

ALEXIAD

(AΛΞΙΑΣ)

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This year the stores began dragging out Christmas decorations before Halloween. With a supreme effort of self control I refrained from singing the Grinch song every time I went into a store playing Christmas carols before Thanksgiving. Come on, people, let's at least get through Thanksgiving before we start preparing for Christmas. I don't have anything against Christmas carols. I enjoy them in their proper time, which is no earlier than the day after Thanksgiving. The stores make huge efforts to sell us things. I understand that Christmas is a huge deal for them. I, however, do not like seeing the season turned into one huge market. It should be about more than that. Oh, I will buy presents for people. But I am not going to be sold a lot of hype. I give presents through the year and I refuse to yield to the marketing hype.

— Lisa

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Reviewer's Notes.....	1

Coffee.....	6
Eclipse News.....	6
The Joy of eReaders.....	6
The Joy of High Tech.....	6
Worldcon News.....	9

Book Reviews

JTM Bart, <i>Race to the Top of the World</i>	5
JTM Brooks, <i>Shattered Nation</i>	3
JTM Campbell, <i>The Lost Stars: Perilous Shield</i>	3
JTM Greenfield, <i>If Kennedy Lived</i>	3
JTM Holland, <i>Dam Busters</i>	5
JTM Resnick, <i>The Trojan Colt</i>	4
JTM Resnick/Garcia, eds. <i>Worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs</i>	2
JTM Walker, <i>The United States of Paranoia</i>	4

Con Reports

LK Archon 37.....	7
LK Windycon.....	8

Fanzines Received.....	9
------------------------	---

Random Jottings.....	2
----------------------	---

Letters.....	10
--------------	----

Sheryl L. Birkhead, Dainis Bisenieks, Sue Burke, Richard A. Dengrove, Brad W. Foster, Alexis A. Gilliland, John Hertz, Robert S. Kennedy, Timothy Lane, Rodney Leighton, Murray Moore, Lloyd Penney, George W. Price, John Purcell, Darrell Schweitzer, Joy V. Smith, Milt Stevens, Jim Stumm, R-Lauraine Tutihasi

Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

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) was **November 2, 2013** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Ronny Bugatti won, a purse which was twice his previous winnings all together. (Ronny Bugatti's sire is named Art Major. Really.)

Trivia.....	22
-------------	----

Art:

Brad W. Foster.....	3
Paul Gadzikowski.....	22
Alexis A. Gilliland.....	4, 5, 7
Trinlay Khadro.....	2

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Deadline is **February 1, 2014**

For some of you, this will be the **last** issue — unless you subscribe, write, or otherwise indicate your interest.

Reviewer's Notes

Life gets more complicated.

Back around 2001 there was a quarrel about the Hugo-worthiness of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Was it the best SF novel of 2000? That can be questioned. Was it the best novel nominated? That, sadly, I had to say so. (One of the opposing novels was *A Storm of Swords*, one of the middle works of the *Song of Ice and Fire*.)

Since then, the trend has been downwards. More of them have been “within the circus” ones, such as *Redshirts*, a STAR TREK parody, and *Among Others*, a story of a girl who reads SF (but strangely, not given the time and place, not New Wave) and has fantastic adventures. There's a place for a novel about a girl who reads a lot of fantasy adventure and then gets cast into a fantasy world, but Diana Wynne Jones has passed on, and such a work would not meet the standards of editors today.

I can see the problems of the earlier writers, but I also notice their virtues. The paradigm has flipped now, so I can't read the more readable stuff.

Meanwhile, mundane factors intervene. I am now the only driver in the house. The cellar door needs to be put in, but I can't do it alone, and our potential helper has so much else to do.

We still go to Heitzman's for Saturday brunch — it's not that far from the con hotel for ConGlomeration, for your congoing experience. But even there changes are not for the better.

Some of you don't do NASFiC, but I have connections in the north, and that's a decent time to see the area. The Henry Ford, for example, which would have delighted Uncle Hugo. But then, Ford said “history is bunk” because it was being taught as rulers and wars, not as he saw it, the use of technology to better the human condition. Also, the Neil Armstrong museum is not too far away, not to mention the Air Force Museum in Dayton.

Have a fannish 2014.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



One correction: Cantonese is *Yue* not “*Wu*”, which is a different Sinic language.

Amazing Stories has revived “The Club House”, the fanzine column that I remember from those heady days of the seventies. The author, Earl Terry Kemp (the son) gave in his October 11 column a glowing plug for both this fanzine and *Heinlein’s Children*. We point out that the distributor and reference may spark some interest.

<http://amazingstoriesmag.com/>

We get it by cable ow! ouch! I’ll stop already.

Someone in the Navy has a sense of destiny. The commanding officer of the new stealth destroyer USS *Zumwalt* (DDG-1000) is . . . **Captain James A. Kirk**.

<http://ingalls.huntingtoningalls.com/products/ddg1000>

Meanwhile, the LA Fan who was so enthusiastic about the series that he *changed* his name to “James T. Kirk”, performing other acts of *homage* as well, has been reported dead; he is alive, but unwell. Thanks to Mike Glyer and correspondents for the news.

And going on in the devoted fan department, a Tennessee fan is putting forward great effort to building a full-scale model of the *Millennium Falcon*. Has anyone seen his back?

MONARCHIST NEWS

Baldrick’s cunning plan to get into Buck House worked. That is, **Anthony “Tony” Robinson** was created a Knight Bachelor in the 2013 Birthday Honours for his services in politics, sports, and the arts, including playing Baldrick in the *Blackadder* series.

Prince Harry (Prince Henry Charles Albert David of Wales) is going for another walk with the Walking with the Wounded. To the South Pole this time. Let us hope that history does not repeat itself.

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

ERB-DOM

Review by Joseph T Major of
WORLDS OF EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
Edited by Mike Resnick and Robert T. Garcia
(Baen; 2013; ISBN 978-1451639353; \$15;
Amazon Digital Services; \$7.53)

Tarzan fan fiction has been common for some time. Not always without difficulties, admittedly. The “New Adventures of Tarzan” by “Barton Werper” of the fifties violated copyright, such as it was, and for many years ERB fans had to write about the adventures of “Elmo of the Apes”. And then there was PJF . . .

The copyright holders have unbent a little, and here are stories by others in the many and varied worlds that began on the backs of used stationery, under the moons of Mars and other places. Not just Elmo — **Tarzan**, either!

“**Tarzan and the Great War**” by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Is there anything that that Lloyd George won’t stoop to in order to finance his schemes? While the Great War grinds on, an investigator from the Treasury is dispatched to Algeria to prove that this “Jean C. Tarzan” is not the true heir to the late William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke. And if there is no heir, the estate escheats to the government . . .

The story is interesting, but the background seems a bit, well, contrived. There would be reaction:

“Trying to grab a peer’s estate is an outrage, I say, an outrage!
/s/ Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells.”

“**The Fallen: A Tale of Pellucidar**” by Mercedes Lackey. What was life like on the Pendent World, the orb within the shell of the Hollow Earth? Particularly for the non-human inhabitants, the Sagoths? Misty takes an excursion into the feeling of being shut out from others, describing what it is like in the Land of Awful Shadow in the inner world. Particularly when someone falls from the cause of that darkness, straight into conflict and other matters . . .

“**Scorpion Men of Venus**” by Richard A. Lupoff. Carson Napier and Duare find someone who is claiming connections to that impossible place beyond the clouds. It turns out that his claims work, and before long, Carson Napier is

back in California. With his new love, Duare, and her new love.

What was Lupoff *thinking*? He should have known better!

“**The Forgotten Sea of Mars**” by Mike Resnick (reprinted from *ERB-dom* 1963) There was a loose end in *Llana of Gathol*, when Tan Hadron of Hastor, previous hero of *A Fighting Man of Mars* (1931), was taken away by enemies while John Carter escaped. Loose ends ought to be tied up, and besides Tavia of Tjanath ought to have her chieftain returned to her. So, here is the story of how John Carter went to finish the job against Hin Abtol of Panar and his army on ice.

“**Apache Lawman**” by Ralph Roberts. The Apache Devil finds a new job in his forgotten origins, becoming a lawman for the whiteskins — of which he originally was one.

It’s well to be reminded that ERB, like most pulp writers, was eclectic, but that may have been because there were eclectic markets and no categorization as there is today. His portrayal of the Inde (of course it means “Person”, what would you expect) can be faulted as a perspective of the derogated Other, by those who don’t want to believe that pre-post-modern people might be able to have other perspectives.

“**Moon Maid over Manhattan**” by Peter David. And what happened to Nah-ee-lah and her little one Julian the Sixth when the Kalkars followed them to Earth? In the follow-up to the revised prehistory of a Soviet America (the story of how *Under the Red Flag* (1919) became *The Moon Men* (1926) is a melancholy warning of the fate of being ahead of one’s time), we see the fact of a take-over from the perspective of an Enemy of the People . . . who manages to get in her last shot, doing what a good parent should do.

“**Tarzan and the Martian Invaders**” by Kevin J. Anderson and Sarah A. Hoyt. There was one John Carter story in *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches* (edited by Anderson) and this is in that spirit. Except perhaps these invaders have sinister mind-control rays. Fortunately, Tarzan has his own mind control, a more natural and human one.

“**The Two Billys, A Mucker Story**” by Max Allan Collins and Mathew Clemens. Another less noticed work in the ERB library is *The Mucker* (1914, 1916), the story of a man rising above his origins and overcoming a dark past. This is a scene filling in the greater story.

“**To the Nearest Planet**” by Todd McCaffrey. At the end of *Beyond the Farthest Star* (1941) the narrator was preparing to make a flight to the adjacent planet. Not by dragonback, ahem. This is what he did and what he found there, also who, which comes out seeming just a little unfair to Harkas

Yamoda (the girl he left behind on Poloda).

“The Dead World” by F. Paul Wilson. The physics of Pellucidar is a little off. In this daring tale, David Innes and Abner Perry investigate the Pendent World, the cause of the only shadow in the inner Earth, after seeds begin falling from it, seeds which spread like super-kudzu and produce sleep gas. They find an explanation, but it’s more troubling than resolving. Not to mention not satisfying the angry native whose draft dinosaur was killed.

“Tarzan and the Land That Time Forgot” by Joe R. Lansdale. The author of the first *authorized* Tarzan pastiche takes the Lord of the Jungle to a different world, the exotic and strange island of Caprona, where ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny with a vengeance. (James Blish’s Father Ramón Ruiz-Sanchez would be in trouble there, and his bizarrely reactionary Catholic Church not much better.)

Often (as with *Sherlock’s Home: The Empty House* (2012; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #4)) when fans write tributes to a writer’s work, they often have more admiration than skill. These fans are professional writers, honoring a writer whose work was significant to them.

The skill level is better, but there is still the problem of imposing one vision over another. Still, being professional, the writers have tried and mostly succeeded in staying in ERB’s spirit, and the reader can follow in enjoyment.

SMERSH

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE LOST STARS: PERILOUS SHIELD
by “Jack Campbell” [John G. Hemry]

(Ace; 2013;
ISBN 978-0-425-25631-2; \$26.95;
Penguin Group (Kindle); \$9.99)

Sequel to *The Lost Stars: Tarnished Knight*
(2012; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #6)



Though the leaders of SMERSH became prominent in the postwar Ministry of State Security (MVD) they did not stick to one habit from their old days. Instead, they wore uniforms with identifying insignia. During the Great Patriotic War, the officers and men of

SMERSH conducted their activities in ordinary uniforms and civilian clothing, devoid of any specific identification, unlike their colleagues in the NKVD, who replaced the red tabs of the Red Army with blue ones. Anyone could be a SMERSH operator, as too many found out too late.

Just as too many on the Syndicate Worlds found out too late who the snakes were. The Syndicate Worlds’ secret police pervaded the population. Their greatest damage was not that of arresting people; it was that their actions eroded trust to the vanishing point.

The Midway System has thrown off the rule of the Syndicate, extirpated (as far as they can tell) the snakes, and established a more or less functioning government. And they still can’t trust anyone.

This is the story of how that polity without trust had to get going; when no one, from President Gwen Icen and General Artur Drakon down to the lowest worker could trust anyone, but had to act as if they trusted others. It is a very grueling and troubling story told here, for all that there are successes, escapes, recoveries, and improvements. There are also betrayals, and trying to find a human basis for existence in a system so morally ravaged can be hard.

There are glimpses of the enemy; not the Alliance, which at least has politics, however broken and dark they may be, but the Syndicate, with its other-worldliness. The flashes of its operations, not just the snakes but the relationships of their leaders and ordinary people, who in a symbology worthy of *Dilbert* and *Working Daze* are styled with corporate titles from CEO down to line-worker. One wonders how Hemry would have written the story of F. M. Busby’s corporate government in the *Rissa Kerguelen* series.

At least the Enigmas aren’t just misunderstood well-meaning types who just happen to lash out killing, as the aliens were in Busby’s work; Gwen and Artur could deal with those, but their own problems are going to be harder to solve when this is . . . **To Be Continued**

JOHNSTON STAYS WEST

Review by Joseph T Major of
SHATTERED NATION
by Jeffrey Brooks
(Jeffrey E. Brooks; 2013;
ISBN 978-0615802053; \$14.38;
Amazon Digital Services; \$6.99)

The comment has been made that Fort Bragg in North Carolina has been named in honor of the general for his great, if not decisive, contribution to the Union victory in the Civil War. Part of it was his advice for the high command in the Western Theater.

No, he didn’t recommend Grant or Sherman; he advised Jefferson Davis to sack that disreputable fellow Joseph Eggleston Johnston, for his dilatory and overcautious defensive tactics facing the Union advance on the railway and industrial center of Terminus, er Atlanta.

Which led to Victor Fleming starting a fire.

Not surprisingly, the group of people who could not get along with Bragg (a set rumored to include the man himself) generally thought this decision less than well-considered. So.

Brooks takes into consideration a number of other political actions. The Army of Tennessee was politicalized, just as Scarlett O’Hara Hamilton Kennedy Butler didn’t want to go too long between her meals and her last husband was unconcerned. In particular, the case of one commander shows discrimination didn’t just extend to those of African origin. No Irish need apply for higher rank, particularly after they propose emancipation for those who wish to serve in the ranks, and the response to Patrick Ronayne Cleburne’s notorious proposition plays a significant role in the campaign.

The relief of Johnston came at a bad time. Brooks, therefore, has a somewhat more advantageous result occurring. However, not all goes well for the Army of Tennessee in subsequent engagements, and often the outcome is in doubt.

Up north, too. The 1864 election is often taken as a turning-point. Brooks has taken up a few more schemes, devices, plots, and other appurtenances of ordinary political activity as addition to his story line. The activities of Benjamin Franklin Butler, for example, make for particularly appropriate (for the man) results to the changing situation.

Thanks to superior numbers and some clever deception, the situation at Atlanta becomes a particularly grand crisis, and our characters, both the surviving commanders, and the little people, such as the Texan sharpshooter who finds himself the last man standing in his outfit, are perilously close to destruction . . .

THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED

Review by Joseph T Major of
IF KENNEDY LIVED:
The First and Second Terms of President John F. Kennedy: An Alternate History
by Jeff Greenfield
(G. P. Putnam’s Sons; 2013;
ISBN 978-0-399-16696-9;
Penguin Group (Kindle); \$10.65)

Most of the works that presuppose Lincoln’s living on present him as a failed if not hated figure, no Abraham to go with Martin and John. This novel is about John suffering the same fate.

In *Then Everything Changed* (2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #3), Greenfield snuffed out JFK’s life earlier. Now, he takes the other tack, and prolongs it. All because it looked rainy, and the Secret Service figured the Presidential car should have the bubble top, so he could see, and not have raindrops a’fallin on his head. Or 6.5 mm bullets, either. Greenfield is to be commended for avoiding the facile conspiricism put forth by, for

example, Bryce Zabel (*Surrounded by Enemies*, 2013, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #5), even though he does have the balked assassin silenced thanks to more energetic resistance on his part in the Texas Theater.

After his salvation, Jack turns to tackling several issues. For one, there is the land war in southeast Asia. At home, there is the question of civil rights. In the government, there is the question of Lyndon's associates. Not to mention Cuba, the Soviet Union, and so on.

It isn't easy. The contestants don't fall down on their faces in awe of His JFKsomeness. Add to it his deteriorating health and personal situation, and the President is surrounded by a different sort of troubles.

When Jack bites the bullet and drops out of the land war in South-east Asia, that ends one potential problem, but sets another. Perhaps in return to get the good opinion of the armed forces, he discards McNamara and replaces him with — Bobby! Which sort of precludes a RFK in '68 campaign

Indeed, Greenfield shies away from the Kennedy dynasty (of, say *The Number of the Beast* (1979, NHOL G.189)) concept, since under the differing circumstances the siblings did different things. One hopes this keeps the Prophet Nehemiah Scudder in his church.

Incidentally, Greenfield's usual omission continues; there is next to nothing about the space program here, any more than there was in *Then Everything Changed*. So much for Stephen Baxter's *Voyage* (1996, 1997).

One can argue about some of his foreign policy speculations. A choice between "Hey, Hey, JFK, How many kids did you kill today?" and "Who lost Vietnam?" would seem more likely than his ignominious scramble.

Is there something better coming from this? The change described by James Piereson (*Camelot and the Cultural Revolution* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #5)) would not have such a strong focus.

But a ill, weak JFK sitting in his rocking chair, having paid any price and borne any burden, now has to face the pain of living, and being less than an icon.

SILVER BLAZE

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE TROJAN COLT
"An Eli Paxton Mystery"

by Mike Resnick

(Seventh Street Books: 2013;
ISBN 978-1-61614-789-1; \$11.68;
Amazon Digital Services;
ISBN 978-1-61614-790-7; \$8.89)

Bwana has also been into racing, and in this mystery novel he deals with a coverup. The groom for the new Trojan colt has gone mysteriously missing. Now the annual Keeneland yearling sale is one of the more noteworthy events of the season. There's nothing here like the pulpy scene in *Sonic*

Slave ("The Baroness #6" (1974)) by "Paul Kenyon" [Donald Moffitt] with the Baroness Penelope St. John Orsini, the "Sexy Superspy", riding a stallion naked from the Keeneland stables to Lexington Airport, which fortunately is just on the other side of US 60.

The investigation is . . . well, unglamorous, but not as "gritty" as some detective novels are. More like a real-life police case (instead of the novelistic ones with either gunfights or magical CSI, just as Paxton, the detective, is not a grotesque, just a guy trying to get by).

The complication is that another groom for this Trojan colt also inexplicably disappeared. Goldfinger's paradigm of events gets accelerated here (how far was it from *his* place, anyway?) and gradually a plausible motive appears.

But there's no proof — until it turns out that a standard of journalistic layout was applied, taken up by someone who only read the magazine . . .

"Write what you know," they say. Resnick is doing this, with mysteries set in his area, dealing with mundane things he knows. The previous book in the series, *Dog In the Manger* (1995) featured dog shows (big surprise), another of his mundane interests. Those looking for a novel that lacks grotesques, magic, romance, or cyberpunk (yeah I know, that seems to exclude almost every mystery reader these days) can look here.

Thanks to Resnick for blowing his own horn, as it were, and giving us a good time.

HOW CAN WE ACCOUNT

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE UNITED STATES OF PARANOIA:
A Conspiracy Theory

by Jesse Walker

(Harper; 2013;

ISBN 978-0-06-21355-1; \$25.99;
HarperCollins Publications (Kindle); \$11.89)



The question was put: "How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are conspiring to deliver us to disaster?" (The current case being those who are so absolutely convinced that the entire American and British war effort was directed for the benefit of Stalin.) But long before the Senator from Wisconsin, or even his state, came to be, people were asking that question.

In this useful book, the Books editor of

Reason Magazine carries the story of American conspiracies so immense and in infamy so black back to when the Salem Witches were agents of the International French-and-Indian Conspiracy. Yes. King Philip's War was conducted against a grand master conspirator working with the French and (gasp) *witches*, according to no less an authority than Cotton Mather himself.

And so he goes on through the methods of conspiracy and its deleterious effects. For example, there was the never-published work *Tom Sawyer's Conspiracy*, in which Tom persuades Huck and Jim to join with him in playing Abolitionist conspiracy. As this would likely have ended with Huck narrating, "Here they's a-comin' fer me, with an insultin' thick rope.", like *Huck and Tom Among the Indians* it never got to the publisher. (That one misfired when it became clear that the noble savages had gang-raped their prisoner.)

Other discussions include the history of Robert Anton Wilson and his Illuminatus works. Wilson might have the problem that his games become too serious. As it was with another topic of this work, Philip K. Dick, who began to wonder if he was telling the truth after all. (Walker's proposed ending to the *Matrix* trilogy should be drawn to the attention of the YouTube "How It Should Have Ended" channel.)

Some of the people involved are even stranger than Phil Dick, a remarkable accomplishment. Thus we have William Dudley Pelley, an American Nazi who believed in Occult Masters. He could have moved to the Homeland and got a job with the *Ahnenerbe*, or maybe sent messengers to the future in a ritual requiring the desanguination of a dozen Aryan virgins, to mention two dooms possible.

Or for example the sinister Rothschild mistress told off by her lover to write a popular tale that would set a blueprint of how the Illuminati were going to take over America. Her books sold wildly to Communists. In 1979 a follower of John Todd, the man who revealed this sinister plot, confronted the writer and demanded her confession. And Ayn Rand was confused. That wasn't the weirdest thing Illuminati revelator John Todd did, either.

(It will be a severe disappointment to skeptical, secularist, and other such groups that far from being his enablers and supporters, Christian organizations critically investigated Todd's claims and showed their falsehood. These people believe Jack Chick books are given out after Mass; that all redigulous morons have one common belief.)

Some of Walker's discussions are off. Thus he denounces Daniel Pipes for his calling any critique of American foreign policy "conspiracist". Or, he never deals with Piereson's *Camelot and the Cultural Revolution*.

A history of this dark doleful undertone in American culture is useful in learning its nature and seeing its results. Walker is to be credited for his bravery (considering how, for example

Popular Mechanics was excoriated as a neocon propaganda rag for its analysis of the 9/11 events).

As a coda, Bart recounts the story of the Fokker Triplane *America* and its flight across the Atlantic. He does mention, casually, this other guy from Minnesota, before he gets down to the gruelling flight, the impossible conditions at Paris, the desperate decision to land on the beach in Normandy . . .

This is a well-informed book. I remember reading “Nevil Shute’s” *An Old Captivity* (1940) and noting that the explorers had to custom-order their airplane. That was how it was up to the post-WWII era. To go a little beyond the topic, as with Norway’s archaeologists, the *Floyd Bennett Ford Trimotor* was custom-built with a more powerful central engine, for example.

Bart touches on this; design was a crucial part of every such work in the early days of flight, and technology was transitioning.

Beyond this, there were other shifts. For example, one proposal had been to use the Navy dirigible *Shenandoah* to make the polar flight, but she ran into a storm and crashed. (Given the historical accident record of lighter-than-air craft, their popularity in alternate history and steampunk is the triumph of nostalgia and enthusiasm over experience.)

Beyond that, Bart takes Byrd’s point of view. Thus he describes the 1925 Greenland expedition as being led by Byrd. Not surprisingly, Donald B. MacMillan thought he was in charge (see *Dangerous Crossings: The First Modern Polar Expedition 1925* by John H. Bryant and Harold N. Cones (2000; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #2) for more on this).

More to the point, as said, Bart describes in detail how the Polar flight of the *Josephine Ford* could have been accomplished. There seems to be evidence in the form of navigational readings made (and erased) by Byrd that Bart does not discuss.

DAM WARS

Review by Joseph T Major of
DAM BUSTERS:

The True Story of the Inventors and Airmen Who Led the Devastating Raid to Smash the German Dams in 1943

by James Holland
(Atlantic Monthly Press; 2012;
ISBN 978-0-821-2169-1; \$28;
Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$14.99)

DAM WARS

Episode .5
Dam it!

The Germans have constructed a dam in the Ruhr valley. British Lancasters have been dispatched by the RAF with one goal — bring it down. The

Germans are confident that the thick concrete can withstand any attack, but the British have a new weapon: bouncing bombs. With any luck, they will be able to break the dam, flood the Ruhr valley, and retard German production for over a year.

— “The Dam Busters a la Star Wars”,
Henry V. Keiper

I have been rereading *MacArthur’s War: A Novel of the Invasion of Japan* (2008; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #3) by Douglas Niles and Michael Dobson. Ellis Halverson, the Smith-fan AAF pilot who is the principal point-of-view character of the book (who else would name a B-26 *The Skylark of Space*?) in proper Seatonian style invents skip bombing.

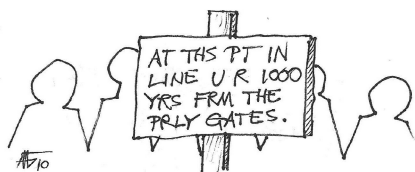
Somehow watching Flight Lieutenant Ellis Halverson at the helm of a Lancaster named *S-Skylark* roaring down towards the Möhne Dam would only involve him finally having crossed up MacArthur once too much, and what MacArthur wants, MacArthur gets, says MacArthur. (The authors seem to have it in for Douglas MacArthur, though not quite as bad as Robert Conroy, who had him being hit by a kamikaze plane.)

Richard Ballinger Seaton might have found Barnes Neville Wallis a congenial sort. The photographs show a grandfatherly, avuncular, lets-go-out-and-make-a-Heath-Robinson-gadget looking fellow. He certainly had a very commonplace origin, and knocked around in various vehicular construction venues before fetching up at Vickers, where he became a lead designer. (For a while he worked on airships with a team that included N. S. Norway. Did their breaks include a spot of time *On the Beach* (1957; as by “Nevil Shute”)?)

When the war broke out Barnes Wallis started thinking about how to blow things up. While his designs include the Grand Slam bomb, the first bunkerbuster, he also started wondering about the best way to place explosives against dams. Since they had torpedo nets and there wasn’t the opportunity to run a loaded ship into them, he considered other means.

Gregory Boyington used to say that if you scratched a hero, you found a heel. Guy Gibson may not have been a cad, but he was a little . . . unusual. He fell for and got married quite abruptly, and his wife’s position is given, perhaps discreetly, as “dancer”. Then, he fell in love with another woman — who before long also got married. Perhaps volunteering for this mission was a way of getting out of entanglements.

The development of these dam-busting



THE WIND AND THE BYRD

Review by Joseph T Major of
RACE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD:
Richard Byrd and the First Flight to the North Pole

by Sheldon Bart
(Regnery History; 2013;
ISBN 978-1-62157-082-0; \$29.95;
Amazon Digital Services; \$14.99)

Declaration of Interest: Anne Douglas Beverage Byrd, sister-in-law of the topic of this book, was a relative of mine.

This is a partial biography of Richard Evelyn Byrd, the explorer from Virginia. It’s also a narrative of the earlier of his various explorations, with comments on the competition.

One of the characteristics of explorers seems to be an ability to transcend physical limitations. Or bad feet. Robert E. Peary had lost eight toes to frostbite, and Byrd had broken an ankle so badly that he was medically retired after graduating from the Naval Academy. Nevertheless, Byrd found something he could do and with great skill persuaded the Navy to let him do it, over and over again, rising from Ensign to Rear Admiral — always on the retired list!

His contributions to flight were pervading. He was involved in the Navy’s crossing of the Atlantic in 1919, and continued from there, leading an aerial survey of Greenland and Ellesmere Island. Then the Pole beckoned.

As with any such expedition, there was the problem of paying for everything. The explorers who trek with two dozen different corporate logos plastered over their equipment are in an old tradition. Byrd’s polar plane was named after his principal donor’s daughter, and just as well, too. Imagine how it would look today saying he had gone to the North Pole in an Edsel. (The namesake of the *Josephine Ford* was Edsel Bryant Ford’s only daughter.)

Bart describes how the pattern of a storm and the actual timing of the flight dispelled those accusations of falsehood. And then, Byrd, Bennett, and the rest of the guys they watched Amundsen and Nobile take off in the old technology to do it.

bombs had its moments. The bombs would skip over the lake surface, and the torpedo nets, hit the dam wall, roll down, and apply explosive force to the lower reaches of the structure with a concrete-shattering kaboom. This took a lot of effort and indeed when the mission was launched, the bombs still had not been fully tested.

As for the men . . . a problem of the Army Commandos was that they took high-initiative and skilled men, who would be good nco's and even officers, and made them expendable footsloggers. This mission required high-quality pilots and crews, just the sort every squadron commander wanted to keep. Yet Gibson got them. Including Joe McCarthy. (An American named Joseph C. McCarthy, and he was a pilot, not a tailgunner.)

Then, Operation CHASTISE set off. The mission was not the safest in the world. One of the Lancaster bombers (for Americans, think B-17) flew into power lines. But the first wave got to the Möhne reservoir, dropped, and blew open the dam. Gibson went in first and stayed around, drawing German flak, as he ordered in other bombers. One of the other dams was also broken.

The flooding in the river valleys is all too reminiscent of the Johnstown flood, with devastation and destruction widespread. Albert Speer was ordered to mobilize a special effort to rebuild the dam. Which meant that the Atlantic Wall was short of workers and materials. I believe they call that a "knock-on" effect.

Afterwards . . . eight of the planes, out of seventeen, did not come back, and the rest of Gibson's crew died on their next mission. The book says four of the original Dam Busters are still alive, another source says three.

