

least, his troubles out of the news.) [Roy Cohn?]

But, while the 100% butch or the 100% swish often advertises, the bisexuals (as they are often called today) don’t need to advertise and I’ve never run across one who did — and I know and have known many of them only after years of trust and friendship. Once such a person is utterly certain of my discretion and of my freedom from prejudice, he or she (or ‘they,’ as it is oftener than not a happily married couple), he, she, or they might level with me about it — not necessarily nor even usually a pass, just open and honest discussion among trusted friends.

Or might never tell me, in which case I never would know save through unlikely accident. But over the past fifty years I have run across enough of them to hazard a rough guess that over 10% of the married couples in this country are actively ambisexual at least occasionally — when the opportunity turns up, the circumstances are safe, the attraction is mutual all around, and each trusts all the others. Nor are the stated necessary conditions uncommon as two married couples offer each other perfect chaperonage against the world behind locked doors, a condition that obtains any of the millions of times that one couple entertains another, even just for dinner and bridge or such. If the mutual interest and trust already exist, the situation can progress in as little as five minutes from a guarded and impersonal hint (one that could be ignored but this time is not) to open talk and then a relaxed and gentle but all-out orgy. Or it might take five weeks instead of five minutes and several progressive stages. But if both couples have ‘been there before’ although not with this couple, five minutes is more likely than five weeks . . . the possible combos and the possible opening gambits are almost endless and have no place in this letter. Let it go that I think that ‘10%’ figure is low; I would bet even money on 25% — although I don’t know how such a bet could be settled — and would not be surprised at a higher figure. All through this century I have watched this culture move steadily from strict Victorianism into something much more open, and the end is not yet in sight.

So — change of views? I can’t see it.

The “very high Federal official” might be Sumner Welles, who resigned as Under-Secretary of State (he was the real power there) in 1943 after it came out that in 1940 he had been soliciting



sex from two Pullman porters. Welles was married (three times, in fact) and had two children.

— JTM

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

"The Admirable Crichton" is by J. S. Barrie. What I tell you three times is true.

In a science magazine — *Nature*, I think — a few months back was mention of an essay contest. What modern scientific discovery would you communicate to a chosen personage of antiquity? You would need, of course, all the means of presenting yourself credibly, which I need not explain. Outright science, of course, is not always necessary. Martin Padway kept darkness from falling by means of the semaphore, among other things. I would offer antiscorbutics . . . how about to Henry the Navigator? It is a wonder to me why, when fresh fruits and vegetables at ports of call were known to do it, nobody ever thought of sprouts. But: what is a good source of Vitamin C, grows in temperate climes, and can be dried and carried on the voyage? Rose hips — the fruit of the rose — are one such thing. My mother harvested them to make a tisane, whether with knowledge of the vitamin I know not. Separating out the seeds was a chore. There must have been ways of doing it on a large scale, because on a visit to Germany in the 1960s I bought a jar of rose hip jam. Be that as it may, the actual navigators (Henry sat in his castle and directed them) might want the stuff preserved in honey or sugar.

In spite of the Royal Navy's experience with antiscorbutics, Dr. Wilson on the Scott expedition didn't bother to prepare them, and you know what happened to him. Shackleton had lime juice concentrated and put in capsules, and by some strange alchemy, his explorers never got scurvy.

Archimedes, presented with a Newtonian telescope, would have understood it instantly and would, with little or no prompting, have made all of Galileo's discoveries. Could such a thing have been fabricated in his time? If lenses, for the eyepiece, could be ground in the late Middle Ages, they could be ground in the ancient world. The mirrors would be of metal, with silver surfaces. Given the resources, I would fabricate dies for the primary mirror, bringing them to polished sphericity by the well-known method. Mass production!

From such interventions, darkness is not guaranteed not to fall. In our time line, a God was proclaimed who threw away advantage, who said that the first would be last. Somewhat later, a god was proclaimed who

told his adherents they were on the winning side, no matter how long it took. So join the winning side, don't be among the losers; only so will you be all right with God and with the world.

Ah, Willy Ley! I read his science books when I was in high school and have acquired my own copies since, and of works published later. My copy of *On Earth and in the Sky* was once in the Catahoula Parish Library, Jonesville, Louisiana. It had been borrowed three times in 1967.

There is a vast silliness about all what-ifs, especially where the laws of Newton are being followed. What if the Athenians at Syracuse had seen no eclipse? But it was decreed by the Fates. As for lotteries, those who did not buy into the office pool may reflect that all the numbers would have been different. Fateful plays in sports, whether early or late in the game, are fateful only in the context of what really happened. Change one thing, and there would have been a different ball game. Everything is then fateful, or fated if you take that point of view. What if Casey had not struck out?

As Mary Renault's Alexis (in *The Last of the Wine* (1956)) said, Demosthenes could have seen the eclipse as Athena's shield covering their evacuation, but noooo (or maybe [ochiiii]). As for Casey, there's always Grantland Rice's "Casey's Revenge" (1907).

I was at Baycon and recalled being bored by Sturgeon, but in my experience of worldcon toastmasters and GoHs, he was by a long shot only the second most boring. Well I recall the tourney; in photos, I might well be found among the spectators. I was then renewing my friendship with Don Studebaker and made the acquaintances of the other Grayhaven (and SCA) people, not yet at that edifice. On later visits there, I found that even the children could speak forsoothly . . .

The evolution of same-sex marriage portends a great deal of work for legalists. Consider marriages contracted abroad. (Israelis go to Cyprus for civil marriages.) Consider further marriages between nationals of two different countries. I do not know any details of how, in this or that country, this affects the right of the foreigner to enter reside or gain citizenship, but in the main the usual obstacles are eased or removed. Consider now the U.S. citizen who has contracted a valid same-sex marriage abroad. We are sure to hear of some such before long.

I now have *The Ides of April* by Lindsey Davis. Almost twelve years have passed since the events of *Nemesis*; Albia, now aged 28, has had those years to gain experience and find her own voice. (This is a first person narrative.) Domitian is emperor, and Falco is keeping a low profile, but we know he will survive into the reign of Trajan (to whom Albia also

alludes). Readers of *Nemesis* will understand about the boy named Postumus.

About first-person narratives from a perspective of time, I have remarked before that we accept perfect recall as a literary convention. Still, it amused me to find, in an earlier book, to find Falco not recalling names and faces among the olive-growers of Cordoba.

When he got to that point in the scroll, he asked Helena and she told him.

— JTM



From: **Joy V. Smith** June 29, 2013  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-  
0341 USA  
[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)

I'm so sorry for the loss of C'Mell. I know how hard that is and am always amazed at how quickly the shot takes affect.

Joe, I am annoyed by stories that turn out to be a dream or the characters are made to forget the adventure or they decide that the treasure needs to be buried again. Pfui!

I think that was a concession to "realism"; e.g., the ending of the movie of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

*The House of Silk* sounds intriguing. Mostly those spin-offs are boring or annoying. I presume people are having fun revamping comic book heroes, but just reading about the earlier changes makes me disinclined to even try to figure out what's happened/happening.

I enjoyed the con reports. Thanks for sharing. Btw, at Oasis in Orlando recently there was an airline/stewardess conference or something at the same time, and I saw the coolest uniform in an elevator once. Sorry I didn't find out the airline name.

The LOCs were interesting too. Sounds like Montreal has been invaded by aliens who don't understand the language. To Alexis



Gilliland: Sorry about the loss of Pest. To Sue Burke: Congratulations on your Diploma in Translation! That is so cool!! To Taras Wolansky: Good analysis of *NCIS*, and I love your silverback reference. Re: *The Mentalist*. I am so tired of the Red John storyline; I avoid any episode that mentions him.

Joe, your "The Report on the Extinction..." was well-thought-out. 'Course it does make you wonder about the current reports being examined by aliens picking up our broadcasts.

If they can read tweets.

— JTM

From: **Rod E. Smith** June 30, 2013  
730 Cline Street, Frankfort, KY  
40601-1034 USA  
[stickmaker@usa.net](mailto:stickmaker@usa.net)

Murray Moore wants to know about shootings in the US. Most years, more wanted felons are killed by being shot by law abiding citizens than by police officers. This doesn't show up in most popular news media, but there is coverage if you know where to look for it.

Connected to this, according to the US Department of Justice, just about half of all fatal shootings in the US are ruled legally justified.

Interestingly, the vast majority of applications of firearms for self defense are resolved with no shots being fired. The bad guy sees the gun and leaves. Usually quickly. :-)

So, yes; they are successfully used for self defense. According to several studies (the first two by criminologist Gary Kleck) made over the past couple of decades, this happens roughly two million times a year in the United States.

