

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Today Joe and I are at the library with our various devices. Joe has his big laptop, iPad and phone. I have my small netbook and phone. The netbook has a sizable music collection, several thousand books and a collection of my writings. The phone, which is considerably bigger than my previous one, can access the internet almost anywhere. I remember the day I bought my first big stereo. It was state of the art. It sported a record player and two cassette decks so that I could make my own cassettes. Later I acquired a CD player I could actually lug around with me. It was still awkward finding the music I wanted to listen to. With the netbook I can pick out just those songs I want to listen to. Several days ago a local thrift store was offering cassettes for ten cents apiece. I looked over them and saw several titles that once I would have eagerly grabbed for that price. I no longer have a working cassette player. The new devices are not an unmixed blessing. A physical book does not require an electric outlet nor does it have to be periodically charged. On the other hand it is not possible to take several thousand of them on a trip. I also like the fact that it is no longer necessary to buy the whole album in order to enjoy the one or two songs I really want.

— Lisa

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Reviewer's Notes.....	1
Coffee.....	8
The Economy of Abundance.....	3
Hugo Results and Commentary.....	10
On Not Going to Worldcon.....	9
Worldcon Results.....	14
Book Reviews	
JTM Andersen, <i>The Boleyn King</i>	5
SB Bueso, <i>Cenital</i>	8
JTM Fox, <i>The Riddle of the Labyrinth</i>	6
JTM Haynes, <i>Bully!</i>	4
JTM Jones, <i>The Fireflies of Port Stanley</i>	6
SB Marin, <i>Lagrimas de Luz</i>	9
JTM Zabel, <i>Surrounded by Enemies</i>	5
Con Reports	
SB Celsius 232 2013.....	13
LK LoneStarCon III.....	11
Fanzines Received.....	14
Random Jottings.....	2
Letters.....	15
Sheryl L. Birkhead, Dainis Biesnieks, Cuyler Brooks, Sue Burke, Jason Burnett, Richard A. Dengrove, Alexis A. Gilliland, Jerry Kaufman, Robert S. Kennedy, Trinlay Khadro, Patrick McCray, Murray Moore, William H. Patterson, Lloyd Penney, George W. Price, John Purcell, Darrell Schweitzer, Joy V. Smith, Rod E. Smith, Milt Stevens, Jim Stumm, John Thiel, Taras Wolansky	

Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

Frederik Pohl

November 26, 1919 — September 2, 2013

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. Dewycolorin the line 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 a record \$1.2 million purse.

The 121st Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **October 6, 2013** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Creatine won in a blazingly close finish.

The 59th Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 3, 2013** at Tioga Downs in Nichols, New York. Captaintreacherous won by a neck after a hard-run race.

The 68th Running of the Little Brown Jug (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 19, 2013** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio. Vegas Vacation won over his stablemate Lucan Hanover, while Captaintreacherous was absent, heading for the Red Mile.

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.

Trivia..... 28
Art:

Sheryl L. Birkhead..... 15
Paul Gadzikowski..... 28
Alexis A. Gilliland..... 4, 6, 14, 19, 27
Trinlay Khadro..... 2, 20
Marc Schirmeister..... 5, 7, 16, 18

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Deadline is **December 1, 2013**

Reviewer's Notes

The year turns on. Now, I go to work before the sun rises. Traffic is active, but not packed; but it's only two blocks to work, so I walk. The morning is quiet. The moon may be out, or I can see a morning star.

When daylight savings time ends, there will be a shift, but that is the time I start taking Fridays off. As seems to be the case, my time off requires more effort than my time at work, what with doctor's appointments, maintenance work, and the various demands of life.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Now that Fred Pohl has passed on, who is the Senior Science Fiction Author? This has to be 1) someone who has regularly published in the field (as opposed to someone who did one speculative book, once), 2) there is no one living who published a story before this person did.

And it seems to be . . . **David A. Kyle!**

<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?2916>

First story: "Golden Nemesis" (*Stirring Science Stories*, February 1941). Born **February 14, 1919**, one of the last two surviving Futurians (with Jack Robins), one of the last four surviving attendees of the NyCon (with Erle Korshak, Bob Madle, and Art Widner), and a recipient of *Alexiad*.

As they say at the Howard Families meetings, "Is there anyone here who is older?"

William H. Patterson's *Robert A. Heinlein: In Dialogue With His Century Volume II: The Man Who Learned Better* will be released on June 1, 2014.

I have a couple of books by Jeffrey Brown on the problems of single fatherhood: *Darth Vader and Son* (2012; Chronicle Books; ISBN 978-1-4521-0655-7; \$14.95) and *Vader's Little Princess* (2013; Chronicle Books; ISBN 978-1-4521-1869-7; \$14.95). Where else can you find such heartwarming parental interactions as:

**LUKE PICK UP YOUR TOYS
RIGHT THIS INSTANT
LUKE I AM YOUR FATHER
DO YOU WANT A TIME-OUT**

Or the ever-popular response to the ever popular brass bra outfit:

**YOU ARE NOT GOING OUT
DRESSED LIKE THAT**

And remember, Father Knows Best!

A brave, bold leaker released classified information that deeply embarrassed the Administration and showed the progress of the

nation to war. However, for some reason, Daniel Ellsberg doesn't embrace him, and Edward Snowden doesn't honor his memory. The story of Tyler Kent, the out of place State Department official who passed classified messages between Roosevelt and Churchill to the Italians (who passed them on to the Germans), makes the theme of *Conspiracy of One: Tyler Kent's Secret Plot against FDR, Churchill, and the Allied War Effort* (Lyons Press; 2013; ISBN 978-0-7627-8696-1; \$26.95) by Peter Rand.

The author describes Kent's less than stellar career in diplomacy, which seems to have included selling confiscated Czarist treasures while in the new U.S. embassy in Moscow (he was there because he spoke Russian). Then, they had to put him somewhere, so he was sent to London and put in the Cipher Room, thus proving that personnel qualifications in the State Department are done at random. He fell in with some anti-Bolshevik Russian emigres, with connections . . .

He was stripped of his diplomatic immunity (by order of Joe Kennedy, no less!), tried, sent to prison, and returned to the U.S. after the war. His most notable achievement afterwards was publishing an anti-Kennedy newspaper (of course) and speaking at Holocaust Denier conferences.

James Bowman, reviewing the oaf lads versus pod people movie *The World's End* for *The American Spectator* on line, all too unfortunately got something down all too well:

. . . The point of much if not most science fiction is to provide the now politically incorrect warrior heroes of old with suitably inhuman cannon fodder which, in the absence of any acceptable human enemies (except for racists and businessmen) in our enlightened times, can be blown apart without any risk of engaging the audience's sympathies or making the heroes look like conscienceless killers. The zombies in *Shaun of the Dead* fulfilled the same function.

The World's End
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1213663/>

James Bowman on *The World's End*
<http://spectator.org/archives/2013/09/17/the-worlds-end>

There's no longer any room for this:

Elaine came to him, while he was resting. She looked at him in horror, and he tried to hide his face from her, and then realized that he was trying to hide it from himself.

— H. Beam Piper, *Space Viking*, Chapter XII

The bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo will not feature a reenactment of the clash

between the Red Fleet and the Blue Fleet. (Having the "Red Army" participate might cause confusion.) However, the Duke of Wellington, the Fürst Blücher von Wallstadt, and Prince Charles Napoléon will be present and will shake hands. (And not Count Alexandre Colonna Walewski, the direct male-line descendant of Boney?) People do have descendants, after all.

Charles Napoléon is descended from Prince Jérôme Bonaparte, who commanded a division in the battle. The current Duke of Wellington, Arthur Valerian Wellesley, will be two weeks short of being 100 years old, so likely will be represented, one way or another, by his son and heir, Charles Wellesley, who is married to Princess Antonia of Prussia.

One does wonder if Anni-Frid Prinzessin Reuss von Plauen and her associates will be invited. You know — ABBA. The history book on the shelf is always repeating itself.

OBITS

Frederik Pohl

On September 2 we lost one of our greats.

Ann Crispin

A good writer and tireless worker in supporting newbie writers.

MONARCHIST NEWS

It's a little late, but . . . on **January 20, 2013**, **Princess Sophie Johanna Maria von Isenburg, Princess of Prussia**, gave birth to two sons, **Prinz Carl Friedrich Franz Alexander von Preussen** and **Prinz Louis Ferdinand Christian Albrecht von Preussen**. Carl Friedrich, as the elder, is next in line for the claim to the thrones of Germany and Prussia, after his father **Georg Friedrich Prinz von Preussen**.

**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

There are eight surviving veterans of the International Brigades (including three Spaniards who, like Juan Pujol Garcia, filled out the ranks, and two survivors of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion), two Red Army veterans (both women) who served there, and one survivor of the Republican Army.

There are five survivors of the Nationalist armed forces, and one survivor of the Condor Legion.

OOMPHEL IN THE SKY

Commentary by Joseph T Major

The Second World War led to social changes throughout the world. In the New Hebrides, the change was in the understanding of economics.

Americans came there, bringing with them unimaginable quantities of goods, not only for fighting, but for living; manufactured housing, strange foods, transport on a vastly superior scale . . . the list was endless. Then they left.

The locals thought they had got the short end of the stick. Particularly when the rumor went around that a tall white man named Jon Frum (or John Frum, or John From, or maybe he was black) had met someone and passed on the word that he was going to go off to get cargo for the locals and would be back with that infinite abundance on February 15.

He forgot to specify a year, which was a bit of an advantage to the locals. Thereafter, the locals built airstrips, put out plane-scarecrows to indicate that this was where Jon Frum's transport planes should land, and performed other rituals to ensure they would get cargo when February 15 came around. And again next year.

There were earlier movements of similar import in, for example, New Guinea going all the way back to 1885. Some might also consider the millenarian aspects to have similarities to the Ghost Dance of 1890, the Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-1857, or the Millerites of 1840-44. By way of contrast, there are scholars who opine that there is no such thing as a cargo cult.

H. Beam Piper pulled this into his *Terro-Human Future History*. Otto Harkman, in a later work of the series, opines that "practically everything that's happened on any of the inhabited planets happened on Terra before the first spaceship." (*Space Viking* (1963, *Analog* Dec 1962-Feb 1963), Chapter II). Piper's story "Oomphel in the Sky" (*Analog*, November 1960) deals with such a dissent, an alien race wanting their share of cargo, or "oomphel" as they call it, and the solution to the dissent. (SPOILER: The resolution is that humans got no soul.)

Other writers have discussed oomphel on the Earth, and what to do with it.

The concept has been referred to as "the economy of abundance", based on the idea that some technological or scientific advance will solve the problems of production, and then the concept of a price for goods will cease to exist, since all goods will be so abundant that their sale will not be feasible. It seems that the economy of abundance is just over the horizon.

The question that writers therefore deal with is what to do with this? Since conflict is the basis of a story, having everybody with all they need would seem to end most conflict.

It seems odd to say that the two defining

British dystopias of the middle of the twentieth century are "economy of abundance" novels, but a case can be made that such is a substantial plot element of those works. In that period, the advancement that would bring about abundance was industrialization; once the last trick or two was worked out, the cargo would come rolling off assembly lines and the era of universal prosperity would begin. Or something would have to be done with it.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) is rather strongly based on the Dearborn Model T plant. Really. Huxley read about Ford's production and was rather taken aback. Thus, because of assembly lines, the One State has so much that they don't know what to do with it. There are increasingly elaborate playground games and so on up. (One wonders how he reacted to the popularity of "Fordism" in the Soviet Union. Or how Henry Ford reacted to the book.)

The other dystopia, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), figured out what to do with all the surplus production. The never-ending never-victorious wars of Oceania against and with Eurasia and Eastasia consume all that production, leaving little enough for the Outer Party members like Winston Smith, never mind the proles..

(A study of contemporary life in the Soviet Union, especially now that there are so many more memoirs and histories of the time available, should make it clear that Orwell based life in Airstrip One, Oceania, on the life there, with a touch of British rationing and other social restraints. As was common then, he maintained that traditional British society could not win or even survive the fighting, and the only choice was between a Fascist coup and a Socialist revolution. He had hoped that the latter would be spearheaded by the Home Guard. That's right, he expected Dad's Army to march on London and put the posh clubmen at the points of their bayonets. Stupid boy.)

Not quite in this elevated company, but in some ways more inquiring about the human condition, is Philip K. Dick's *Solar Lottery* (1955). There, the surplus production was initially destroyed, which understandably produced resentment. Since that was the era of the quiz shows (SF is so often so of its time), this shifted to quiz shows giving away goods. Then the only really valuable good, the absolute domination of the Solar System, became the prize of a random drawing.

By this time, a different factor had arisen as the power that would bring oomphel to the Earth. Cybernetization, the power of computing, would solve the problems of production and distribution.

The contrasts in technology are sometimes amusing. Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952) describes the wonderful world of automation, run by punch cards. (As you know, Bob, this was a primitive form of data storage, where powerful electromechanical devices interpreted arrangements of holes punched into flexible rectangles of cardboard.)

With production solved, the question becomes what to do with the populace, all of whom seem to have become government employees, whether in a large and disarmed army [for the army geek, the army in this era seems to have reverted to the organization of World War I], a maintenance department, the "Reconstruction and Reclamation Corps", or "Reeks and Wrecks", and a small technological elite reporting to the actual head of the country, the National Industrial, Commercial, Communications, Foodstuffs, and Resources Director, the economic planner who directed the automation of war production and kept the job after peace.

A more peaceful coming-about of this situation appears in Frederik Pohl's "The Midas Plague" (*Galaxy*, April 1954). Instead of technical unemployment, what Pohl's world has is forced consumption; the lower someone is in social standing, the more he or she has to consume. Until a proletarian sick of gagging down more than he can eat discovers a way to combine consumption with production . . . Pohl seems to have rethought the situation and in its sequel, "The Man Who Ate the World" (*Galaxy*, November 1956) he has someone who seems to have read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and tried to do what he could, creating an island with a giant play-military. Resemblances to the Kim dynasty of Korea are an example of SF's predictive ability, albeit without the production.

Pohl listened to futurist Robert Theobald describe the world of the Triple Revolution and noted that he had done that. Theobald's theory was that the world was facing three society-changing events; the human rights revolution, the weaponry revolution, and the cybernetics revolution. He proposed a massive program of government intervention to speed the transaction to a post-economic society of abundance, in 1964 wrote up a pompous manifesto, got several progressives to sign it, and sent it to Lyndon Johnson, who promptly ignored it, if he was even told about it.

Four years later, Theobald produced a book manuscript, sent it around for comments, and after including them with the text, had the manuscript published: *Teg's 1994* (1970). The book is laden with jargon, which is offputting to the reader. It is supposedly the diary of the narratrix as she tours the world and sees how it is acting, and what with the headnotes for each chapter reads like a set of LiveJournal entries. The cybernetization revolution, it seems, created a world of abundance where the principal problem is ensuring that the developing areas are not surfeited with produced goods.

(One of those comments compared Teg to a Teutonic Knight from *The Sound of His Horn* (1952) for her elitist tour of the world and attitude towards it; Theobald didn't seem to quite get the point, as the Teutonic Knights of that book were Nazis in a world where they had won WWII.)

In one chapter of that book, Teg visits an artist's colony with the original and innovative

name of Artisia. She has to barricade her door to keep the inhabitants from inviting her to join their sexual sprees, and the place seems to be a nonstop debauched revel. Another reader of Theobald's manifesto was Philip José Farmer, and his contribution to *Dangerous Visions* (1967) was "Riders of the Purple Wage", later expanded into *The Purple Book* (1982) [which also contains other stories]. The "Artisia" in that work comes from the circle of friends of the protagonist, painter Chibabos Elgreco "Chib" Winnegan; a group of poets, singers, and the like, including a writer who has taken the name of Huga Wells-Erb Heinsturbury, more proof of Farmer's prediction of future trends in the field. They favor expressionist works, including impromptu street brawls. (And, in a prediction of a future trend that would dominate Farmer's work, they are all the children of a mysterious passer-by who went by the name of "Raleigh Renaissance".)

On the other hand, Theobald's work may not have crossed the Big Pond, although the influence of the New Wave did. One of Farmer's fellow contributors to *Dangerous Visions* was John Sladek, author of "The Happy Breed", a horrifying portrayal of the results of a truly affordable and universal health care system.

Later on, he wrote a book about the next step past cybernetization for the Economy of Abundance: *The Reproductive System* (1974; alternative title *Mechasm*). In spite of the sexual references, there is very little sexuality in the book, and more about his von Neumann machines producing more and more goods while destroying the land to make them. Consider it a kind of macro nanotechnology.

At first, the portrayal of an ignorant procurement system granting a huge research grant to a toymaker (and a single-product toymaker at that) seemed implausible. Now it's only implausible in that such a grant would only go to someone with huge political pull. Not that they would actually produce anything at all, much less von Neumann machines that made oomphel.

Farmer addresses, sometimes in quite grotesque images, one of the questions that is only half-heartedly looked into by others. With there no longer being a need to work for sustenance, what are people going to *do* with their lives? Chib's mother and her friends show one reaction; they are all gross in several senses of the term; not only grotesquely overweight but crude and low of speech and thought. (This is not that far from the principal character of "The Man Who Ate the World", a bloated child-man, but he was presented as an anomaly.) Chib's circle isn't much better, they seem to revel in violence. This is a society that longs for a Dr. Anthony "Theodore Dalrymple" Daniels to chronicle and expose its progress of the underclass view.

Somewhat contrawise, there is the question of what is to be done? The concept of

abundant production seems to leave aside one question, that of distribution. How do the goods get to the consumers? Most of this seems to be taken for granted. But if there is no need to work, who will be the distributors?

(Distribution seems to be a lacking concept. In one scene of a Mack Reynolds story, the Clueless Protagonist is led by the Wise Tutor step by step through the costs of distribution of his electric razor. The Wise Tutor also states that the additional price added at each step is pure exploitative profit to the intermediaries — thus completely ignoring the costs borne by the intermediaries; transport, distribution, damaged goods, and so on. And Reynolds had the reputation of being informed on such matters.)

This leads to the greater question of services. Presumably, if a Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy broke down, the Beta in charge of playgrounds would inform a Gamma clerk, who would tell the Delta in charge of maintenance to take a team of Epsilons out to fix it. But they were all conditioned to want to do that. If a steamer crashed into a building, which collapsed as a result, the Inner Party chief of that region would have some Proles make a stab at picking up the rubble. Huxley and Orwell had totalitarianism as an accompaniment of their abundance.

Vonnegut had the Reeks and Wrecks. But then, he was the only one who had actually worked in industry, for General Electric in Troy, New York (which became "Illium" in *Player Piano*). The Reeks and Wrecks are however a government agency, which seems to have some compulsion involved.

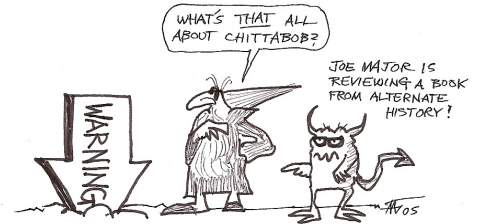
This seems to be a institutional problem. The supposed freedom engendered by the creation of the Economy of Abundance turns out to require one sort or another of coercion. At least Robert Theobald recognized that there might be such problems, though his solution seemed to be to have endless aggregations of facilitators playing world games. As was pointed out earlier, he had his own version of Newspeak.

Indeed, for all that one of the political movements that created this world was the "Anti-Bureaucratic Coalition", the society has a bizarre form of bureaucracy. Teg's tour of the world was as an Orwell Fellow for 1994. One of the things she will do is to nominate someone who will nominate an Orwell Fellow for 1996. At the end of the book, she indicates a need for a committee to draw up a new World-Myth, and asks one of her advisors (make that "facilitators") to be on the committee to discuss the formation of the committee. If this makes you think of the management methods of the Pointy-Haired Boss of *Dilbert*, you may be on to something.

More complex services seem to be being taken for granted. One can't get a broken leg mended that way no matter how many assembly lines or cybernetic controls are making products. The Drexler types might make the case for nanobots, but nanotechnology seems to be another of those

wonders always just over the horizon.

Unsound science is more obvious. *Die Frau Im Mond* (1929) could have a livable lunar climate on the far side of the moon because little was known about it then. By the time moviemakers got to *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987) that setting was a highlight of the satire. In other fields, the lack of understanding of the basics leads to stories that fail to work out.



LIVING LONG AND PROSPERING

Review by Joseph T Major of
BULLY!

by Felix Haynes

(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$5.99)

Someone seems to have given T.R. a boost to his health. Maybe someday he'll grow up, too.