Guy Gibson received the Victoria Cross for bravery exceeding that of even the most devoted British soldier. He died before the war ended, flying a Mosquito (for which he was not checked out), after a showing of extreme signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Barnes Wallis lived a long and happy life, becoming Sir Barnes, and held the seemingly contradictory values of a strong Christian faith and a sort of pride in having done what he had done. The unit that conducted the mission was continued, the famous 617 Squadron of the RAF, their insignia showing a broken dam and their motto the sardonic "Apres Moi la Deluge". After sinking the *Tirpitz* and bombing Iraq, the unit is being reformed to fly F-35s.

When George Lucas was doing early rough cuts of what was then "The Star Wars", to fill in the gaps, as it were, he used clips from "The Dam Busters". Which was why Henry V. Keiper's "Dam Busters a la Star Wars" YouTube video, with the dialogue from the attack on the Death Star over scenes from "The Dam Busters", works so well. The "Dam Busters a la Star Wars" video has been deleted from YouTube for copyright problems. Its counterpart, "Star Wars a la

The Dambusters" hasn't.

"Retard" . . . heh heh . . .
— "The Dam Busters a la Star Wars",
Henry V. Keiper

YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

There was a hybrid solar eclipse (partially total, partially annular) on November 3, 2013. It was visible in Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. The maximum totality was one minute 40 seconds, at 3° 30' N, 11° 42' W, off the coast of Liberia. It was part of Saros 143, which began on March 7, 1617 and will end April 23, 2897.

There will be two solar eclipses in 2014. The first will be an annular eclipse, on April 29, visible in Wilkes Land of Antarctica, with the maximum totality being at 70° 36' 42" S, 131° 18' 18" E. It is part of Saros 148, which began September 21, 1653 and will end December 12, 2987. The second will be a partial eclipse, on October 23, visible in eastern Russia, Canada, and the United States. It is part of Saros 153, which began July 28, 1870 and will end August 22, 3114. Oddly enough, all the eclipses in this saros are either partial or annular.

The next total eclipse will be March 20, 2015, visible in Svalbard and the North Atlantic and Arctic oceans, ending at the North Pole at local sunrise. The maximum totality will be two minutes 47 seconds. It is part of Saros 120, which began May 27, 933 and will end July 7, 2195.

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

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

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

COFFEE

by Lisa

I have a new favorite coffee. It is Guatemalan coffee from Highland Coffee Company. I found its flavor smooth and robust. It does not beat a sugar free cappuccino but it comes close.

For my birthday we went to the Newport Aquarium. It was thoroughly fun even if I did learn that sharks are harder to photograph than horses. The best thing about it was a tunnel with water above and on either side of the passageway. The sharks were interesting but the real prize of the exhibition were the mantas. They look like they are flying in the water.

Saturday is December 7, seventy-two years exactly since Japanese planes swept down on Pearl Harbor and brought us into World War II.

NOOK

Observations by Lisa Major

For the Black Friday weekend Barnes and Noble had basic Nooks going for \$39. Joe took me to the one in Evansville where I learned that for ten dollars more I could have Glowlight. The sales woman did not find me a hard sell on the more expensive machine. My impressions of the Nook so far are mixed. Overall it is a better machine than the Kobo, I think, but it does not fit as well in my hands as the Kobo did. Its screen is wider than the Kobo's and I believe it weighs less than the Kobo. It does not have all the latest bells and whistles but all I wanted was a basic reading machine. I am enjoying the Nook but discovering also that it has not brought me the thrill that the Kobo did. I think the reason for that is that the Kobo was my first ever e reader, not any fault in the Nook itself. My experiences with it were a voyage of discovery. You only get to make the voyage of discovery with a new experience once.

THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

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

MACHO WIMP

There's a lot out there we don't see. This isn't surprising. We can only perceive distant objects by the light they emit themselves or reflect from other sources. (Here using "light" to include the complete electromagnetic spectrum.) For some bodies we also detect particles they emit. Except for such nearby bodies as the Moon and Venus (both of which have been radar scanned from Earth) we can't supply this illumination.

Digression: Well, we can't supply the amount needed from Earth. Not with any practical application of current technology. The inverse square law sees to that. Typically, if you double the distance you need four times the energy sent for the same energy delivered to the target, because the radar wavefront spreads as it travels. Then subtract what the target absorbs. Then only a tiny fraction of what's reflected actually heads back towards the transmitter, and even that is again weakened by distance.

Years ago there was a serious proposal to launch a probe well out of the plane of the ecliptic. Once far enough from what we already know about (especially including us) it would detonate a gigaton warhead. This would act as a flashbulb, illuminating the solar system out to perhaps hundreds of astronomical units. This "snapshot" would reveal many new objects in the Kuiper Belt and Oort Cloud.

Also, some space probes have had radar. Others have transmitted their radio data signal as they passed around the limb of a planet or moon, giving us information on the makeup of any atmosphere present.

Coming back on target: Even the most sensitive telescopes can only detect what

bodies reflect or emit themselves, and even that must be above a certain threshold. That threshold gets a little lower every year, but it's still there. So, when looking out at the universe, we know we're missing a lot.

In the Thirties, brilliant (if eccentric) physicist Fritz Zwicky used data from astronomers to demonstrate that we could not see enough material in other galaxies to explain how they held together against their own spin. There just wasn't enough visible mass. He coined the phrase "dark matter" ("*dunkle Materie*" in his native Swiss) as a label for this substance we can't see. Like the Force, dark matter holds the galaxy together. (Oh, so many jokes to resist . . .)

There are many potential candidates for this matter we aren't seeing. One is numerous massive objects out in the cometary halos around star systems. For our own system, these are detectable through occultation (that is, they get in the way of light from stars) or by direct observation if they reflect enough light from the Sun. We don't know how many there are, but considering we've already discovered several of them the number is probably large. However, even using maximum estimates for their total mass, there aren't enough. There has to be more. Much more. Two classes of what that more might be are the origin of this column's title.

MASSIVE Compact Halo Objects (MACHO) are massive bodies such as dead stars (including neutron stars and black holes) and small, dim stars; "free" or "rogue" planets which wander between stars; brown dwarfs and a few things. They could be imaged through occultation or — for the most massive of these — gravitational lensing. These massive bodies would produce a specific lensing signature when passing in front of a star. That is, there would be a smooth, gradual rise to a peak then a gradual symmetrical falloff, over many days to several months, depending on the geometry and relative speeds. These are normal bodies, made of normal matter (that is, baryonic matter, which is what we are made of). They are just too small or too old to glow detectably on their own. (A black hole doesn't glow at all, but matter falling into one does. However, if there's no matter falling in . . .)

Weakly Interacting Massive Particles are similar to neutrinos in that they are incredibly difficult to detect. However, those ghostly particles have barely any mass at all. WIMP particles do... theoretically. If they exist, they are likely the most significant part of whatever makes up dark matter.

There are even **GNACHOs**: Gravitationally Negative Anomalous Compact Halo Objects. These are also detectable through gravitational lensing, but with a different and distinct signature. (Gradual rise in intensity, sharp cutoff to zero, sharp rise to a second peak, gradual falloff. Again, the time scale depends on geometry and relative speeds.) These are very hypothetical objects

which are the results of matter pouring through a wormhole and producing a negative gravity effect. Which makes my head hurt just thinking about, so let's move on.

A similar exotic concept is negative matter. While antimatter has a reversed electrical charge with respect to what we're made of, negative matter has a reversed gravitational charge. If it exists, it would collect between galaxies, and might provide an inward repulsive force which would counter the centripetal acceleration which would otherwise tear apart galaxies and other large collections of stars. It could also be all or a major component of the mysterious "dark energy" (you'd think they'd call it "dark force" but noooo . . .) which is expanding the universe. However, it also is still very hypothetical.



So, the WIMP concept seems the most likely source of unseen mass. Multiple detectors around the world are seeking the WIMP population, using several different methodologies. If they exist theory calls for a whole family of different particle types, to symmetrically balance with visible matter. Some physicists (and others) have imagined that these aren't just particles flying around on their own. That there would be at least dark matter atoms, and likely molecules. There could possibly be entire planets and star systems, existing alongside us unseen and undetectable except for their gravity. Actually, the individual particles, atoms and molecules have so little mass they could be passing right through us continuously, and we'd never notice. One wonders if WIMP stars produce an analog to electromagnetic radiation, and how that might be detected.

We see the presence of dark matter on a galactic scale, but what about within our own solar system? No matter what is responsible for the extra gravity, the effects would be subtle in something as small as a star system. Inside the orbit of Jupiter, even light pressure from the Sun would overwhelm the effect. However, there are signs of the influence of an unexpected force on some of our most distant probes. There is something causing the Pioneer 11 and 12 probes to slow more quickly than expected as they move outward from the Sun. The Voyager probes can't show this effect, since they are not spin stabilized and fire their thrusters to maintain or change orientation. That overwhelms this miniscule effect. The given

explanation is that thermal photons (IR heat emissions) from radiothermal generators is providing enough thrust to cause the differential. However, some say this doesn't completely account for the deceleration.

One wonders whether the piano-sized New Horizons probe — at the time this is written over halfway to Pluto — will show this effect. New Horizons has both spin-stabilized (cruise) and three-axis stabilized (science, using thrusters) modes. In the spin stabilized mode is should be subject to the same effect as the Pioneers, once it gets far enough from the Sun for the effect to be detectable.

An alternate explanation to dark matter is **MODified Newtonian Dynamics**, or **MOND**. It claims that gravity does not behave exactly as one would expect according to the inverse square law. That over very large distances, gravity decreases less and less. This makes gravity stronger at great distances than if it operated strictly according to the inverse square law.

MOND does explain galaxies holding together in spite of their spin. It also explains the Pioneer anomaly. However, there is no experimental evidence to support it. We know there are **MACHO** out there; we've seen some of them. We have actually observed lone planets between stars. We've seen large objects in our own cometary nebula, too. Given our current state of the art and the number so far detected, there must be a *lot* of both 'em we aren't seeing . . . at least yet. Most people familiar with **MOND** dismiss it as an interesting intellectual exercise which is almost certainly not applicable to the real universe.

There are no confirmed findings of WIMP matter, but the concept fits so well with existing subatomic particle physics it is probably real. Besides the detectors — which look for existing WIMP particles — there is hope that the Large Hadron Collider — which already found the Higgs Boson even while operating at a reduced power level due to equipment problems — will produce detectable WIMP particles once at full power.

There's a lot to look for out there. Even if we can't see it.

ARCHON

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

Archon 37 was held over the weekend of October 4-6, 2013 at the Gateway Center and the Doubletree Hotel in Collinsville, Illinois, one of the St. Louis Metro East suburbs. It is one of the larger annual conventions in the Midwest.

We started our trip that Wednesday and went to my folks' place in the Bloomington-Normal area to stay the night. Their local high school was having their homecoming that weekend, so we went to watch the parade. It brought back memories of my own high school days, and the homecoming parades in our small town.

Thursday morning we hit the road for

Collinsville. We made some pretty good time in spite of a fair amount of road construction on I-55, and we got checked into the hotel. However, we made an unhappy discovery when we checked out the hot tub -- it was shut down and drained. We asked at the front desk and were told that it had been shut down permanently because it couldn't be made compliant with ADA accessibility requirements. I was a little surprised and did some research, and discovered that the ADA rules were supposed to apply to new construction, and existing installations that couldn't be retrofitted at reasonable expense would be grandfathered in. So a ham-fisted interpretation of the law meant that a nice thing was taken away for everyone. We were really disappointed, since we'd been looking forward to soaking out some aches and pains.

After supper, we headed over to the convention center to get our badges. I might've gotten my art on the art show, but I'd forgotten and used the art box to fill a space when I was loading our merchandise, and it was pretty well buried.

In the evening I did some writing. We also made contact with the couple who would be sharing our room.

Friday morning we got up early and had breakfast before heading over to the convention center to load into the dealers' room. We had some really good help and were able to get in quite quickly, which was good because it was unseasonably hot and humid, which made the process miserable. Setting up in air conditioning was much nicer, just time consuming. Because of some trouble we'd had with our big t-shirt display at Worldcon, I reinforced it with some PVC pipes, and it seemed to be holding up better when we started loading it up with t-shirts.

Once we were set up, I headed over to the art show and got my art set up. Then I had a little time to look around and see what other sellers were offering.

Once the doors finally opened for business, I noticed that sales seemed to be coming more slowly than I would've expected. I had some time to write, or at least make some notes. There were a few spurts of business where we had several customers at once, but nothing to the level of similarly-sized anime cons.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed over to the artists' reception. It was already in progress, but there was still a reasonable amount of food left. I took a look through the art show and was gratified to see a bid on one of my pieces. I also saw two very nice Cthulhu-inspired majolica-ware ceramic jars with very reasonable starting bids. I would've liked to bid on them, but with the poor sales we'd experienced in the dealers' room, I didn't want to commit myself to the purchase of either one.

After that we headed back to the hotel to do a little catching up on the Internet before

turning in for the night. It had been a very long day, and I was ready to get some sleep.

Saturday morning came way too early, and it didn't help that I'd been dreaming about driving through Oklahoma during our Worldcon trip. We had breakfast and then headed off to the convention center to get our tables open and do business.

At first, sales were so slow that I was fighting sleep. But plenty of caffeine and some lively conversation with fellow bibliophiles perked me up, and by the time I needed to get to the David Weber signing, I was actually starting to feel alert. While I was standing in line, I made a pretty good start on my con report.

When the signing started, we were warned that he had an old wrist injury that was prone to giving him trouble, and that he might not be able to sign for everyone. As it turned out, the line wasn't that huge and he ended up getting everybody's stuff. His wife was helping get books ready so he could sign one after another.

After the signing, I headed back to the dealers' room. I'd been thinking about checking in at the art show to see if anything else had sold. However, as I went by, I saw they were closed for auction setup.

When the dealers' room closed for the evening, we debated on whether to come back for the parties or to just stay at our hotel room. We took a look at the weather radar and didn't like the look of the rain to the west of St. Louis, so we just stayed put after supper and I did some writing.

As we discovered the next day, it was probably a good call. At breakfast another fan was telling me about various activities he'd participated in, and mentioned that he didn't enjoy the parties because there were so many cops hanging around, like they were just waiting for an excuse to crack down. Then, as we were packing to leave, our roommates mentioned that the parties were wilder than they felt comfortable with.

Once we got our stuff out of our room and got checked out, we headed off to the convention center. We were running late, so by the time we got our dealer tables open for business, there wasn't much time to look around.

At least the sales started picking up, but not really enough to let us feel confident that we'd made money. Soon it was time to start packing, which meant I had to go out and get our empty boxes from the van. At least I was able to move to a parking spot closer to the loading dock, which would speed things up.

We had good help in packing and loading, and we were able to snag one of the convention center's big flatbed carts. Our biggest problem was not always having the next thing I needed to load out, but I was able to improvise enough to keep things flowing while other things were being broken down and packed.

Once we had everything loaded into the van, we hit the road back to my folks' place. While we were stopped at one of the rest stops on I-55, we encountered some other fan returning home

from Archon. We talked briefly, then continued on our way.

We made good time to my folks' place, and stayed the night. On Monday we continued the journey and made it home in good time.