George W. Price wants to know about the underlines in my recent JOHT. That was my fault. My e-mail client does not support underlining, bold or italic in the body of e-mail messages. The accepted ASCII substitute is to put a separate underline character at the beginning and end of the section intended to be underlined. However, I submit my JOHT columns as attached .RTF files, and should have just gone ahead and underlined properly. I didn't out of absentminded habit. Sorry for the confusion.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** June 28, 2013  
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA  
<http://www.alexisgilliland.org>

Thank you for *Alexiad* 12.3, which arrived on the first astronomical day of summer, as opposed to the cold and rainy Memorial Day, which, with Labor Day, comprise the three-day weekends bracketing our "official" summer. We had a cool spring, which being weather, proves very little about global warming, which is climate. However, we note that Mayor Bloomberg of New York has proposed a 20 billion dollar plan for dikes and levees to keep his city dry, taking what I would call a more realistic view of the future than that held by the producers of fossil fuels and their running dogs (tou chous in Mandarin) in Congress. Theater stuff: we saw "Monsters University" in which a well written book provided a pretty good prequel to "Monsters Inc.", and an excellent revival of Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" at the Kennedy Center. Overheard at intermission was a young lady saying: "So that's where that song in "Blazing Saddles" came from!" Cat stuff: Mehitabel and Squeak are now good buddies, and Mehitabel is definitely Lee's cat, except when I get up in the morning. Then, I go to the bathroom and she comes in to rub my legs, reminding me of my duty to provide her with breakfast. Curiously she does not purr when I pet her.

In an example of faanish timebinding, Darrell Schweitzer recalls the 1968 Baycon, which Dolly and I attended. If there were riots, we stayed out of harms way and avoided them, although we did see a few taped up windows in Haight-Ashbury the next day. I know that some guests (but not us) were refused admittance to their hotels on Saturday night. Our banquet food was mediocre and served lukewarm if not cold, and yes, Farmer's speech was interminable and boring but we had stopped paying attention (Dolly had a book to read) and were simply glad when it ended so we could get on to the parties. The masquerade had three local bands playing, loud to deafening, and the room reeked of marijuana, so we looked in but didn't stay. However, I heard that Joni Stopa had to threaten the last band's amplifier with a fire axe before they would stop playing so that the masquerade could begin. Later worldcons have been better organized, but less exciting. Or maybe it's me, being forty-odd years older might have something to do with my loss of excitement.

Jack Chalker told some about that at ChiCon in 2000 (the guy arranging the masquerade had hired three bands and bought \$100 of incense, using up all his budget) and was going to finish the story at Millennium Philcon — but he died before it took place.

Regarding gay marriage, the Supreme Court announced their results yesterday, and Jim Stumm should be pleased that they mostly agree with him. Thus, DOMA, which he wanted struck down, is obliged to defer to state law, thereby striking it down. On the other hand, the Supreme Court refused to hear the challenge to Proposition 8, amending the California constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman, on a cheap legal technicality. Jim had wanted it upheld, but at least the evil day has been put on hold, pending further action. Which should please Dainis Biseniecks, in that certain good faith actions in the sexual sphere are currently not forbidden. Dainis also asked how many sigmas make a deviant. This is a meaningless question, since deviancy depends on what is being measured. Michael Jordan and Freeman Dyson are easily three sigmas above the norm of their respective groups, but neither could be considered a deviant. For a man inclined to abuse his women, the question of whether he deviates from similar abusers is irrelevant, especially if his victim should die.

Regarding the choices of Mormon obligate homosexuals, Taras Wolansky writes that my emission of celibacy as an option is a "curious blind spot." What part of obligate does he not understand? If one's sex drive is strong, celibacy is a hardship to be endured, not a lifestyle to be embraced, regardless of one's sexual orientation. I have known a number of people with low sex drives who were quite comfortable remaining celibate, and at a guess at least a few of them might have preferred their own sex. My views on this subject were informed by Lee, who is an excommunicate Mormon, and by the late Joe Mayhew, who, as a Catholic priest had to deal with a number of MOHs who survived suicide attempts. Taras also asks: "Is a tolerant Islam even possible?" Since the Koran does not require intolerance, it is possible in theory. In practice, we-ell maybe, but it would surely be hard. Given that Islam has no office equivalent to the Pope tasked with enforcing adherence to a doctrinal line that the office has had a hand in laying down, the individual Imams have a lot of latitude to preach any agenda that will find support, whether from within or without their congregations. Currently, this means that the oil money of Saudi Arabia, dispensed by the conservative and intolerant House of Saud, has a profound influence. Were that oil money to be dispensed by tolerant types, I expect that Islam might present a more tolerant face. However, people with significant money to give tend to be conservative, regardless of their religion, and the House of Saud has been supportive of (Wikipedia says to the extent of 87 billion dollars) and supported by, the ultra-conservative Wahhabi sect. Remove the oil money, however, and the push towards intolerance might be reduced if not eliminated. Note that the more tolerant versions of Islam, (tolerant because they are in the minority?) such as Shiaism, Suffism and Bahaiism, tend to



be regarded as heretical by the more numerous Sunnis and Shiites, who are currently engaged in a sectarian civil war in Syria.

The Alawites (the al-Asad are Alawites) are involved too.

— JTM

From: **Brad W. Foster** July 3, 2013  
Post Office Box 165246, Irving, TX  
75016-5246 USA  
[bwfoster@juno.com](mailto:bwfoster@juno.com)  
<http://www.jabberwockygraphix.com>

Been a while since I contributed in any real way to *Alexiad* through art or such, and not sure if you didn't care for the toon I sent back last October, or it just got lost in the mix. I'm attaching it again here — no problem if you don't ever care to use anything I send, but just let me know, and I'll send something else. Otherwise, will wait for things to be used before sending more — and then issues pass, and I start to feel guilty about not contributing, and feel like fannish leech!

I mean, I see all these great locs issue after issue, whereas my own comments are usually very surface; kind of like the notes I had on this issue: I loved the poem you wrote in memory of C'mell, brought a sniffle to the nose for sure. I held onto our last lovely little one when she also finally had to be taken as peacefully as possible out of this life, after having a long and almost miraculous one. She wasn't going to go with no one there with her, not after all the love she had given to us.

I got her a gravestone at the garden supply store.

— JTM

I've fallen way behind in reading *anything* this past month due to some eye surgery, so now that I seem to be able to focus for more than five minutes at a time on print, working to catch up. That's one zine down, a dozen more to go

From: **Jerry Kaufman** July 7, 2013  
[JAkaufman@aol.com](mailto:JAkaufman@aol.com)

I suppose you are satisfied in an irritated and ironic way by the Hugo nominees, as there are two "Chicks Dig" books among the Related Books nominated (although one is actually a "Chicks Unravel" volume). I haven't read either these or any previous books with similar titles. What annoys you about these? Are the essays inane, shallow, unoriginal? Is the subject matter unworthy? Are the titles too flippant?

Of the five titles nominated this year, there's only one I might have the inclination to read, that being *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy*. But I haven't yet read the previous book on sf that James and Mendlesohn edited. (At least I have the Mendlesohn book *Rhetorics of Fantasy* — I'm very interested in

her way of classifying and discussing different types of the fantastic.)

In your review of *How Teddy Roosevelt Slew the Last Mighty T-Rex*, I note your remarks about "a tale that has accomplished nothing and arrived nowhere." This matches up with Greg Bear's explanation of the difference between a thriller and a science fiction story. (I have heard him explain this, but don't know where, if anywhere, he might have written it up, or if he got the idea from someone else.) In a thriller, a new technological or political change threatens the status quo, and the story is about preventing the destructive changes and returning to the safety of how things were. In the science fiction story, the writer introduces the same changes and then imagines how life and society will change — no return to the pre-change state of affairs. No safe return — things change.

So the thriller version of The Skylark of Space would have ended with DuQuesne's death and the destruction of all his notes and equipment, making Seaton's discovery of X a curiosity. Afterwards, Seaton would have married Dorothy Vaneman and got a promotion to GS-12, while Margaret Spencer would have become the protagonist of Fifty Grades of Crane.

— JTM



I liked Jim Stumm's discussion of the DOMA case and what he thought the Supreme Court's approach should be.

I still don't understand the case for the Gold Standard, as it seems to me that the value of gold is as arbitrary as the value of money itself. I need to read something cogent but reasonably impartial on the subject. Suggestions?

We will try to make it to the Faned Dinner in San Antonio, barring being on a program item opposite it, or Suzle's Sleeping Room Hotel Liaison duties conflicting, or any of the one hundred and one things happening that

prevent one from doing things at conventions.

From: **Milt Stevens** July 11, 2013  
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA  
93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* V12 #3, Lisa mentions a fantasy novel based on the life of Richard III. That's a good idea. It should have been used before this. Richard III was an evil cuss. If he didn't deal in the black arts, it was only because he didn't know how. Some people are complaining that *The Game of Thrones* is too bloody. I presume the people who are complaining haven't read about The War of Roses. It was quite bloody, and it really happened. I've read that the War of Roses wiped out half of the English aristocracy. It probably wasn't too good for the peasants either, but history doesn't usually bother counting them.

I don't find it too bloody, just too destructive. It should end up with Baldrick standing alone amid icy devastation, the only living entity in the land, saying, "Oi fang Oi won!" He won't starve; he eats cigarettes, after all.