What if Theodore Roosevelt had lived past 1919? He was supposed to have had the Republican nomination in 1920 for the asking. Instead, somehow, he lets it pass.

Meanwhile, a profoundly disappointed and grieved army officer from Kansas gets an appointment to the Canal Zone. It is an opportunity to get in some command of troops on the ground, something he didn't get in the Big War.

And the Colombians figure they should have something back . . .

Haynes has stayed the course, beyond his miraculous survival of TR. (He refers to hunting in the Amazon, which presumably was less stressful and infectious than descending the River of Doubt.) More or less. I can understand Colombia being willing to get their own back, and for Japan, furious over the 1921 Naval Limitations Treaty, willing to covertly aid anyone wishing to harm the country. (Small error here; the American Black Chamber was a code-breaking center, it didn't do radio intercepts, and in any case the Japanese negotiators sent their enciphered messages by telegram.)

Though I do feel a little odd about the Colombian President ordering all this being Victoriano Hugo Chavez. The man is a Venezuelan. The President then was Pedro Nel Ospina Vázquez, who took office August 7, 1922.

This is an old-fashioned pulp-type adventure, with derring-do, fierce combat, and

a dramatic climax. Without, fortunately, the stereotyping of the “greasers”, “slant-eyes”, and other lesser breeds. Indeed, Haynes shows the Colombians as having ingenuity, bravery, devotion — but still out of luck.

At least Dwight Eisenhower gets some combat duty . . .

THE TWO WIVES OF HENRY VIII

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE BOLEYN KING

by Laura Andersen

(Ballantine; 2013;

ISBN 978-0-345-53409-5; \$15.00;

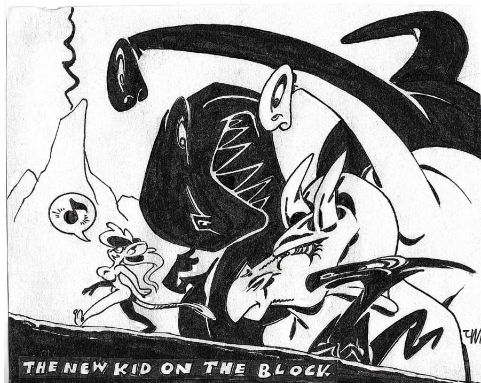
Random House LLC (Kindle); 2013; \$7.99)

“Anne Boleyn Trilogy”

On January 29, 1536, Queen Anne had a miscarriage, her second. On May 19 of that year, found guilty of treason, adultery, witchcraft, and incest, she was beheaded.

If someone — say Master Tortha of Milan, someone with a very suspicious resemblance to Tortha Karf of the Paratime Police — were to tell William, the protagonist of this work, the tale of these events, he might well turn to his sister and say, “God’s death, t’would be ill tidings for this land and our mother alike were such to come to pass.”

But in this timeline, in this story, Anne did not miscarry, and was brought to birth of a strong son. I presume he is named “William Henry”, since he reigns as Henry IX and is known as William, to distinguish him from his father. Jane Seymour, Anna von Kleve-Jülich-Berg, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr are all on other assignments, obviously, and Philip of Spain is not burdened with Mary.



In spite of which, William has the same problems. There is a treacherous balance to be made between Protestantism and Catholicism. Abroad, the conflict between France and Spain can cause great loss. And there is always the problem of Scotland and its monarch. At least Calais is in William’s parliament, not on his heart. (Yes, Calais

returned members to the English Parliament.)

Some of the players are different. Thus, the royal uncle who is chief regent is George Boleyn, Duke of Rochford, and the Seymours are just provincial gentry. Their connection Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, seems to have kept himself out of trouble, though his eldest son seems to have fallen afoul of something or other, probably sharp.

Speaking of falling afoul . . . William is in a love triangle. Apparently, Henry Courtenay, the Marquess of Exeter, had a second son named Dominic before he died of natural causes (beheaded, which in those days were natural causes; in our time-line, he only had one son, Edward). The lad grew up as a friend of William, and became his trusted confidante.

While the Princess Elizabeth had as a lady-in-waiting the orphan daughter of a sometime lady-in-waiting of Queen Anne. In the game of nicknames, although the lady is named Geneveve Wyatt, Elizabeth, and perforce everyone else, calls her Minuette. Minuette was born on the same day as William. Dominic and William both are in love with her.

There are distractions both home and abroad. The conflict finally comes down to being against France. William and his commanders campaign well against a somewhat distracted France, ending with a peace treaty signed in Rouen (!). Whatever would the Maid say!?

But the serpent is in Blighty. It seems that Lady Mary (you know, Henry’s older daughter) and her patron the Duke of Norfolk have a signed confession by someone that William is indeed the son of Anne . . . and her brother George. (Signed by Minuette’s mother, no less. That’s not the sort of thing one witnesses unless one gets into some really kinky scenes.) And Minuette gets sent into the Howard stronghold to find the secret.

When all is resolved, it seems that there are yet more depths of conspiracy and complexity to be resolved when this tale is . . . **To Be Continued.**

WARNING

HISTORY GEEK SECTION

Some will note that there are families named Courtenay in both France and England. Yes, they are connected. (Where does Craye D’Courtney from *The Demolished Man* come in? Probably not.)

Athon, Seigneur de Courtenay, was an eleventh-century French nobleman from the Orléanais. The town of Courtenay, from which his title derives, is now part of the Département de Loiret. One of his grandsons was Joscelyn de Courtenay, Count of Edessa, the Crusader lord. A great-grandson by Joscelyn’s older brother Miles, Renaud de Courtenay, moved to

England where he married the heiress Hawise de Courci, leaving behind a daughter by his first marriage who married Louis VI’s youngest son, founding the French de Courtenay line.

Renaud’s great-great-grandson Hugh de Courtenay married Eleanor le Despencer, daughter of Hugh le Despencer. As part of the rewards le Despencer got as advisor to Edward II, Hugh de Courtenay was granted the succession to the Earldom of Devon, which had been held by his ancestors the de Reviers family.

The title passed through the heirs male until the death of Edward Courtenay (see above about Henry Courtenay, Marquess of Exeter), except for a brief period during the Wars of the Roses when it was held by Humphrey Stafford, a supporter of Edward IV. When the Cavendishes were granted the title, in spite of having the same designation in Latin, in English it became Earl of Devonshire (and later Duke of Devonshire).

In 1831, William “Kitty” Courtenay, Viscount Courtenay of Powderham, a distant relative of Edward Courtenay, petitioned to have the title taken out of abeyance for him and his heirs. Hugh Rupert Courtenay, the current Earl of Devon, is descended from Kitty’s second cousin. Kitty had to flee Britain after reports of a homosexual affair with the wacky William Beckford (the author of *Vathek*). Hugh is also in trouble over that, having refused to host a civil partnership celebration at Powderham Castle. And you thought cakes were bad enough.

The heir, Charles Peregrine Courtenay, styled Lord Courtenay, is a lawyer in Los Angeles. His wife, A. J. Langer (Allison Joy Langer), played Rayanne Graff on *My So-Called Life*. She is a fibromyalgia activist (and sufferer). They have a son, the Hon. Jack Haydon Langer Courtenay, and a daughter, the Hon. Joscelyn Skye Courtenay.

A. J. Langer

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0486277/>

FAILURE MODE

Review by Joseph T Major of
SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES:
What If Kennedy Survived Dallas?

by Bryce Zabel

(Publish Green/Amazon Digital Services;
2013; \$7.99)

There is an interesting speculation to follow from Kennedy’s not being killed in Dallas. Even if one doesn’t completely agree with the thesis in Piereson’s *Camelot and the Cultural Revolution* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #5) it is still obvious that November 1963 marked a turning point in the alienation of the progressive movement.

Beyond that, there was much to be considered in the future from that point. There were military entanglements in the name of “bear any burden, pay any price”. There was a stirring civil rights movement, poised between

requesting and demanding rights. There were conflicts within the government. Beyond that, there was the president's tangled love life and his treacherous health.

Zabel, however, buys into one of the items tangentially identified by Piereson. Yes, he believes that there was a conspiracy to kill the President. And at that point I gave up. I don't care which group of the Usual Suspects he fingers, which fragments of evidence he selects and arranges.

It's a pity, because there is potential for a real story of a real Kennedy struggling with his real problems. See Gregory Benford's *Timescape* (1980; Nebula and Campbell Memorial Award winner), for example.



THINGS FORGOTTEN

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE FIREFLIES OF PORT STANLEY
 by Marc Jones
 (Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$3.99)

This is one of those novels previewed on the alternathistory.com board. And, like so many Kindle books, it could use a little proofreading. Also some editorial querying, basically whether Argentinians should sound quite so British.

The point of departure is, while unusual, all too plausible. An error of bureaucratic procedure in the fifties gets three obsolete Sherman tanks sent from Britain to the Falkland Islands. And there they sit, being maintained against a nonexistent threat.

Then, the threat becomes all too real. And the Falklands defenders, Royal Marines and the local militia (Falkland Islands Defence Force) discover they have an unexpected asset. Shortly thereafter the Argentinians, thinking they have an easy target, discover they have an unexpected level of opposition.

They are waist-deep in el Grande Barroso, and have to reinforce failure. The next few days are a desperate race between the two opponents to send reinforcements to the place. Meanwhile, there is political division and struggle in Britain, in Argentina (though the portrayal of Galtieri descending into the depths of drunkenness seems a little much) and

also the United States.

Some deadly blows are dealt out at the last minute, as the final hours of the conflict portend a grand triumph or disaster, and then . . .

Jones seems to have a handle on the nature of conflict and the politics of the time. Some might find matters turning out too pat for the British, but then, autocratic systems have a bias of loyalty over ability. The Falklands campaign was launched as a way of rallying support for the Argentine junta. (A little later, though, he may go off the rails. The Liberal and Social Democratic Alliance beating victoriously triumphant Tories in 1987?)

Tank geek note: The tanks are the British upgrade of the Sherman tank that replaced the original 75-mm main gun with the British 17-pounder 76.2-mm gun. The Firefly was the first Allied tank that was capable of matching the German tanks. Argentina got a few after the war. You will recall that in the lost scenes of *Duck Soup* (1933) it was explained that Rufus T. Firefly was an arms dealer. Imagine, Firefly selling Fireflies.

THE DANCER FROM ATLANTIS

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE RIDDLE OF THE LABRYINTH:
The Quest to Crack an Ancient Code
 by Margalit Fox
 (Ecco; 2013;
 ISBN 978-0-06-222883-3; \$27.99;
 HarperCollins (Kindle); \$13.59)

"Yes, cryptanalysis," von Ohlmhorst pounced. "The reading of a known language in an unknown form of writing. Ventris' lists were in the known language, Greek. Neither he nor anybody else ever read a word of the Cretan language until the finding of the Greek-Cretan bilingual in 1963, because only with a bilingual text, one language already known, can an unknown ancient language be learned. And what hope, I ask you, have we of finding anything like that here? Martha, you've been working on these Martian texts ever since we landed here—for the last six months. Tell me, have you found a single word to which you can positively assign a meaning?"
 — H. Beam Piper, "Omnilingual", *Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1957

Ironies can occur between the composition of a story and its publication.

This book is the story of three people who raised the dead; in this case, a dead civilization, a civilization that laid the grounds for our own, yet was nothing but a legend

Arthur Evans was a typical British Imperialist, someone with money and the leisure to investigate his particular fixations. His happened to be ancient Greece.

That wealth gave him the ability to pursue a particular archaeological obsession without having to get a myriad permits and pay fees, give presents, endow local authorities, and the like. He found his site and simply bought it.

That was Knossos, in Crete. Having possession of the land, he proceeded to excavate. Unlike his distinguished predecessor Heinrich Schliemann, he didn't happen to destroy what he was looking for in the process of looking for it. Evans did produce a survey of the area even as he rebuilt. (Which latter is itself controversial. Fox describes the Palace at Knossos as the third house he built, in conjunction with his homes in Britain and in Greece.) All the same, seeing how big the place is should give the visitor the realization that this was a complex civilization. But all there were to go on were the pictures and the relics.

The travails of a later war drove Sir Arthur (he had been recognized for his work) away from his two southern homes, and he died in Britain in 1941, discoverer of a civilization, but not quite sure of its nature.

He did careful work. One of those things found in the excavation was ancient tablets with regular markings; writing, presumably, and not art.

The writings seemed to fall into two groups, one a little less regular, the other more so, and because the markings were done in lines, as opposed to say the wedges of cuneiform, they were designated "Linear A" and "Linear B". (When Frederik Pohl's secret agent in "Under Two Moons" (*Worlds of If*, September 1965) said he spoke Cretan Linear B, that comes across as a part of the satire about the super talents of the secret agent.)

The job isn't finished until the paperwork is done, and in this case the job of preparing the listing of paperwork fell on others. One of whom, a professor at Brooklyn College, felt the need to try to make sense of this.

Alice Kober is the unrecognized transition in all this. As Fox describes it, she came out of nowhere; saying nothing of her past, her family, her origins. She seems to have been a totally bland and indifferent-looking person, yet with an extraordinary facility for languages (learning ancient Egyptian on a six-day crossing of the Atlantic, for example).

She was the one who set out first to make sense of the inscriptions. Now the available corpus of Linear B inscriptions was limited; Sir Arthur hadn't disseminated pictures of the tablets, much less made them available for inspection by others.

Kober's methodology was interesting. She began compiling a set of cards showing all pairings of characters; which ones were associated. There is a parallel which Fox does not seem to be aware of; *The American Black Chamber* (1931) had a description of Yardley's methodology for decrypting Japanese cipher messages, which included preparing an index

of combinations of Japanese characters.

The Japanese plain language telegrams gave me in all about 10,000 *kana*. After the typists had recopied all the telegrams, I instructed them to index each and every *kana* on a separate three-by-five card. The information on each card contained the particular *kana* under study in capital letters, the page and line reference, and the 4 preceding and the 4 following *kana*.

— *The American Black Chamber*, Chapter XIV

Kober did all that all by herself.



Now Evans had decided that Linear B was a syllabary. What's that?

In *Murder in Canton* (1966) Robert van Gulik plays a joke on the reader. Following up the case, Judge Dee's investigator Chiao Tai goes to an Arab merchant's house and makes an observation:

To break the awkward silence, Chiao Tai pointed at the band of intricate design that ran all along the top of the wall and asked:

'What do those curlicues mean?'

'It's Arab writing,' Yau explained hastily. 'It's a holy text.'

'How many letters do you have?'

Chiao Tai asked Mansur.

'Twenty-eight.'

'Holy heaven!' Chiao Tai exclaimed. 'Is that all? We have more than twenty thousand, you know!'

— *Murder in Canton*, Pages 47-48

Chiao Tai perhaps ought to be saying "character" instead of "letter". He associates "letter" with "word". In Chinese, a word is a character, one symbol (for the moment, we'll pass over that Chiao Tai's native language was likely Putonghua ["Mandarin"] and in Canton [Guangzhou] they would speak Wu ["Cantonese"]). In Arabic, a word may have one or many symbols. Arabic is an alphabetic language.

And then, there is a syllabary, in which each symbol represents a syllable. Japanese writing uses both Chinese word-characters and Japanese syllabic symbols, what Yardley refers to as *kana*. (It also goes into *romaji*, Latin characters, just fine. Douglas MacArthur once gave a speech suggesting that to facilitate education, Japanese should write in *hiragana*, their own syllabary, and drop characters. The newspapers printed the speech using characters. The General-san was too distinguished to not use them.)

From a count of the different types of characters, Evans concluded that Linear B, like Japanese *kana*, *hiragana* and *katakana*, was a syllabary. So what then?

The reader will find amusing that Fox uses as an example of reading an unfamiliar script the Cipher of the Dancing Men, and discusses Holmes's particular insights and problems in decrypting it. But the Cipher of the Dancing Men is a monoalphabetic substitution, the principal strength of it being a similarity to graffiti. Another system she uses as an example is Blissymbolics, also discussed in Arika Okrent's *In the Land of Invented Languages* (2009; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 8 #6); at least no one here was as obnoxious and possessive as Charles Bliss, its inventor.

Kober persevered. She had to improvise, using all kinds of scrap paper to make her cards. The time she had to devote to this work was limited. This may be hard to credit these days, but she had to teach five classes a semester. Imagine, a university professor actually teaching!

Her efforts were not ignored; she received a Guggenheim Fellowship to continue her investigation. But she only published three papers, and some of her speculations proved wrong.

Kober traveled to Britain (learning ancient Egyptian on the voyage, remember) to meet with the various academics involved in describing, recording, and disseminating Evans's work. One didn't think he was worth her time. She had to transcribe the Linear B inscriptions, and seems to have done a valued task.

But her health declined, and her attitude also took a drop. She had been becoming dissatisfied with the work she was reviewing, the other researchers were becoming sloppy. In a crucial discovery, she had finally found a single character to which she could positively assign a meaning, a character that meant "and": ☺, called "button".

Frustrated, on the verge of discovery and the brink of nowhere, she passed away at home in Brooklyn on May 16, 1950, balked from fame at the last moment. Strangely enough, the New York open records rules require that death certificates so released have the cause of death redacted, so we don't know what Alice Kober died of.

Academe used to be less demanding of credentials. Consider, for example, Robert

Heinlein's example of P. A. M. Dirac's first publications in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*. His credentials then consisted of a degree from the University of Bristol in electrical engineering. (See "Paul Dirac, Antimatter, and You" (1975; NHOL G.175).)

A few years after Dirac's first publication, the *American Journal of Archaeology* published in 1940 a paper on "Introducing the Minoan Languages". The author had been somewhat vague on his institutional association, which was the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. Oh yes, he was eighteen. (One thinks of the self-obscurer Timothy Paul of Wilmar Shiras's "In Hiding" (*Astounding*, November 1948).) The author had made a few errors, including conceptual ones, like assigning sound values to the Linear B symbols. (Having done this might have got Martha Dane of "Omnilingual" in trouble if she hadn't found her referent.)

If Alice Kober had come from a conventional and even unknown background, Michael Ventris had come from a diverse one. His father was an Indian Army officer, his mother a Polish landowner with artistic associates. Michael seems to have found it profoundly easy to learn new languages.

How he got into Linear B is another matter, and perhaps could be discussed in more detail. His distractions were of a different sort; he got married at the age of nineteen(!) and was conscripted into the Royal Air Force.

Not the Government Code & Cypher School? No, Ventris was a navigator on a bomber. Flying on a night raid, after laying out the course, Ventris would sit at his post and work with Linear B. He was retained for a time after the war doing translation work for the occupation forces.

All those languages seem to have been only one of his talents. He started playing the stock market, and amazingly enough made enough money there to be comfortably well-off. And do Linear B.

Ventris was handicapped by his belief that Linear B was a form for writing Etruscan (or more likely another language from the same family). He had speculated on the sounds of the letters, which caused other problems.


Fox discusses the various problems of reading unknowns. There are known languages in unknown scripts. Her example is rongorongo, the script of the Easter Island tablets. (Mayan would seem to be more appropriate.) Contrawise, there are unknown languages in known scripts, such as Etruscan. And then there is the matter of an unknown language in an unknown script, which was what Linear B and whatever it was used to write was at that time. The passage from "Omnilingual" quoted above might be considered.

Ventris continued his work. He met Kober during her visit to Britain, but left abruptly. They do not seem to have given each other much credit. Also, Fox points out a problematic issue; Ventris felt his standing was not deserved. It could be said he suffered from

“impostor syndrome”.

His method involved creating checkerboard tables of characters. Somehow this seems rather like the straddling checkerboard cipher, such as in the “Hollow Nickel” Cipher that the NSA found impregnable, yet was used by the sloppy Reino Hayhanen.

And then . . . Ventris had published his work on decipherments individually. He had created a Linear B fanzine, so to speak. And in his twentieth issue, he described how it had all become clear. Linear B was a script for Early Classical Greek!

It wasn't perhaps the best choice. The form of Greek, with clusters of consonants, goes poorly with the consonant-vowel format of syllabaries. For a modern example try writing Classical Greek in katakana. Or consider Herbert O. Yardley's comment: “For example, *Ireland* in Japanese *kana* is spelled *a i ru ra n do* — the *ru ra* being their closest sound to the letters *rela* in *Ireland*.” [*The American Black Chamber*, Chapter XIV]. アイルランド, that is. (All I have in WordPerfect is *katakana*.) For the record, in Linear B it would be .