WINDYCON

Con report by Leigh Kimmel

Windycon is the Chicago area's big fall science fiction convention. This year it was held in the Westin in Lombard over the weekend of November 8-10, 2013.

Because dealer load-in begins at noon on Friday and we knew it would take us a long time to get everything in, we came up on Thursday. However, in the haste of getting on the road, some important things got left behind. As a result, I had to figure out some awkward workarounds, but at least I could make do.

After supper we headed over to the main hotel. Since this was our first time at this location, we wanted to take a look around and get some sense of our logistics. We got an opportunity to talk to some of the people running the con, which was also helpful. Then we headed back to our room and took it easy for the evening. I did some work on a story, although it took several times to catch elements I'd forget.

On Friday we headed back to the main hotel. We went early in hopes of getting our badges, but registration still wasn't open. However, the dealers' room did start letting us load in early, so we started hauling everything in. We didn't have a lot of space to work with, so getting set up was quite a challenge. We just made it in time, and I still needed to get my artwork on the art show.

I picked up the necessary paperwork and took it back to the dealers' room to fill out between customers. Then I took it back and got my art set up. Since they print bid sheets up on computer, I tried my best to put everything in the proper order to simplify the process of getting the bid sheets on the correct artworks.

The rest of the evening was fairly slow, and we were rather disappointed with our sales. We tried to console ourselves with the idea that it would be slower than an anime con, but it still left us wondering whether we'd made an expensive mistake.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed over to the con suite to grab some food and hang out until the parties. We talked to some friends I hadn't seen for a while, and I did a little writing.

Windycon has always been a really good one for parties, and that was something I really missed during the years we weren't attending. Several of the local and area conventions had parties to promote them, and they had enough good food that I ended up eating more than I'd intended. By the last couple of parties, I was feeling full and icky, and was talking with a friend about how we just aren't as young as we used to be, and can't do some of the stuff we used to do without a second thought, like

staying up all night partying, or pigging out on the party food.

We headed back to the other hotel to get some sleep. At least by the next morning I was feeling enough better that I could eat a hearty breakfast from the hotel's complimentary spread.

Then we headed over to the main hotel to get our dealers' tables open for business. Sales remained pretty much steady, and we were beginning to have some guarded optimism about the possibility that we'd do well enough to return in future years. However, sales were still slow enough that I had time to write.

We headed over to the con suite to have supper. However, I was still feeling rather off after the previous night's indulgence, and I found the chicken sandwich I'd brought for supper did not appeal. I tried to force it down, but each bite got harder, until it was literally repulsive. I finally ended up having to toss it.

As a result, we decided not to stick around for the parties, even if it did look like we were going to have an interesting night, what with a mundane wedding party sharing the hotel. We headed back to the other hotel so we could turn in early and get some serious sleep.

On Sunday morning we ate breakfast, then carried our stuff out to the van. Then we headed over to the main hotel to get our dealers' tables open for business. I also needed to retrieve my unsold artwork from the art show.

Sales actually picked up on the last day, after people settled up with the hotel and the art show and knew how much money they had left to spend. However, we had a long drive home ahead of us, so we started packing the slow-selling merchandise early.

We were able to get everything packed without too much difficulty, although we did have some hassles over the hotel's issues with carts on their carpet. Then we hit the road for the long drive back home.

FANZINES

Askew #6
John Purcell

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

Broken Toys #22, #23
Taral Wayne

The Drink Tank #357, #358, #359, #360,
#361
Christopher J. Garcia
garcia@computerhistory.org
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Fish Out of Water #559, #560
Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue,
Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

The Life of Rodney Year 65 #1
Rodney Leighton, 11 Branch Road, R. R.
#3, Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia, B0K 1V0
CANADA

MT Void V. 32 #14 October 4, 2013 — V. 32 #
22 November 29, 2013
Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge
Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA
eleeper@optonline.net
mleeper@optonline.net
<http://leepers.us/mtvoid>

Opuntia #268 October 2013, #269 November
2013
Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2E7 CANADA

The Reluctant Famulus #96
Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road,
Owenton, KY 40359- USA
tomfamulus@hughes.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Space Cadet #23
R Graeme Cameron

Vanamonde #918 January 11, 2011 — #922
February 8, 2011
John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.
409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA



WORLD CON BIDS

2016
Kansas City
<http://kansascityin2016.org/>
Proposed Dates: August 18-22.

2017
Helsinki
<http://helsinkiin2017.org/>
Japan
<http://nippon2017.org/>
Proposed Dates: sometime in August

Montréal
Washington DC
<http://dc17.org/>

Proposed Dates: August 16-20

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

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

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

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

Bids under consideration include:

2021
Fort Worth

2022
Chicago

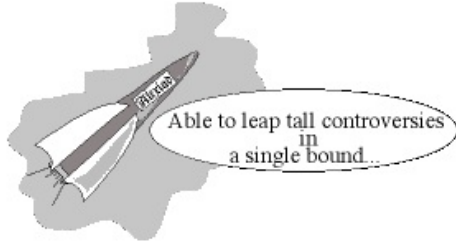
Thanks to Mike Glyer for the updates.

The problem with Detroit is, well, Detroit. As for future bids, Kansas City is quite reasonable — it will be forty years *SIGH* after my very first WorldCon, and afterwards there is the Kansas Cosmosphere, with the Liberty Bell Seven capsule. I would never have thought to see it, and there it is, in Hutchinson, Kansas, a place that features in *When Worlds Collide* (1933). I can see some relatives afterwards, too.

Of the choice, we have a preference for the newly announced DC in '17 bid, but it looks as if Helsinki has the emotional edge. And New Orleans should be fun. (Not surprisingly, I have relatives in both.)

See you in Detroit.

Letters, we get letters



From: **Sheryl L. Birkhead** Oct 12-14, 2013
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
20882-3422 USA

Ah, the saga of the laptop continues. Well, I found out what the underlying cause of the erratic (psychotic) behavior was. Unfortunately, during the diagnosis, I . . . um, er . . . rendered it pretty much useless as a mobile computer. It (as you can see) still works, but only while plugged in since I made it impossible to install a battery. Since the connection is a magnetic one, almost any movement of the computer makes it pull off and if I have not saved it . . . well at least I am making different mistakes! Fixing it for this model will require replacing the lower case. I bought a used one off eBay, but after reading the directions several times (it is labeled as a **difficult** procedure) I am not so sure I want to tackle it. *Apple* won't do it, saying it is too old (2007) but went on to say they cannot get the parts. I said I already had them — and they said no since they can not guarantee such parts. I went to an *Apple* related store called *Mac Business Solutions* and they said they would do it if I got the parts for \$226 **however** he went on to say he felt it was not in my best interests to repair this one. It boils down to the idea that I want to be able to use *FreeHand* as long as I possibly can since I have been unable to find any other drawing program that feels as right. *FH* is obsolete from OS 10.7 on. This locks me in to any *Macbook* (or closely related) manufactured before late 2011. On my desktop I use 10.6.8 (*Snow Leopard*) with an external hard drive connected that is running 10.7.5 (*Mountain Lion*) — so I can use both as needed, but not on the portable one. So, problem figured out — solution . . . well . . . not yet. I looked on eBay and just cannot afford any of the right years. With any luck (read that as coming into a windfall) I will be able to get a newer model **and** repair this one (yeah, right!).

Moving right along . . .

As I type this *Capclave* is doing its thing nearby. I have poked around the Internet to see if I can locate any news item about it, but so far haven't located anything. With *Steve Stiles* and *G RR Martin* as two of their *GoHs* I was hoping to see exposure (so to speak).

Nope, a quick re-search . . . can't find anything yet.

I don't have a cell phone that I use or that could be used as a camera. As a result, I have thought about buying a digital camera (which I keep reading will soon be obsolete — well, my drawing software will have company!) but am uncertain about what to look at/for and suspect the price will be a rude awakening. So, no digital camera.

You can get some decent digital cameras for about \$100. I noticed during my skin cancer surgery that the dermatologist used a regular camera to record the operation.

My *VCR* taping is still months behind in the watching category — but I think *Jenny McCarthy* is the new co-host on the *View*. Eventually I'll get to some of their shows tapes within the past two or so months and I'll know for sure. I won't cheat and go look!

Sheesh, even with eye surgery as an excuse, *Brad Foster* is doing a better job at loccing than I am. Gotta get better at this.

Lloyd, maybe you and *Brad* can discuss eye surgeries — it is the fannish thing to do.

I am just now trying to watch the new episodes of *Foyle's War*. I watched *Bletchley Circle* after seeing *Sam (Honeysuckle)* in the previews.

George (Price) my condolences on your loss.

Well — kept typing, cord pulled out and whoop there it went. Not sure where my comments were headed, so might as well stop now and not even try to re-construct this (but I gotta admit this is better than it was — but now I need to make it right!).

Didn't hear anything about the worldcon — making me think nothing went horribly wrong or terribly ghreat — can live with that. I tried to watch the Hugo ceremonies online, but the screen kept on going dark and I gave up.

You missed the mad dogs kneeling us in the groin.

As always — thanks!

November 17, 2013

It would appear that I am close to being caught up (again?) on loccing . . . well, to one zine at least!

I have notes to myself written all over the envelope- so I need to re-write them in some other spot that I can remember. I'll work on that later.

I bought a turntable and cd player that looked like an old victrola. Well, you get what you pay for and within a year, the cd portion died. So, the whole thing is parked in a corner of the bedroom. Perhaps I think it will self-heal because I certainly cannot find a repairman! On my list of holiday gifts to me (since no one else

pays any attention to what I say I want) is a "nice" record and cd player — caveat being the price-free would be affordable. That went on the list a year ago, but since there was no extra money at Christmas, it is still right there. Yeah, RSN. (To make matters worse, I need a floor-mat for the car and the one it came with never fit right — since it was not factory equipment I can't complain. I took the car in for routine servicing which I expected to cost at most \$64. There was a new guy at the reception desk who asked for name and then read over the repair/service history and told me what needed doing would be a bit over \$1000. I didn't both saying he must be joking-just said- to going to happen. He took the list back and said-no wait—I see you've done a few of these things already — so the total is \$596. I repeated- not going to happen, but if all that was really necessary, it would get done over time. Then, the service manager who usually waits on me came by and said he would look at the paperwork. He told his co-worker that everything had been done over the past year, just out of order and not exactly at the benchmark of mileage. So, for the first time since I got the car it really did only need grease and oil etc. It is difficult to keep up since the car is 11 years old but only has 68,000 miles on it so work has been done due to age rather than mileage. Anyway- at that point I didn't ask the cost- it had to be better than the \$596 . . . just took my toys and went back to the waiting area to ..well..wait. When I was told the car was done and had been through the wash-I just went to pay the bill. \$4.98 I thought he was kidding, but no, that is what the receipt says. So, I went over to their parts department and asked the guy if he could research new mats — really only need the one, but no way to get just one and break up a set-I only found then at \$139 — again, not going to happen. He went to — his words — an arcane and difficult to locate website and they had one set of the 2002 mats(come to think of it — he never did ask the color — this might get interesting) \$49.99 — SOLD! Well . . . order me one and then it will be sold — so that has become my holiday gift to me — and bumped the player down to a maybe . . .)

A comment about tires. I grant you that I totally forgot my own advice when I got my last tires but I remembered it as soon as I signed the credit card receipt and I won't forget it in the future. I found that (I don't haggle, so it is much nicer if the regular price is right...) the amount I saved on one tire at *Sam's Club* covered a year's membership that I had to buy in order to... I was buying two tires that time, so I got a year's membership and still saved \$75 on top of that for the same tires I would have gotten from the dealership.

Just heard from my brother that they are moving to Louisville..their younger daughter already lives there. It is ridiculous for them to keep their beautiful (and BIG) home when they are at home only 2-3 months out of the year, they do love traveling! He pointed out that it

might take a while, since homes in this price bracket don't sell well and add in winter...may be a while. They (he and his wife and their daughter) are off for their traditional holiday trip-meeting up with the elder daughter in Australia for a three week stay in Vietnam and Laos. I believe that last year's Antarctica trip meant they had hit all the continents. Next they head out to Hawaii in January for a few weeks' stay at their time share. In March they head out to Australia again for another cruise — 4 months — tough life!

Coffee — nope, don't like it. My mother drank it with cream/milk and sugar and I got used to the smell — and I had eaten coffee ice cream. I thought coffee would taste like . . . it didn't. When I'd try a cup of "good" coffee, the only analogy I could think of was that it tasted as if someone had stubbed out a cigarette in it. Yeech. I don't want the buzz. I also never could tell if one cup would make trying to draw a "straight-ish" line impossible and it wasn't worth it to me. The day I decided not to continue trying to like the stuff was the day after my Organic Chemistry exam in college. In panic, I had gone to the student union and gulped down cup after cup..so I could study. I went back to the dorm and..immediately fell asleep. Coffee ice cream — that is okay, not on my best list, but . . .

There is a vegan ice "cream" mocha chocolate fudge~and yeah, you know how I know that fact. It is difficult to find, but enjoyable.

I use *Healthwarehouse* online to mail order the one small prescription I get. I never get anywhere near the annual deductible, so I just pay it myself—since going through insurance would be \$180 for 6 months and *Healthwarehouse* is \$18.50 for 6 months (free shipping). FYI, the address is listed as Kentucky. I don't know if their prices are any better than what you are already getting. Around here, of the chains — *Sam's Club* is routinely the least expensive — and the last time I checked you did not have to have a membership if the pharmacy was all you wanted to "visit".

As *non-Worldcon* reports go, yours rates right at the top. Sorry you had so many troubles and couldn't make it. I'd be tempted to say — think of all the money you saved, but with all the car troubles, I am not sure how much the bottom lines varied from each other.

The price of the two repairs was about what the price of the hotel stay would have been. That was why I decided there was no point in going on.

— JTM

I'm trying to remember if I ever stood in line for an autograph..yes. My sister came with me to a con and wanted *Asimov's* signature — so I stood in line with her while she waited to get it. Wonder what she did with it?

Every time I start thinking of attending a Worldcon, I look at the travel and lodging costs. That pretty much finishes off even considering a trip.

I only get 3 of the 10 zines listed. 30% bodes well for the state of health of printed zines.

In this area we have had *WETA UK* on regular PBS TV for a year now. If you were paying close attention to the scheduling, it was possible to get episodes of *Endeavour* (the prequel series) and *Inspector Lewis* (the spin-off, sorta sequel) back to back with episodes of *Inspector Morse*. My stack of VCR tapes to watch has grown substantially since this TV show started broadcasting!

I got a temporary CoA for Guy and *Rosy Lillian* — then a follow up letting me know the original one was wrong. That's another fanned on my list of needing to contact/loc RSN.

I am/was hoping to be able to get to a few fillos to send, but so far that is proving difficult — useable time in a chunk just is not being found. I'll give it another try before trying to print this off to send . . .

Man — the little illo below is so very simple and took forever to create—I have no idea if it will look the same printed as it does on monitor — let alone I got carried away with color — sorry, but too enticing to avoid! Sheesh — it is now Nov 17th — sorry!