— JTM

Joseph writes about his preconceptions of the trufannish convention attendee. My preconceptions about fandom and conventions came from the fan columns in the prozines. It sounded like fun. It turned out to be fun, but not quite what I expected. When I was a kid I thought writers and editors were godlike entities. Then I met some of them. They proved to be entirely human. I've liked many of them, although there were some I wouldn't let in the house. I thought fandom would be mostly about talking about SF. Well, science fiction is sometimes mentioned. There has always been some really good sercon work done in fandom.

Then there is the fan I became. I didn't attend conventions until I had the money to do it reasonably. I don't like being crowded, and I don't like being uncomfortable. When I'm hungry I want to eat what I feel like eating. I'm a fairly conventional person in dress and habits and don't feel like changing just for the sake of a con. I think fannish is a descriptive term rather than a prescriptive term. If I don't feel like doing something, I don't care whether it is fannish or not.

This year, I read all five Hugo nominees for best novel. I voted 2312 in fourth place. I thought the plot was just an excuse for taking a tour of Robinson's construct for a future solar system. I had a feeling of unreality through the entire novel. The actions didn't seem reasonable to me. I think it is annoying when characters don't answer reasonable questions, and the protagonist has to spend a couple of hundred pages finding out the answers.

My other Hugo novel choices were: (1) *Throne of the Crescent Moon*. (2) *Captain Vorpatril's Alliance*. (3) *Red Shirts*. (5) No Award. (6) *Blackout*.

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** July 16, 2013  
Post Office Box 5323, Oracle, AZ  
85623-5323 USA  
[laurraine@mac.com](mailto:laurraine@mac.com)  
<http://www.weasner.com/>

I don't have much to comment on but just wanted to say that while *Brave* is not a great movie, I enjoyed it. I thought the ads for it were misleading. The story is really about the mother daughter relationship.

From: **Lloyd Penney** July 17, 2013  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 2B2 CANADA  
[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)  
<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>

Thank you for Whole Number 69 of *Alexiad*. Pay little attention to the date above, that's when I started writing it, and will no resemblance to when you receive it. Toronto and area received record-setting, torrential rains on July 8, which knocked out the power for about 36 hours. I started composing locs on Yvonne's laptop (that's where I'm typing this), and was back to the desktop for a day, but another micro-outage did some unspecified damage, and it's in the shop.

I did get to see the Queen's Plate on television here. I can't remember which horse won, but I believe it was owned by Queen Elizabeth II, a fine Jubilee prize indeed.

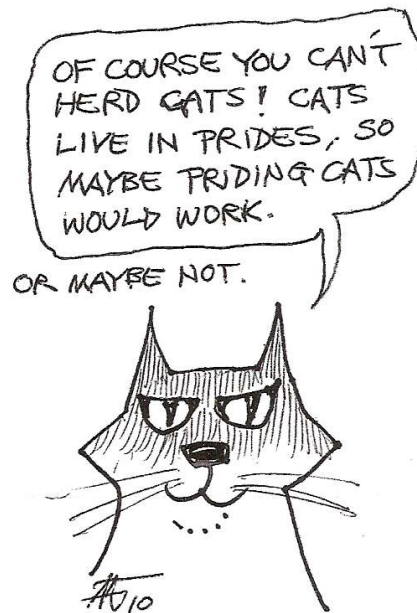
I remember the days of the traveling giants, the party animals, the local SMOFs, and the eager neos. They seem to be gone; newer fans don't even like the term 'fan', and they like anime, Doctor Who, comics and gaming. I freely admit I have no interest in any of that, so there are few conventions that interest me these days. I teased a couple of Whovian friends that I am sure that if the Doctor needed more regenerations, he could probably find them on eBay . . . there are two major DW clubs in Toronto, as one formed without any knowledge of the older one which dates back to the 80s. The clubs seem to glare at one another like growling cats, separated by very little outside of a generation gap.

I am sure the monarchists among us are waiting anxiously for the birth of Will and Kate's birthday. I think Kate let the cat out of the bag a while ago; looks like a little princess. The resulting souvenir tat will add several billion pounds to the British economy, much needed.

Maybe she should get a job with the Security Service in the Deception Section.

Condolences on the loss of C'Mell. We invest so much love on the little animals, and

for the most part, they reward that love with companionship, and attention that we interpret as a little love back. We've never owned cats ourselves, but we certainly remember those affectionate cats owned by others . . . Chat-Chat, Tiffany, MomCat and recently, Emmett. They all have their own personalities, and we've spent memorable quality time with all of them. They add so much to our lives; that the least we can do for them, and end their pain if the deed is needed.



Martin Morse Wooster mentions the N3F and its publications . . . the membership numbers are down in comparison with past years, but there are still numbers enough to merit what the club executive provides to its membership. There is a level of involvement in fandom for everyone.

Good to see Cathy Palmer-Lister in the local. I hope to be in better financial shape to see what Perception is all about next year. I hope there will a little something new and different about the con...there are conventions I'd like to go to, have done so in the past, but the con over the years seems to be nearly identical each time.

My loc . . . the cataract operation happened in early June, and I am still popping eye drops in my eye, and probably will for the next month. Robert Kennedy, I did indeed have a very successful operation. I was the chairman of the last Smofcon in Toronto in 1989, but doubt I'll be able to go to the Toronto Smofcon this year; just too dear for me right now.

So much discussion about same-sex marriage. It's been re-legalized in California, the US federal government will now issue

benefits to same-sex couples; a no-brainer to me. Same-sex marriages have been legal in Canada for ten years, God did not smite us down, and the premier of the province, Kathleen Wynne, is herself in a same-sex marriage. It's become a part of everyday life. A former prime minister of Canada, the late Pierre Elliot Trudeau, once said that the state had no business in the bedrooms of the nation, and I fully agree with him.

I will declare an apa-ish RAE,BNC on the rest, and say my thanks for this issue. Hope you're staying cool in this hot summer. We're trying to be cool after the rainstorm and floods, but it has been very humid, and more is coming. See you with issue 70.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** July 18, 2013  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA  
93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

Thank you for Vol. 12, No. 3

All the reviews and commentary were very much enjoyed.

**Lisa & Joe:** I am sorry to learn of your loss of C'Mell. Having had a number of cats over the years and having to put all but one down (one disappeared and she was the best), it is never easy.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:57 am the power went off in the area where I live. Apparently an animal had taken out some power lines. Power did not come back on until approximately 5:30 pm. Eleven and one half hours without power. The only times that has happened previously was the result of a couple of earthquakes.

You don't have hurricanes, do you?

I recently read *The Human Division* by John Scalzi (2013). It is indicated as being: "A New Tale of the Best Selling *Old Man's War* Universe." Actually, it is a series of interconnected short stories. I know that there is some disagreement concerning *Fuzzy Nation* and maybe *Redshirts* too. But, I enjoyed *The Human Division* very much and recommend it to anyone who has enjoyed Scalzi's *Old Man's War* series or just likes most of Scalzi's writings in general.

DNA again. There is an excellent article on the Denisovans in the July 2013 issue of the National Geographic magazine (p. 90)

Some of you may recall that in Vol. 12 No. 2 (April 2013) I expressed my admiration for the novels by Vince Flynn. It was a great shock to learn that he died on June 20, 2013, from prostate cancer. He was only 47. There were more than 2,500 people at the service in St. Paul, Minnesota.

I have watched a few episodes of *Under the Dome* and keep asking myself why? It is not very good. The police chief is killed when his pacemaker explodes. One of the deputy officers' ridiculously goes berserk and a ricochet shot of his kills another deputy. That

seems to leave Natalie Martinez (real name) as the surviving deputy and I guess automatically the chief. She is the best part of the show and the only reason I still watch it.

**Joe:** In your excellent review of *The House of Silk: A Sherlock Holmes Novel* (I've obtained it from the library) you mention *Foyle's War*. This lets me comment that *Foyle's War* is one of my favorite TV shows. Also, enjoyed has been *Inspector Lewis* which now appears to be finished. It should be noted that Lawrence Fox who played Detective Sargent James Hathaway in *Inspector Lewis* played an English NAZI in one of the *Foyle's War* episodes. Oh, as good as *Foyle's War* is the best part may be his driver Samantha Stewart who is played by Honeysuckle Weeks. Who on Earth would name their female child Honeysuckle?

Robin & Susan Weeks, parents who smelled the strong scent of honeysuckle at the time of their daughter's birth.

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0917320/bio>

I hope to see you and Lisa in San Antonio. **R-Laurraine Tutihasi:** Since there were only some 5 of us in the audience when Lloyd and Yvonne Penney were interviewed by Chris Garcia it is too bad that we somehow didn't meet. If you are at *Loscon 40* perhaps we will be able to meet.

**Alexis A. Gilliland:** My first colonoscopy found a few polyps and the doctor had me come back in five years. The second one I was clear and he had me come back in 10 years. That one was recent and there were polyps. He wants me back in five years. It is normal for colonoscopies to cease at a person's age 85. I will be 84 at the next scheduled one and may refuse. The procedure itself is nothing as I am completely out. As I am sure you are aware it is the preparation that is very unpleasant.