It is generally assumed that Linear A is the script for the indigenous Cretan tongue, the so-called “Minoan Language”. In *The Dancer from Atlantis* (1971), Poul Anderson has a scene where Theseus complains to the time-traveller that the Greek scribes have taken up using the Cretan script, with adaptations. Trying to use the Linear B values for Linear A characters produces gibberish. The “Greek-Cretan bilingual” from “Omnilingual” would likely be a Rosetta Stone style text with inscriptions in both Linear A and Linear B.

Ventris became immediately famous. He spoke on the BBC explaining his discovery. He was awarded the Officer of the Order of the British Empire honor in 1955.

But he was seemingly feeling more and more the impostor. He withdrew from academic pursuits; taking up a project to develop a computerized architectural database, only to drop out of that through a feeling of being not quite fit for the project. His marriage was dissapating; he never quite could make emotional contact with people.

So, he went out for a drive late at night on September 5, 1956. Just after midnight he hit a truck and was instantly killed. His death seems not to have been reported in American newspapers; he was too obscure here. (Fox is an obituary writer for the *New York Times*; there might be an element of atonement here.)

The Linear B tablets were thought to be, and proved to be, no more than clerical records. The great literature, the rituals, the poems, the songs, the history of the Cretans was too important to note down in clay; they were written on papyrus, and perished with their makers. What we have is inventories of armories, listings of temple offerings, tax records, descriptions of storehouses.

Instead of their art, we have their lives. Somehow, we know them yet, and perhaps better, for this is the commonplace, the things everybody knows and which are not recorded.

COFFEE

by Lisa

On one of the times I visited Dad he mentioned that a doctor in a Parkinson's support group had pushed the health benefits of coffee. I grimaced at this, for I loathed the stuff. It was my firm belief that if God wanted caffeine to be hot it would come out of hot bubbling springs such as Old Faithful. Nevertheless I resolved to try to learn to like the stuff. For two weeks I made myself drink a cup of the stuff every day. I also made a lot of grimaces and scorched my tongue no few times. It was not long, though, before I began liking the caffeine buzz I got from the nasty stuff.

Had it not been for the caffeine buzz I might not have persevered, that and the fact that I discovered if you put a sugar free candy into it the stuff is not too bad. It took two weeks of struggle before I became an addict and needed my fix every day. Along this little journey I have discovered that two convenience stores, Thornton's and Speedway, offer more things than a fullscale coffeehouse. These fast stores actually offer sugar free cappuccinos. I really like these. These sugar free cappuccinos are cheaper than the cups from full scale coffeehouses.

I have developed a fondness for something called Mexican Organic from local coffeehouse Highland Coffee but since it is more than two dollars a cup I restrict my indulgence in this stuff to pay days. When I was sure I was addicted to coffee I took an idle look around WalMart coffeemakers. They ranged from a Rival going for nine dollars to a Keurig selling for \$169. There were also many more brands of coffee than I had expected. I was surprised at some of the exotic brands being offered. It became clear to me that coffee was a much bigger business than I had thought. I will have to do more research before deciding on a coffeemaker. I would also have to find a place for one, not easy in a house stuffed full of books.

A DYSTOPIA MADE IN SPAIN

Review by Sue Burke of

CENITAL
[At Zenith]

by Emilio Bueso

(Salto de Página; 2012;

ISBN 978-84-15065-26-5; €18)

I bought this book after hearing it praised during the Celsius 232 horror book festival in August in northern Spain. In fact, I bought one of the last remaining copies from a bookseller at the festival, and Emilio (we were all friends there, even if we had never met before) autographed it for me.

Cenital had already won the Celsius Award at the Semana Negra Festival. (The coincidence in the “celsius” names involves a long story that doesn't matter here.) Bueso's previous novel, *Diástole* [*Diastole*], a horror novel about a vampire with a different twist, also won the Celsius Award last year. Since then, *Cenital* has been nominated for a 2013 Ignotus Award, the Spanish equivalent to the Hugos, which will be awarded in December.

In a newspaper interview, Bueso said he wanted to write an unconventional dystopia, one that didn't involve an autocratic, evil government. Instead, he was drawn to the consequences of energy use in modern society, particularly to the idea that petroleum won't last forever. You could call the resulting novel science fiction, or you could call it an alternate history. You can't call it pretty.

The novel opens in 2008 when a young man called Destral gets a job managing spy satellites for an espionage agency, which alerts him to the fact that petroleum production has reached its peak: oil companies, especially government-run ones, which are the lion's share, have found it strategic to lie about how much reserves exist, while in fact the reserves are close to zero.

This inspires Destral to act. He starts to blog(!), ranting about the coming energy crisis and inviting people to join him in creating a self-sustaining hippy eco-village. In the next chapter, set in 2014, the little settlement is running successfully, almost idyllically. Or so it seems.

Short chapters interweave the past, the present, the blog, and citations from real life by Thomas Friedman, Mad Max, H.G. Wells, and Richard Heinberg, among others. In flashbacks, we're introduced one by one to some of the members of the eco-village and learn how they came to be there.

For example, Teo had been a priest who lost his parish to the disaster when cheap oil ran out in 2012, which meant the end to trade and even farming, since farms needed fuel to run tractors and petroleum-based fertilizers, which were brought by ships and trucks that needed fuel to move. Cities starved, violence broke out, Teo lost his parish and nearly his life, and “when the last dog in the municipal dog pound had been devoured and every can of food had been emptied,” he remembered something he had once read on the Internet. He stumbled out of the city and its piles of corpses, and arrived at the eco-village, where he was accepted, and while he had no luck converting its members to Jesus, he was able to organize a school.

Except for Teo, though, the inhabitants seem to be good for little more than smoking weed, having sex, and growing dreadlocks. But crises loom: by mistake, there's no seed for the wheat fields, and worse yet, they're running low on condoms.

Perhaps because I've spent too much time on the internet, Destral's rants seemed a little tedious, although they were more compelling

than the average angry blog. Still, they're flashbacks, and the chapters that introduce characters are also flashbacks, so the actual time moving the plot forward is limited. The novel resembles a mosaic more than a conventional story-driven narrative, although each little part is told well enough to keep the book interesting. And, slowly, something ugly starts to loom in the distance.

Destral notices that the roads, which had been clogged to uselessness by abandoned cars, have been cleared to the point of being passable in one lane. Someone wants to go somewhere and has the sustained manpower to push aside all those hulks. The flashbacks also grow increasingly brutal, a hint of what's to come. It's no secret that the anarchy following the collapse of civilization has left most people dead and too many of the survivors reduced to savagery and cannibalism.

I had suspected from the beginning that the eco-village's inhabitants would be put to a test. And they are. Bueso's earlier works have been horror, and this book returns to horror at the end.

The odd structure works well enough, giving it an air a bit more like a documentary than a novel. At times the dialog sounds false, especially in the final conflict. But that final conflict makes all the parts in the book fall suddenly and satisfactorily into place. *Cenital* faces tough competition for the Ignotus, but it's a worthy contender.

THE NOVEL THAT CHANGED SPANISH SCIENCE FICTION

Review by Sue Burke of

LÁGRIMAS DE LUZ

[*Tears of Light*]

by Rafael Marin

(Sportula; ebook re-edition 2012,
ISBN 9788494046049; €3.50)

This book is often called the “before and after” novel in Spanish science fiction. Published in 1984, and written a few years earlier when Marin was only 22 years old, it proved that a Spanish author could write an ambitious literary work of science fiction.

This might sound odd. Of course Spanish authors could – but they had to believe that themselves, and they had reason to doubt it. For the previous two centuries, realism and naturalism had reigned supreme in Spanish literature. Despite “futurist” authors like Nilo María Fabra, Spanish science fiction (and fantasy and horror) didn't exist and wasn't possible.

In the English-speaking world, science fiction set down its roots in the early 20th century, first as pulp and then as more serious works. Spain had its pulp too, starting from the 1950s, although its authors usually wrote under Anglo-Saxon pseudonyms like Louis G. Milk or George H. White at the behest of publishers, who did not think openly Spanish authors, pulp or serious, would sell. Top English-language authors like Alfred Bester

and Roger Zelazny were available in translation, though, and they made their mark.

From 1968 to 1982, a fanzine with a professional attitude, *Nueva Dimension*, edited by Domingo Santos, provided budding authors with a chance to grow, and some solid works began to appear. But nothing caught readers' attention like *Lágrimas de luz*.

The novel is set in the far future, the Third Middle Ages, and the protagonist is a young man named Hamlet Evans. He lives in a small town that manufactures food and aspires to more in life than toiling in a factory, numbed by drugs and sex. He wants to be a poet, specifically one of the bards whose songs celebrate the Corporation that expands the human empire and protects it from its enemies. He is accepted, trains at the bards' monastery, and is assigned his first military ship.

Soon he learns that the glorious triumphs of the empire are anything but: indigenous life forms are cruelly wiped out and the planets' resources are stripped as the Corporation expands its iron grasp. Disillusioned, Hamlet can no longer compose acceptable epic poems. He resigns and is set down on the first available planet, which turns out to be under punishment for a rebellion against the Corporation. He barely survives, eventually escaping to join a small theater group and then a circus. The Corporation, meanwhile, decides that no entertainment that fails to extol its greatness can continue to exist, and sends troops to wipe them out.

Hamlet escapes again, and he decides to continue an outlaw artistic existence to defy the Corporation.

Marín himself has called the novel an “ambitious space opera,” which it is, offering careful characterization and thematic development. Hamlet matures as a man and an artist in a fully-imagined universe. Like most first novels, it's not perfect, especially some of the wooden and long-winded dialogue, but the action scenes are riveting and the prose is polished, at times even soaring.

As critic Mariela González pointed out in her analysis, *Lágrimas de Luz: Postmodernidad y estilo en la ciencia ficción española* [*Tears of Light: Postmodernism and Style in Spanish Science Fiction*], the novel makes a clean break from pulp. It features protagonist who is hardly a hero, and its themes include the search for beauty, and the crisis and alienation of youth. Rather than save the universe, Hamlet can barely save himself, and the universe might not even merit saving: no lightweight escapism here.

The story also draws on Spain's own medieval past and brings it into the future. The bards' songs echo works like *El Cid* that had once been popularly sung throughout the land – a past oral culture updated for the novel's present. The novel also responds in its own way to Robert Heinlein's *Space Troopers* and openly draws on themes from *Moby Dick* and other classics.

The surprise of *Lágrimas de luz* didn't

usher in a sudden boom in Spanish science fiction. That waited until the 1990s with works by authors like Juan Miguel Aguilera, Elia Barceló, Javier Negrete, and Rodolfo Martínez, among many others, but the door had been opened. The genre continues to struggle, especially in the current economic crisis, and I have witnessed that too many Spanish science fiction fans do not yet believe that Spanish authors can write as well as English-language authors. (I try to convince them otherwise.) The road still heads uphill, but the problems are economic now, not artistic.

Rafael Marin, by the way, has continued to write and now has a long list of outstanding works to his name. *Lágrimas de Luz* is still in print after all these years.

ON NOT GOING TO WORLDCON

Non-Trip Report by Joseph T Major



There were so many plans and preparations to make. Our Saturdays were taken. On August 3, we went to get our eyes examined, it being that time of year. The optometrist charged \$\$\$ for two pair of free glasses.

On the tenth, I took the car in and got the oil changed. After having to spend \$\$\$ for two new tires the last time I had them look at the car, I was pleasantly surprised to find that nothing was all that wrong and the car was up to driving there and back again. You never can tell, can you?

On the twelfth, I went to see my doctor. He listened to my heart and lungs, reviewed my blood sugar tests, and ordered some more tests at the lab. If he were not to call the next day everything would be satisfactory, and he didn't call.

On the seventeenth, we went to the NOTA meeting and the Kentucky State Fair. The birds and the beasts were there — Raptor Rehabilitation had an owl and a bald eagle, and it was dairy cow day in the animal barn. Big baboons, drunk monkeys, and elephants with allergies were absent.

By way of contrast, not only were there donut burgers for sale, but the makers had a new way to shorten human lives; donut sloppy joes. They should have a cardiac bypass booth at the fair.

I couldn't upgrade the phones until the twentieth. Which was when we went back. It

was old people's day, and I only had to pay a dollar to get in. Now we have telephones that run Windows 8TMSM®(© Bill Gates is GOD!), more advanced (for some values of advanced) than any computer we have.

There were other preparations to make. Hotel reservations, now much easier thanks to the Internet. The last time we went to Arkansas, there was the Corvette convention in Bowling Green, the which led to some amusing (in retrospect, nerve-wracking in performance) events with hotels. Also the setting up of meetings with family members.

Friday morning was interesting. I thought I had one more bottle of Pentasa (for my Crohn's Disease) than I did. So I had to call the insurance, the doctor, and the pharmacy. The doctor's was interesting, as they only switched off the answering service about an hour after they said the office opened. However, the pharmacy did have a fill in order of Pentasa and it was only \$\$, about two-thirds of what a full order is by mail.

And this would be my last day at work for two weeks. So, before leaving, I put my Yoda figurine ("Give you wisdom, I will." Go have it out with Kermit, dude,) in front of the keyboard and closed the door to the office.

Grant had gone to the wound healing clinic, where they rewrapped his foot. It's been healing for 36 weeks. That exacerbated his leg cramps, so he took the day off. He had dinner with us and Tim and Elizabeth.

Lisa had to work Saturday. We took Grant to get his TARC3 bus tickets and had breakfast, then Grant went to drop off his week's supplies at work. Laundry is always a great burden, since Lisa's socks need special care.

After work, we went and picked up Lisa's glasses, ate dinner, and did some final book shopping for Grant, who wanted some more books for his bus ride. We got home around sunset, and proceeded to load the car. Then Lisa cleaned out the litter boxes.

Sunday was an easy drive down to Nashville. We found McKay's Bookstore out on Old Hickory Boulevard, **finally** — see our trip of three years ago when we went out there three times and never did get to the place.

Checked into the hotel and went downtown to have dinner with my ninety-four-year-old relative, her son and daughter-in-law, and the grandson and his wife of the relative who gave me a big leg-up in the family history business. It was quite fun, especially when Jack (the old cousin's son) told about how he had been talking to another man at an Episcopal conference and discovered, to their mutual amazement, that they were related.

Monday morning we set out for Little Rock. Part of which involved going by Jackson, Tennessee. Everything in Jackson is "Casey Jones" the way everything in Louisville is "Derby" (except when it's "Falls of the Ohio") and everything in San Antonio is "Alamo". But John Luther "Casey" Jones came from **Cayce**, Kentucky, a place I've

been through. It has a stop light. The two names are pronounced the same, which makes some interesting consequences should my cousin Cayce Jones ever meet an antiquarian or railroad buff. (No, he's not named after John Luther Jones. There's a identity matter involved.)

Looking at us before the move to Frankfort, you would have thought we three brothers had a sister. Close enough, my mother looked after her niece, Cheryl, enough to the point that she started considering Cheryl's children as her grandchildren. I hadn't seen Cheryl in a few years (she and her husband hadn't been able to get to my niece's wedding, for example), and we stopped off in Memphis to reconnect. After talking for way too long about the old days, we had to set off, but Cheryl may join us for Our Birthday.

That afternoon was when it happened. The engine died on I-40, about thirty miles out of Little Rock. I called AAA and my cousin George. AAA sent a quite cheerful towing guy who was going to take his first vacation in years next week, riding his motorcycle down to Biloxi. We wished him well, or better at least than the squashed armadillo we had stopped just short of. Omen, anyone?

My cousin George met us at the Pep Boys. He took us to the meeting we had been intending to go to, where 20 relatives were waiting to hear the news from out east. Afterwards, he took us to the hotel and we checked in.

Tuesday morning, George showed up again and took me back to the Pep Boys. The new alternator cost \$400+. I was beginning to have concerns. But we went back to the hotel and then George took Lisa and me to pick up his wife, Anita, after which we went to the nearby nursing home to see our cousin the Rev. James E. Major, and his wife, Lillie. They have been married for 71 years.

In 1930, the First Baptist Church of Conway, Arkansas received a new pastor, the Reverend E. P. J. Garrott. This is the grandfather of Elizabeth, her siblings Alice, Jack, and Bill, and their first cousin Max Bahner of Chattanooga, who you will remember from our trip to ReConstruction in 2009. So we had to go there. Rev. Jim remembered Faddy Garrott, very well, and very positively.

We also saw the old Major graves in Conway — George's and Jim's ancestor had settled there, after all. All thanks to my cousin George, who performed prodigies of kindness and thoughtfulness.

Went out to dinner that night. The Check Engine light went on. Oh dear.

Wednesday morning we checked out and went back to Pep Boys. This time it was the O2 sensors. Guess what? Another \$400+. So much for hotel bills. I called and canceled, and canceled and called again, being immensely glad I at least had unlimited cell phone minutes. Then we drove back to Henderson. It was 460 miles.

We stayed with Lisa's father and his wife for a couple of days, went back and had the normal weekend and then . . . since the car seemed to be working and cousin-in-law Lucy Alves had been sooo disappointed, we went down to the lovely town of Guntersville, Alabama and saw a set of relatives from different parts of the family. And more relatives the next day, in Nashville, including cousin Jim who had met cousin Jack at the Episcopal conference. After which we went to McKay's Bookstore, again.

Then, just for variety, we stayed a couple of nights with Lisa's Aunt Delta, went to the Forrester Reunion, and saw Delta's sister Mildred again (we had seen her during that long drive the week before). Lisa's maternal grandmother (Delta's and Mildred's mother) was Azzie Forrester. One of the Forrester ancestors dropped the last two letters of the name. Supposedly, one of his descendants was named Nathan. Another piquancy for us and *The Guns of the South*, where Turtledove had him running for President of the CSA. Everyone at the reunion asked after Delta and Mildred.

Just as everyone in San Antonio asked after us, I hear. I understand it was a good Worldcon, except for the "fan" Hugos. And we would have loved to see San Antonio again.

Back to Detroit next year.

The attendance was in the average range for a WorldCon these days. I had heard concerns that the con might be too underattended, because of the competition.

In the month after, I ran across a blog by someone feeling all put out about those old-timey written skiffy types who didn't get it and how they would all soon fade away. The Worldcon didn't offer cosplay and spontaneous fan fiction readouts.

And no one — not one of the commenters — suggested putting on a bid that would feature these things. Or even volunteering for a program item of them.

That is to say, we have consumers, not participants.

HUGO RESULTS

Best Novel:

Redshirts: A Novel with Three Codas by John Scalzi (Tor)

Best Novella:

"The Emperor's Soul" by Brandon Sanderson (Tachyon Publications)

Best Novelette:

"The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi" by Pat Cadigan (Edge of Infinity, Solaris)

Best Short Story:

"Mono no aware" by Ken Liu (*The Future is Japanese*, VIZ Media LLC)

Best Related Work:

Writing Excuses, Season 7 by Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Mary Robinette Kowal, Howard Tayler, and Jordan Sanderson

Best Graphic Story:

Saga, Volume 1 written by Brian K. Vaughan, illustrated by Fiona Staples (Image Comics)

Best Dramatic Presentation (Long Form):

The Avengers Screenplay & Directed by Joss Whedon (Marvel Studios, Disney, Paramount)

Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form):

Game of Thrones: "Blackwater" Written by George R.R. Martin, Directed by Neil Marshall. Created by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss (HBO)

Best Editor — Short Form:

Stanley Schmidt

Best Editor — Long Form:

Patrick Nielsen Hayden

Best Professional Artist:

John Picacio

Best Semiprozine:

Clarkesworld edited by Neil Clarke, Jason Heller, Sean Wallace, and Kate Baker

"Best Fanzine":

SF Signal edited by John DeNardo, JP Frantz, and Patrick Hester

Best Fancast:

SF Squeecast, Elizabeth Bear, Paul Cornell, Seanan McGuire, Lynne M. Thomas, Catherynne M. Valente (Presenters), and David McHone-Chase (Technical Producer)

"Best Fan Writer":

Tansy Rayner Roberts

"Best Fan Artist":

Galen Dara

The mad dogs have kneed us in the groin, again.

The **John W. Campbell Award** for the best new professional science fiction or fantasy writer of 2011 or 2012, sponsored by Dell Magazines (not a Hugo Award):

Mur Lafferty

Would it be fair to say that something else Tansy Rayner Roberts, Jim C. Hines, and John Scalzi have in common is that they don't understand "The mad dogs have kneed us in the groin."?

The changes in the fan Hugos made last year were supposed to end bloggers getting

awards in a field that didn't pertain to them, but did give them a credit. Instead, one person on the Hugo Committee seems to have ignored the rules. As long as this goes on, the mad dogs will kneed us in the groin over and over again.

LONESTARCON III

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

LoneStarCon III was the 71st World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon), held in San Antonio, Texas over the weekend of August 29 to September 2, 2013. Because the Worldcon is intended as an annual gathering of science fiction fans from around the world, it is held in a different city each year so that everyone has a chance to have one nearby some year.