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** October 25, 2013
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I fear our friend Taras Wolansky is getting a mite peculiar. He seems to think that heterosexual AIDS is a "myth." If so, what is devastating Africa? In South Africa as much as a third of the population is infected. Either South Africa and some of the adjoining countries have the highest rate of closet homosexuals in the world, or something is wrong with this model. Indeed, most sources report that the main means of spread has involved (female) prostitutes and truckers, who get laid when they are on the road and then come home and bring the disease to their wives. The result is that there are an extraordinary number of orphans, because many children lose both parents this way. I don't doubt that certain homosexual practices are riskier, and more likely to introduce the virus from semen into the bloodstream, but it is also clear that heterosexual transmission is common.

The science on global warming is in. We know it is happening and it is caused by human activity. The UN admitted as much recently. There really is no argument here, although the details continue to change as more data is collected. Will the sea level rise a foot, six feet, or twenty feet? That we do not really know, but it will rise. Taras asks why people who keep up with these things do not mention the southern polar cap. The answer is that they do. It is melting too. Pieces have been breaking off at record sizes. We just pay more attention to the

northern one because it is closer, and the immediate geopolitical implications are greater, because there is no land underneath, which allows easy access to oil in the seabed. But this is not a mystery. The political issue remains though, how to defeat the obstructionists and harness international will to address the problem.

Alexis Gilliland is quite correct that the world's leading polluter is China. That is because the Chinese have completely unregulated capitalism, very much in bed with the corrupt government but not at all answerable to the people. Profit is all. There is no equivalent of the Environmental Protection Agency, no laws against monopolies, no regulations guaranteeing worker safety, etc. It is true that some Republicans apparently see this as an ideal and are working to bring it about in the United States, but they have not done so yet. China may ultimately turn out to be a warning to the rest of the world. For example, if fracking is really as bad as some people say it is, we will find out from China, which is determined to take the lead in this technique, without any regard for environmental consequences.

Alexis is also right about another thing: rule by the rich is the most common form of human government. It may take many names, and sometimes cause and effect can be reversed (as when a revolutionary clique *becomes* rich by ruling, but it tends to work out the same. In the Roman Republic there were offices (such as Tribune of the Plebs) which were reserved for non-senators, supposedly to give the government some balance, but even as far back as the days of the Gracchi this did not really work, and the electoral system was more like an Illinois election as managed by Al Capone. The masses actually did better under the Empire, as there was more opportunity of persons of low birth, who lacked senatorial connections. So when Caesar and then Octavian wiped out most of the old senatorial aristocracy, the common people were not particularly concerned. When Octavian as Augustus brought peace and prosperity, most people did not care how exactly he had done this, and did not look too closely at the studied hypocrisy it required.

As for what there is to admire in Heinlein, there is of course a great deal, but the question, which I once used for the title to a group discussion at a Lunacon, is "When Did Heinlein Go Bad?" He definitely did, but, was it before or after *Starship Troopers*, before or after *Stranger*, or later. The common opinion certainly is that *The Moon is A Harsh Mistress* is the last really good Heinlein novel, and that most of what he published thereafter, starting most memorably with *I Will Fear No Evil* did his reputation no good. *Friday* marks only a partial return to form, but it was given a lot of slack at the time because so many Heinlein admirers were so desperate for something to admire. But to see Heinlein at his very best, I think you have to cut off his career after *Have*

Spacesuit, Will Travel, and before *Starship Troopers*. He is rather like Bradbury in that regard. He had about ten great years, early, and then wrote less and less good work. I think the preponderance of his later work is going to harm his reputation in the long-run, particularly the publication of the unedited texts. A fan of my acquaintance tells me that this twenty-something woman at his local club asked the older members, "Why does Heinlein have such a good reputation? He writes such terrible books." What had she read? *I Will Fear No Evil*, *The Number of the Beast*, *Time Enough for Love*, etc. It is entirely possible that bad Heinlein will sink Heinlein altogether.

There are some good parts in *Time Enough for Love* and even *I Will Fear No Evil*. Up to the point when we find out that Gwen in *The Cat Who Walks Through Walls* is Hazel Meade Stone and she brings in the rest of the Lazarus Long bunch, that book isn't half bad. The writer is master of his world and as he goes on, his attitudes get reinforced, usually to the detriment of his writing. As Bradbury had his Mr. Munigant, who crunched the strength out of his work. For as long as Heinlein had to defend his ideas against an equally firm personality (Campbell first, then Alice Dalgliesh) he was the better for it, even if they had their own issues. To look how it went for another writer, compare *Dragonquest* and *Dragonflight*, written with Campbell's input, with the later books, written with the input of adoring fans hoping to see their dragonrider names in print.

I have to admit that Richard Dengrove's idea for an alternate history does not excite me very much. I suspect that for the average soldier on the ground, or the average civilian trying to survive through it all, an alternate historical war causes the same sort of suffering and destruction as a regular, historical one. So some different combination of how a battle turned out is not particularly interesting, dramatically or intellectually. Alternate histories only get interesting when the difference brings about some real change, and creates a strange, new (but half-familiar) world, as it did in Keith Roberts's *Pavane*. I've always admired Sprague de Camp's "Aristotle and the Gun," which is about how the difference in an idea about the nature of science changed everything. The only alternate history I ever wrote ("The Last Heretic," published in a Postscripts anthology) was about the impact of a religious idea, i.e. what would happen if the Arian "heresy" had

triumphed, as it very nearly did in the mid-4th century. Is it really a meaningless formula that Christ was "begotten, not made"? What if it were the other way around? I then went off into satire, suggesting that an infinity of worlds and timelines was necessary to allow all the contradictions in Christian theology to make sense.

Who is the senior person in the SF field now? I think it may be Carol Emshwiller, born 1921. Now 92.

First story, "Built for Pleasure"
(Long Island Suburban, November 1954)

—JTM

From: **Milt Stevens** October 25, 2013
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I held off writing an LoC on *Broken Toys* #21 until I received some new software. The software is called JAWS, and it will read fanzines for me. It does pronounce words like prozine and Lonestarcon strangely, but you can get used to it. Now all I need is some software that will write LoCs for me, and I'll have this fanac thing knocked.

In the United States, it does appear that the number of massacres has increased in recent years. It's still not as bad as in the Arab world where blowing yourself up is just something to do on a Friday night. In the U.S., the media isn't exactly to blame, but they have made the marginally suicidal aware of a spectacular alternative. However, areas in most major cities have been war zones for decades. The massacres don't do much to the overall numbers.

Back when I was still working, I read an essay titled "The Statistics of Deadly Quarrels." The man who wrote the essay had collected as much information as he could about people getting killed for the last 700 years. He may have found a relationship. As I recall, it was called a Lausanne Distribution. Basically, people kill people in either a few big incidents or a lot of small incidents. It's possible there doesn't have to be any reason for people killing people. It's just what we do.

I agree that things would be better if there were fewer guns. Considering the number of men who were killed with bolt action rifles in the 20th century, I wouldn't think it was necessary to have automatic weapons in private hands. Trying to control bullets would never accomplish anything. Making bullets is cottage industry. Some reloaders produce bullets that have far more oomph than factory ammo. Unfortunately, it is also possible to create bullets that are poisonous or which promote infection.

Back before I retired, possession of minor amounts of marijuana had been reduced to being an infraction. In other words, it had been reduced to the level of a traffic citation. If you

got several of them, you could be referred to drug counseling. Possession of 50 lbs. of marijuana was still a serious matter. Of course, driving under the influence is illegal no matter what the substance.

From: **Joy V. Smith** October 26, 2013
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I'm so sorry you had to miss WorldCon, and it sounds like a lot of people missed you! I'm glad you did get out and about to visit your families.

Those Darth Vader books on single fatherhood sound like fun. Interesting background on Tyler Kent, whom I'd never heard of. Fascinating article on economics, dystopia, and fiction. (Excellent roundup.) And I like to read about the alternate history books out there to see what's happening in that sub-genre, but I never see any point in reading them 'cause I'd lose track of what really happened. (I have enjoyed a couple.) Another interesting review is *The Riddle of the Labyrinth*. I am impressed by the work done in that field, and I know more about Linear A and B than I did. I've seen them mentioned, but never had a clue as to what the reference meant.

Thanks to Sue Burke for the intel on Spanish conventions and SF books. And thanks to everyone for their LOCs to give us a different perspective on everything. Fun story combo on the back page, though I don't know enough about Smiley.

The BBC serial is better than the recent movie, and besides it has Obi-Wan facing off against Captain Picard, instead of Commissioner Gordon.

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (1979)
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0080297/>

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (2011)
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1340800/>

—JTM

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** October 26, 2013
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Thank you for *Alexiad* 12.5, the highlight of a postal delivery otherwise consisting of a mess of Christmas catalogs. Since the previous issue, various things have happened, the most notable of which being that I traded my gold 2000 Mazda Protege for a white 2013 Mazda 3. Such a move was maybe a little overdue, because in the past year I had spent more on repairs than the car was worth, and more repairs, some major, were in prospect. Since Lee had begun to urge me to get a new car, I cooperated with the inevitable, and turned in the old car for

about three percent of the cost of the new one over the big Labor Day sale. The Mazda 3 is taking a little bit of getting used to, but so far so good. Lee and I were also invited to Capclave, the local con, for the first time since 2005. Why were we invited? It seems the Baltimore-Washington Area Worldcon Association is bidding for 2017 in some as yet unspecified location, and feels the need to show that things are cool between BWAWA and the Gillilands. We wouldn't have gone back to WSFA, but decided refusing an invitation to WSFA's convention would have been ungracious, so we arranged to attend for Saturday only, with one panel each, and despite her misgivings Lee had herself a very good time. Alas, after dinner I ran out of steam (if we had had a room at the hotel I could have taken a nap) so we went home around nine.

Joe's essay on "The Economy of Abundance" aka "Oomphel In the Sky" (Oomphel In The Sky With Diamonds?) offers a number of comment hooks, the first being that the cargo cult in the New Hebrides was cynical rather than naive, having begun as a counter-missionary effort. The second is about employment. In 1800 about 70 percent of the population worked as farmers, while in 2000 only about 3 percent did, the result of the mechanization of agriculture. The same process (applying science and engineering to make more money) has increased the efficiency of manufacturing even as it reduced the size of the labor force needed to produce all that stuff. The manufacturing exported to China, Mexico and India may someday return to this country, but only when it will be cheaper to make stuff here. That will be when manufacturing can be sufficiently automated, so that the necessary investment of capital will be less than the ongoing expense of labor. Labor in need of expensive training, and often inclined to unionize as a way of getting more money for less work. The general rule seems to be that well-paying jobs are the first to be eliminated, as is currently shown by America's shrinking middle class. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting, if not poorer, at least a lot more numerous. College degrees for all will not help, nor more job training, and we seem headed for more inequality of income than we currently enjoy. From a science fictional point of view, this is not a promising future, since machines are usurping human economic functions, thereby making humans unnecessary. For instance, it is hard to imagine a worker's uprising if workers are only a tiny minority of the population. A third comment hook is the weaponry revolution since the battlefield is becoming increasingly non-survivable as machines usurp not only human economic functions but also human military functions. Indeed, hotshot pilots like Buck Rogers are already being phased out in favor of drones, with the prospect of cyber-fighter planes (not human fighter planes flown by clunky Cylons) being able to outperform

human piloted fighter planes. In a world of Machina Uber Alles, who needs humans, except maybe the writers of science fiction?

In the letter column there is some discussion of climate change. The notably conservative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently issued its fifth report since 1990 in which they estimate that the chances are 95 percent that global warming is caused by human burning of fossil fuels. The IPCC also predicts a three-foot rise in sea levels by 2100. Will global catastrophe wipe us all out before our very profitable machines turn suffering humanity into a useless anachronism? Stay tuned for breaking news.

George Price extols the virtues of the gold standard, though he doubts that anyone anywhere has ever lived up to his ideal. Two things come to mind, the first being that the essence of government is choosing the least available evil. In practice this means long-term advantage is usually traded off to avoid short-term pain. The second is that the humans running any given government have often embraced dumb ideas with enthusiasm, invariably to the detriment of the governed. Examples of such ideas are left as an exercise to the reader, but might that perfect gold standard be one of them? George should consider whether there are minuses as well as pluses to his beautiful idea. When William Jennings Bryan said: "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" did he have a point for at least some of the people? The fact that the nation eventually abandoned the gold standard suggests that Bryan might have been on to something. What else? This Halloween will be our 20th wedding anniversary.

From: **Brad W. Foster** October 29, 2013
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New issue of *Alexiad* arrived this weekend, in time to remind me that I still have the *previous* issue in the stack here, waiting for response. Been that kind of a summer, always hurrying to catch up on things. Should be a bit better from now on, had the last of the eye surgeries about a month ago. The twice-operated eye is still a bit funky (slow to adjust to light in the morning, not the same focus as the old eye, etc.), but it *is* getting better, and I now am at least back to having two eyes, which means depth of field, and I can DRAW once again on something more than a tiny doodle. Lots to catch up with on the drawing front after a whole summer of little getting done.

Back in 1996 I had a sinus headache and woke up the next morning unable to see out of my right eye. After several visits to various eye specialists, thorough testing, and much analysis, they

concluded "We don't know either." The vision returned over about a week.

— JTM

Oh, and speaking of drawing, attached is a new piece I hope you might get a grin from. One of those "Hey, never thought of it *that* way before" kind of cartoons. If you'd prefer not to use it, just let me know. I think the lettering will hold up when reduced to your column format . . .)

Sorry one of the things we had to miss out on this summer was getting to go to the Worldcon after, well, quite a while. Right down the road from us, but having it moved back to the Labor Day weekend conflicted with one of our bigger art festivals that I show at each year, and we couldn't afford to lose the income from that show at this time. We're going to take a gamble and throw our hat in the ring for TAFF for this next year though. Have always wanted to visit England, and figure we'll never be able to do it financially on our own. So, maybe will get to attend a Worldcon after all, as long as enough people in the US vote to kick us out of the country for a while!

August issue—

While I was sorry to see the obit for E. L. Konigsburg, it did remind me that I have been meaning to read *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* forever, and so have added it to our "look for this one" book hunting list. The writer may pass, but their work remains to entertain over and over.

Your description of scenes from "Le voyage dans la Lune" as having a Monty Python vibe had me grinning and nodding my head in agreement. The Pythons tackled so many things, I always wondered what a Monty Python sf movie would have been like. But then, maybe we have that in the Douglas Adams works?

Getting near the end of reading *At Home, A Short History of Private Life* by Bill Bryson. Odds are you have already devoured it at some point yourselves. However, if not, all the books in this issue dealing with history of various sorts made me think it might be something you would enjoy. He uses the framework of the rooms of a house as a jumping off point for a look at the history of.. well, just about everything! I've been a Bryson fan for years, so might be a bit prejudiced, but am enjoying this one tremendously.