The unpleasant part for me is explaining to the doctor that no, I do not want to be put out.

— JTM

**Joy V. Smith:** *Person of Interest* is also one of my favorite shows. Others being *NCIS*, *Once Upon A Time*, *The Mentalist*, *Bones*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *The Following*, *Warehouse 13*, *Arrow*, *The Americans*, *Burn Notice*, *Blue Bloods*, and *Foyle's War*. Luckily they are not all on during the same weeks as some are on vacation when others are on. I think that I may watch too much TV.

**Murray Moore:** Guns can be used for target shooting (an Olympic event) and hunting as well as self-defense. The press does not report it, but guns are used for self-defense (often not fired) incredibly more times than they are ever used by criminals or the

widely reported crazies. The Second Amendment of our Constitution is very clear that the people have the right to keep and bear arms and that this right "shall not be infringed." As stated previously, I agree with the comment by George Price in the March issue of *Alexiad* that a gun-free zone is: "A place where victims assemble to be killed with no chance of defense."

**Taras Wolansky:** Thank you regarding *Haven*. Also, see my comment to Joy V. Smith.

From: **George W. Price** July 22, 2013  
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL  
60690-3228 USA  
[price4418@comcast.net](mailto:price4418@comcast.net)

June *Alexiad*:

My last letter opened with a light-hearted comment on my wife's addiction to *NCIS*. Now I must report very sad news. Virginia passed away on June 15th.

Omitting the medical details, she died of being eighty-three years old and in chronic bad health. I'm now eighty-four but in better health, so I may be around for a while yet.

Virginia was a good woman who deserved the best. It was my great good fortune that she was willing to settle for me. We met in 1995 and married in 1999. It was not a marriage of blazing passion, but we were comfortable with each other. Fourteen years was not enough.

Our condolences.

\*\*\*\*\*

Darrell Schweitzer warns against assuming, as some Americans do, that "all Muslims want to conquer the world, kill infidels, or support Al Qaeda." He also notes that it has been only a few hundred years since Christians were enthusiastically slaughtering each other in religious wars. Quite so. Muslim cultures and individuals can indeed be very tolerant. Sometimes.

But there are also significant differences. I don't think the Bible ever calls for conversion by the sword. But the Quran is equivocal, to say the least; some verses forbid compulsion and others (the "Sword Verses") command it. In any case, Islam has a long and bloody history of forced conversion, and must be ranked among the most consistently militant and expansionist religions. And I don't believe any major Christian denomination espouses anything like the concept of jihad.

It appears that the closer a Christian adheres to the Word of Jesus, the less likely he is to make war upon other religions. But the closer a Muslim adheres to Islam, the more likely he is to attack unbelievers. So the tolerant Muslims (may their number increase!) seem to be mostly those who don't bother to live up to the precepts of Islam. This is not a good advertisement for Islam.

The Saudi government reportedly

subsidizes mosques and Muslim education in the U.S. in order to propagate hard-line Salafist Islam. We might be wise to examine the literature made available in mosques, and see how much is jihadist. That would not justify censorship — but we should call out any serious discrepancies between what is printed and preached in Arabic and the moderate and tolerant Islam presented in English to the unbelievers. (The translations might be checked by Christian Arabs who won't whitewash Islam.)

For now, I won't argue whether Islamic culture is compatible with a secular and democratic society. Suffice it to note that the word "Islam" means "submission" (to the will of God), and its rules apply to all aspects of life, including government. We may ask just who decides what the will of God is, and how the deciders are chosen. "Separation of church and state" seems to be a concept completely foreign to Islam.

\*\*\*\*\*

As to whether homosexuality should be regarded as a defect (as I believe), Jim Stumm says it would be "more objective and less judgemental . . . to call it a common variation, like red hair or blue eyes." So it might, and perhaps it is only my subjective feelings of disgust at homosexual acts that make me think of it as a behavioral deformity or defect. If that makes me a "homophobe," so be it. Still, I am also disgusted by some heterosexual practices (never mind which ones) without feeling that they are abnormal. In passing, I note that red hair and blue eyes rarely affect one's readiness to propagate the species.

However, in one way we do have to be judgmental about homosexuality, because we must decide the major public-policy question of whether marriage should be severed from its traditional heterosexual roots and radically revised to include same-sex relations. I see no good reason why it should, but it looks like I am on the losing side.

Nor can we avoid judging. Neutrality is itself a judgment that the issue is not worth bothering with. Does anyone really believe that? It's hugely important.

When same-sex marriage is imposed on us, either by legislation or by judicial fiat, several very squirmy cans of worms will be dumped out.

First, as Mr. Stumm points out, the Full Faith and Credit clause of the Constitution requires every state to accept the marriage laws of every other state. Crossing a state line will not automatically divorce a gay couple. However, contrary to Mr. Stumm, it does not follow that the federal Defense of Marriage Act should be struck down because the federal government "has no Constitutional authority to legislate in regard to marriage, which is entirely a concern of the States."

True, the feds have no power to make states change their marriage laws. That would require



a Defense of Marriage Constitutional Amendment. But can't the federal government choose its own definition of marriage, different from those of the states, for applying federal laws such as the income tax? If Utah decided to allow polygamy, the feds could not decree that the extra wives are really only concubines — but the IRS could refuse to count them for tax exemptions.

Second, universal same-sex marriage will require states to revise the many marriage laws that assume all couples are heterosexual. For example, I understand that in some states the husband is legally obligated to support the wife, but the wife is not obligated to support the husband. Some states may assume that in a divorce the mother will normally get the children. And are alimony obligations identical for both sexes? It will take years to work it all out.

Third, once we sever marriage from reproduction, on what basis will we decide just what limits apply? Yes, I know traditional heterosexual marriage includes couples who can't reproduce — as my own just-ended marriage attests — but the rules have evolved with child-bearing and rearing in mind. On what grounds can we continue to forbid polygamy or polyamory (multiple partners of both sexes), or even incest or child marriage? If all that counts is just "being in love," may we impose any limits at all?

An editorial in *National Review* (July 15, 2013, p. 14) says, "The real argument for continuing to treat marriage as the union of a man and a woman is that marriage and marriage law exist to channel sexual behavior in a way that promotes the flourishing of children. They exist to uphold the ideal that children need the mother and father who created them to stay in a stable relationship together. Recognition of same-sex marriage means that the institution is no longer about those things."

It would seem to follow that when the state thus loses its traditional reason for regulating marriage, it should stop regulating marriage. Perhaps we should take the radical libertarian path and just get government out of marriage entirely. No marriage licenses, no marriage laws, and no tax breaks for married people. Make marriage strictly a matter of private contracts voluntarily entered into by consenting adults.

The state could even abandon the term "marriage" altogether, and leave that word for churches to use in celebrating whatever rites they wish — rites that would have no legal force. The state would instead register and enforce "cohabitation contracts."

The state would not care if a cohabitation contract is between a man and a woman, or two men, or two women, or one man and four women, or even three men and five women. The state would be limited to enforcing the contract, with few constraints on its terms other than forbidding such obvious violations of basic rights as slavery or child abuse.

The state would still ban such things as sexual relations with children, or incest, but it would be proscribing the physical acts, not the social forms within which the acts take place.

"Family law" would become part of tort law, construing the terms of a particular contract in such matters as whether adultery is a breach of the contract, how the contract can be amended, and who takes care of the children when the contract is dissolved.

I strongly suspect that many homosexual activists would furiously reject any such ultra-libertarian system, because it would bypass and nullify their strategy of using legal recognition of gay marriage as a way to force straight society to accept homosexuality as normal.

\* \* \* \* \*

Murray Moore asks me "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?" Well, every month the National Rifle Association's magazine *The American Rifleman* runs a one-page "Armed Citizen" column. It summarizes a half dozen or so recent newspaper reports from around the U.S. of cases where people have used guns to defeat (and sometimes kill) those who attacked them or their property — robbers, burglars, home invaders, and the like. Why Mr. Moore doesn't see any items like these is something to take up with the Canadian media. Maybe such reports just don't fit the narrative?

Now, if he means only the cases where a nutjob starts spraying strangers with bullets, as at the school in Newtown, the answer is simple: Since most Americans don't go armed, the chance of an armed citizen just happening to be at hand when the shooting starts is very small. (It has happened a few times, but I can't cite the cases. Ask the NRA; they keep track.) The best way to improve the odds, of course, is to allow and encourage more citizens to go armed. We're working on that.

\* \* \* \* \*



Be the first one on your block to have dual props!

Sue Burke disputes my statement 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, she says. "In fact, in 2008, Spain's government had a budget surplus." She cites the BBC saying that "the crisis was caused by private-sector debt, not government debt."

(That ain't the way I heard it, but I am not going to write a long essay refuting the BBC.)