Because of the distance, we had to leave on Sunday in order to get there in time for load-in on Wednesday. We would usually leave in the early afternoon, but we were supposed to get some consignment merchandise from a business associate, and he was at a show that weekend and wouldn't be out until early evening. So we couldn't leave until he'd dropped his stuff off, which meant we didn't get to my folks' place until almost bedtime. However, I was able to get some critical laundry done, so it wasn't a disaster.

On Monday we drove over to some friends in Springfield, Missouri. At least we were able to get there in time to visit, because we had to leave very early on Tuesday morning to get to San Antonio in a reasonable amount of time. And that was allowing for delays, which we had in abundance. Just outside of Joplin, Missouri, the police had completely closed down I-44, and we sat there trying to find out on our iPad whether there'd been a bad accident. As it turned out, they were just installing a huge sign and didn't want to risk any trouble. Then we had heavy traffic around Dallas and Austin, both of which slowed us down.

By the time we rolled into San Antonio, it was getting dark. We were staying at a less expensive hotel on the outskirts of town for the first night, and we had a little trouble finding it. Worse, they didn't have any bell carts, and our merchant cart was behind a bunch of merchandise, so we ended up carrying everything in by hand.

After a reasonable night's sleep, we got up and had the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we got our stuff back in the van and headed in to the convention center. It was already getting hot when we arrived, and due to a miscommunication, we thought that having our merchandise loaded in on pallets would be a separate charge. As a result, we carried two loads in by hand on our own cart before the situation was clarified.

It was really interesting to watch the union guys handling the palletized merchandise. One of the forklifts was equipped with a scales, so that the guy operating it just had to lift each pallet a few inches to get its weight, which

was added to the list. Then another forklift operator would come with a regular forklift and take the pallet to the appropriate tables.

Once we got everything in, I had to move the van to a nearby lot before we could start setting up. We hadn't gotten very far before we discovered that the tables for our booth were only six-foot instead of eight-foot. So we asked the dealers' room coordinator what had happened. Turned out the decorator thought that six-foot tables looked nicer in the booths, never mind that we'd paid for eight-foot tables.

Some of the people who'd gotten booths just let it slide. However, our setup depended on our having all the table surface we'd paid for, so we got them swapped out before we started setting out the t-shirts. It made a huge difference, and I could see we'd have a lot more merchandise out. Even then, we had some trouble with the tables we'd brought from home not being as wide as we'd planned.

When we were just about finished, I took a break and checked my e-mail. This was when I discovered a missive from our homeowners' insurance company, informing us that they wouldn't be renewing our policy. Since I had been under the impression that if we did all the repairs they'd listed in the letter they'd sent in June, we'd be kept, I quick got on the phone to ask what was going on. First they try to claim that we were supposed to replace the entire roof and had failed to, and when I called them on that, they said that they weren't going to renew the policy based on "the general condition of the house" and we should look for a local agent to write us a policy with another company.

Getting dropped was upsetting, but not nearly as annoying as being lied to about it. If they had no intention of renewing us, why did they act as if they'd keep us if we just fixed their laundry list of stuff? And then why did they try to tell me that their decision to not renew was based on a failure to make a repair that wasn't even on their list?

So I was pretty upset when we finally got to the hotel where we'd be staying during the con. I set up my laptop and wrote a blog post detailing my experience. I don't know if it'll make any difference, but at least I got it out there.

The next morning we got up and headed back to the convention center to get ready to do business. We had some last-minute setup to complete, and I was getting annoyed with the continual assumptions that Of Course my capacity to deal with stuff was infinitely elastic and I could contort myself to handle any task that was put to me. So I got a little sharp with some people, and got called on it.

When the dealers' room finally opened for business, things got off to a very slow start. Maybe we've just had our expectations shifted by our experiences at anime conventions, but it felt almost dead for such a big convention. I even had some writing time when I wasn't standing in line helping a friend get stuff signed.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we connected with some FOSFA friends and headed over to the con suite, where we connected with some more friends from Louisville. We also got the news that Joe and Lisa Major had bigtime car problems and weren't going to be attending after all. I was disappointed, since I'd been looking forward to talking to them.

Then we headed back to the hotel for the evening. I did some catching up on my e-mail and other computer stuff, and we decided to turn in a little early.

Friday morning we got up fairly early to get breakfast. Then we headed over to the convention center to get into the dealers' room and get our tables ready. We also needed to get our votes in for the site selection for both the 2015 Worldcon and next year's NASFiC.

In the afternoon the process of getting autographs began in earnest. As it turned out, there were simply too many people wanting Robert Silverberg's signature to get through the line more than once, and I only got Elizabeth Moon to sign anything because a friend took those books through the line. However, Tanya Huff's line was much more manageable, and she was extremely gracious about signing for the full time in spite of having recently broken an arm in an accident while loading bales of hay.

However, it soon became obvious that the next signing session would be more difficult to get through. Ben Bova's line was already forming when I got through Tanya Huff's line the last time, and I really wanted to see him because he was co-editor of an anthology that I'd been invited to contribute to. Although I wasn't going to bring it up because I didn't want him to feel any pressure (they were running late on editorial decisions), I wanted to see whether he'd recognize my name and connect it with my story.

As it turned out, the line was moving quickly enough that he didn't have time to really look at my badge and see my name, since the books I was having him sign were merchandised and didn't need to be personalized. But I figure it doesn't matter, since it wouldn't be fair to slow the line while we chatted when so many other people were waiting. So I got in the line for Greg Benford and got a few books done before we ran out of time.

By then it was time to get our dealer tables closed for the night. We headed over to the con suite to hang out for a while, then went back to the convention center to check out the artists' reception. They had a bunch of fancy food, but far too much of it was spicy. Worse, they didn't have a proper bag check set up, so we had to suffer through having our bags inspected on the way out.

Then we went back over to the Marriott Rivercenter to see some of the parties. We checked out the Sime-Gen party, where they were showing a video to promote the new game Ambrov X. Then we visited the Helsinki

bid party. We were going to look into some of the other parties, but they were on another floor and it was getting late, so we decided to call it quits and head back to the hotel to get some sleep.

Saturday morning came way too early, and we had to struggle to get to the dealers' room on time. It didn't help that my hotel room key card went astray, and then we got to the parking lot only to discover that the cost of parking had doubled for the weekend.

Once we got in and got set up, sales did seem to be coming faster than on the first two days. However, we did make the unhappy discovery that one of our products from a new wholesaler had hidden damage. It looks like their supplier on that item has quality control issues, so I don't know if we'll continue ordering that item.

I had some more signings to get through. Our biggest concern was Harry Turtledove, since we had several boxes of his books. However, he signed them while he was going through the dealers' room, so what had looked like a non-doable task got a whole lot more manageable. I had been ready to write off the Charla Harris signing when I heard it was limited to only a hundred people, but when they didn't get the anticipated turnout, I was able to get everything of hers signed after all.

By the time the dealers' room closed for the night, we were tired enough we decided to just knock off early for the night, rather than try to go to parties. I did get a little writing done before bedtime.

Sunday morning I woke up with a nasty headache, which was not a good way to start an important sales day. A good hot shower loosened it up a little, but it lingered with me all day long.

We had some more signings to get to, and some, such as David Brin's, attracted long lines. I didn't find out that Lois McMaster Bujold was signing until it was too late and the line far too long, but there was almost no line at all for John Maddox Roberts.

However, we also had some unwelcome excitement when someone spilled a big cup of pop right behind our booth and it started spreading in an area where we'd piled boxes of backstock. We had to quickly move those boxes to keep them from getting soaked, and then we had to wait for the convention center to get someone in to mop up the mess.

We also had some hard decisions to make. Detroit had won the 2014 NASFiC, but they had a really iffy table setup, so we had to decide how many tables to buy. Also, Spokane had won the 2015 Worldcon bid (apparently the organizer of the Orlando bid had alienated a lot of people), so we started the process of considering the probable costs of a trip out there in relation to what we could anticipate making.

After the dealers' room closed for the night, we headed over to the con suite to grab some munchies. Then we went up to the SFWA suite for our one and only visit of the con (having

been too busy with our business concern the rest of the weekend). While we were there, we got into a conversation about why New York City never gets the Worldcon. I pointed out that it was the location of several early Worldcons, but that was when NYC prices were much lower, and now it's pretty much priced itself out of reach for a Worldcon.

Then we headed back to the hotel for some sleep before tackling the final day of the convention. The walk back to the van was through some very crowded streets in terrible heat, so we decided to take a different road back to the hotel to avoid the worst traffic problems.

Monday morning we got breakfast before heading back over to the convention center for our final day of the convention. When we got to the parking lot, we were happily surprised to get the weekday rate in spite of it being a holiday, which saved a little money.

We got our tables open and settled in to get some final sales in before time to pack up and load out. However, sales continued to be slow and disappointing. We ended up starting to pack early, but we were still packing when the dealers' room closed and they started bring pallets around. We had so much stuff left that it took nine pallets to load it all.

Once we were ready, I went over and retrieved the van from the parking lot. Then the forklift drivers started bringing stuff out to us. Not having to haul the unsold merchandise out did reduce the misery of the hideous heat, but we still had to load everything into the van, which had become a sweatbox. I had to stop and take a break in the middle of the process because I was getting sick, but once I went inside to get some chilled water and a bit of time in air conditioning, I felt better enough that I could resume. With some help from our friends, we were able to get done in a reasonable time.

As we headed back to take one last look around our booth and make sure we hadn't left anything behind, somebody came by with the announcement that there was pizza in the art show area. So we headed over and got ourselves a few slices, which were quite welcome after all that work.

Then we headed back to the hotel room to rest and recover after the load-out process. We knew that we wouldn't be able to get very far if we tried to take off right after load-out, so staying one last night would enable us to start the journey home rested and refreshed.

On Tuesday morning we had one last breakfast at the hotel before carrying our belongings out and checking out. Then we hit the road for the very long trip to our friends in Springfield, Missouri. We had some trouble getting on and off the roads when we needed to get gas and some food for the trip, and by the time we arrived in Springfield, I was struggling to stay awake enough to drive.

After a good night's sleep, we helped our friend run an errand, and then continued across Missouri and Illinois to my folks' place. We

arrived right as they were sitting down to supper, so we joined them for supper before getting some laundry done and taking care of other essentials.

Wednesday morning, we took off from my folks' place and headed back home. We got there in good time to pick up the cat at the vet's and get her home. After supper, I unloaded the merchandise back into the storage unit to prepare for getting the van to the shop for a much-needed oil change. And thus we completed our Worldcon trip.

UNCONVENTIONAL CONVENTION

Celsius 232, the second annual science fiction, fantasy, and horror festival in Avilés, Spain, July 31 to July 3, 2013

Report by Sue Burke

Wednesday, July 31 Madrid – Avilés

After a short walk in the early afternoon to the neighborhood train station, then a quick crosstown commute to big Chamartin station, I got on the high-speed train headed north and surprise! someone was in my seat. "I'd like to sit next to my boyfriend," she explained, "so would you mind changing tickets? Mine's first class." No problem. So I spent the five-hour trip in a big comfortable seat, and even got a free meal: gazpacho, salt cod and white bean salad, and chicken curry, with beer or wine if I had wanted.

We barreled at 155mph through fields of harvested wheat and ripening sunflowers baking under the 100°F afternoon sunshine in Castilla-Leon, then snaked for an hour through the breathtaking valleys and peaks of the Cantabria Mountains. In the city of Oriense in the Asturias foothills, where it was only 68°F degrees, I caught a commuter train to Avilés, located on the Atlantic coast, and walked several blocks to my hotel, El Magistral.

My room in the 19th-century building was tucked under the eaves and my windows were mere skylights – but that was just as well. I got on a chair to look out and caught a view of the docks and an oil refinery with hellish flames on two smokestacks bright enough to serve as nightlights from over a mile away. Other than that, the room was clean and almost spacious.

Avilés (population 83,000) had been a small but important port town in the Middle Ages; 20th century industrialization made the city boom. But when factories began to close in the 1980s, Avilés overcame the crisis by reviving its medieval center and catering to tourism and shopping. That's what created Celsius 232 (which equals Fahrenheit 451): ambitious fans convinced the city to sponsor a literary festival similar to one about *noir* in nearby Gijón, this one focusing on science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

By the time I had unpacked, it was past 9 p.m., and I didn't know exactly where the festival was, but I set out uphill through pedestrian streets toward downtown a few

blocks away, and found it alongside the main square: tents and book stands next to the Cultural Center. A friend led me to the activity underway in the Cultural Center auditorium, dramatic presentations of short stories by a group called the Children of Mary Shelley. I had missed talks earlier in the day by Ian Watson, Joe Abercrombie, Marc Pastor, Joe Courtenay Grimwood, and Paul McAuley, along with a number of Spanish authors. After the presentation, I found some more friends and we went out for dinner in the medieval heart of Avilés. I enjoyed a local favorite, fresh grilled sardines.

Movies were being shown each night in the main square – *Brave* on Wednesday – but by then I'd missed most of the film, so I went to my hotel and to bed.

Thursday, August 1 Avilés

Activities didn't start until after 11 a.m., so I spent an hour in the morning touring the historic sights of Avilés, mostly churches and colonnaded streets, and not many of them. In medieval days, the town had four streets, each only a few blocks long; the city walls were taken down in the early modern era as the city grew. I had time to buy a newspaper and eat breakfast, a *tortilla española*, which is a Spanish potato omelet.

In the morning, authors were being interviewed in the large tent, which also housed book sellers, alongside the Cultural Center. Alejo Cuervo, whom I had dined with the previous night, interviewed Emilio Bueso and many in attendance, including me, were convinced to buy Bueso's award-winning book, *Cenital* [*At Zenith*], about a fortified community in a societal collapse. He happily autographed copies afterward. Star Wars troopers had begun to wander through the streets, availing themselves to photo opportunities.

The publisher of *Terra Nova: An Anthology of Contemporary Spanish Science Fiction* caught up with me to give me my contributor's copy as a translator. I took a little walk in a formal garden next to the Cultural Center and returned in time to catch that publisher, Rodolfo Martínez, presenting Eduardo Vaquerizo and Steve Redwood and their latest books.

I had lunch with Lola Robles, an author with a story in *Terra Nova*, and had *fabada asturiana*, a bean soup made with smoked meats and sausages, a local culinary treasure.

We returned to the auditorium to catch the announcement of some new books, including *Terra Nova II*, which was accepting stories, and a new publishing line: Fantasy, a branch of Random House Mondadori, which would publish 15 to 20 books a year, both Spanish writers and foreign writers in translation, such as Paolo Bacigalupi and China Miéville.

More authors were interviewed: Lauren Beukes, Nina Allan, Javier Negrete, and José Carlos Somoza. I sneaked out to watch the

Asturian School of Antique Fencing present classes and demonstrations, including the use of medieval armor. Although the Children of Mary Shelley were performing again and the movie *Willow* was showing in the main square, by then it was my bedtime.

Friday, August 2 Avilés

I bought a newspaper, which had an article about Celsius 232, had another tortilla for breakfast, then visited the Avilés History Museum, with exhibits in Spanish and Asturian, the local language. I learned, among other things, that in medieval times the city had cornered the salt trade, and that it had been home to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, founder of Saint Augustine, Florida.

Back at the festival tent, Cristina Macía was interviewing Ismael Martínez Biurrun and Clara Peñalver. Macía is married to British author Ian Watson and is translating the *Song of Fire and Ice* novels into Spanish, which have been selling proportionately even better in Spain than the US. Then Víctor Conde, whose story I translated for *Terra Nova*, presented his latest book; and Ana Campoy and Sofia Rhei presented their new children's books and had fun comparing ideas. A boy sitting next to me held a stack of Campoy's novels on his lap, eagerly awaiting the autograph session.

The audience grew to standing room only for the next panel, which presented the anthology *Más Alla de Némesis* [*Beyond Nemesis*]. It's based on the novel *Mundos en la Eternidad* [*Worlds in Eternity*] by Juan Miguel Aguilera and Javier Redal, a space opera that has reached classic status in Spain – I believe it would win a Hugo if it were in English. Aguilera, Sofia Rhei, Eduardo Vaquerizo, Rodolfo Martínez, and José Manuel Uría spoke about the excitement of revisiting those worlds.

A group of us including a few of those authors went for lunch at a restaurant on a historic colonnaded street that served outstanding personal pizzas.

When we regrouped in the afternoon in the Cultural Center auditorium, successive talks by David Moody, Robert J. Sawyer, David Simon, Steven Erickson, and Christopher Priest entertained the audience with the help of interpreter Diego García Cruz, one of the Celsius organizers and such a good interpreter that he got rounds of applause and has his own Facebook fan page.

I gravitated toward a nearby sidewalk café to have a couple of beers with friends, and then to bed, although *The Prestige*, based on Christopher Priest's book, was showing in the plaza. And after midnight, in a nearby cemetery, the Children of Mary Shelley hosted a night of spooky poetry and music, which I heard was tremendous fun.

Saturday, August 3 Avilés – Madrid

I had to leave for home Saturday morning, which was too bad because Saturday was a

great day at Celsius 232. Robert Sawyer, Christopher Priest, and David Moody discussed "I Saw My Work on the Screen," and David Simon spoke about *The Wire*. In addition to writers, there were presentations by visual artists, makeup artists, and chefs. A free lunch of fabada was served to 250 people. The night's festivities included an *espicha*, an Asturian stand-up dinner featuring hard cider, conversation, and in this case, a costume contest.

Instead I caught a train for an uneventful ride back to hot, bustling Madrid.

In all, the four-day festival had a lot in common with a standard convention, with writers presenting books and many literature-related activities. On the other hand, it was meant to attract tourists, too, so all the events were open to the public and costs were underwritten by the city. By Saturday a lot of people had come, and the whole thing might be repeated next year.

Distance traveled: 800km/500 miles as the crow flies.

Books read on the train: *Historias del Crazy Bar y otros relatos de lo imposible*, by María Concepción Regueiro and Lola Robles.

Purchases: several books; a fabada kit of dried beans and smoked meats as a gift for my husband, which we can make when the weather cools down, maybe in autumn; and a hiking staff, a common souvenir because Asturias is famous for its mountain hiking, but Madrid has mountain trails, too, so I plan to put it to use.

FANZINES

Beyond Bree August 2013, September 2013
Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA
beyondbree@yahoo.com
<http://www.ccp.unt.edu/bree.html>
Not available for The Usual; \$15/year, \$20 foreign, \$10/year electronic.

Broken Toys #20, #21
Taral Wayne
Taral@teksavvy.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Dewachen August 2013
Trinlay Khadro, 6918 N. 41st Street,
Milwaukee, WI 53209

The Drink Tank #347, #348, #349, #350,
#351, #352, #353, #354, #355, #356
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Fish Out of Water #546, #547, #548, #549, 2017
#550, #551, #552, #553
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#13 September 27, 2013
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WORLDCON BIDS

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

Proposed Dates: August 18-22.

Helsinki
<http://helsinkiin2017.org/>

Japan
<http://nippon2017.org/>

Montréal

New York

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

2019
Dublin
<http://dublin2019.com/>

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

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

The 2014 NASFiC is **Detcon 1**, in Detroit.
Dates: July 17-20, 2014

Guests of Honor:
Steven Barnes
John Picacio
Bernadette Bosky, Arthur D. Hlavaty,
and Kevin J. Maroney
Helen Greiner
Bill and Brenda Sutton
ConChairs Emeritus
Roger Sims and Fred Prophet
(Co-Chairs of Detention, the 1959
Detroit Worldcon)

<http://detcon1.org>

Congratulations to Bernadette, Arthur, and Kevin, and Roger, on their recognition.

The 2015 WorldCon is **Sasquan**, in Spokane, Washington:
Dates: August 19-23, 2015.

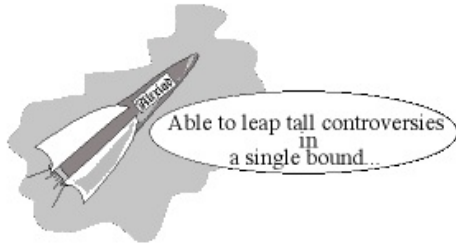
Guests of Honor:
Brad W. Foster
David Gerrold
Vonda N. McIntyre
Tom Smith
Leslie Turek

<http://sasquan.org>

The race was a close one, with the Orlando bid being eliminated before Spokane passed Helsinki. Congratulations to Brad.

Tragically, Sasquan co-chair **Bobbie DuFault** died on September 14. Our condolences to her family and to the committee.