Oh, and think special mention needs to be made of the wonderful Gilliland cartoon on page 24 of the August issue, with the alien folks occupying the negative space of the two human figures (or is it vice versa?) Freaking brilliant, Alexis!

October issue—

Can identify with your comments on changing tech, Lisa. Looking at all the record albums on the shelves at one side of the room, I know I've got an old turntable around here

somewhere, but not sure if it even works properly anymore. Then there are all the VCR tapes on shelves on the other side of the room-- I've got a player next to the tv, but it has been unhooked for years, so I could attach the DVD player. Can I even figure which cables go where anymore? (Of course, there is also the old hand-crank standing victrola in the front room, and it's selection of about a dozen or so super-thick record discs — I can crank that up anytime I want, though the selections are a bit more limited.)

Part of Leigh's trip report struck home, the crappy deal with their insurance for their house being cancelled out from under them, even after doing all the work that was asked. We had something similar last year — told would not be renewed unless some nebulous "fix the walls" repairs were made. After a lot of calls, I was finally able to narrow it down to what, exactly, they wanted done. Had the repairs made, photographed and sent it in months before the policy would end . . . then waited and waited. Turns out they still needed to have their reps drop by to look at it, and wouldn't you know it, just too difficult for anyone to drive by for two minutes to confirm the repairs in the photo were real. For months, they couldn't be bothered. Ended up our agent literally had to write a brand-new policy, and on the day the old one expired, put the new one into effect. Insane, but hopefully we won't have to go through that again for a while.

Meanwhile, we are still paying off bills for the new ac/heating unit, the two different times burst pipes had to be repaired by cutting through the foundation, and a couple of different doctor/hospital bills from my surgeries this summer — all of this stuff, interestingly enough, was not to make things better, but just to maintain the slowly crumbling status quo of both the house and my own body. Ah, life. Of course, it beats the alternative!

From: **Lloyd Penney** October 29, 2013
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Many thanks for the 71st *Alexiad*. I am rapidly catching up with my letter writing, mostly because yesterday was the day I started a new job with an advertising agency literally down the street from me. I am so relieved, and while it is a two-week trial to get a 3-month contract, it is the first work I've had since March. Let's see what I can say here.

Netbook, laptop, iPad, smartphone... I have none of these, finding that for the money, for me anyway, the benefits are questionable and the potential costs of software and possible temptations to buy stuff online are more than I want to consider. I am no Luddite, but I won't take on new tech until I can find a reasonable use that will benefit my life. I have

a cellphone, Yvonne has one and a laptop, and this suits what we want and need. Also, old tech should never be considered bad or useless tech. That was brought home to me when years ago, I saw a group of university students hook up their Twitter feed to an old teletype machine. Not only did they get their messages printed out, but they could also respond to the messages using the teletype keyboard.

Dave Kyle is now our senior statesman? I am sure that's a distinction he has never looked for. I am pleased to say that Dave will be at a convention in Toronto next month, and I look forward to chatting with him and signing his book.

Daniel Snowden's actions have lost-lasting effects, now with revelations that the US government, through the NSA, has spied on allied nation leaders for many years. A comment I saw on Facebook last night . . . the US has been proved to be doing terrible things, things they used to criticize the Soviet Union and East Germany for doing. I enjoy history texts, but must wonder about our future. . . who will write those history books?

Your commentary on oomphel . . . we've been living a dystopia in some ways. Dubya got rid of surplus production in the US by almost-never-ending, never-victorious wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and did so to boost the economy. But, it resulted in record debts, and of course, the Republicans blame Obama for debt they rang up themselves. Our own conservative leaders have been doing much the same things, and the next federal election should give them their just rewards. I can hardly wait . . .

I am pleased to say that after six months of unemployment, I am working again, and I hope for more than the proposed two-week trial or three-month contract. With this job in mind, we are still optimistic for going to London. I must agree with you that many consumers of science fiction these days are consumers, not participants. We're being trained not to speak up or do anything, but simply sit down and watch. The mad dogs will knee us in the groin again and again, if we stick around to have it happen again and again. The FAAn awards will have to do for the moment.

The local . . . Sheryl asks about change the elimination of the copper penny here. The price of anything, should it be something other than 5 or ten cents, gets rounded up or down to the nearest five or ten. I hope I've gotten the luck I need for my new job; thank you for your good wishes.

My loc . . . Joseph, better change my e-mail there. I haven't been with Allstream for many years. Now that Helsinki is now bidding for the 2017 Worldcon, I think Montréal's chances have become fairly slim, unfortunately.

For the moment, I think that will have to do. I have just finished up my second day at Perennial Inc., an advertising agency just down the road from where I live . . . a walk and a short bus ride gets me there is about 20 minutes. I am trying my best to stay there, but I shudder to think what will happen to us if I don't. I am

so relieved at having this job, and a number of people are happy to have me there, and have told me so. Anyway, the best of times to everyone for Hallowe'en, and may we have a relatively warm and snow-free winter. I don't want to think about snowbanks . . . See you with the next issue.

From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Nov. 2, 2013
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Thank you for reviewing *The Cats of Tanglewood Forest*. It looks like my kind of book. I've added it to my reading list.

In response to Rodney Leighton's query, I received an issue of *Pablo Lennis* sometime last year or so. It came with a note saying that I was mentioned within. I read it fairly carefully without finding that reference. I can't say I was terribly impressed by the zine. The layout was pretty bad, and the contents weren't much better; I didn't find it worthy of a LoC.

It doesn't sound really worthwhile to get a driver's licence in Spain. Wow!

I'm glad to see that I'm not the only one unimpressed by Kim Stanley Robinson's writing. The ones I've read seem like treatises with a thin veneer of fiction. His ideas are often very intriguing, but his characterizations leave a great deal to be desired. That said, I felt that *2312* was an improvement over his Mars trilogy where his characters were concerned. They were about the level of Asimov's early characters.

At least the setting of *2312* was interesting. I found the Mars Trilogy boring.

— JTM

Since there was some discussion of worldcons and hopeful statements made about meeting at some future date, I just want to say that the next one on our calendar is the one in Spokane. I can't see getting to London unless an unknown long lost uncle leaves us a large legacy. Illness prevented us from being in San Antonio, and I regret the lost opportunity for meeting some people there.

From: **Murray Moore** November 6, 2013
1065 Henley Road, Mississauga
Ontario L4Y 1C8 CANADA
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The two of you have a lot of relatives. My mother's side of the family assembles in a city park annually on Labour Day. Since I resumed attending Worldcon in 2000, on Labour Day I chose to be at Worldcon when Worldcon happens on Labour Day weekend.

You were missed at LoneStarCon 3, both as individuals and as warm bodies. I have not experienced such an underused Worldcon Fan Lounge, despite its location adjacent to a bar,

the fan tables, Newsletter, and site selection tables.

Looking at the list of Hugo winners, I had to remember, 'Scalzi won for best novel'. I did not vote in the Novel category however my choices for Novella, Novelette, and Short Story, were the winners.

Cadigan's "The Girl-Thing Who Went Out For Sushi" was the only fiction nominee which I thought very fine.

Recently I read Best Graphic Story winner, "Saga". The writing is smart and the painted art does not get in the way. I will borrow Volume 2, too, if it becomes available through our public library.

I voted for Best Fan Writer on the basis of the samples included in the Hugo packet. Tansy Rayner Roberts I gave my second place vote. Galen Dara as Best Fan Artist: nice for her but Very Much Not my choice.

Dept. of Mad Dogs Knead Us In The Groin, AKA Unversed in History, this year's record five-Hugo-nomination recipient, during Renovation, did not appear to understand a reference to *The Stars My Destination*. Kids these days!

Dale Kyle, your suggestion, Joe, as Senior Science Fiction Author, is a guest, Nov. 29-Dec. 1 at SFContario 4, with the slightly younger Chan Davis and the very young Seanan McGuire.

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

Of the 95 names on the list of members of this year's Corflu, 30 I know to be active fanziners, whether publishing, writing, drawing. More of them might be but I don't know it.

You can experience Corflu next year, in Richmond, Virginia, only 8 hours 13 minutes from Louisville. No need to organize a Faneds Feast: the Corflu Sunday brunch ticket is part of your membership. And two weeks later you can return to Virginia, to Bristol, for DeepSouthCon 52.

That's May 2-4. We have another engagement that weekend.

The 2013 Corflu, CORFLU XXX, Membership List, as it was April 17, 2013: Ted White, Pat Virzi, Geri Sullivan, Robert Lichtman, Carol Carr, John Harvey, Eve Harvey, Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, Nigel Rowe, Spike, Tom Becker, Arnie Katz, Joyce Katz, Frank Lunney, Earl Kemp, Michael Dobson, Dixie Tracy-Kinney, Jay Kinney, Terry Kemp, Aileen Forman, Ken Forman, Gary Mattingly, Patty Peters, Sandra Bond, Woody Bernardi, Art Widner, Milt Stevens, Carrie Root, Andy Hooper, Hope Leibowitz, Murray Moore, Mary Ellen Moore, John Hardin, Jacq Monahan, Rob Jackson, John D. Berry, Teresa Cochran, James Taylor, Petrea Mitchell, Chris French, Steve Stiles, Elaine

Stiles, Mike Meara, Pat Meara, Randy Byers, Jim Caughran, Jerry Kaufman, Suzle Tompkins, Linda Deneroff, Roy Kettle, Kathleen Mitchell, Kim Huett, Rich Coad, Stacy Scott, R-Laurraine Tutihasi, Mike Weasner, David Levine, Kate Yule, Rob Hansen, Eileen Gunn, Jack Calvert, Gary Hunnewell, Jeff Schalles, Doug Bell, Christina Lake, Pat Charnock, Graham Charnock, James Charnock, Shell Rees-Jones, Eloise Charnock, Gordon Eklund, Lucy Huntzinger, Victor Gonzalez, Tamara Menteer Gonzalez, Alan Rosenthal, Jeanne Bowman, Andy Smith, Chris Wrdnrd, Karen Schaffer, Mike Ward, Ian Sorensen, Gregg Trend, Audrey Trend, Bill Burns, Mary Burns, Elinor Busby, Kate Schaefer, Glenn Hackney, Pamela Davis, Terry Floyd, Grant Kruger, Lenny Bailes, Jim O'Meara.

Dainis, our public library has these Gillian Bradshaw titles: which one should I sample?: *Wrong Reflection*, *Sand-Reckoner*, *Island of Ghosts*, *Bearkeeper's Daughter*.

Simple, read them all.

— JTM

From: **Rodney Leighton** November 1, 2013
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
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CANADA

Thanks for the last couple issues of *Alexiad*. #72 appeared a few days ago all by itself. This is the day after Hallowe'en. I was sorry that you didn't make it to the con. Admit it, you were secretly pleased. Knowing in your heart that you are the only person interested in these fanned feasts or at least the only one willing to put in any effort on them and being tired of being the sole organizer of the things for years on end, aren't you happy to see that there wasn't one because Joe wasn't there to make it happen.

My latest adventure involved eyeglasses. Interesting how things have changed over the years, but some things stay more or less static. I got my first pair of glasses 53 years ago. Examined by an older man whose son attended. A few days ago I had an eye exam with his grand daughter; her father having done almost all of my eye exams in the interim. He passed away a couple of years ago. She's really good, and fast. Our vaunted medical care will pay for the exam now that I am 65. They won't do anything for the glasses.

The adventure began when my glasses fell apart. Cleaning the lenses and they disintegrated into three parts. I found an older pair. Those I am now using date back to the 90's. Eyes haven't changed much. But I developed some sort of allergy to something in the frames. If I wear them for about four hours wearing my hardhat with ear muffs down my head feels like it is in a compression chamber. Doctor is in Thuro, about a 45-minute drive away. I had some other things to do there and my aunt lives farther away, I planned on doing all my stuff on Friday and going to visit her.

Having troubles with these glasses I went on Thursday to see if I could get them fixed. Sorry, can't weld those. Got to get new frames. Got to have an eye exam to do that. Bother.

So, I made an appointment for the following Tuesday. Exam took about 15 minutes. Used to be they were all one, do exams, fit you for glasses, make the things, mail them out. Now she is affiliated with some huge corporation which does the glasses; took longer to select and order a pair than the exam did; they no longer use Canada Post. And instead of the three to five days it used to take it is now seven to ten days.

They had a buy one pair get the second free so called deal. Then the female doing this stuff revealed that if I only bought one pair there was a 30% discount. Thus: \$99.95 for frames; \$365 for lenses less \$139.49 for one complete pair of glasses equals \$325.46. Plus three trips to Truro at around \$20 per trip equals about \$60. But that's probably not fair; I did other things the other times I was there, like buy some Chinese food for lunch and likely will next trip as well.

In case Lloyd doesn't answer Sheryl's question; sales tax is added to the cost of purchase. I just now realized there is no tax on the glasses or else it's factored into the cost. Anyway, the discontinuation of pennies applies only to cash transactions. Since I paid this one with the Visa the price given was what I paid. If I had been carrying \$400 with me and paid cash it would have been \$325.45. Price is rounded up or down to the nearest five cent level; 46 or 47 cents goes down to 45; 47 or 48 or 49 goes up to 50 cents. Gas has taxes on top of taxes.

It's raining like crazy. Probably had nothing to do with global warming or any such foolishness. How about a moratorium on global warming chatter?

I have been in one of my "I am getting out of this small press shit entirely" moods. But I gather that a couple of people have started reading the zine. Here's one in case you want to read it.

From: **Jim Stumm** November 1, 2013
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo, NY
14223-0029 USA

George W. Price: This is what a gold standard would prevent: On the first day the debt limit was raised, the Obama Administration added \$328 Billion to the National Debt, in one day. That's a new record high increase for one day, surpassing the old one day record increase that was also set by the Obama Administration in 2011.

Before the debt limit was raised, I read that the Govt needed \$246 Billion a year to pay the interest on the National Debt. The revenue that the Govt continuously receives from various taxes is more than 10 times that. So what I heard repeated over and over, that not raising the debt ceiling would FORCE the Govt to default on its debt, was not true. They had

plenty of revenue to pay the interest and avoid default.

But if they keep on raising the National Debt by continuing to borrow more, the amount of interest they have to pay will continue to increase. Besides that, interest rates are now very low. They will probably go much higher in the future, and that will also increase the interest that must be paid on the National Debt. So future generations will be stuck with paying the bill for what this present greedy generation is consuming.

Jerry Kaufman: You wonder what will happen when the writers have run through all of the Oliver Sacks books. This often happens in the British police procedurals that I like to watch. For example, there were only some or 8 "Inspector Morse" novels to adapt for TV. After that, other writers wrote new episodes "based on" these novels, using the same characters, the same setting, and trying to remain faithful to the original concept. I suppose this requires approval by the author or his estate, and payment of royalties. Another example is "Midsomer Murders." I believe there were only original novels, but they have by now made over 80 episodes, and the series is still going on, with some characters being replaced, as they do regularly on "Law and Order."