And then Ms. Burke gives it all away by adding that "the costs of the private sector's bad behavior have been socialized." Ah, "socialized"? The private sector can't "socialize" anything. So my original statement stands, with the clarification that a lot of the excessive government spending was to bail out private borrowing that the government chose to guarantee. Would those reckless private borrowers have dared take such risks if they hadn't known the government would bail them out? A government that subsidizes private "bad behavior" can expect to get more and more of it. So whose fault is that?

From: **Jim Stumm** July 15, 2013  
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo, NY  
14223-0029 USA

R-Laurraine Tutihasi, **NEGATIVE INCOME TAX**: A version of this idea is the Earned Income Credit, line 64a on the 2012 1040, which pays up to \$5891 if the person filing has 3 children.

I believe it was economist Milton Friedman who originally proposed this idea. Public policy innovations usually come from academics or think tanks. Politicians may pick up such ideas. They are pleased to get their names attached to any such innovations that turn out well.

But Friedman's idea was that all welfare programs should be abolished and replaced by a big negative income tax. That didn't happen. Politicians seldom repeal programs. Instead they enact new ones that are in addition to all those that already exist.

There are other refundable tax credits as well as the EIC. "Refundable" means that the filer will get the full amount of the tax credit in a tax refund (so-called) even if his tax liability is zero, and even if he had no taxes withheld from his pay, perhaps because he was unemployed, or paid under the table. The other kind of tax credit is non-refundable which can reduce the amount of taxes owed to zero, but not below. So refundable is better than non-refundable. And a tax credit is better than a tax deduction.

Murray Moore, **SHOOTINGS**: What you probably hear about most from US mass media are school shootings. In most (all?) US public schools civilians are not allowed to carry guns. So there is no possibility of someone not a police officer shooting a shooter in that setting. Guns are used defensively mainly in homes and shops possibly 1 million times a year in USA, though estimates range up to 3 million times a year. You don't hear about those civilians defending themselves and sometimes shooting shooters because US national media refuse to mention them. These liberal national media support gun control or prohibition and they refuse to run any stories that would undermine this support. But such incidents are reported in some local newspapers and TV stations. I have

a source for such reports and I often print some of them in my newsletter *Living Free*.

Have there ever been any shootings in USA private or Catholic schools? I have never heard of any.

Darrell Schweitzer: You say the planet is warming, but I have read that there has been no global warming for the last 16 years.

You say "the ice caps — both of them — and glaciers are disappearing at a record pace." I have read that the main body, 98 percent of the Antarctic icecap is growing in depth, not shrinking. Only the Antarctic Peninsula region, which makes up 2 percent of the icecap, is shrinking. That 2 percent is the only part of the icecap that alarmists ever mention.

The Antarctic Peninsula is also where the Argentine and Chilean stations are, and both countries have established several, as part of their claims (when and if) to the area.

— JTM

As for glaciers, if you google "glaciers that are growing" you will find websites that mention a large number of glaciers that are not now shrinking.

You wonder where all that water from melting icecaps and glaciers is going. A lot of it is ending up on the growing Antarctic icecap and on glaciers that are growing. Of course, the Arctic icecap is already sea ice, so if that melts, it doesn't raise the sea level at all.

If the damage of recent large storms is measured (as I have heard on TV news) by the dollar amount of property damage, a lot of that can be attributed to increasingly expensive construction in risky places, such as flood plains, ocean beaches, and barrier islands where no one should build at all, and where hardly anyone would build were it not for govt subsidies, such as flood "insurance" (so-called), and disaster relief that encourages rebuilding in the same risky place. If Americans insist on building in known natural danger zones, govt should not subsidize their folly.

Oceans haven't risen as much as was predicted years ago, and the IPCC's predictions of how much oceans will rise keeps getting reduced with every new IPCC report. In 1990 the IPCC predicted a maximum of 100 cm rise by 2100. In 2001 they said it would be up to 88 cm by 2100. In 2007 they said up to 59 cm by 2100. Other climate scientists predict still less rise. 59 cm is about 2 feet. Al Gore's pseudo-prediction of a 20 foot rise is pure goofiness.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** July 27, 2013  
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,  
Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA  
[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

This is a LOC for the June 2013 *Alexiad*.

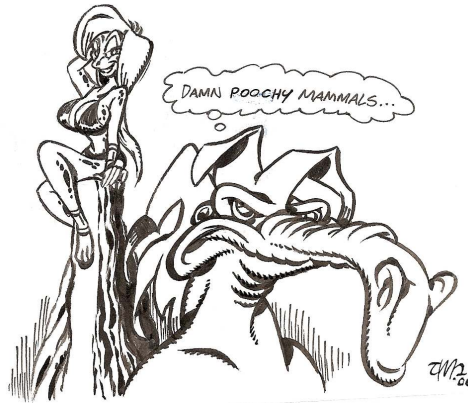
Written, of course, late. Since I've been retired, I've been busier than ever. Nonetheless, it doesn't seem like I'm getting as much done as before.

We go from the era of my life to the era of science fiction. While my era is typified by not getting my priorities done, this era in science fiction is typified by alternative histories.

One category are alternative Civil Wars. It seems an endless source. When one thinks it has been mined of all its inspirations, a novel, like *Stonewall Goes West*, comes along. It presents a new take on Stonewall Jackson surviving the friendly fire that killed him.

With another genre that goes over a lot of the same territory, comic books, I am not so willing to suspend boredom. I disagree with Carol Clarke here. For instance, I doubt the current writers could get much more out of the Avengers. How many variations on the Avengers' repertoire can you have? For that matter, how many comic book superheroes can come out of the closet as Gays — or Muslims?

We must look to a resurgence of the independents for new characters and plots, like happened during the '90s. Of course, the boom may not occur in paper, but on the web. In fact, writers of web comics are currently publishing a plethora of new characters. Some actually popular.



On the other hand, sometimes the old ways are best. That's what I got out of Taral Wayne's review of the mystery series, the Old Dick. The only problem here is that we have a different perspective than several decades ago. While the Old Dick may have more chutzpah than his younger counterpart, we might like him better even without it. At our age, we can identify better with someone the Old Dick's age.

We know why we like the Old Dick. We are not as certain about anything when we are drifting into Alzheimers. Nonetheless, as R-Lauraine Tutihasi and the podcast she refers us to points out, it can create great works of art before the repetition takes over. Maurice Ravel's Bolero is an example of that; and so is an artist the podcasters give as an example.

I haven't made up my mind whether my mother, though not knowing her name, had buried herself in repetition quite yet. In her later days with Alzheimers, she only drew faces. However, each remained different.

At advanced stages of Alzheimers, people are out of it. With other syndromes, it is harder to tell. Milt Stevens talks about a secretary, Bobbie, who talked to God and Satan, while no one else heard anything. My father, my brother, and a good friend were shrinks. For them, seeing or hearing things did not inevitably indicate insanity or psychoses. If Bobby could hold a job, handle her affairs, and not pose a danger to herself or anyone else, they would have deemed her sane.

There is some question whether Bobby is crazy or not. There is also some question about whether I, Alexis Gilliland and Lee Gilliland are crazy. We all attended the anniversary of the *Titanic* at Freddy's in Arlington, VA. I have a few things to add. Finding the place was a problem because it didn't say Freddy's on the sign, but White Star Line. Then, suddenly, it dawned on me that the *Titanic* belonged to the White Star Line.

While there, I found out something interesting about the music. The trio couldn't play the probable tune that accompanied the evacuation of the *Titanic*. The authentic tune was most likely a ragtime to keep the passengers in good spirits. Unfortunately, members of the trio told me they most likely wouldn't have been able to play it. I wasn't that disappointed. No way could you perfectly replicate the *Titanic*, even for that one night.

How do you replicate the night the *Titanic* sank in 2013? That was Freddy's problem. How do you replicate the Constitution and its amendments in 2013? Jim Stumm doesn't see a problem. For him, Judges should use their common sense and follow the word of the Constitution and the Amendments, and not let their personal opinions impinge on decisions.

I find the law more complicated than that. For instance, I wonder what Jim thinks of making judicial decisions based on precedent. It may not reflect verbatim the words of the Constitution and Amendments. We know all too well. However, it isn't based on personal opinion either, and English law has used on precedent since time immemorial.

The Constitution and amendments have been our standard for law. Should gold be our standard for what money is worth? Joe, you take me to task for claiming no one has actually used the gold standard. He points to the period in the US between the Civil War and the Depression as one where the gold standard was applied. Also, he points to Germany between 1924 and 1929.

However, the person advocating the gold standard is George Price. I don't suspect that he would accept those examples as a true gold standard. It is true that, in the period between the Civil War and the Depression, the Federal government would exchange gold for greenbacks. Of course, that does not mean that

the Federal government had stockpiled the worth of those greenbacks in gold. It could be the monetary people assumed few takers.

And there are also people who say that the American polity is fascist because newborn children are not allowed to vote.