Letters, we get letters



From: **Patrick McCray** August 10, 2013
Patrick_McCray@webbschool.org

In the world of fandomish writings, feel free to check out my typo-ridden (and slowly proofread), 99,000-word episode companion for *Dark Shadows*, *The Collins Chronicles*, written in sixty days.

<http://collinschronicles.com>

From: **Sheryl L. Birkhead** August 3, 2013
 22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
 20882-3422 USA

I am slowly (as in at a snail's pace) making inroads into the stacks of zines needing attention. While I was not paying attention a satellite stack suddenly appeared in the kitchen. I refuse to take a detailed look at this new interloper until I have the original batch cared for!

No excuses — just noting I have three issues that have been sitting here patiently waiting for some attention. Their time has come.

Yes, I knew *Frankfort* was the Kentucky capitol — never knew why and it appears the real story is misted in lore. So, we'll never know for sure why it is spelled the way it is. I actually have several books on emergency preparedness — all of which include the 72-hour issue. Of course I have not followed any of the directions. What I have done is to give a lot of thought to it, so I know where most of the things I'd need to grab are located. That won't get me out of the house any faster, but at least I'll know where to look for what. If there is a true emergency around here (with only one or two roads out — that are all high speed and multi-lanes), I figure it is going to be something along the line of nuclear and I don't think trying to drive a little faster (or just sit in traffic and...) is going to get me out of the ground zero area (or at least not faster than the damage can occur).

Sherlock Holmes — it took a bit of scrounging, but I found a free online site to watch *In Search of Sherlock Holmes*. I had it on my Netflix list and there did not seem to be any progress over a year or two about its ever becoming available. I watched it and enjoyed it greatly. It only goes to show me that I am

not a true devotee since almost everything in the video was news to me. It also means I could appreciate it all as my first exposure.

Hope *Brad Foster* is all healed after the detached retina surgery, (okay — laptop acting up — need to stop and let it get over its snit). Luckily I have the originally saved one in another folder. True, I have lost all those pearls of wisdom and I am not going to try to recreate. Man this didn't last long — it has already started moving text etc — so I will quit yet again for a while. I am guessing it has something to do with the palm rests I put on it before I ever started to use it. Somewhere I have the mouse that came with it — means I cannot use it as a true laptop since I need a mouse pad, but almost anything helpful is better than this.

Okay, gave it time to "cool down" and hauled out the mouse. Now let's see how far I can get before it starts hiccuping again.

Visioncon is a new one to me.

Contrary to *Taral's* take on *Brave*, I enjoyed it... not great, but... I also admit that I enjoyed the horse she rode. A very different movie might have been made if its primary focus was a adult audience. As it was, I did enjoy it.

Lloyd — it will be interesting to see what *Brad* has to say after he reads your comment about the cataract surgery as a consequence of the detached retina surgery, (oh yeah, all my previous comments about *Brad* and... got wiped out by the laptop — sorry) Question about pennies — if they can no longer be given in change, then the prices must now be to the nearest (5¢?) coin — right? How is sales tax now assessed Since it usually, depending, on location, makes the final price one that would, often, make pennies necessary. Just curious since this seems to make prices go up a bit and the tax similarly — at least if you cannot use pennies. Still wishing you luck on the job search.

Alexis — at least *Lee* could tell the driver was a woman. Glad that things were no worse.

The discussion of taxes is depressing. The most recent information I heard for the metropolitan D.C. area is that a family of 4 needs at least \$88,000 to just get by. Granted, I don't know if getting by now includes cell phones, cable, and an annual vacation, but if it does, I must be doing something wrong. True, you can't simply divide by 4 to get the requisite income for one person, but I have no idea how you make that calculation. Depressing, since I have no cable, no vacation in well over 20 years, and my emergency cell phone in the car costs me \$10 every three months (no bells or whistles, it is just a simple old phone), I would expect to be living better than I am if I "only" need \$22k a year. Ah well, as long as the bills eventually get paid. (Just one point of clarification — does the comment about those making over \$100,000 should not get Social Security or Medicare — does that release them from the necessity of paying into it too?)

Of course not.

Ah, seeing the mention about the recent *Three Stooges* movie reminds me I ought to consider putting it on the *Netflix* list... after I do a little more research. I enjoyed *Abbott and Costello* but only mildly enjoyed the *Three Stooges* — so is it worth it now?

Sue Burke — the hardest part of the written driving exam might well be the vocabulary. While knowing what you should do, it might be very difficult (it was for me when reading the questions!) to understand what is being asked. That would make it highly frustrating — knowing the correct answer if you could only figure out that was the question!

(okay-acting up again-be back "later")

Right — let's try again (man this is getting complicated!).

With any luck this might actually get mailed in the near future. I took off part of one day last week and actually devoted it totally to working on getting some sketches closer to complete. Sigh — made me just want to spend more time that way — but there is no question, **that** has to be done at the desktop and restricts anything else at the same time. Eventually I am just going to have to bite the bullet and buy some software — ignoring that it is nothing like what I have used over the years. For now I am using the *separate but equal* set up with an external hard drive to use two different *Mac* systems since the last few versions won't work with the drawing softer I have used all these years. So, all I am doing is postponing the inevitable. Just wish I had gotten more accomplished.

Yes, *Andy Offutt* will be missed.

C'mell catnip fields and butterflies to you, gone on ahead.

Irony — just was looking at *Foyle's War* information to see the timing of the production. Just as I had *Murdoch's Mysteries* pegged at much older—the same it true for *Foyle's War*. I had heard the new season was up and running, but *Netflix* is quite a bit behind — the last season was out in 2010 and season 8 is a 2013 production. Sigh, that usually means I'll see the episodes in a few years unless I have the time to do research and see if I can locate any site that has free viewing of episodes. Yeah, that goes on the list of things to do *RSN*.

No comment on the *Triple Crown* since we all know how that went.

I am still irritated about all the text I have lost and effort that went in and then down the drain. So, I will put this out of my misery now and try to get it mailed tomorrow... fingers crossed that I can actually print it!

From: **Milt Stevens** August 14, 2013
 6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA
 93063-3834 USA
miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Alexiad* V12 #4, Joseph mentions organizing dinners. For several years, I had the job of organizing dinners for the LASFS. The

club thought they might attract members who were no longer attending regular meetings to attend occasional dinners or other gatherings. Initially, there were four dinners a year. For each dinner, I had to arrange for a restaurant and a speaker. Then I had to sweat until the very last minute when people would finally buy tickets. I gradually worked my way out of a job. I reduced the number of dinners from four to two to one to zero. Years later, someone explained that LASFS no longer had dinners because I got tired of organizing them. Nobody was interested enough to organize dinners themselves.

Guy Lillian told me that there wasn't a Faneds Feast — because I wasn't there to organize it. There are several ways to look at that.

I noticed that bit about Dragoncon getting rid of Kramer. Before that, I had seen a mention that Kramer received \$150,000 a year from Dragoncon. It occurred to me that I might have gone into doing the wrong type of cons. For that sort of money, I could easily give up philosophical purity. If there were seven people drawing that sort of money from the organization, Dragoncon has one huge overhead. At some point, the attendees might notice they weren't getting a very good deal for their money.

They'll be too busy counting the numbers of each Doctor in the Doctor Who parade to care.
— JTM

I noticed Richard Matheson had died. I never encountered the man even though we had lived in the same area for the entire time I have been in fandom. Matheson was guest of honor at the 1958 worldcon in Los Angeles. It only had an attendance of around 300, so it wasn't a very impressive event. I've heard he attended a World Fantasy Convention some years later. Other than that, he never attended another convention. I've never heard any comments on Matheson based on the 1958 convention. Nobody got mad at him, but nobody seemed to notice him either.

The royal baby is a cute little tyke. He probably won't be king until he's 80, but being a prince probably isn't too bad.

From: **Bill Patterson** August 15, 2013

I'm always deeply skeptical about anyone's speculations about what Admiral Heinlein or Captain Heinlein in this case might have done. They never seem to take into account that most important of all drivers of history, the Awful Blinkin' Cussedness of Things in General. Heinlein was medically retired at just the point (well, actually, just off the point) in a naval officer's career of maximum opportunity for career plans to veer

into radically different territory. Look at Heinlein's friend Barrett Laning, who took submarine training but wound up captaining a destroyer in WWII, where he became "top man in CIC" and wound up in Washington, D.C. working on various aspects of computerization of the Navy into the 50's. And then got a tombstone bump to Rear Admiral.

I had forgotten about the late, much lamented Charles Sheffield's speculation. It's not particularly unlikely Heinlein might have risen to ship command by the time of WWII, though why he would be commanding a PT-boat is a head-scratcher in the first place, and it's even harder to figure out how he might be in the Atlantic at all. Almost all his service after leaving the Academy was in the Pacific. Also true, he was rather expensively trained in operating the most advanced mechanical ballistic computer afloat and stationed in 1933 on a destroyer that did not have that computer. Perhaps that would have provided a billet for him out of the Pacific.

True, one can appeal to Ian Hays and to what appears to be an innate perversity in BuPers and BuNav — but the appeal to perversity is poor storytelling, and I have the strong intuition that Heinlein would prefer any story made up about him be better told than that.

The speculation that appeals to me is a 50/50 possibility that he might have decided to go back to his first love, aviation — not as a pilot, but as an engineer. The 50% downside is that when he was retired he got as far away from day-to-day dealings with the Navy as he could, so there's a possibility that might be the one area he would try to stay away from... but he did wind up in Philadelphia as a civilian engineer working in aircraft materials engineering, so who knows how to evaluate that?

The intriguing possibility is that, from 1934 to 1944 is a period in which the character of military aviation changed radically. In 1934 craft design was still driven by developments in commercial aviation; by 1941, government military orders started to drive aircraft design. If he had stayed in, the might have stuck in aircraft design — and he might have been at BuAer in DC when a certain redheaded Lieutenant came to BuAer directly from Mt. Holyoke. Convergence of historical developments.

But would they have connected without the political activity Commander/Captain Heinlein would have missed in this timeline? Their desks were next to each other at NAES, which naturally threw them together sometimes, and Ginny said the first time he really looked at her was when she remarked that she had been a precinct worker. Without that "clubbability," they might have passed — oh, go ahead with the cliché — like ships in the night.

Insightful, very well argued, and I tend to agree with your points. Heinlein examined is more

interesting than Heinlein idolized.
—JTM



August 28, 2013

"The Kramer Problem" Well, I suggest that the strategy you have reported in schematic is fraudulent on its face — exactly the sort of machinations the law is designed to prevent. It seems to me the desire to separate themselves from Ed Kramer is understandable — but the impulse to do it by outright fraud is less so.

Realistically, the only legitimate options the DragonCon committee has for separating itself from its founder are (a) buy him out according to whatever terms are in the original founding documents, if any; or (b) abandon the DragonCon name and/or any obvious variations on the name and do their own event and hope that people understand this new name is the equivalent of the event they used to know as DragonCon, which is no more unless Ed Kramer decides to get up a committee and put on the show as before. If there are no buy-out provisions in the founding documents, then option (b) is all that is available — until and unless Kramer does something that allows the organization to terminate the relationship for cause which would, again, be according to the founding documents.

Although I do not follow the DragonCon news closely, I am not aware that anyone has suggested Kramer has breached fiduciary duty, which would be the gateway condition for state law to intervene (i.e., legal forces outside the founding documents).

From: **Cuyler "Ned" Brooks** Aug. 17, 2013
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn GA 30047-4720 USA
nedbrooks@sprynet.com

At least if this is August, it must be v.12#4. The actual data is missing from the header line. And I see that you put the title in Greek with a "capital sigma" for the D - shouldn't it be a Delta? I might make these symbols here, but

whether you would see them is a crapshoot.

The Atlanta paper said that Dragon*Con did carry through the corporate flumdiggle to divest itself of any connection with Ed Kramer and that he accepted the payoff — whether he can still sue, who knows. Apparently anyone can sue over anything — but not necessarily with any success. The curious part is that after all these years, no details of the alleged offense have emerged, and he has never been convicted of anything.

For your monarchist news, I see that Princess Irina, the third daughter of ex-king Michael I of Romania, has been charged in Oregon with running cock-fighting derbies. She is married to the mere commoner John Walker.

I had a long debate in Slanapa over laws against cock-fighting, saying that I didn't see that the offense to the sensibilities of people (including me) who don't attend them really justified the police and court expense to suppress the sport. Dog-fighting produces dangerous dogs, but as far as I know, bystanders or passersby are never attacked by these roosters.

My great-uncle John liked cock-fighting. Once, two of the participants decided to cut out the middle chicken, and went at each other. He broke up the fight by picking them up, one in each hand.

— JTM

To my mind, Verne's moon cannon is closer to fantasy than Wells' Cavorite gravity shield, in terms of what was known by engineers at the time. Then as now I think a mechanical engineer would have known that the cannon could not be built, much less used. But that the gravitational force field was so much less amenable to interference than the magnetic and electrostatic fields was not yet known at all.

I hear that the Johnny Depp "Lone Ranger" movie is thought to be bad — apparently by people who remember the old books and movies with some fondness. I never read any of the books, and I thought the older movie and TV efforts were lame, so the new movie may suit me well enough as spectacle. I might see it at my sister's house on the 5-foot TV screen, or I might see it here from a DVD.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** August 19, 2013
6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA
19149-2128
darrells@comcast.net

I am not really sure what Taras means about sympathy for Oscar Wilde. I know perfectly well how Wilde got in trouble with the law. His affair with Lord Alfred Douglas became increasingly open. (Douglas, who seems to be the really despicable character in all this, later lied about it, but at the time he

flaunted it.) Douglas's father, the Marquis of Queensberry, left a card in Wilde's club addressed to "Oscar Wilde, Somdomite." (Spelling was never Queensberry's strong point.) Wilde, against the advice of his friends, sued Queensberry for libel. Queensberry defended himself by proving that the charge was true. The libel case was dropped and Wilde was arrested, charged with homosexual offenses. In the course of the trial, various rent-boys were produced as witnesses. Wilde apparently thought he could just go on being a brilliant wit and charm his way through the ordeal. For a while this almost seemed to work, but when at one point the prosecutor, pointing to one of the boys, asked, "Would you want to have sex with that boy?" and Wilde, making one more joke, said something to the effect of "Oh not, not that one. He is much too ugly." There was an intake of breath from the jury. He had lost their sympathy. It was the beginning of the end.

By today's standards, what is offensive about Wilde's behavior is that he broke his marriage vows. He cheated on his wife. He lied about it. However, she stuck with him, and did not choose divorce, which would not have been denied her. She could well have painted him as a monster and herself as a victim, and that would have gained much sympathy. But she didn't. Today we would say that is a private matter and respect her decision. It is alleged that Oscar had contracted syphilis (usually fatal in those days, with gruesome treatments the only recourse) in the course of his adventures and wanted to spare his wife possible infection, although he obviously had no qualms about infecting his male partners. This isn't honorable by today's standards either. But if this had occurred in the 21st century, it would have been seen as a case of a celebrity acknowledging his bisexual nature and being true to himself. This is why Wilde is usually depicted sympathetically, as a hero or a martyr, in plays and films, such as *Wilde* starring Stephen Fry. My point is that by today's standards, his homosexuality itself would not be seen as a crime.

The basic legal principle illustrated here is that you should never sue for libel when the charges are actually true and the accuser can prove it.

As for the story about Spanish Jews being forced to give up their children, this is in many history books. Taras is right to question if it is really true. It could well be a factoid that has crept in over the years. However, his main objection does not hold up. The Spanish Church or the Crown would have been fully capable of taking those Jewish kids and supporting them while they were raised as Christians. They could be cared for in monasteries. The reverse of this practice was utterly routine in the Turkish Empire, where, as a "tax" some of the sons of Christian subjects were taken away to be supported and raised as Muslims. Some became the famous Janissaries. Others became court officials. My own guess is

that the Spanish government was trying to use this to extort even more money out of the Jews. You could imagine a lively amount of bribery would have gone on over this.

So you're arguing that the Spanish took up the devshirme from the Moors, too.

As for the French Canadian version of the American invasion, the fact remains that the French Canadians remained loyal to the British even after the French came in on the side of the rebels. They were at that point fighting against their own king and country, if they still regarded themselves as Frenchman. (But as the French Canadian explained to me, they did not. They had a feudal mentality and felt King Louis had signed them over to King George, and therefore they owed loyalty to King George.) At the time of the American Revolution, Catholicism was only legal in Maryland and more or less tolerated in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. There was a law passed in 1700 in New York and still on the books that any Popish priest caught on the colony should be imprisoned for life. If he escaped and was recaptured, he should be hanged. I seriously doubt Massachusetts was more tolerant. This obviously was not a good way to lure the French Canadians over to the American cause, and, as we have seen, it failed abjectly. Religious freedom in the United States after the Revolution was a radical idea that took a while to catch on. There was still anti-Catholic violence in the 1840s. My alma mater, Villanova University, was built where it is because this was more than a day's walk from Philadelphia. The idea was that any mob of anti-Catholic rioters would get tired and go home before they ever got that far.

George Price gets to the heart of the matter about Islam, which is that Jesus was a pacifist and Mohammed was a warrior. An intolerant, warrior Christian, who converts people at swordpoint (like Charlemagne, for instance, who reinforced his conversions with mass-beheadings of rebellious Saxons) departs from the teachings of Jesus, as so many Christians have done down the ages when they proved inconvenient. A warrior Muslim is obeying the dictates of the Prophet and following his example. Islam does have violence inherent in its teachings. However, you could argue, so does Judaism. Mohammed is nothing more than a throwback to such warrior-prophets as Joshua, or to Samuel, who comes across in the Bible as a genocidal lunatic. (Samuel is the one who rebuked Saul because Saul had spared an enemy king. Samuel chopped the king to pieces before the altar of the Lord, but this still did not redeem Saul, who lost God's favor from then on.) I point out that most Jews do not follow this example. Likewise, in the modern world many Muslims do not go in for violent jihad. Religions do evolve. And of course the behavior of religionists sometimes has nothing

whatever to do with doctrine, as is evident from the sorry spectacle of violent Buddhists in parts of Asia today.

In any case, I do not think the real conflict today is between Islam and Christianity. It is between Islam and Secularism. The reason reactionary Muslims have become so violent of late is that their countries tend to be backward, ignorance, and poor precisely because they are Muslim (of a reactionary sort). What is becoming increasingly clear is that a country (like Taliban-ruled Afghanistan) which refuses to educate its women and certainly prevents any intellectual progress is not going to be able to compete with the more advanced, civilized world. Osama bin Laden used to proclaim, "Islam is the answer!" No, Islam is the problem. The Muslim countries which succeed are probably going to be the ones ruled by rich, cynical people who can wear their religion lightly when they need to, however useful it may be for controlling the masses. Muslims have never had a problem with pious, church-going Christian peasants. They have a problem with wealthy, adventurous, internet-using Secularists who spread new ideas. Of course Fundamentalist Christians have precisely the same problem, for the same reasons. Their world is dying, and it is going to die hard.

Secularism seems to me more unable to resist Islam, for political reasons. As for tolerance of "pious, church-going Christian peasants", But Ye'or has something about that.

As for climate change, what Taras conveniently fails to report about all those news stories about climate change not fitting some of the predictive models, is that these stories always make a point of giving the deniers no cause for comfort. The models have often proven too conservative. The climate is changing faster and more radically than predicted. The news media are full of stories like this every day. Yesterday, on the BBC, it was one about how the forests of Europe are reaching their limit of carbon-absorption capacity, and so a tipping point may soon be reached with catastrophic consequences. There is also a story about how Scottish red deer are now breeding earlier in the season, because of climate change. The big story is that the leaked parts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report to be released in Stockholm are premature and that the final draft will differ from them. The key points here are that scientists (195 governments, 100 non-governmental agencies) are more prepared than ever to blame climate change on human activity. However, there are some questions about the apparent slowdown of the process. Not that it is stopping, but that it is, for a time, slowing down, and there is no consensus on the cause. There is a sidebar

about how the warming of Greenland enables farmers to extend their crop production.

What it comes down to is the conclusion of the John Grant book I mentioned a few issues back. If your house is on fire, you do not stop to argue with people who deny the possibility of combustion. It is too late for that. The only issues left are how to deal with the actual problem and how to defeat the obstructionists. (Grant's book is more about who they are, what motivates them, and who finances them.) The world is slowly coming together on this, although I think it is going to take more catastrophic superstorms and floods before much is done. See New Orleans and Venice while you can. They may not be there by mid-century. Nor will the north polar cap. Actually I suspect the French Quarter of New Orleans can be saved with a strong enough levee built around it, since it is on higher ground than the rest of the city or the surrounding countryside. That was why the original city was built there. But it may become an island in the middle of a wide swamp, surrounded by the half-submerged ruins of the modern city, which could become an apocalyptic tourist attraction of their own, albeit a dangerous one. But I could easily see how boat tours could set out from the island of New Orleans, into the surrounding districts, the way they do into the bayous now.