In production terms, it's a franchise. If the Lord of the Rings movies didn't cost so much, we would have a LotR franchise, with further adventures of the Fellowship. (Aak, Tauriel fights the New Shadow . . .).

Darrell Schweitzer: So all these scientists are prepared to blame climate change on human activity. But they don't seem to be prepared to say what proof they have that it is due to human activity. At least I have never seen any such proof. What I have seen repeatedly is the assertion that global warming is caused by human activity. And a theory, the greenhouse effect. And a correlation, as CO₂ rises, due to humans burning fossil fuels, global temperature rises.

But, correlation does not prove causation. And a theory is not proof, it's what needs to be proved (that this is what's really happening). And an assertion is just an unproven hypothesis. And now we see that as CO₂ continues to rise, the global temperature has stopped rising. So you no longer have even a correlation between CO₂ and temperature.

So what proof do you have that global warming is caused by human activity? In science, a theory is not proved by the number of people who say it is true, but rather by the strength of the evidence. I haven't seen ANY evidence.

Everything that is occurring is proof of global warming. More

polar ice pack — global warming. Cold winters — global warming. I started having problems when an expedition set out to measure annual snow pack in Greenland. They expected to see less snow in more recent years, due to global warming. They found the snowfall in recent years had been greater, thus proving the global warming hypothesis since increased evaporation from the oceans was increasing snowfall.

Alexis A. Gilliland: Moral hazard also applies to the Govt's response to rising sea levels. If they subsidize flood insurance for people who want to build on barrier islands, that encourages more people to take on more risk and build in these unsafe places.

But I have heard on the news that a law has been passed requiring the Govt to stop subsidizing flood insurance. I don't know if that means all flood insurance or just in certain places.

One woman whose house was flooded by Superstorm Sandy says her flood insurance premium is going to go up from a few \$100 a year to \$9000. She can't afford that so she will drop her flood insurance. So the next time she gets flooded out, there will be no insurance money to rebuild. I don't think people should be living on barrier islands or right down on ocean beaches. But I would prefer a softer transition. Give one last payment, but only to people who agree to build somewhere else, on higher ground.

Use these beaches for recreation. Maybe drive your RV down to the beach and park there for a week or 2. But no one should receive any kind of Govt subsidy to build a permanent house there. And the Govt should not build any infrastructure in these high risk places. No utilities, nothing more than roads. Any RVs that use these places should be self-contained, no hook-ups. And when a big storm is forecast, everybody should clear out of the area, leaving nothing much of any value behind.

Rod E. Smith: You think low solar activity accounts for the lack of global warming in recent years. Do you think that higher solar activity before that may have had something to do with the global warming that occurred then?

From: **Sue Burke** November 14, 2013
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I went to watch the movie *Gravity* in "versión original," which means original language with subtitles. The movie was fun, and one subtitle taught an interesting lesson in translation. When Matt asks Ryan where she lives, "Where do you pitch your tent?" the Spanish subtitle read, "Where do you keep your

toothbrush?" — a good idiomatic translation. In Spanish, the word for tent is also the word for store, a usage dating back to medieval times when shopping was done at weekly or annual fairs where itinerant merchants pitched their tents. If that sentence had been translated literally, Matt would have asked her where her store was. So an alternative had to be found, and this sounded just as jocular in Spanish as in English.

Translation isn't always so easy. Here in Spain, if something is very successful, it "leaves by the big gate." This is a reference to bullfighting, where a matador who has a very successful fight is carried out of the main gate of the bullring on the shoulders of his crew, surrounded by cheering fans. You could translate it as "hits a home run," but Spaniards don't play baseball. You could just say "very successful," but the verve of the expression gets lost in translation.

Similarly, there's the expression, "They blamed him for everything. He even killed Manolete." Again, this is a bullfighting reference. Manolete (1917-1947) is generally considered the greatest bullfighter ever. He was killed in the ring by a bull named Islero. To blame someone for Manolete's death is a way of saying that the person is considered the culmination of all evil. I can't think of any translation that would not be another lesson in loss.

(By the way, you can see the tanned hide of Islero in the Bullfighting Museum of Córdoba, in the room dedicated to Manolete. Olé.)

Speaking of Spain, I recommend that Darrell Schweitzer throw away all his history books that say Spanish Jews had to give up their children when they were expelled in 1492. The edict by Queen Isabel I and King Fernando II specified:

"... Nosotros ordenamos además en este edicto que los Judíos y Judías de cualquier edad que residan en nuestros dominios o territorios que partan con sus hijos e hijas, sirvientes y familiares pequeños o grandes de todas las edades al fin de Julio de este año . . ."

"... In this edict we also order male and female Jews of every age who reside in our dominion or territories to leave with their sons and daughters, servants and family members, humble or wealthy of all ages, by the end of July of this year . . ."

(http://es.wikisource.org/wiki/Decreto_de_Granada)

I thought it had been July 2 —
Tisha b'Av 5252.

And so they did. The priest Andrés Bernaldez (1450-1513), in his history of Isabel and Fernando's reign, wrote this account: "...Young and old, they left the lands where they were born, elderly and children, on foot or mounted on donkey or other beasts, and in carts

... some falling, some rising, some dying, some being born, some becoming ill, so no Christian who saw them did not feel sorrow for them...."

The edict was formally overturned in 1969, and in 1992, King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia presided over a ceremony called *Sefarad 92* to mark the official reconciliation with Spanish Jews, held at the Madrid synagogue.

Primo de Rivera decreed in the 1920s that descendants of expelled Sephardim could gain Spanish citizenship, which proved to be of use during the Holocaust.

Here in Madrid, we watched a partial eclipse of the Sun on November 3 in the early afternoon – just a nibble out of the solar disc, not very exciting. We had a little more excitement two days later with an earthquake at 7:34 a.m., 3.5 on the Richter scale, with an epicenter 2 kilometers under Alcorcón, a suburb where I had practiced driving. My apartment building shook briefly. No injuries or damage, but it gave us a lot to talk about.

I'm turning in this letter early because I'm off to San Angelo, Texas, for three weeks, to help my sick sister. I'll be there for Thanksgiving and for the Packers game on television. I'm packing my Packer backer gear.

The next missive will include a report on *Hispanic XXXI/Quartumcón 2013*, Spain's national SF convention, on December 14 and 15 in *Quart de Poblet*, a suburb of Valencia. *Hasta luego*.

Hasta la vista, ba-bee.

— JTM

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Nov. 16, 2013
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As usual, I have arranged all my comments on politics to come at the end of *Alexiad*, October 2013.. It is not hard because most of the comment hooks on politics come from the letter writers, and the letter column is near the end. At any rate, most hard politics come near the end; and softer politics are typical throughout.

For example, my comment on George Orwell, AKA Eric Arthur Blair, whom you mention in "Oomphel in the Sky." For now, I'm apt to believe him that he based his Oceania not on a Fascist Britain but on Britain during the World War II. He worked in the propaganda branch of the government, and exaggerated his experiences for his 1984 world. For instance, people disappearing from the public view, and heroes being made up for the public.

I can't say the same for this comment on

"Dystopia made in Spain." It's not light on politics; in fact, it's pure political dynamite. My problem with the Spanish novel *Cenital* is the same as I have with quite a few US and British dystopias: that our technological civilization will die without oil. What about coal? Not that it's desirable from an environmental point of view. What about atomic energy?

Now that we have spoken about one danger to humanity; how about another. This, however, I hope, elicits no politics. I found the hook in your article "On Not Going to Worldcon." You mention donut burgers and donut sloppy joes as a way of clogging arteries. In fact, I gather the cholesterol in them is not measured in micrograms but in megatons.

The same here: it is no politics politics. In fact, I hope this excites even fewer politics than the donut burgers. Too bad you couldn't make it to WorldCon. Of course, something like this had to happen. I had my incident at Ditto Con in, I think, 1991. My 1970 Volvo broke down and I had to return home.

Unlike you with World Con, I doubt Corflu missed me.

For this next comment, also absolutely no politics at all. I'd like to tell Sheryl Birkhead in the letters section there's nothing wrong with using a mouse with your laptop. I found a wireless mouse best, and that there was no need for a mouse pad. So the mouse took up even less space than normal.

My next comment concerns politics again. Fortunately, politics of the 17th Century. Nobody should be up in arms about that, but I'm sure there are few that are. I am sure some would react when you mention the Duke of Monmouth to Alexis Gilliland.

My comment is that while the Duke of Monmouth may have been illegitimate, my understanding is he still would be entitled to a coat of arms. However, it would have to contain the Bar Sinister, indicating he was illegitimate. I also hear that some heraldic symbols signify a person whom the king had Gay relations with. Of course, you, Joe, know more than I do about that.

He was granted one: "The Arms of King Charles II (viz. quarterly: 1st and 4th, France (azure, three fleur-de-lys two and one or) and England (gules, three lions passant guardant in pale or) quarterly; 2nd, Scotland (or, within a tressure flory counterflory gules a lion rampant guardant of the same); 3rd, Ireland (azure, a harp or stringed gules)) defaced with a baton sinister argent, with an inescutcheon of Buccleuch (or, on a bend azure a star between two crescents of the first)" [for his wife], and now the Dukes of Buccleuch have more quarterings. Also, a DNA test performed on Sir Richard Walter John Montagu Douglas Scott, the current Duke,

in 2012 showed that he had Y-chromosomal descent from the Stuarts, so it looks like Lucy Walter was telling the truth about her son's parentage.

— JTM

While the Duke involved himself in 17th Century politics, you and Trinlay indulge yourself in silly politics. I love the idea of the Lovecraftian *Prairie Home Companion*.

Now we're completely back to hard politics again with Jim Stumm. He argues that precedent is good as long as the judges stick to the letter of the law. No, no, the idea behind precedent is the law is what the court says it is. Of course, since the justices know their power is very limited: they have no army or police force; normally they are cautious in their decisions.

What Lloyd Penney says is too personal for politics, namely that he has been searching for a permanent job for some time; and hasn't been successful. You Joe sympathize because you searched between 1976-88. My search wasn't as long as either of you two, 1974-77. Still, however long it was, it was depressing. As they say, job hunting is the worst job you'll ever have.

What isn't a micron so depressing is discussing the how and why of people's names. I referred to Josephus as Titus Flavius Josephus and Joseph ben Matityahu. You said you referred to him as General Two-Gun Joe Cohen.

Just one problem: wouldn't that be a nick name?

Next plenty of politics as opposed to the politics of names. George Price advocates taming the politicians with bimetalism. Rather than taming the politicians, I suspect bimetalism, a gold and silver standard, would allow great room for mischief. I know the Republicans were opposed to silver as a standard too, the Democrat Bryan's cause. They feared it would inflate the currency.

Of course, the politicians wouldn't be in control if you had Free Silver, which gets pretty close to the private currency you advocate,. Anyone could have any silver they owned brought to the mint, made into coins and used as the currency.

If that were the case, the way I heard it, it would accomplish an objective the opposite of yours: it would inflate the currency. I have heard the amount of silver would suffice to do that today; and the farmers who advocated free silver intended it to do just that then.

George goes from bimetalism to the Financial Meltdown. And he is still trying to prove it was caused by the Community Reinvestment Act of 1978. To do this, he claims that it is possible lenders didn't mind making subprime loans he claims the Federal government was forcing them to make.

The reason is that while such loans would bankrupt them, they thought the Fed's were going to bail them out because the Fed's were

already subsidizing housing. While I doubt the lenders would give up present profits for pie in the sky, I have to admit anything is possible.

In fact, something else is possible: that lenders were willing to stoke the housing bubble because they saw dollar signs in their eyes. With prices always going up and up, foreclosures didn't matter. Nor that the mortgagee was a credit risk. The lenders could still make money by reselling the property. It is possible.

Of course, both of us can't be right – nor can the proponents of alternatives unmentioned here. So 'possible' is a garbage criteria. Thus, once more, George fails to give any actual proof that the Community Reinvestment Act of 1978 was the cause of the Housing Bubble of the ought years.

On the other hand, I will say, while George fails to give any evidence for his thesis, he recognizes I believe the Financial Meltdown was a bubble not a government plot. Also, he is responding to my arguments when he argues that you cannot control a financial bubble once it gets sufficiently large.

It is true I disagree with George that absolutely no one saw trouble coming while the housing bubble was in progress. I remember a lot of people worrying about it. In addition, a number of people saw the real estate practices leading to it as basically fraud.

However, I have to agree with George 100% that once a financial bubble has grown large enough, it is too late. Once the bubble gets sufficiently large, the perps have too much money to be regulated. No, any housing bubble has to be nipped in the bud.

It is obvious to me, though, that that can and has been done. That regulation between 1940 and 1980 had nipped any wouldbe financial bubbles in the bud. Forever in the world of the politics and government.

It looks like my long, meat potatoes screeds on politics to George – on bimetallism and the financial meltdown – will end my letter. Just in case you forgot, I made comments earlier about George Orwell, Spanish and American dystopias, Ditto Con and me, and Lloyd Penney and job searching. Anyway, as all good things, my letter is finito.

From: **John Purcell** November 21, 2013
3744 Marilene Circle, College Station,
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j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Egad. Your fanzine has reached a rather stratospheric number. The problem here, though, is that now I have the song “77 Sunset Strip” running through my head. Oh, great. My vision just regressed 50+ years so that now everything around is no longer in color, just black and white — birds, trees, the sky, hockey games on the television . . . Oh, wow! The players aren’t wearing helmets, either. And is that really Gump Worsley in goal for the Canadians? Doo-dee-doo-doo.

doo-dee-doo-doo . . .

Don't you mean *SNAP*?

You know, Daylight Savings Time is a fully-loaded crock of steaming fecal matter. Studies continue to reveal that the use of DST has resulted in no significant changes in energy consumption or savings. At best, the differences between standard time and daylight savings time are negligible. All I know is that now it's dark by six in the evening, and that's a bad thing when everything around you is in black and white. Can't see a frigging thing anymore! Then again, that may be a good thing.

When word spread around LoneStarCon 3 that Frederik Pohl had died on Monday, September 2nd, the general tone of the WorldCon dramatically downshifted. It was the last day of the con anyway, but it was terrible news to leave the WorldCon with. I heard the news from Steven H Silver when Valerie and I rode the elevator with him up to the dead dog party (re-named the Old Fan's Party, I noticed) in the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel that night. The news definitely affected many a convention attendee as groups of fans shared memories of meeting Pohl and appraisals of his many books and stories. For myself, I have always enjoyed *Gateway* and *Man-Plus*, but I think my favorite Pohl novels were his collaborations with Cyril Kornbluth, especially *The Space Merchants* and *The Marching Morons*. Those two are wonderful books. Frederik Pohl was definitely one of the greats, and he is missed.