— JTM

So much for the example of the Federal government during that period. How about Germany between 1924 and 1929? As far as I can see, all it was doing was pegging the amount of Rentenmarks in circulation to the gold market. While that kept down inflation, it says nothing about the German government's ability to exchange the Rentenmarks for gold.

With the examples of the US and Germany, and other monetary systems like theirs, I am presuming that George would insist that gold cover all the money in circulation. That way, officials could not stray from a policy of hard money and no inflation, the outcome he demands.

Of course, while, to me, this accords with George Price's objectives, I shouldn't put words into his mouth. Instead, I should wait to see what George thinks of this.

A form of gold standard was practiced in many places in many ways. Now, we go from that to a situation more localized to America, the real estate bubble of the 2000s. Robert Kennedy asks if I really believe that lending institutions would make loans to the uncreditworthy without being pressured by the government.

Yes, since they believed that real estate prices could only go up, and never go down. If a mortgagee had to be foreclosed, it meant the banks would make more money selling it anew. This as a motivation has been well documented enough.

As further evidence the banks embraced rising prices with gusto, from the '70s on, people have often told me that real estate prices can only go up. I originally thought it was a con. However, the banks' actions during the real estate bubble reveal they believed their own guff.

George Price is another person who believes that the Financial Metldown was caused by the Community Reinvestment Act. When I pointed out the banks didn't complain about the Federal government forcing them to make bad loans, George replied that they were confident of being bailed out by Uncle Sugar.

As far as I can see, no such cushion existed. The infrastructure for the bailout was not created until the meltdown neared the bottom. In fact, I gather, originally, the Secretary of the Treasury Hank Paulson and the Fed were not going to bail anyone out. They let Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers go under. Only when the economy started entering free fall, did they blink.

By claiming such a cushion existed, I suspect George wished to show that his theory

was not one of convenience — as I characterized it — but one of overwhelming evidence. He considers it an insult I called convenient his theory, which impugns all the top Democrats. Given the above, I continue to characterize it as convenient.

With my long long discourse on the Financial Metldown, I end my letter. It includes material both personal and totally impersonal, cosmic and microscopic, vituperative and friendly. I shall return with comments on the next *Alexiad*.

From: **Leigh Kimmel** July 29, 2013  
[leighkimmel@yahoo.com](mailto:leighkimmel@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.leighkimmel.com/>  
<http://www.billionlightyearbookshelf.com/>  
<http://www.starshipcat.com/>

Things have been busy of late. We went to three anime conventions in three weeks, which was exhausting, albeit remunerative. Unfortunately, it's unlikely that we'll go back to the most remunerative of them next year, as a result of serious allegations leveled against the individual running it. If it weren't for that one person, I'd go back in a heartbeat. But unless he's ousted as con chair and removed from all financial responsibility, we just can't risk it. If he gets in trouble again while the con is effectively his personal business, we could end up losing our table money, which would be a serious outlay of money. If he's ousted, or if several years have passed with no further complaints, we'll consider it again, but not when there's a serious risk that he could do something that would take the whole con down.

And when we got back from all those events, we hadn't been back a full day before our car got hit. It had sat safely in the driveway the whole time while we were gone in the van, but the night after we got back, someone came around the corner too fast, lost control, and smashed into it. They hit the car so hard it was pushed off the driveway several feet into the front yard. The whole thing had the feel of someone who'd been drinking, and who ran off so they wouldn't have to take a sobriety test. So now our car's in the body shop (at least they didn't decide the damage was too bad to be worth repairing and just total it) and we're getting by with just the van until the car's repaired. But we got by with just the van for two and a half years, after our old van died the final death, so we can get by for a couple of weeks, especially since we have two more conventions and would be using it anyway.

We're also dealing with the final cleanup of our attic after the raccoon infestation, a process that was delayed because of our three conventions taking us out of town. I'm also dealing with some other repairs of problems revealed when we had landscapers come in and trim back or remove vegetation that was providing an avenue for the raccoons to get on our roof. At least it also provided an opportunity to get another problem repaired in the same trip, so our house will now look a

little nicer.

When it rains, it really pours.

Did you have to chase a raccoon out of the house?

— JTM



From: **Rodney Leighton** June 24, 2013  
 11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,  
 Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0  
 CANADA

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad* which arrived today. Should be a copy of *TLoR Year 64 #5* enclosed.

My plans are to continue doing that for year 65 but in 8 page increments. I am planning on writing thank you letters to those folks who are good enough to send me things. My ability to write comprehensive locs seems to have diminished commensurate with my desire to do so.

I do see some things I might wish to comment on. Like Martin Morse Woodter wondering why anyone would belong to the N3F and what it offers. I have to wonder if you deliberately placed Laurraine's letter immediatly in front of Martin's. I shall leave it to her to respond to what the N3F has to offer if she wishes to do so.

In, I think, the late forties, a BNF who had gafiated (Charles Burbee, I seem to recall) had made a return. He wanted to get up to speed on things, so sent in a N3F membership. He got a "Welcome to Fandom" letter intended to explain to the neo



what this was all about. He did not take this seeming condescension well.

Best Schweitzer loc ever! Seems that Lisa was somewhat irate at the plaint about errors. I'm working on reading a book called *The History of the Jews*.

But, Joe: the reason for fiction is to entertain the reader. I read a couple of pages of the history book and then I read a bit of a James Patterson novel about a group of terrorist Jews who do something in the Olympics in Moscow. Book is so outrageous it is boring. But a good piece of fiction should allow the reader to ignore those things that could never happen and live vicariously in the story.

Speaking of fiction: is John Thiel still doing *Pablo Lennis*? I don't think I have seen it mentioned recently. Gone electronic? And yo don't bother reading it? Not doing it at all? Well, that's that.

From: **Sue Burke** July 30, 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 passed my behind-the-wheel Spanish driver's license test this morning! I spent a half-hour braving the hazards of traffic circles, cruising local highways, and turning at random through side streets in the bedroom suburb of Alcobendas, pausing to parallel park (uphill, with a stick shift!). The whole process cost about \$1,000USD in fees and lessons, and Spaniards are as resentful about the expense of learning to drive here as I am.

Murray Moore speculated that, given how strict the theory and practice tests are, driving in Spain must be a pleasure because few people pass. On the contrary, people keep trying until they do (or they run out of money). Traffic is intense and stressful; roads are poorly designed and maintained; signage is confusing; and exacting rules that work poorly in theory operate even worse in practice, in part because nobody obeys them. (Driving in Spain is still better than in Italy, though.) But I don't plan to drive in Spain, at least as little as possible. I wanted a driver's license so I can drive during visits to the United States, since my Texas-issued license had finally expired.

*Terra Nova: An Anthology of Contemporary Spanish Science Fiction* is now available at Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, and Smashwords in a variety of formats. You may recall that I am a co-translator in this project: six outstanding stories by top Spanish-language authors plus an essay on the state of Spanish science fiction. The Spanish-language version has garnered eight nominations for this year's Ignotus Awards, Spain's equivalent to the Hugos.

In the last letter, I reported that the 72nd annual Madrid Book Fair had begun, but booksellers were worried, since sales had fallen 43% since 2008. So they assiduously arranged for 3,600 authors to sign books, including top names, and sales increased this year by 9.3% or €7.1 million.

In fact, reading is up in general. In 2003, 47% of Spaniards said they read at least one book per year, and now that number is up to 60%. Not that they're necessarily buying more: instead, library borrowing has increased – by as much as 150% in Seville. At the same time, austerity means that library budgets are being cut sometimes down to zero, so volunteers are stepping in, even organizing their own local libraries with donated books. Unemployment seems to be a factor, since too many people have nothing better to do than read or help other people read.

Joe despaired when he heard someone say *Dr. Who* had been on the BBC since the '30s. I can top that. I was in Andorra at a souvenir shop that also sold stamps, I wanted to buy postage to send a postcard to the United States. The clerk asked me if the U.S. was in the European Union.

I was in the 'States for the Fourth of July, where I was pelted with candy and gifts as I stood on the curb and watched a neighborhood parade in Houston. I had earlier been in Milwaukee for my mother-in-law's 80th birthday party, and she's going strong and in better shape than some 60-year-olds. Then I went to Houston for a Burke Family reunion, where I learned that my sister's lung cancer had just been declared in remission and my older brother, who had nearly killed himself in an car accident last fall and spent a month in intensive care, can walk again reasonably well. In all, it was a happy little vacation, and I came home with five pounds of Wisconsin cheese.

My aunt Mary Katherine  
married a Burke.

— JTM

I won't be going to WorldCon this year, having blown my overseas travel on FamilyCon, although I hope to go to LonCon in 2014. However, I am going to Celsius 232 (which equals Fahrenheit 451) from July 31 to August 3 ([www.celsius232.es](http://www.celsius232.es)). It's a literary festival in Avilés, a port city on the Atlantic coast in northern Spain, that focuses on fantasy, science fiction, and horror. I'll have a full report next time.