There was a news story the other day about the first US climate refugees. It was about a village in Alaska which is located on a small peninsula, little more than a sandbar. As sea levels rise, the town will be uninhabitable in no more than twenty years. Actually the geography of it reminded me of some of the low-lying areas along the New Jersey shore. Will Atlantic City and Wildwood still be there in 2050?



Taras's comment about Saladin Ahmed are likely to cause offense. As we get more people in American society with Islamic backgrounds and even Arabic names, yes, inevitably some of them are going to write science fiction or

fantasy. It is offensive to suggest that Ahmed only got nominated for an award because of his name and ethnicity. It's rather like suggesting that Samuel Delany or Octavia Butler only got nominated for things because they were black. Yes, Saladin Ahmed is a real person. I don't know him, but I may have met him briefly at a World Fantasy Con, and I know I corresponded with him briefly about his panel assignments for the WFC in Columbus in 2010, because I was chair of programming. I haven't read *Throne of the Crescent Moon*. But before anyone jumps to conclusions about tokenism, maybe they should. The real question is not, "Did they give him a nomination because of his name?" but "Why is this book popular?"

It has zombies.

— JTM

It reminds me strongly of old time sword and sorcery. I am not sure that old time sword and sorcery really qualifies for a Hugo but I did enjoy *Crescent Moon*. And while I enjoyed *Redshirts* I'm inclined to think old fashioned sword and sorcery deserved the Hugo more than a parody of a TV show.

— LTM

P. 25. It must be the same C.D. Carson who sent me a copy of that *Numismatics International Bulletin* with the article about My Lord Derwin's coinage. I would like to thank Mr. Carson, whose name I could not make out from his handwriting. This is the first time I have ever been mentioned in a numismatics journal. By the way, I am thinking of issuing a coin of my own, in my capacity of Patrician of Thxoio. On one side will be my monogram. On the other will be a portrait of fellow fantasy writer Lucius Apuleius, with a device of an ass. More details when I have them.

From: John Thiel

August 20, 2013

Well, what's happening here? Suddenly I take the email route to LoC *Alexiad*. And I'll tell you how it came to pass, I'm down to four stamps and they must be used on bills, and I only get to the post office once or at the most twice a month, now that developments in the auto industry have forced me to give up my car. But I haven't lost my belief in paper fandom.

I notice in your fanzine mentions there are three zines that don't have the editorial address listed, *Askew*, *Broken Toys* and *Pablo Lennis*. Can you tell me why these zines don't have their addresses listed?

I've always wanted to ask George Price what he thinks of the Chicago of today, as I had some correspondence with him back when he was spokesperson for the University of Chicago Science Fiction Club and I saw from your zine that he was still living in Chicago. This wish to discuss the shape of today's Chicago with someone, anyone, was augmented by descriptions last year of travelling to the

World Convention there on the net at Facebook. Well, George is pretty tight about what he discusses but I thought I would break the ice on that matter if my LoC is printed. I don't see him anywhere else but *Alexiad*.

From: **Murray Moore** August 20, 2013
1065 Henley Road, Mississauga
Ontario L4Y 1C8 CANADA
murrayamoore@gmail.com

Lisa, I am determined to use my camera, too, during LoneStarCon. My interest in photography was revived when I discovered a cicada emerging from its cocoon on the trunk of our old apple tree. I might not see you, though, if you are at the viewing end of your 40x zoom lens.

Joe, for the Tucker bio, the Science Fiction Oral History Association might be a source of recordings by Tucker and/or others talking about Tucker.

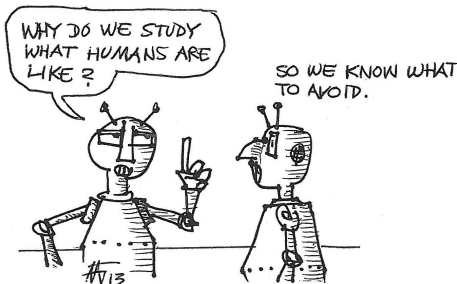
Yes. And it will lose the Hugo for Best Related Work to Chicks Dig Elf Warrior Princesses: A Celebration of Tauriel By the Women Who Love Her.

— JTM

Breyerfest in Ontario would be about ice cream, not model horses. We have craft beer and wine of all types in Canada and the United States. I am hoping for a wave of craft ice cream makers. More small producers of chocolate, too, please.

"The Gun Debate is Over." Good for you, Joe and Lisa. Usually it is the sex that is censored and the violence that is promoted.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** August 22, 2013
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA
22204-1552 USA
<http://www.alexisgilliland.org>



Thank you for *Alexiad* #70, an impressively high number for any fanzine, whose arrival probably had no connection with my right front tire going flat that very same day. When Joe told Sue Burke that his aunt married a Burke, it reminded me my grandmother Gilliland's maiden name was Burke, and in my letter where I spoke of the Sunni and Shiite sectarian conflict in Syria, Joe mentioned the Alawites, which is a Shiite

sect. Condolences are offered to George Price on the death of his wife. Finally, since I drew my cartoon about priding cats in 2010, I have learned that while lions live in prides, the collective noun for domestic cats is clowder.

On the subject of global warming, *The Economist* (p. 18, August 10-26, 2013) has an article on China, the world's worst polluter, which notes that China uses 390 tons of coal equivalent to produce one million dollars of output, compare that to the world average of 300 tons of coal equivalent. The article also notes the world's CO₂ level is not only increasing but accelerating and is on course to reach 450 ppm by 2037. By 2100 the CO₂ level could easily reach or pass 500 ppm. At which time, China will be the chief emitter of CO₂, and *The Economist* concludes that the Chinese political system is no better at solving environmental problems than anyone else's. "The top is ambivalent, the middle skeptical and the grassroots weak and divided."

The cover of the September 2013 issue of *National Geographic* shows the Statue of Liberty hip-deep in water, illustrating the article "Rising Seas", which describes what will happen in the unlikely event (scary sells) that ALL the world's ice should melt. However, it also includes a graph of sea level rise from 1 AD to 2100 AD, showing a marked change in slope from about 1850 to the present. The graph reflects the profound scientific uncertainty (which the article explores in some detail) for the projected range of sea level rise by 2100. That rise ranges from a low of 0.6 feet to a high of 6.6 feet, with an intermediate low of 1.7 feet and an intermediate high of 4.0 feet. Just because the future is uncertain doesn't mean it won't bite you.

Indeed, the unprecedented and rapid nature of the changes currently taking place suggests that something unexpected might be expected to happen. Science fiction gave us Godzilla rising from the depths of the sea to destroy Tokyo, but climate change is leisurely compared to nuclear explosions, so maybe something more leisurely would be more plausible for our impending catastrophe. The Siberian shelf of the Arctic Ocean, an area of about 4000 square miles, is under about 50 meters of water and contains permafrost from the last ice age. One candidate for our Godzilla substitute is that newly warm ocean currents will find their way into the Arctic Ocean and thaw that under water permafrost to release maybe 2 or 3 percent of the methane hydrate stored there — about 50 gigatons of CH₄, in a "sudden" burp over a few short years. Since CH₄ is about 20 times as potent a greenhouse gas as CO₂, such a burp could potentially produce more global warming than all the CO₂ so far released by the industrial revolution.

That alarmist scenario is rejected as either impossible (methane hydrate only forms at a depth of 150 meters) or possible only if the timescale is increased to centuries and/or

millennia. So say scientific experts well versed in the theory of their subject. However, the supporters of the idea are those few scientists who have decades of practical experience measuring the release of CH₄ in the Arctic Ocean. They could be mistaken, but they shouldn't be ignored.

I may have expressed myself badly to Bill Patterson. I thought he was opposed to the government keeping big business safe by being their insurer of last resort. That is, bailing the greedy bastards out when their risky profit seeking resulted in catastrophic losses. The moral hazard is that big business will take more risks in the expectation for a government bail out, just like the one last time. Moral hazard also affects the government, which enjoys the popularity (and higher taxes) of boom times and fiddles to keep the good times rolling. After the 2007 property bubble burst, the banks were pressured to make safer loans. Well, they did, and the commentariat if not the government is now complainign that they are slowing down the recovery by being so tight-fisted.

As for being an apologist for "corporatism" I note that the rich and powerful have always had the government take their side to the extent that it was possible. SPQR stood for Senatus Populusque Romanus, the Senate (the rich) and the People (everybody else) of Rome. Through greed and stupidity the rich sometimes overreach, however. In an effort to limit the size of the Roman Senate, a law was passed requiring a senator to own a certain amount of land in Italy. Those large holdings were assembled at the expense of the small holders who had been conscripted into the Roman army, leading to the end of the Roman Republic, and eventually to an empire with a professional army loyal to their paymaster (the emperor or an emperor wannabe) rather than a state in which they no longer held a stake.

In France, bankrupted by numerous wars (including the American Revolution) the tax-exempt nobles thought they would be better off without King Louis XVI and his extravagant court rather than paying the taxes necessary to keep the state up and running. In England, after the conquest of French Canada in 1759, the rich and powerful were unable or unwilling to make any sort of accommodation with their counterparts in the colonies, the colonies being regarded as a cow to be milked. For example, John Hancock was the richest merchant in Boston. On June 10, 1768, one of his sloops smuggled in 100,000 gallons of wine and was seized by the British, provoking a riot. As a result British troops occupied Boston that October, seeking to suppress the Yankees as the Irish and the Scots had been suppressed. Hancock, who could hire the best lawyers, was acquitted of smuggling, but his sloop was impressed into the Royal Navy as the HMS *Liberty*.

Again I seem to have expressed myself badly. Taras Wolansky wonders at my meaning, which was that a marriage between a

homo- and heterosexual was likely to be less happy than either kind of matched pairing. There may also be some confusion about marriage itself, since marriage does two different things, proposing a standard of sexual behavior for the participants, but also regulating the property rights of their offspring, by disinheriting those born out of wedlock, which may be its main function among the rich and powerful (Charles II had sons, but none were legitimate, so the throne went to his fool brother).

The Duke of Monmouth
thought he was legitimate. The
Duke of Buccleuch is descended
from him.

— JTM

Taras also disputes the notion of a “failing” Gulf Stream. He should check the Internet about the Gulf Stream’s changes, which have been closely observed (it has been moving north), and which have already affected Europe’s weather, if not yet its climate. As I mentioned earlier, the northward movement of all that warm water has the potential to trigger the release of methane on the Siberian shelf of the Arctic Ocean.

What else? Jim Stumm, properly skeptical of global warming, thinks that Al Gore’s prediction of a 20-foot rise in sea level is pure goofiness. Alarmist yes, premature maybe, but Gore’s 20-foot rise is definitely in the ballpark. Melting the Greenland ice sheet would raise sea levels 25 feet, while if all the world’s ice were to melt that would be 216 feet.

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 26, 2013
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I’m glad you’re having fun with your camera, Lisa. And thanks, Joe, for the background on the lunar mission movies. Ties, huh. I wonder if scientists were wearing lab coats yet?

The Cats of Tanglewood Forest sounds intriguing. *The Lost Fleet* novel(s) sounded familiar so I looked in the drawer full of books headed for recycling (usually at the Oasis con). Aha. I have *The Lost Fleet: Dauntless*, which is apparently the first book. I vaguely recall that I planned to skip all the sequels and get the last book: *The Last Fleet: Victorious*. Hmm. So, after that, there’s a new series: *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier* . . .

I also enjoyed the other reviews, the article on lighting (I’m prepared for the next hurricane with hurricane lamps and candles and sconces), and the Perception review; I thought that a hero subject to hallucinations would not be trustworthy — and we’d be confused too.

Lots of interesting tidbits and discussions in the LOCs, and I enjoy Sue’s reports from

Spain. I also liked the illos, including the *Alexiad* one: . . . a light in the fannish dark.

From: **Jason Burnett** September 2, 2013

Congratulations on reaching #70 of *Alexiad*, and thank you for carrying me on your rolls during my recent extended silence. Look for a new zine from me this fall, though, as I’m feeling a surge of fannishness in conjunction with my upcoming 40th birthday (October 15).

I’m finally reading Patterson’s biography of Heinlein. I’m learning/remembering (a little bit of each) that Heinlein has a much greater depth and breadth of ideas than a lot of his libertarian supporters give him credit for. This morning, I reached page 218, where Heinlein blazed the trail that libertarian SF has relentlessly followed ever since: “A cheap source of power might provide the necessary shake-up to get from here to there . . .” Whenever I find an SF book that the solutions being presented depend on the introduction of free (or at least exceedingly cheap) energy, it’s a pretty good sign that I’m reading a Heinlein knock-off and I immediately downgrade my estimate of the chance the author will introduce new and worthwhile ideas. (I’ll likely still enjoy the book, but it’s unlikely to change my world.)

Reading “Let There Be Light”
(NHOL 6.007; 1940, 1950, 1963)
might provide another
perspective. The developers of
the “cheap source of power” have
to worry about being eliminated
by the Power Powers That Be.
(And then the beginning, where
the one scientist sees a beautiful
woman, assumes she’s dumb, and .
..)

—JTM

I’m also reading another book that ties in the recent discussions in *Alexiad: Chicks Dig Comics*. I bought my copy when it first came out because I heard that Seanan McGuire (who I’ve been friends with on Livejournal for several years) had an essay in it. It then got buried in the constant stream of incoming books (despite my best efforts, I still buy more books than I can read) until I felt compelled to dig it out and start reading it because of the way the “Chicks Dig _____” books have become a shorthand in *Alexiad* for the “wrong sort” of fandom. And after reading it (I just finished it on my lunch break today), I wonder how many of the people disparaging these books have read any of them, because the book I read didn’t match up at all with the descriptions I’d encountered. This wasn’t a ball of mindless squee-ing. These were thoughtful essays by people (primarily women) who’d put in their time not only in fandom but also often in the industry. I strongly urge people who haven’t read the “Chicks Dig _____” books to consider giving one a try.

And if you still don’t like them, I’m not going to try to convince you you’re wrong. And if they’re in an award competition against another book that you think is better, well, that happens sometimes. And sometimes the book you like wins, and sometimes it loses. But as Sarah Kuhn said in her essay in this volume “championing one thing by denigrating the other is almost always harmful — and a bad argument to boot.”

I’m sorry to hear that you had to miss out on Worldcon this year; hopefully you’ll be able to find someone to write up an account for *Alexiad* (if you haven’t already). Since I’ve never been to a Worldcon (and doubt I’ll get to one in the foreseeable future), blog posts and con reports fill that hole for me.

Hope you’re doing well. Take care.

From: **Trinlay Khadro** September 5, 2013
6918 N. 41st Street, Milwaukee, WI
53209



TRINLAY KHADRO

Again I am happy to report in as “Not Dead”. KT & Theo are busily and happily planning their wedding (aka WeddingCon 2013) and doing it ALL themselves and with the aid and services of their many many fannish and reenactor friends . . . Much to the dismay of my mother who tends to completely take over such events. My Dad is much more relaxed about it all, but Mom keeps on being told “Don’t worry, you will get an invitation in the mail.”

My 80+ year old paternal aunt is working on her costume as the Tin Woodsman, though I’m not sure if my Uncle will also be costumed.

Auntie may not let him back out of it!

Ah, Nicole Chopper.

I am busy crafting monsters for upcoming conventions and very much enjoying this pastime.

I have also discovered and become addicted to a clever little podcast show called *Welcome to Night Vale*. I describe it as Prairie Home Companion from a world where Cthulhuian Horrors and other mysteries may not be fictional. I am particularly enjoying the Cecil/Carlos "ship" and Koshek the Station's Cat.

"Welcome to Lake R'lyeh, where all the women are cthonian, all the men are mephitic, and all the children are blasphemously squamous."

I think I have figured out my garb for WeddingCon. I've found a reasonably priced sky blue sari with a matching blouse and petticoat. I'd already got jewelry and hair duds that will go well with it. Friend of mine also found a Gorgeou Shalimar kameez set in Periwinkle and yellow but it's also way beyond my budget.

While you note it is difficult to cite sources in conversation, more and more people are running around with computers/smart phones in pocket and could pull up Google.

Sorry to hear about C'Mell. Megumi and Seimi continue to be fine. Megumi has trained me to give treats in response to a meaningful look at the treat cabinet and a meow. I am a good human ☺.

All my current "drawing" is the 3-D sort done with yarn or fabric, but I'm still snapping lots of photos.

This is more of a quickie LoC. I'm sure Dainis is aware that going back a long ways, the Japanese even had a social convention of adult adoptions when a family had need of an heir. Estate sales are difficult enough, when there is family to handle it — especially if there is a rush to settle the estate. I sometimes have some regrets for some of the items my mother simply threw away as "junk" preparing for the estate sale following the deaths of my Grandma and uncle . . . and afterward what was sent to Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul and Purple Heart . . .

Tell me about it. Or my cousin the computer games designer Christopher Natsume, né Christopher Cayce. His wife Shizuka's family had no male heirs. As for the things thrown out, I think of the letters to my cousin Alex H. Major II, thousands and thousands of letters on family history from distant and lost cousins . . . all hauled away to the dump after

his death.

On the other tentacle at 74-75 years old my dad has made contact with relatives all over the US. He's positively struck up on-line friendships with cousins in California.

Robert Kennedy: Has anyone tried these new-fangled LED bulbs?

I've got a couple of them (in areas where I spend many evening/night hours) and like them very much. One of them I've had about two years now and it's still going strong, though the expense means it will take awhile for me to put them in all the lighting in my most active rooms. I do want more, particularly for the light on the basement stairs, as turning on the light while carrying a laundry-basket AND keeping cats from heading into the basement is a juggling act. LED bulbs use so little electricity and give off so little heat it's not unreasonable to leave that stairway light turned on.

George Price: Online there are several examples of modern cargo containers being turned into homes. Two to four containers that have come from overseas and not headed anywhere else are purchased, and cleaned up. Detailing and decorating turns them into relatively nice housing for much less than the costs of new traditional construction.

If you ever go to the Henry Ford Museum, be sure to get a look at the Dymaxion House. — JTM

In my own neighborhood, there are four or five houses that were foreclosed on a few years ago and they are still empty and often apparently ignored by the banks. (Overgrown lawns; one recently had windows broken.)

One on my street recently seemed to have a realtor and a clean-up/repair crew there. It's be good if someone could buy that house and LIVE there. It's less than a block from the grade school . . . how could it be left empty for so long?

OK gotta get this in the mail.

From: **Rod E. Smith** September 8, 2013
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I was on pain medication at LoneStarCon, due to hurting my back the week before. As a result I slept through more of the con than I wanted to. (Of course, without the Tramadol I likely would not have been there at all.) I also seem to have returned with a mild case of con crud, so will keep further comments general and brief.

The facilities were good and well arranged. I heard some people complaining about the long walk between the Marriott RiverCenter (the party hotel, where I was staying though on a non-party floor) and the convention center. However, even with my back (and left hip,

thigh and occasionally calf) still hurting I found the Riverwalk route quick and easy. The convention hall was so large the number of dealers seemed small, but apparently this was an illusion. Many dealers reported sales to be up this year, but others said things were about the same as the past few. There were some nice exhibits, though the *Enterprise* bridge segment recreation was both worn and never attended. In contrast, the Dr. Who exhibit nearby was a delight. There was a radio-controlled K-9, some Daleks (one of them also RC) plus the compound creature from *Brain of Morbius*.

I kept missing the few panels I wanted to attend, mostly due to falling asleep, as well as one being overfull when I got there.

I saw many people I know, and met many folks new to me. There were numerous interesting conversations, good food in the consuite (plus some nice restaurants and a food court nearby) and free WiFi in the lobbies of the hotels and convention center. (It was pay everywhere else, though.)

My con photos may be found at:

<http://www.rodsmith.onthisnet.com/images/LoneStarCon3/>

In the letters section, Jim Stumm mentions growing glaciers. The September/October 2013 issue of *Archeology* magazine has an article on the salvage archeology of shrinking ice fields. These are not glaciers, but similar patches of ice trapped in depressions. Glaciers aren't good for archeology, 'cause they grind stuff to bits. Ice fields — which may be offshoots of glaciers or form independently — just sit there. When the ice melts, items from different eras often wind up lying on the bare ground together, but the only damage is from freezing and weathering. They're considered in situ. The article mentions that in some areas of the world glaciers and ice fields are growing, because the warming climate is bringing increased precipitation. Something which most climate models predicted.