From: **Taras Wolansky** July 31, 2013  
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H, Jersey  
City, NJ 07302-3787 USA  
[twolansky@yahoo.com](mailto:twolansky@yahoo.com)

Hi, Joe. Hi, Lisa.  
Excellent issue (June 2013).  
Here are the long-awaited Yugo Awards,  
for the most inappropriate Hugo nominees:  
Novel: *Captain Vorpatril's Alliance*, by

Lois McMaster Bujold. While a pleasant entry in what has become a series of Ruritanian cozies — it gets really dull only in the middle — it's not what I would call award material. The plot made me think of a 1950s comedy with Clifton Webb as a businessman whose harebrained get rich quick schemes interfere with his daughter's love life.

Novella: "San Diego 2014: The Last Stand of the California Browncoats", by "Mira Grant". Shameless fan pandering: zombies eat Comic-Con in the usual way.

Novelette (tie): "The Boy Who Cast No Shadow", by Thomas Olde Heuvelt; and "Fade to White", by Catherynne M. Valente. I don't even want to comment on these. They fill me with inertia.

Short story: "Mantis Wives", by Kij Johnson. Freaky experiment and, like most experiments, a failure.

Best Related Work (tie): *Chicks Dig Comics* and *Chicks Unravel Time*. Fan writing: what's worse than a *Chicks* book? Answer: a *Chicks* book about Dr. Who.

Best Graphic Novel: *Grandville Bete Noire*. Furry Marxism; the artist forgot that, while it's OK for the capitalist villains to look revolting, the romantic leads shouldn't.

By the way, it wouldn't surprise me if several of these won the Hugo. After all, the reason they are nominees in the first place is that they have a claque behind them.

Joe: Haven't gotten very far into Kim Stanley Robinson's Hugo nominee, *2312*, as yet. It's another one of his worthy but dull travelogues, though not as dull as the Mars trilogy, I think. It suddenly occurred to me that these novels are direct descendants of *Ralph 124C41+*; that is, the main point is the travelogue, not the story. Still, I may be voting for it by default. It's not a good year for novels.

It was a splendidly realized background, but I kept on waiting for someone to start actually doing something.

I used to watch the British World War II crime show, *Foyle's War*, but I gave it up. The hero is too much — even by TV standards — the sanctimonious liberal prig. You know how that goes: he's always idealistically right; the authorities are always selfishly and corruptly and intolerantly wrong.

Milt Stevens: "On most of these shows, police are represented as self-righteous creeps." Professionals in any field will usually be outraged by the TV version. I remember my little brother the doctor being outraged by *House*.

As police shows go, I've enjoyed the Canadian show, *Rookie Blue* (if that's the correct title). For the first season (or two?) every episode gives us another way for a young, inexperienced officer to screw up. It also features a couple of very cute policewomen (and, I think, very cute

policemen, but I'm not qualified to judge).

The mother of a policewoman is a member of my local SF club. Unlike the ones on TV, I told her, real policewomen look like fire plugs. But she showed me a picture of her daughter, dolled up to go out for the evening, and I had to agree that not all policewomen look like fire plugs, at least not all the time.

But to bring in my own profession: I caught the season finale of the marginally SF show, *Person of Interest*. The supercomputer/AI at the center of the story line decides to abscond from (selfish corrupt intolerant) government custody. As I watched, I hoped the show would make the point that it's the software, not the hardware; that the AI would simply port itself to other hardware, anywhere in the world. No such luck: instead, it made its dash for freedom by having its hardware shipped to an unknown destination. Never mind.

**Lloyd Penny:** In "the Disney/Pixar movie *Brave* ... the main character, Merida, was perhaps plain." I thought she was cute, but then I'm partial to redheads.

**Robert F. Kennedy:** "I have 2.8% Neanderthal DNA." Some scientists have come up with an alternative explanation for such correlations, that doesn't require interbreeding between Neanderthals and us Cro-Magnons. Instead they posit that whites and Asians descend from the same African population from which the Neanderthals had earlier descended.

In other words, the population of Africa was (and is) not homogeneous. The people who left, inhabitants of the northeast corner presumably, were already different from the ones who stayed.

**Murray Moore:** "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?" The short answer is, this is not a story that progressive editors or journalists want to tell. Often, the stories appear in local newspapers but are not picked up nationally. (I used to get the NRA magazine, though I did not own a gun. A regular feature was a collection of thumbnail accounts of gun self-defense culled from local newspapers.)

A traditional journalist thinks, "How do I present the facts fairly, so people can make up their own minds." A progressive journalist thinks, "How do I present the facts, so people make up their minds the right way." Until you understand this process, it's impossible to understand contemporary America.

In a particularly notorious case, two students "tackled" a shooter at a University. Now, you may wonder how they could "tackle" a gunman, bare-handed. Nearly all media accounts left out the small detail that they ran to their cars and got their guns first: "Gun-Free School Zone", don't you know.

Most often you only need to show you have a handgun to protect yourself. At a Windycon room party a few years back, David

Weber told us that carrying a handgun had saved his life on three separate occasions. He never had to shoot anybody — and I'm reasonably sure he didn't tell the police about any of it.

**Sue Burke:** Indeed, global warming is not a delusion but a scientific hypothesis, with considerable evidence behind it. Anthropogenic global warming, too, is a scientific hypothesis, with somewhat less evidence behind it.

**Alexis Gilliland:** "An unstated advantage of homosexual marriage is that will reduce the number of homo- and hetero- sexual pairings." I wonder: will a license from the government make people more faithful (if that's what you mean)?

**"Taras Wolansky notes that the climate is failing to warm the way it was supposed to."** (Actually, I was quoting *The Economist*.; though a *NY Times* climate blog has chimed in, too.) "[T]he failure has been in our models seeking to predict it." Exactly why skeptics question whether public policy should be based on those failed models.

Evidently Arctic melting is insufficient to account for the plateauing of climate in the last 15 years. Instead, mainstream climatologists suspect heat is being stored in the deep oceans, where is hard to measure. (Once again, the theory struggles to account for the facts.)

**Darrell Schweitzer:** During the expulsion from Spain, "The fleeing Jews were not allowed to take their children with them." This immediately rang false to me. For one thing, no one would leave, under those circumstances. For another, the Spanish government would have to spend money to feed and house the children.

I find that the story is false: contemporary accounts, even Jewish ones, make no reference to such an atrocity. Indeed, they specifically refer to "families" being exiled, and refer to children among the exiles.

And the desirability of taking in the exiles was one thing that the Sultan and the Pope agreed on. Well, the Pope was Alexander VI ["Cesare, I hear some of their women are muy caliente."].

**"Most of the invaders [of Canada in 1775] were Puritans from New England whose avowed goal was to extinguish popery in North America."** While I don't doubt some French Canadian told Darrell this story, it appears to be false, too. I gather that the American invaders were hoping to win over the Catholics of Quebec by offering them freedom from the Anglican Church establishment imposed on them by their British conquerors. But Parliament beat them to the punch and restored the Catholic Church's old privileges — including the right to impose tithes — just before the Americans arrived. Of course, after the defeat of the American amateurs, and heavy British reinforcement of their Canadian

garrisons, backing the Americans looked like a bad bet.

From historical propaganda to global warming propaganda: **"the failing Gulf Stream ... is losing its ability to keep Britain warm"**. This, too, immediately rings false: if the Gulf Stream were "failing", it would be a very, very big news story. But when I looked it up online, it turned out to be wronger than I expected. Not only is the Gulf Stream not failing — once again, global warming predictions are confused with global warming facts — but the prediction itself may be wrong — and, in any case, if it did fail, the latest scientific work suggests it wouldn't affect the European climate! (*Scientific American*, Feb. 2013.) Stanley Weinbaum was wrong.

That's me and Joyce Carol Oates: Islamophobes! I have it on good authority Winston Churchill was an Islamophobe, a Marxophobe, and a Naziphobe, too. (On the other hand, Adolf Hitler was an "Islamophile".)



Like homophobia (racism, sexism, etc.) Islamophobia is an accusation often used to suppress dissent: an accusation of "thoughtcrime". If you can't answer the argument, change the subject to the speaker's evil motives (an accusation impossible to refute) — and intimidate others into silence.

"Most [Muslims] ... lead perfectly respectable lives without supporting terrorism or even attempting to kill gays on sight." True; polls generally show only about 10% explicit support for terrorism (which is over 100 million people, of course). But given a chance they do tend to vote for Sharia law. Everywhere Islam exists we see it evolving in the direction of fundamentalism. I wish this were not true.

**"Yes, there are bigoted, violent Muslims ... Yes, too, there are bigoted, violent 'Christians' ..."** I can easily show Darrell the countries where Islamic terrorism is driving out the Christian population. (The Jews were driven out earlier.) Now let him show me the countries where Christian terrorism is driving out the Muslims. In fact, even as Christianity heads for extinction in Muslim countries, in Christian countries, Muslim populations burgeon.

Here's a rule of thumb: all assertions of the

form, "Groups A and B are equal on measure X" are false. It's not that there are no groups that are equal on some measure or other; rather, it's that such assertions are made precisely because they are false.

Lastly, if Darrell reads up on exactly how Oscar Wilde got in trouble with the law, his sympathy for him will evaporate, as mine did long ago.

*Cathy Palmer-Lister:* Think of attending Worldcon in Texas as acclimatizing for global warming!

**"I don't at all understand what [Throne of the] Crescent Moon is doing on the best novel ballot."** While I would estimate that the book is above average for a DAW fantasy, most likely political correctness played a role. If the author's name had been, say, Joe Miller, instead of Saladin Ahmed, it would probably not have been nominated.

I had wondered if "Saladin Ahmed" was a pseudonym, but Larry Smith said he had met the man and it was his real name.

— JTM

On the other hand, given the other nominees in this category, the book is looking better to me all the time.

*Carol Clarke:* The only "Batman" title I'm familiar with is *Catwoman*, if that qualifies. I bought it mostly because the SF club I belonged to had a meeting in a comic book store. I read it for a while until it was cancelled. The main character was appealingly mischievous.

I started reading the *Buffy Season 8* graphic novel series, but it loses a lot without SMG and the rest. No expressions, no body language, no timing, no tone of voice, no ... acting.

*R. Laurraine Tutihasi:* **"It sounds like a different Con."** I often get the same feeling when I see a review of a convention I attended. They are multi-ring circuses.

The most un-Sherlockian Sherlock has got to be Robert Downey, Jr. Jonny Lee Miller's interpretation on CBS is traditional by comparison.

From: **AL du Pisani** August 4, 2013  
945 Grand Prix Street,  
Wetevredenpark 1709, REPUBLIC  
OF SOUTH AFRICA  
[du.pisani@telkomsa.net](mailto:du.pisani@telkomsa.net)

It has been a mild winter in Johannesburg. For most of the rest of the country it has been milder as well. That still means pretty cold in the Northern Cape, and my mother has been complaining about the cold.

It has been just as well – The country's electricity supply has been under pressure, and I have been experiencing random blackouts on the odd occasion. The main reason for that have been that the brand new power stations built to provide electricity are running behind

schedule. They are currently a year behind schedule, and the current talk is that we will only be getting electricity from them towards the end of next year.

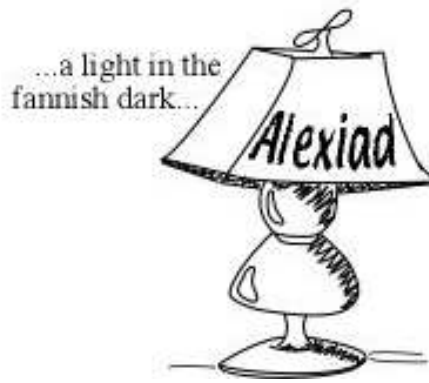
Part of the problem are that the two power stations being built are the largest coal fired power stations in the world, and there are some challenges in getting the equipment to work at this scale. But there have also been a lot of corruption, with it openly known that the ANC as a whole is getting a cut of the costs, in addition to any pieces of corruption the various politicians have negotiated themselves. Our unions have also been their usual reasonable self, with wildcat strikes every now and again, and having to renegotiate any deal when they tire of the previous deal.

I am hoping that we will be able to survive next winter, since it is unlikely that he electricity will have started to flow, and that the winter will be as mild as this one. One where I slept with a blanket less than normal.

I am still enjoying driving my new bakkie, and have gotten a bit used to it being wider, me sitting higher, and the larger turning circle. I just have not quite gotten used to it being significantly longer, and to the rhythm of the gearing. Even though I have more power available to me, it seems that I have much narrower gear ranges. But I can do some things I could not do before, like accelerate on uphills. And that is an ability I need – Johannesburg is not very flat, and you are quite often going uphill and downhill.

Work is OK, but with some tension behind the scenes. We seems to be weathering the economic storms. Personally, things are fine. I remain healthy, with the exception of a tendency not to sleep very well. I am still finding some SF to read, but are currently out of sync with what is appearing in the bookstores. In fact, where I used to frequent my local bookstore at least once a week, In these days I am lucky to go in every month. And most of the time I am disappointed with what is on offer.

I always read and enjoy *Alexiad* – I sometimes wish I lived closer and could meet face to face.



We always enjoy meeting you in person and hope things improve so we can see you again soon.

— JTM

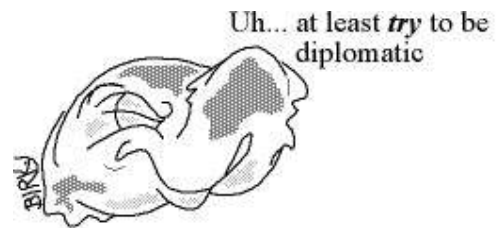
#### WAHF:

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

**Martin Morse Wooster**, ditto.

**Pat McCray**, with thanks.

**C. D. Carson**, sending a copy of Numismatics International's *NI Bulletin* having an article by Derwin Mak, Count of Thoxis, on his commemorative coins.



#### The Gun Debate is Over.

No more comments about guns in the next issue or subsequent issues.

#### CHICKS DIG AUGUST 4, 2013

... The streets of London were filled as crowds flocked to Broadcasting House for the news. Ever since the white puff of smoke had been seen above the building, the word had gone forth with all the energy of a high-voltage electric current, being Tweeted and texted the length and breadth of the land.

Great screens covered the side of the building, now only flashing the faces of the previous eleven Doctors, with the order of their succession, from Hartnell to Smith, and then the cryptic, exciting "12" over a blank.

The screens flickered, showing the scene before the doors that only a few, held back by barriers and security guards, could see with their own eyes. There was a great intake of breath as Mr Moffatt, lead writer and executive producer, of the show emerged. "HABEMUS MEDICUM!" he cried.

There was a great burst of cheers, until the crowd could see the Tardis being rolled out the doors of the building behind the producer. A solemn silence fell at that, and then: "I announce to you great joy. Behold, we have named a new Doctor, and the regeneration is to ... **Peter Capaldi!!**"

The cheers crescendoed as the doors of the call box opened. Sonic Screwdrivers were held aloft in salute, scarves were waved, call box hats were doffed ...

Peter Capaldi

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0134922/>

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"WHAT'S UP, OBI-WAN?"

As you know, Bob, the Poopy Panda Pals have bought the Star Wars™ franchise. What if their competitors had?

A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away . . .

. . . "This is Gotham. You will never see a more wretched hive of scum and villainy."

Luke was, nevertheless, thrilled in actually going to the Big City. "Where are we going?"

"The Iceberg Lounge. Most of the best freighter pilots can be found there. Only watch your step. The place can be a little rough."

The building was built in the shape of something Luke could not imagine, a vast construction of ice. Ben brought the land speeder up to the gate.

"Parking is fifteen credits," the attendant said.

"A credit will be sufficient," Ben said with a strange gesture of one hand.

"A credit will be sufficient."

The gate opened and they entered. Ben said, "The Force has a strong influence on the weak minded."

That observation amazed Luke, and he repeated it in a tone of awe. "The Force has a strong influence on the weak minded."

Ben scowled at him.

They left the speeder, the droids following, and headed to the door. The attendant was less than enthusiastic. "They stay out."

"Those are my droids," Luke said.

"Hey kid. You don't want 'em stolen. But the Penguin would have my gonads if I let them in."

A harsh voice broke in, "What did you just call me?" The attendant was silent. "So I'm a bird to you. Do you know what a bird does when it's attacked?"

"Mr. Cobblepot —"

"It squawks! It squawks like a —"

"Mr. Cobblepot!"

The man speaking certainly appeared strange. He was dressed in ancient attire, a black coat open in front, and long in back, a white shirt, a neck ornament that looked like a pair of red wind-farm blades at his throat, and a tall cylindrical hat. He was very fat, he waddled when he walked, and he glared at them through a small circle of glass over one eye, held between his cheek and long pointed nose, as he cursed out his gatekeeper. There was something strange about his hands.

"They are valuable goods," Ben said.

The fat man glared at his subordinate. "Put them in the cloakroom."

The bar was loud and noisy. Luke sat there while Ben went looking for pilots. The man in the purple coat sitting next to him was human, but peculiar, with unnaturally pale flesh and a red-painted, scarred mouth. He noticed Luke and said, "Why so serious?"

"Er, not at all."

"You look nervous. Is it these scars?" He indicated his mouth, with the knife he was holding in one hand. "Do you want to know how I got them?"

"When I was a kid, I used to love to go fishing at camp. But I never could get those little worms on the hook. So one day, these bullies decided to show me how it was done. And they take the fishing rods and they take me out to the end of the dock and they stick hooks in my mouth. And then they pushed me into the water and pulled me back in. Just like a fish. You know what I did then? I burned their cabin down while they slept. And they roasted. And I never did have any problems with those little worms again."

Luke had a strange feeling about the conversation, as if he were somehow talking to himself.

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

This is issue **Whole Number Seventy (70)**.

**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@iglu.com](mailto:jtmajor@iglu.com)

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