Ötzi the Iceman was found because of a warming spell. Let me see; increased glaciers are proof of global warming, as are shrinking ones.

— JTM

Part of the lack of warming the past few years is due to extremely low recent solar activity. We just left a near-record low sunspot trough, and the coming peak isn't promising to be very impressive.

I have a feeling I'm missing something from this issue I meant to comment on, but can't find it. Oh, well; I'll attribute the feeling (or missing it, if I remember what later) to lack of sleep. :-)

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

Robert S. Kennedy: I agree with your favorable view of *Foyle's War* rather than Wolansky's. I also think that Samantha is a main attraction. I read that 3 more episodes of *Foyle's War* have been made and will be aired soon. After WW2 Foyle investigates Russian spies.

Inspector Morse rated not only a sequel, *Inspector Lewis*, but also a prequel, *Endeavor*, depicting quite a believable young Morse.

Taras Wolansky: "Sanctimonious liberal prig" is not my impression of Foyle at all. As for him being right while his superiors are wrong, this is a common trope which we see very often. Do you dislike all dramas where the hero is at odds with his superiors, or is it just Foyle who particularly annoys you?

Richard A. Dengrove: Yes, judicial decisions should be based on precedent (case law) provided those precedents do reflect verbatim the original meaning of the words of the Constitution and Amendments. And conversely, judicial decisions should overturn precedents that depart from a verbatim reading. I suspect that liberals did not object to the separate but equal precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* being overturned by *Brown v. Board of Education*.

As for British law, they rely on precedent more than the US should because they don't have a written constitution. But we do. And our Constitution says, in Article VI, that the Constitution shall be the supreme law of the land. Justices of the Supreme Court swear an oath to uphold the Constitution, not judicial precedent.

George W. Price: You refer to an editorial that says we should have laws that promote the flourishing of children. That ship sailed 50 years ago when LBJ's War on Poverty began subsidizing bastardy. Since then we've had a couple generations of single mothers, supported by the Govt., often turning their children out on the streets, sometimes without feeding them, with little attempt at discipline. Marriage laws have no effect on them since these women are not married anyway.

There's a dispute currently in Buffalo Public Schools about whether to continue to feed children breakfast in schools as well as school lunches. Proponents say, we have to feed them because children are coming to school hungry. But no one asks, why aren't their mothers feeding them? I suspect they would answer that their mothers are too poor. But these women qualify for food stamps, WIC, earned income credit based on how many children they have, and a flat out tax subsidy of \$1000 per child per year, and many more welfare programs besides these. And with all this they still can't feed their children breakfast?

If the flourishing of children is really our concern, it isn't marriage laws we need. What we need is take-care-of-your-children laws, aimed at criminally negligent mothers.

I have often read about a child battered to death by a single-mother's boyfriend. Now

often have I read about a child battered by a same-sex couple? Never. Let's fix what's broken, not what isn't.

I agree with Ron Paul's view that Govt should have nothing to do with marriage. Why should people need a govt license to marry? I don't see what harm there would be in cohabitation contracts involving multiple marriage partners. The huge social problem we see today is with single motehrs who have no cohabiting partners. It seems strange to me that there should be so much concern about what marriage laws should permit it when today ever increasing numbers of peopel are dispensing with marriage entirely and simply living together.

SYRIA: Why is it supposed to be more shocking to kill a couple 100 people with poison gas than it is to kill 100,000 people with bullets and bombs?

From: **Lloyd Penney** September 13, 2013
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Not far to the deadline, but there's never enough time to write everything I'd like. And now, on to *Alexiad*, whole number 70, and comments on the contents.

I didn't go to San Antonio, but heard so much about it, good and bad. Was a Faned Feast held? I don't think it was. And, I don't think you and Lisa got to the Worldcon, if I recall correctly.

A Lunar National Park? IIRC, no one owns the moon, so the United States cannot set up a Lunar National Park, according to a United Nations document. Maintaining the landing sites of the various Apollo missions would be one thing, but there's lots of infrastructure that needs the maintenance in the US itself. And, it's a lot easier and cheaper to get to.

We are still hoping for London, but if we cannot, there is now the temptation of the Detroit NASFiC, Detcon 1, just down the highway. As if there aren't enough high-cost conventions for me to go to . . . that includes Costume-Con in Toronto next year. Given our finances, the Spokane Worldcon is out of the question, and I suspect just about any Worldcon after that is the same. (Except for Montréal, should they win 2017.)

The letter column . . . Montréal has been invaded by people who don't speak the language? Montréal, like many large cities, is fairly cosmopolitan, with a variety of residents from all over the world. I daresay that upsets the current separatist government in Québec, especially with their new Charter of Québec Values, which can easily be interpreted as extremely racist and xenophobic.

My loc . . . nope, Will and Kate got a little George. The future king is assured, and I think Elizabeth will rest a little easier, now that she is a great-grandmother. The cats I listed were all owned by friends, and who gave to us some

time for attention, purrs and cuddles. I miss them all, especially MomCat, who we almost brought home.

To Taras Wolansky: I'm partial to redheads, too. I married one. And my candidate for the most unlikely actor to play Sherlock Holmes is Matt Frewer. But yes, he did, four times. For me and my generation, Jeremy Brett was the best, but then, he was also in the best productions.

I have had two interviews this week for interesting positions. If you're sick to death of hearing about my never-ending job hunt, imagine how I feel! I'd be happy to take a lottery win, never having to darken the door of a potential employer ever again. But until that happens . . .

From 1976 to 1988 was my hard time. Talk about your "never-ending job hunt" all you like. You have my sympathy.

— JTM

It is a Friday, Yvonne will be home from work soon, and we have things to do like have dinner and do the groceries. This weekend, there's a fannish garage sale and a fannish pool party, so there's lots to look forward to, and lots to forget about for a couple of days, anyway. I hope your weekend is as inviting as mine is, and many thanks for this issue. We will see you with the next one.

From: **Jerry Kaufman** September 14, 2013
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We received this *Alexiad* before Worldcon, and I read it afterward. I heard you couldn't make it to San Antonio because of car problems. Too bad — so far as I know, because you weren't there, the Faned Feast didn't take place.

Or it did happen, but Guy Lillian didn't tell us about it.

My impression is that there were not a lot of fanzine people at the con, unless you also add people that used to be fan publishers like Chris Couch or the Nielsen Haydens who attended because they are professionally involved in one way or another. Chris, whose fanzines in the late 1960s and early 1970s carried some of my earliest attempts at writing, is now a professor/instructor in the history of illustration, comics, and science fiction.

I think Corflu has got to be like that; people who had been there and done that a long time ago, and those who are going to pub their ish RealSoonNow.

— JTM

Bill Patterson is harsh but fair in assessing the legal flaws in that episode of *Perception*. I had a misgiving or two about it, myself, but the general charm of the principal actors and the intriguing psychomedical conditions the show

highlights keep me watching. I do wonder what the writers will do when they have run through all of Oliver Sacks' books, however.

Now that we're well past Worldcon and visits from foreigners (we took Bill Wright to the Museum of Flight while he was here last weekend, with Andy Hooper as resident expert — he does miniature war-gaming there twice a year), we intend to enjoy the rest of the month. This will include mailing copies of the finally-completed issue of *Littlebrook* — #9. Keep watching the skies your mailbox.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 17, 2013
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Thank you for Vol. 12, No. 4 (August 2013), Whole Number 70. Have you decided to do away with the Vol. and No. and just use the Month, Year, and Whole Number?

Joe and Lisa: I am truly sorry that because of car trouble you were not able to make WorldCon in San Antonio. I was very much looking forward to seeing you both. Since you were not there I did not attempt the Faneds Feast. It was good to see Milt Stevens, Taras Wolansky, Martin Morse Wooster, and to meet David Harrington. It may very well be my last WorldCon. Well, I may make it to Spokane in 2015. We'll see. I've been sick since returning from San Antonio so if WorldCon makes me sick...☺

See above at Milt Stevens's letter.

Some of the panels were interesting and others not so much. There were a number of panels relating to Robert E. Howard and they were interesting. On Friday *The Romance of Train Travel* was very much enjoyed. I have not been on a train since the early 70s. But, next year I plan to take the train to the U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association reunion in Portland, Oregon and am looking forward to it with great anticipation. On Saturday *Lois McMaster Bujold's Vorkosigan Universe* was excellent. There are fans that see the characters in her novels as living, breathing persons. Well, they do grow and develop so maybe those fans are right. That day I was wearing my 2.8% *Neanderthal DNA* T-shirt from *23andMe*. As I was leaving the room a voice said: "I see that you have tested with *23andMe* too" and there was Lois. She had been hiding in the back of the room so as not to disrupt the meeting. She indicated her Neanderthal DNA percent but I did not hear her clearly. It seemed to be something a little over three percent, but I'm not sure. On Sunday at 11:00 a.m. there was a panel on *Fiction about Real Politics and How Writers Get it Wrong*. Sadly it was not enjoyable because they were not on subject and were all on the Left politically so there was not any balance. I should have gone to lunch and then

Firearms in the Victorian Era at Noon. The Masquerade and the HUGO Ceremonies were quite enjoyable. It apparently took his retiring for Stanley Schmidt to receive his long well deserved HUGO. Oh, by the way Taras, Martin, David, and I went out to dinner. I had carried *The Unincorporated Future* by Dani & Eytan Kollin with me in the hope that they would be at WorldCon (since they were not at Loscon) and would autograph it. No such luck. The Kollin brothers seem to have disappeared. Big spender me purchased two T-shirts, picked up four free paperbacks, and a free T-shirt.

Lisa Major: Your mentioning culling books reminded me to finally start culling my large pile of U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association magazines. It's such an outstanding magazine that I have not been able to throw any of them away. I started glancing through them to see if there were still any I wanted to keep. The first one I looked at was Fall 2007. What a surprise when I saw that it was the issue with Rodford Edmiston Smith's article on "Battleship vs. Battlecruiser" and Joe's "Historical Note" regarding battlecruisers. It's an issue that will be kept.

Rodford Edmiston: Another excellent column, *Lighting*. As has been mentioned previously, I have several something's.

Jim Stumm: Thanks for more books.

Joe Major: I'm aware that you do colonoscopy wide awake. I don't know how you do it. I would be in such incredible pain that they would not be able to perform the procedure.

I have had worse cramps. Like just recently, where I had to leave work early and spend most of the afternoon and early evening in bed with a heating pad.

— JTM

George W. Price: My condolence on the passing of your wife, Virginia.

Taras Wolansky: It was good seeing you in San Antonio. By the way, my middle initial is "S".

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Sept. 19, 2013
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,
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Not many comments in this August 2013 issue of *Alexiad*, since I have sworn off political remarks, unless they are addressed to me. If I have given a reasoned rationale for that policy, forget it: my antipathy has resulted from politics getting on my nerves.

What used to get on my nerves as well are people like Jenny McCarthy, who go on talk shows and spew forth ridiculous doctrines. That is until I had this revelation. I know the host always pretends to take them seriously. You're not supposed to laugh at anyone's folly these days, no matter how absurd. However, it struck me like lightning since talk shows only

interview clowns these days, the less pixilated portion of the audience got the message a long time ago — they're nuts.

Whatever the audience really thinks, it's very easy to advocate crazy doctrines. It's harder to write alternate history. I doubt any human can pen one without inconsistencies and illogic. More than other genres, you need to use all the literary tricks you can muster so the reader will ignore the inconsistencies and illogic, and accept the alternate history as fact. Charles Sheffield projected 'Shore Job' wouldn't have fit the bill unless he did some fancy footwork in the actual story.

You have discussed Sheffield's alternate Heinlein, and alternate tales written beforehand speculating on the Moon shots. So I feel entitled to tell you an idea for a novel I stashed away for some future never. Germany wins World War I; and, because of the humiliation and reparations, France becomes Fascist under the Croix de Fer. On the other hand, the Kaiser is overthrown during the Depression, and a Social Democratic government rules in Germany. With blitzkrieg, they easily defeat the French.

No excitement here, I admit. For some suspense, I could hide the ending until the end. However, more likely, I will place any excitement in a plot occurring in that world. Maybe ordinary people, maybe big wigs. Anyway, I hope that is what I would do.

If my writing was not up to this, it would still improve many TV shows. When I have happened to view TV shows recently, I've cringed. TNT's *Perception* would be par. In fact, cop procedurals especially have descended into hackland. The plot appears to take place in Cloud Cuckoo Land.

Some things bad can be controlled like TV scripts; other things bad can't be. I wish George Price many condolences on the death of his wife. It must be tough to lose a beloved wife, as his obviously was. Strange as it seems given our disagreements, let me add myself to the list of those who can't help feeling sad.

Some things, like our reaction to death, are obvious; other things require a little thought. At the end of that thought, I can't help but think the convention Leigh Kimmel is referring to is Dragoncon. And the alleged (?) miscreant who made him wary of selling at Dragoncon is Ed Kramer. Dragoncon's problem has been pasted all over the web as if it was a wanted poster.

A slightly more puzzling conundrum than the convention Leigh is referring to occurs in a letter by Rodney Leighton. He says he is reading *The History Of The Jews*. Is it a translation of a work by Josephus, AKA Titus Flavius Josephus AKA Joseph ben Matityahu? He wrote a book by that title in Ancient times.

I prefer to refer to him as General Two-Gun Joe Cohen from Galilee, the biggest l'il county in Texas.

—JTM

With my comment on an Ancient Jew with many names, I end this letter. My final comment is "See. Richard without politics." Poor Richard? No. Though I always write my letters for *Alexiad* with gusto, I am a little happier with this de-politicized letter than I have been with the normal run.

From: **George W. Price** Sept. 23, 2013
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August *Alexiad*:

Rodford Edmiston's "Joy of High Tech" piece on "Lighting" says, "One type of non-electric lighting not often seen today is the gas mantle wall fixture." The apartment building I grew up in was built around 1880. It originally had gas lighting, not electricity, as you could tell by the stub end of a gas fixture still jutting out of the wall of our front room, about seven feet up. It was no longer connected to the gas, and the burner and mantle were long gone, but that brass pipe remained.

That's why Chicago's gas utility was "Peoples Gas Light & Coke Co." with no comma after "Gas." It started out as the gas-light company; gas was not yet used for heating and cooking. The coke was a byproduct of passing steam and air over red-hot coal to make "illuminating gas" (a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide). After World War II a pipeline from Texas reached Chicago and natural gas replaced the manufactured gas.

Bill Patterson finds my comments on homosexuality "completely rebarbative." That one I had to look up (it means "repellent"). He quotes extensively from the Heinlein correspondence to show that RAH had no animus toward homosexual activity, and under the right circumstances might have been willing to try it. Most interesting — and a very long way from my feelings. As I have made clear, "gay sex" is a complete turn-off for me — I might even say "rebarbative."

I hope I have also made clear that I am absolutely against any persecution or abuse of homosexuals. What they do behind closed doors is none of my business, and I feel no need to punish or suppress it. What does bother me is the insistent redefining of it as normal rather than as a behavioral deformity. I still have huge difficulty in accepting as normal a trait that seriously discourages reproduction.

However, that applies only to those whose desires are primarily fixated on their own sex to the exclusion of the opposite sex. Bisexuality, now, is another matter — if you do your duty by the opposite sex, it hardly matters that you also play around with your own sex. I do not consider as "deformed" the

old-time sailors who buggered each other on long voyages, but when they reached port headed joyously home to their wives, or to the nearest whorehouse. Or both. And I suspect they would have been horrified at the idea of marrying their shipmates".

The Royal Navy had the death penalty for "sodomy". Court-martials for that were few.

Jerry Kaufman says, "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."

The value of gold is not arbitrary. It is set by the impersonal interplay of supply and demand in the market, not by any one individual or small group. It is the value of fiat paper money — which is what we've got now — that is arbitrary, because it is set by the will (some might say "whim") of the monetary authorities. Gold is more objective, in that it exists entirely independently of politicians, and is also valued as jewelry and as an industrial commodity. When a government collapses and its paper money is no longer good for anything but wallpaper and asswipes, any gold coins it may have issued will still have full value.

The function of a gold standard is to stop politicians from inflating the currency by issuing new money that they can spend without having to raise taxes. Such an increase in the quantity of money is the primary cause of the wage-price spiral. (It was a great boon to irresponsible politicians when the term "inflation" came to mean the wage-price spiral itself instead of meaning the excessive issuance of money which causes the spiral. That severs cause from effect and conceals political guilt for rising prices.)

Gold money deters inflation because when politicians want to spend more they can't just turn on a printing press and grind out a flood of gold. Because gold is scarce and expensive to produce, it is physically almost impossible for the quantity in circulation to increase by more than about two percent a year.

When a big discovery of gold does significantly increase the quantity in circulation, prices and wages then rise to a new level that fully absorbs the new gold. This happens infrequently and relatively slowly. That is vastly preferable to the inflation that fiat paper money allows, where there is no limit to how much can be issued, nor how fast. See Germany after World War I, or Zimbabwe more recently. Nor is the U.S. exempt, though so far we have been lucky: our worst inflation of modern times was in the 1970s, when the price level more than doubled.

There is no perfect money, but with all its faults the gold standard has worked enormously better than any fiat-money scheme.

Richard Dengrove doubts that I would

accept as "a true gold standard" the system the U.S. had "between the Civil War and the Depression." Well, it wasn't the purest of gold standards, but it was much better than what we've had since, and going back to it would be an advance.

The purest gold standard allows no money except gold, or certificates for the gold actually in the Treasury's vaults. I doubt if anyone anywhere has fully lived up to that. It is almost irresistibly tempting to issue more certificates than can be redeemed, in the expectation (as Mr. Dengrove notes) that only a small fraction will have to be redeemed at any given time. As said, the politicians are always looking for ways to get more money to spend than they can raise by honest taxation.

The gold standard has many possible variations. The standard doesn't even have to be gold — silver will work almost as well. Milton Friedman's *Money Mischief* (1992) discusses at length the possibilities of bimetallism, in which both gold and silver standards coexist. That is, the dollar is defined as both a specific weight of gold and a specific weight of silver, with the ratio between them set by law. (This was a big issue after the Civil War, and was what Bryan's famous "cross of gold" speech was about.) Bimetallism has serious problems — what happens when the legal ratio between gold and silver prices varies significantly from the market ratio? — but Friedman thought it might still be workable.

The essence of a commodity standard, whether gold or silver or you name it, is that it must have a reasonably stable market value independently of the fiat of politicians. Since gold (or silver) is too cumbersome for large transactions, paper money is a practical necessity, but it must always be fully redeemable in gold (or silver) upon demand. And there must be no way the government can make us honor unredeemable currency; there must be no "legal tender" which we are forced to use.

Irresponsible politicians hate any kind of gold (or silver) standard because it subjects their spending to a discipline which they loathe. And of course that is why they damned well should be subjected to it.

It might be wisest to take the production of money completely away from government. Leave it to private mints to coin gold and silver and issue fully-redeemable paper certificates (with small seigniorage fees to cover costs and a decent profit, or even an indecent profit). Since a private mint wouldn't have the advantage of legal-tender laws forcing us to use its money, it could stay in business only by earning and maintaining a reputation for supplying coins of full weight and true alloy and not over-issuing paper certificates.

Read Chapter 32 of Henry Hazlitt's *Time Will Run Back* (1951, 1966) for more on this.

— JTM

Turning to another subject, Mr. Dengrove disputes my thesis that the financial meltdown was largely caused by the Community Reinvestment Act which punished lenders if they didn't issue large numbers of "subprime" mortgages, and that the lenders happily went along with this because they were confident that the feds would bail them out at need.

Dengrove says, "As far as I can see, no such cushion existed. The infrastructure for the bailout was not created until the meltdown neared the bottom." True, but incomplete. What created the expectation of a bailout was the very existence of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as "Government Sponsored Enterprises." Lenders understood that to mean that Uncle Sam stood solidly behind them. In fact, that's the real (if unstated) reason for them to be "Government Sponsored" — so they can tap into the Treasury in their hour of need.

To be sure, hardly anybody — and especially not the regulators — believed that the boom was really a bubble, so they felt no need to prepare for a bailout. I have yet to hear of any regulator who said, "This housing boom is really an unsustainable bubble, but we regulators can't stop it because Congress won't let us. So get ready for a bust." Only a few observers (notably the *Wall Street Journal*) warned of a bust, and they were howled down as racists who didn't want poor people to get decent housing. And even the WSJ didn't anticipate how bad the bust would be.

If we don't want to go through this again, we should abolish all GSEs — for housing and anything else — and let all lenders know that they are strictly on their own. As it is, Fannie and Freddie are still in business, the CRA has not been amended, and so you can start looking for the next boom — and the next bust.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** Sept. 24, 2013
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With the passing of Fred Pohl, who is now the Senior? Ursula K. Le Guin and X. J. Kennedy were both born in 1929, on dates I have not troubled myself to research. Kennedy (as Joquel Kennedy) had a couple of magazine stories in 1951, but that was then all; Julian May's "Dune Roller" came a year or two later, and I know of nobody living whose first professional publication of SF/F was also in those years.

See above about Dave Kyle.
If you think him undeserving,
there's James Gunn, born 1923,
first story "Paradox" (Thrilling
Wonder Stories, October 1949).

Joe Kennedy was a fan and letterhack in the 1940s — before my time, but I had

collected all those pulps. When I was introduced to him in Ann Arbor in 1958, I asked if he were that Kennedy, and he was too surprised to evade the question. His past, unknown to his fellow graduate students, had caught up with him.

I recently found *Scottish Military Dress* by Peter Cochrane worth acquiring — very nice artwork by Jeffrey Burn. A few days later I became aware that the color art I had admired in *Warfare in the Classical World* by John Warry was by this same man. There is life in his figures, even when they are portrayed just standing. (In the latter book, there is greater variety of posture.)

Warfare . . . was a library discard; recently I have been pleased to get more of the same: "21" by Patrick O'Brian and *The Sun's Bride* by Gillian Bradshaw, my favorite living historical novelist. In this, as in one or two others, the female lead can deal with adversaries with extreme prejudice.

Among donated books cheaply sold at a library branch, I found a batch of war books and chose a few that looked especially readable and informative. I especially recommend *To War in a Stringbag* by Commander Charles Lamb; I got it in a book club edition which in turn goes back to another publisher's hardcover. My copy of *Popski's Private Army* is ditto; it must have been in the Bantam editions that these got drawings by Greg Beecham, showing weapons and aircraft on the pages where they are mentioned. Anyway, Lamb flew the Swordfish, a biplane with a radial engine nicknamed of the variety of ordnance it could carry — including, notably, a torpedo. It was one of these that crippled the *Bismarck's* steering gear.

It's not all combat experiences; a major part of the book recounts experiences in a Vichy French prison camp. "I realized that I had grown up in that camp, and ever afterwards would have to guard against a tendency to try to measure people with an unfair yardstick: 'How would he behave in Leghous?'"

There was a coin show here, meaning a hall full of dealers — in large measure with U.S. silver and gold, totally boring to look at. I looked for those who had, for instance, ancient coins, and used the opportunity to shoot the breeze with some of them, recounting some experiences and airing some opinions. Among the very few coins I desired to have was a Flying Eagle cent; one had a batch of low-grade specimens for \$5. I did not want to spend folding money, but I offered to pay with wartime nickels (an alloy with silver but no nickel) and brought them around the next day, eight of the fifteen I had. I have long had specimens of the 2¢ and the (cupro-nickel) 3¢, pierced specimens got for a song at rummage sales . . . I have read somewhere that the sum of money and th count of coins named in "The Gift of the Magi" requires a 2¢ coin.

This same dealer had a little box with low-grade cents and another with nickels from a century or so ago. One of the Indian Head

cents was worn flat and barely recognizable. We just don't see coins like that any more. Once in a blue moon I see a nickel of 1939 or 1940, and it's good for another seventy years, if we do not by then have a New Dollar.

Fans, as is well known, scarcely ever talk about science fiction. In my everyday life, I almost never find anyone with whom I can talk about SF or books in general, or about coins, or about the Napoleonic wars, or . . . Who is there that recognizes the names of Gobrecht or Longacre, or of Ney, Soult, Davout, Junot, and Berthier? (I cannot offhand match the latter group to the titles and honors they were awarded — quick, which was the Prince of Eckmühl? — but I can look them up . . . as I can, for that matter, the capitals of the 50 states.)

Unless you've read E. F. Delderfield's *The March of the Twenty-Six* (1962, 1966).

Ney — Prince de la Moskowa,
duc d'Elchingen
Soult — Duc de Dalmatie
Davout — Prince d'Eckmühl,
duc d'Auerstaedt
Junot — Duc d'Abrantès
Berthier — Prince de
Neuchâtel, prince de
Wagram, duc de Valangin
Soult was called "The Duke of
Damnation" by the British fighting
him in Spain.

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** September 28, 2013
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Not in 1972, 2012, 2016, or 2020: Madrid put in yet another bid to host the summer Olympics, and the city lost. Again. The bid committee, including Prince Felipe, who had been an athlete at the 1992 games, did its best, yet the vote on September 7 went to Tokyo for 2020. Apparently the state of the Spanish economy weighed heavily against the bid.

So *Redshirts* won the Hugo for best novel. I read it and *2012* by Kim Stanley Robinson. I enjoyed *Redshirts*, which I got as a birthday present last year and then had John Scalzi autograph at ChiCon 7 for my mother-in-law so I could re-gift the book, but I think *2012* was more ambitious. Still, *Redshirts* had its strengths, like making my in-laws laugh out loud (they passed it around avidly). All the contenders sounded worthy.

While there's been a lot of excitement about the next Doctor in *Doctor Who*, here in Spain there's been more anticipation for the next season of *Isabel*, which started in September. The season opened in 1472 and features Boabdil, Cristobal Colón (Chris Columbus to you), Torquemada, Juana la

Beltraneja, and some ill-fated Jews, among many other historic personages. Some scenes were even filmed in the Alhambra, where the Patio of the Lions has just been restored.

Speaking of television, my husband has been watching *The Walking Dead*. He's thought of a sure-fire method to deal with a zombie apocalypse in Spain: just rush to a walled city like Avila or Lugo, shut the gates, and wait it out. For that matter, the site of the castle in Alcalá de Henares near Madrid still has its curtain wall intact, although the castle where Isabel lived right after her marriage to Fernando is no longer standing. Bring on los zombis!

In September, my husband and I went to Alcalá de Henares to a 17th-century convent next to the medieval walls. The building now houses the Madrid Regional Archeological Museum. We saw the exhibition "Fragor Hannibalis" about the Carthaginian general with the elephants and what he did in Spain. We learned that his family name, Barca, means "lightning" and referred to the lightning-fast military tactics of his family.

We also went to an exhibition on Salvador Dalí, "All of the Poetic Suggestions and All of the Plastic Possibilities" at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid in September, and I learned he was a polyglot as well as an artist.

My condolences to George W. Price at his enormous loss.

In the last issue, he said he doubts that any major Christian denomination espouses anything like the concept of jihad. Well, there's the Christian crusade. There have been a number of them. The Spanish Civil War was officially declared a crusade by the Spanish Catholic Church, which supported the Fascists, and 100,000 people still lay in unmarked mass graves across the country, killed by the Christians.

And he asks "Would those reckless private borrowers have dared to take such risks if they hadn't known the government would bail them out?" History give us a resounding answer: Yes, they would. Again and again. With and without bailouts. Bubbles and panics abound in history, including recent history.

In legal news, Spain's government plans to raise the age of consent for sexual relations to 16 years old. It is currently 13 years old, the second-youngest in Europe. The country with the youngest age of consent is Vatican City, at 12.

I'm sorry to report that my sister's cancer has come back and is incurable. I'll return to Texas sooner than I had expected. Tobacco killed my mother when she was three years older than I am now. It is now killing my little sister. If you smoke, please quit. Your loved ones want you to spend your old age with them.

From: **John Purcell** September 28, 2013
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Well, we certainly missed you two in San Antonio, Joe and Lisa. As it turned out, there was no Faned's Feast on Saturday of WorldCon as it was sort of planned. Such a disaster! Turns out that the original plan of meeting at noon in the Fanzine Lounge so to walk from there to lunch did not pan out. Then Guy Lillian misinterpreted the Feast info as being on Sunday at noon in the Fanzine Lounge, but that's when the WOOF collation was scheduled. So he was properly corrected — politely, too; only took a few lashes with wet noodles this time — but Chris Garcia thought we were all meeting Saturday noon at a different location — and a different restaurant, too — so he and the Lovely Linda Wenzelberger (hope I spelled that correctly) had a nice lunch while nobody else did because we had no freaking idea what was going on! Man, we sure could have used your planning expertise, Joe. It was a mess.

I posted the name of the restaurant and the day and time we were supposed to be meeting. As the cat said when he was found in the bag of kitty litter, "That's what it's for!"

Speaking of disasters, my plans for the Fanzine Lounge did not work well at all. I had hoped to demonstrate the hectograph process on Friday, but when the manual typewriter I schlepped to the con — an 80 year old, 20 pound, gray steel Remington — revealed its aging flaws (namely, a jammed advance mechanism), all hopes of producing carbon zines and hecto masters were dashed. We did have mimeo stencils, so Warren Buff and a couple other fans hand-drew some stencil art and attempted to crank out product on the Rex Rotary mimeograph set up, but I don't know how well that went. So the Lounge became more or less just a place to rendezvous or relax with a drink since there was a bar right next to the lounge. That helped out, but didn't fix the typewriter. Mary Robinette Kowal tried, as did Pat Virzi, Warren, myself and others, but unless we had proper tools, there was no way. *sigh* Such went my Fanzine Lounge trials and tribulations during LoneStarCon 3.

My sincerest condolences to Lisa on the loss of her friend. That is always so hard, and this year sure seems to be a tough one in this regard. Way too many good people going to that big con suite in the sky. The one that hurts me quite a bit was the recent news of the death of Delphyne-Hanke Woods (a.k.a., Joan-Hanke Woods). Back in the late 1970s Joan always gave me such wonderful artwork for my early fanzines (notably *This House*) whenever I asked. She was a delightful person and I miss her. Many of us do.

You know, I have been really enjoying a lot of Alternate History books lately, so the book reviews in your fanzine are a constant source of new titles to get. Case in point, this issue your review of *Gray Tide in the East* sounds very

interesting. Once that book goes on the bedside reading shelf I fully expect a chunk of the wall to fall out. Maybe I should put all of those Turtledove books on a different bookshelf. That might help.

Since I read a Kindle edition, I wouldn't have that problem. — JTM

Well, I think it's time to wrap up this loc. Or LOC, LoC, or however that acronym is formed. Steve Fahnestalk wrote a blog entry on the *Amazing Stories* website recently, along those lines — "To LOC or not to LOC" — so I fully expect another Fannish War to engulf us all. Saints, preserve us! It will be a mess. Carcasses of fanzines stripped clean of substance strewn across the wasteland . . . Time to stock up my fannish underground bunker with zines, beer and munchies. It's gonna be a long one, it looks like.

From: **Taras Wolansky** October 1, 2013
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August 2013:

Joe: I'm a survivor of whooping cough myself, from the days when the treatment was mostly prayer. (At least it sounded like that when my mother told me about it: she promised me to the Church. And I think I was on track, until I started reading Jack Vance and H. Beam Piper.) Hope we're not going back to those days.

Sorry you couldn't make Worldcon. I don't know if I was ever so pleased with the results of the Hugo voting before. Not one of the Yugo winners — the most inappropriate nominees — won the Hugo. Maybe the worst winner was the Pat Cadigan story, "The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi". Not really bad, but narrow-minded, intolerant and politically correct.

The worst winners were Tansy Rayner Roberts, John DeNardo, and Galen Dara.

Even the three "Dr. Who" episodes (probable Yugo winners if the Committee had ever seen them) lost, to an outstanding episode of "Game of Thrones". At Paul Cornell's literary beer, he told us how he doesn't like being identified as a Dr. Who writer, especially since the producers started rejecting all his script ideas. He laughed when I pointed out that they stopped buying his scripts — and promptly lost the Hugo!

I also signed up for a kaffeeklatsch with Michael Swanwick. He told of visiting a former Soviet closed city. "And this building was built by Russian slaves ... and this one by German slaves in the Fifties ..." his hosts told him. He had a sudden epiphany, he said: everything your parents told you about the

Soviet Union was true! (File that story under "Liberals always admit conservatives were right all along, when it no longer matters.")

Review of Jack Campbell/John Hemry's latest "Lost Fleet" book: If I may venture a mild criticism of a series I like very much, Hemry has his heroes win too much. It might be usefully compared to Patrick O'Brian's "Aubrey-Maturin" series: the protagonists survive but they don't always win. In the long run, this may make Hemry's side-series about the losers of the war more interesting and unpredictable.

Bill Patterson: So now we find out that, in addition to being a wild-eyed feminist by the standards of his time, Heinlein was also ahead of his time on homosexuality. If they didn't consider attacking him an imperative, progressives would have much to admire.

Funny thing. All the negative information about homosexuality I have comes from gay sources (not that I've ever bothered to look for it). For example, it was in Andrew Sullivan's blog that I read of a researcher who claimed being a sexually active gay male, on average, took thirty years off your life. Sullivan pooh-poohed this, but claimed the real number was "unknowable". Then there's Dan Savage. Some years ago he filed stories from the Republican Iowa Presidential caucuses, claiming: a) that he tried to give his flu to the volunteers for a social conservative candidate he especially hated, by licking coffee cups and putting them with the clean ones; and b) that he illegally voted in the caucuses. (Another gay writer commented bitterly at the time that Savage had played into the worst stereotypes about gays.) Now, non-Iowans voting in the Iowa caucuses is a crime, and when authorities started asking questions, Savage quickly changed his tune and claimed the story he filed was a lie.

Years later, I would sometimes read the *New York Times* op-ed page, and see articles on gay topics bylined "Dan Savage". This must be a different Dan Savage, I speculated. Surely the *Times* won't publish a self-confessed journalistic fraud. (I was younger then and still naïve about mainstream journalism.) But then he published a column that – tendentiously, dishonestly, but recognizably – discussed that very scandal.

The reason I mention this is, Savage recently came to my attention again, when I happened to learn about his proposal to use the name of a certain former Pennsylvania Senator, passionately hated by gays, as the term for something gay men routinely encounter in their sexual activity. And the scales fell from my eyes: for decades I'd had an unrealistically sanitized image of those very activities (to the limited extent I thought about them at all). Remember Heinlein's wisecrack, that God shouldn't have put the playground so close to the sewer. Gay men are playing, to extend Heinlein's metaphor, in the sewer, with open wounds. I guess this is what they really meant by the vague term, "unsafe sex", all

along. And, perhaps, why Michael Fumento's 1990 book, *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS*, turned out to be right, even if it cost Fumento his job and his career.

I don't know if he ever read Fumento's book, but I remember Samuel R. Delany giving a talk at a New England con a few years later. He was grimly amused by claims of heterosexual AIDS: closeted gays on the down low, in his opinion. (Aside from Muslims, perhaps, the black community is the most hostile to homosexuality.)

Joy V. Smith: Looks like everybody is getting tired of the Red John storyline in TV's *The Mentalist*. The producers promise to reveal his identity this season. (Or maybe they'll copy a page from last season's finale of *Elementary*!)

Alexis Gilliland: Were you ever able to figure out what Philip Jose Farmer was trying to achieve with his "interminable" Baycon speech? Did he ever say anything about it afterward? It might be interesting to read. Or skim.

If it comes to that, there are people who are "obligate" pedophiles. Most of us would tell them to practice celibacy, no matter how strong their sex drive.



"The Koran does not require intolerance". I'm not sure you're right. The most I would say is that the Koran does not absolutely forbid tolerance (within the context, always, of Muslim dominance). What we think of as relatively tolerant Islam is perhaps more accurately described as relatively *lax* Islam. This view helps explain the phenomenon of the second- or third-generation Muslim immigrant who turns radical or even terrorist. He's going back to the roots of his religion.

Blaming the rising Islamic fundamentalist tide on Saudi money has cause and effect reversed, I think. Rather, the Saudis are buying off the fundies so they'll leave them alone (for now) while they go on living the good life. It's kind of like Campus Crusade for Cthulhu: you get eaten last!

Actually, I thought the point of it was to get eaten first, so you didn't have to suffer. I still have that parody of a Jack Chick cartoon book (yes, it is possible) **Who Will Be Eaten First?**

George W. Price: **"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 Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) tries to do this.

There are several rational positions on marriage, I think. 1. Leave the institution as it has been for thousands of years. 2. Let anybody marry anybody. 3. Get the government out of the marriage business. The direction we're moving – a special carve-out for gays only – is the product of political clout and cultural intimidation, not reason.

Once, I actually heard a gay activist admit what I think is the real story: it's about government and corporate benefits. That recent Supreme Court decision – evidently state law trumps Federal law, if it promotes liberalism – gave married gays access to 1100 Federal benefits, according to new reports.

Jim Stumm: You will note that global warmists talk a lot about the Arctic, but are strangely taciturn about the icecap at the other end of the world.

Robert S. Kennedy: *Under the Dome* just got stupider and stupider as the season progressed; and now that it's renewed for a second season we know the story isn't going anywhere, any time soon.

I found myself watching one of the new episodes of *Foyle's War* after all. I was curious to see how they would handle the Cold War. Not as bad as I feared: at this late date, at least, they're willing to admit the Soviet Union under Stalin was a nasty place, and that the Soviets were worse than our side. On the other hand, a Communist character refers to Stalin as "our faithful ally", and no one points out Stalin was Hitler's "faithful ally" until Hitler attacked him and made him our reluctant ally.

Considering how riddled with Soviet spies the British intelligence services were at the time, and for years afterward, Foyle can't have done a very good job!

Philby and Blake. Philby was eased out of SIS after Burgess and Maclean defected. Blake was exposed by Mikhail Golenewski (SNIPER, "Tsarevich Alexei"). The Foreign Office didn't discipline Burgess because it would have looked intolerant, I guess.

— JTM

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Martin Morse Wooster, with the same

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY

Percy Alleline said, "Very well. Let us begin."

"Mr Holmes from **harumph** higher authority is here to be brought up to date on what all we have been doing since the recent unfortunate incident."

The large man sitting at the far end of the table listened, attentively, but said nothing as the directors of Secret Intelligence explained their actions. Instead, his eyes flickered from one to another, not only as they spoke, but as they listened to the others speaking.

If he knew of more he kept it to himself. Mycroft Holmes held some sort of undefined but high position in the Civil Service. He had served Tory and Socialist alike, with the same reserved demeanour.

They left him alone in the room for a moment. He would have to return to his normal office, but he needed some time to think about the men he had heard speak. Percy Alleline, Chief of the Service. Roy Bland, his deputy. Toby Esterhase, the chief of the covert actions department. Bill Haydon, chief of the London station.

He knew them all, and he knew one other thing. That one day in the Strangers Room of the Diogenes Club, when the previous Chief, shown in through the delivery entrance, had revealed his suspicions, the suspicions that one of them was a mole, a double agent for the other side. And then Control had died.

There was another. His departure from the Circus had served to clear him. But how to get to him? Mycroft had a way.

"John, you are *not* to record any of this," he had said.

Mycroft doesn't pay me enough for this, I thought. I was being paid to be Sherlock's minder, and keep him from going off the rails, in the hope that I wouldn't do so either, not after what had happened in Afghanistan.

There had been a little more in my pay packet after the time Sherlock had shot up the flat, howling "I'm bored!" over and over again. He might have hit me with a stray round.

This time, in his usual mysterious way he had told me to be at a certain place at a certain time, and wait for a certain person. I had been there, and there he was, a mild-mannered man in a rumpled overcoat, trundling along with a book under his arm. Sherlock had even told me what to say.

"Mr d'Ascoyne?" I asked him.

He blinked. Those glasses and his hunched, closed demeanour made him look almost like a mole. He said, "I'm afraid you've got the wrong man."

"Oh. Do you know a Mr d'Ascoyne? Or a Colonel Nicolson?"

He shook his head. "No, no, definitely not."

He walked off and I followed. "It's a matter of some importance. Jim Wormold told me that they could help me. Are you sure you don't at least know him?"

He paused. "Wormold. I think I've heard that name. But I don't know the man."

"Please. I can explain it to you. We had better sit down. Do you live near here?"

He made a face and said, "This way."

I wasn't surprised to find Sherlock there but he certainly was. "Get out or I'll call the police!"

"Ask for Inspector Lestrade, C.I.D. He can vouch for me. You're a very hard man to find, Smiley."

Smiley sat down. "How did you get here?" "I followed you."

"I took precautions to break a tail. There's no way you could have done that. I didn't see you, or anyone follow me."

"That is what you may expect when I follow you."

"Mr Smiley, I've been made aware of the circumstances under which you left your previous service. I have been hired to help you resolve the matter . . ."

— David Cornwell and Mark Gatniss, not to mention Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, were not harmed in the writing of this piece.

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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.

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