Joe, your article "Oomphel in the Sky" is a very good discussion of the concept of over-abundance and howit has been incorporated into various science fiction stories. What impresses me the most is how you discuss how many writers explored the consequences over-abundance would have on society. I would think that such a material excess would create a lazy society, which could become stagnanty with every need and want provided with plenty left over. If there is no desire to 'want' anymore, then that removes the drive to provide and/or acquire goods. Complacency would become the norm, and such a situation could result in lower classes (the proletariat) becoming thoroughly cowed and controllable. It's like you said: "if there is no need to work, who will be the distributors?" My guess is that would be those in charge and they'd regulate the amount of produced to be used, thereby maintaining the status quo as they see fit. Availability regulating needs.

I'm surprised that no one got the point about "Huga Wells-Erb Heinsturbury"; a field dominated by continuations of others' work and by women.

Holy crap, but I'm beginning to sound downright Marxist! This is not good. Time to change topics and fast.

On page 5 you review a book — *Surrounded by Enemies* — that asks the musical question on everybody’s lips this week, “what if JFK had lived?” Well, “what if’s” is a staple plot device in science fiction, and there have been numerous Alternate History books on the very topic. You mention Gregory Benford’s novel *Timescape* here, of which I have an autographed copy of. One of these years I may even read it. In another universe maybe I have — and before Benford even wrote it.

And another one, If Kennedy
Lived, in this.

Oh, my! A fanzine written in Linear B (page 8, column 1). That's enough to make my head hurt. Don't make me use wing-ding font on the next *Askeu* in retaliation.

[illegible]

So Lisa has discovered the wonders of coffee? I usually only drink one and a half cups each morning, and that holds me for the day. More than that and I'm bouncing off the walls.

I am really sorry you two didn't make it to San Antonio for WorldCon; hate to say this, but I was really looking forward to finally meeting you two. If anything, it is good that you were able to make it home safe and sound, which is major good news.

Speaking of the WorldCon, I have no comment on the Fan Hugos except that until the final ballots came out, I had never heard of Tansy Rayner Roberts nor Galen Dara. Sure I had met Leigh Kimmel, though; I have a couple of her books at home and it would have been nice to put a face with the name.

Leigh spent most of her time in the Dealers' Room, selling so she could afford to go. Tansy Rayner Roberts is a minor pro with a blog, Galen Dara is a pro artist, and both of them are among the mad dogs who have kneed us in the groin.

- JTM

A fairly lengthy loc. Not bad at all. Many thanks for sending the zine my way, and now it's time to get onto the next *Askew* and *Askance*, the latter of which should be done around Thanksgiving weekend.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Nov. 21, 2013
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Thank you for Vol. 12, No. 5 (October 2013), Whole Number 71.

In the last issue I mentioned obtaining four free paperbacks at WorldCon in San Antonio. Two of them I could not read. However, the remaining two I did read and enjoyed even

though they are not in my usual interest area. *Touched By An Alien* by Gini Koch (DAW Books, Inc., 2010) and *Servant of the Underworld* by Aliette de Bodard (Angry Robot, 2010).

While I'm at it let me recommend a non-SF book. *The Revenge of Geography: What The Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and The Battle Against Fate* by Robert D. Kaplan (Random House, 2012). In a couple of places the author gives his political orientation away. But, I heard part of an interview with him on the radio and that led me to check the book out of the library. His information is excellent and his conclusion(s) is well thought out. For anyone interested in what the United States should be doing in foreign policy and actions around the world I recommend the book highly.

Every Thursday I go to the library to return books and DVD's, obtain any books or DVD's being held, and to get a copy of the weekly free county alternative paper *The Ventura County Reporter*. Also, I like to check the new SF books shelf. What do you know? On October 24 there was a copy of *The Lost Stars: Perilous Shield* by Jack Campbell (a.k.a. John G. Hemry) (2013, Ace Books). I am not as fast a reader as Joe; but I did finish it in two days, not getting some other things done. Just by chance I noticed that next to it on the shelf was another book by Jack Campbell, *The Last Full Measure* (2013, Subterranean Press). It is an alternate history of the United States. It's either a one-time short work, the start of another series, or a political statement by Campbell (Hemry). It is only 98 pages. I recommend it.

It was reviewed in Alexiad V.
12 #2 WN 68.

Being that I enjoy the TV series *Once Upon a Time* I watched the first two *Once Upon a Time in Wonderland*. I didn't particularly care for it and did not like Alice, so have not watched it further.

I went to see *Ender's Game*. It was well done, but a bit of a disappointment. It's been many years since reading the book. But it seemed to me that they left out some parts that could have been included (the movie was two hours and could have been a bit longer with no problem) and put in some of Hollywood's politics. On my movie rating scale of 1-5, I gave it a 4.5. I would be interested in the opinions of others who have seen the movie.

Let me recommend another book, this time by Neil Gaiman—*Fortunately, The Milk* (Harper, 2013). It's indicated as Young Adult, but probably is more like children. Nevertheless I enjoyed it which may indicate my mental age. ☺ It was a fun read and the illustrations by Skottie Young are outstanding.

I don't understand the problem some people seem to be having with the Red John storyline in *The Mentalist*. Getting Red John is the reason for Patrick Jane (Simon Baker)

continuing to live. Red John murdered his family. Red John apparently has a large number of people working for him including a good number in law enforcement. I do not have any problem with the Red John storyline. As of the latest installment Red John has been identified and is on the run. Where *The Mentalist* going to go next is the question.

So, Helsinki, Finland is trying again, this time for 2017. I wish them luck. I voted for them as #1 for 2015 and they led on the first ballot eventually losing to Spokane, Washington.

From: **John Hertz** November 16, 2013
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Among childhood memories of my grandfather is his teaching me to sing "Little Brown Jug". Decades later I realized what it meant.

Under so many of the "economy of abundance" stories we intellectual types have never thought through the creation and exchange of value. Instead we abhor or romanticize labor — usually both. (We don't read books like the Dorothy Sayers *Mind of the Maker* because that's religion, see comment about labor.)

Fascinating to read about ripening sunflowers in Middle-earth.
Josephus had handguns?

As the Romans said, "Cave ne ante ullas catapultas ambules." (Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus, Henricus Barbatu scripsit (AUCMMDCCLVII). Pagina CXXXVIII ["If I were you, I wouldn't walk in front of any catapults." (Latin for All Occasions by Henry Beard (2004) Page 138)])

— JTM

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** Nov. 23, 2013
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By a neat coincidence, this appeared in the letter column of *TLS*, Oct. 11:

"Armenian is a normal abjad with thirty-eight characters, conspicuous for their discipline, regularity, while Amharic is an abugida, or syllabic alphabet, with 182, that fleetly dsnce up and down the page."

Wouldn't want to add these words to my vocabulary until I was sure the guy didn't just make them up. Not that I can imagine them being in my active vocabulary, spoken or written, which msut not send the hearer of reader scurrying to the dictionary.

An "abjad" is a consonant-only (or almost solely) alphabet. An

"abugida" is a syllabary where vowels only appear in association with consonants.

Once in my life I declared myself to be aghast, when I found that the American editor of *Titus Groan* had taken the drunken Swelter, shpeaking like thish, and normalized everything.

Somewhere in a magazine I read recently was a bit about words that are only used in newspapers. I did hear "slain" from a youngster in a creative anachronist household. "But of course," said his father. "Kilt; is what Uncle Paul wears."

Lastly, on words: I found quoted from "Indian Ink" by Tom Stoppard: "While having tiffin on the verdanah of my bungalow I spilled kedgeriee on my dungarees and had to go to the gymkhana in my pyjamas."

For that you need to reference *Hobson-Jobson* (1886, 1903) — which itself is from the Shi'ite wail of "Yā Hassan! Yā Husayn!" for Ali's children.

My auld acquaintance X. J. Kennedy — Joe Kennedy, 1940s fan and letterhack — asked me to copyedit a novel for which he's trying to find a publisher. This I have now done. In such matters, the principal of confidentiality applies; an editor saves the writer's face where necessary and takes no credit. Still, I can make a few harmless remarks. The setting is a (wholly fictional) college in New Jersey, 1946-7. I realized the question whether there should or should not be any little pointers for the 21st c. reader. This is akin to Heinlein's principle for science fiction, that it should be written as though for readers of the time of the story. It struck me that some of C. J. Cherryh's novels, the ones not about world-changing events, were exactly such.

I was certain that Joe couldn't resist working a prominent bar in Secaucus, N.J., into the story — and sure enough! He had this poem, in a ballad metre: Secaucus was famous as the site of the NYC landfill.

Have the mad dogs kneed him
in the groin lately?

— JTM

The biography of Patrick Leigh Fermor by Artemis Cooper is now out, a year after UK publication, and I have it from the library. I find myself reading more about Brits of that era, roughly the first half of the 20th c., than about Americans. Familiar names flit through these pages, as they do in other biographies and memoirs — I looked to see who was also in *Friends of Promise* (about Cyril Connolly and *Horizon*, the magazine he edited in London in the 1940s) and found a bunch of them. More of them may may, in time, take on some solidity. Much can be accomplished by a good revealing anecdote about a person.

The latest *Economist*, looking forward to 2014, had a rather unusual obituary, not of a person but of the Latvian unit of currency, the lat, about to be replaced by the euro. Its stability was noted. It was brought in after the transitional Latvian ruble had stabilized; it was not noted here that 200 of them converted to one lat. They didn't want to make the hundredth part too picayune. They should have gone for 500, just as a number of other countries should have shifted by one more decimal place.

From: **George W. Price** Nov. 24, 2013
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October *Alexiad*:

My heartfelt thanks to all those who offered condolences on the death of my wife Virginia. Your concern is very much appreciated.

Joe's commentary "Oomphel in the Sky" deals with utopian or dystopian stories about "the economy of abundance" which assume 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." That is, there is no longer any scarcity.

Such stories usually embody a fatal misunderstanding of what "scarcity" means in economics. It does not mean "shortage" or "poverty." A good is "scarce" if the amount available is any less than what would be consumed if it were perfectly free. No matter how wealthy an economy is, goods are still "scarce" if producing some means that we must forego others that might have been produced with the same resources. The function of prices is to help us decide which goods we will forego in order to produce which other goods.

Stories positing that all goods will be abundant are implicitly assuming that capital, labor, and natural resources will all be unlimited, so that we never have to choose between using them to produce one good rather than another. Until that impossible world of infinite resources shows up, we need a price mechanism to make the choices. As Ludwig von Mises pointed out in 1922, centrally-planned economies lack such a mechanism, and so they necessarily work very poorly. The Soviet Union spent seventy miserable years proving him right.

By the way, I once talked to Frederik Pohl and pointed out that "The Midas Plague" had an idiot plot because, really, all the people had to do was turn off the production machinery. He agreed, and said it was *Galaxy* editor Horace Gold's idea. That sounded like Gold all right.

Galaxy had a habit of running that sort of story. Then the same spirit animated *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Sue Burke reviews the Spanish novel *Cenital*, by Emilio Bueso. She describes it as a dystopia about the oil suddenly running out in 2012, with the consequent breakdown of commerce and farming leading to starvation and violence. Right up to the end the oil companies "lie about how much reserves exist, while in fact the reserves are close to zero." I do not know any more about this story than Ms. Burke tells us, so I could be way off, but I suspect a huge misconception of what petroleum deposits are like, and what is meant by "reserves," and especially "proved reserves."

First, a petroleum reservoir is not a big pool of oil that we can suck out steadily until we get to the bottom, and then suddenly it's all gone, like draining a tank. It is more like a rock sponge with oil in the pores ("fracking" breaks open those pores), and in general the oil gets harder to pump as the amount remaining diminishes. In practice, we "shut in" the well when pumping becomes too expensive for the price we hope to get. Half or more of the oil might still be left.

Second, "proved reserves" means the amount of oil known to exist that can be profitably produced at the current price. If the price goes up, then "proved reserves" increase even though no new oil has been discovered, because now we can profitably produce oil that was already known but too expensive to extract. (The reverse is also true: if the government clamps on price controls, and at the new lower price level we can profitably produce only half of our previous proved reserves, then the proved reserves figure drops by half.)

As production draws down reserves, the price will rise to where it becomes profitable to step up exploration for more. When we find it, that adds to the "proved reserves" at the new higher price. The economics of oil production are such that proved reserves are usually about twenty years' worth of consumption. That does not mean we'll run out in twenty years, only that we'd better explore for more oil before then.

It is effectively impossible for the oil to run out all at once. In the real world, as oil is used up the price will keep rising, which encourages exploration for more oil, discourages oil consumption, and encourages developing substitutes.

In fact, substitutes for natural petroleum already exist. For example, back in the apartheid era the South African company SASOL developed a workable process for making gasoline out of coal, to evade sanctions cutting off imported oil. Any number of such processes are sitting on the shelf, ready for use when natural petroleum becomes too scarce.

We can also substitute non-petroleum energy sources, such as nuclear-generated

electricity to charge the batteries of electric cars.

Had I been writing *Cenital*, I would have felt obliged to work out a plausible rationale for why the oil companies — especially the government-run ones — overlooked all this. Or did Bueso give such a rationale that Ms. Burke didn't mention? If not, I have to put this down as an idiot plot (though perhaps not quite as idiotic as in "The Midas Plague").

Darrell Schweitzer says, "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." Indeed so. I have seen it stated (but have not confirmed) that public school systems started being founded around that time precisely to "Americanize" the Irish and other Catholic immigrants pouring in. Previously, almost all schools were run by Protestant churches, and the Catholics wouldn't use them. So compulsory public schools were set up with the plain intent of breaking the Catholics of their papist ways and indoctrinating them in proper Americanism. The new schools were highly slanted toward Protestantism, of course, so the Catholic response was to set up their own parochial school system.

As I have noted before, the First Amendment forbade the federal government to establish a national religion, and also forbade it to interfere with the already-established religions that still prevailed in several states. (Those were eventually disestablished one by one by each state, not by federal compulsion.) So it was perfectly constitutional for states to discriminate against Catholics, either explicitly or implicitly. I hope we've outgrown that.

I learned about *Pierce vs. Society of Sisters* (in full, *Pierce, Governor of Oregon, vs. Society of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*, 268 U.S. 510) in constitutional history class. Unfortunately, it seems that a lot of other people didn't, particularly Justice McReynolds's line about children not being "mere creature[s] of the state."

Mr. Schweitzer also notes that "Jesus was a pacifist and Mohammed was a warrior," which helps explain why Islam is usually more militant and intolerant than Christianity. I'd say Jesus was more a peacemaker than a pacifist. He famously said to "turn the other cheek" when attacked, which I interpret to mean that we should be slow to take offense, and should look for a peaceful resolution if at all possible. Is there anything in Scripture to show that he meant that we should never fight at all regardless of how gross and harmful the provocation? Should we meekly suffer invasions, with all the usual rapine and plunder,

rather than fight back? I think not. (We all know the pacifist way of preventing rape: give in willingly — then it's not rape.)

καὶ ὁ μὴ ἔχων, πωλησάτω τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀγορασάτω μάχαιραν.
kai ho mē echōn pōlēsalō to himation autou kai agorasatō machairan.
and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

Luke 22:36

John Thiel asks me what I think of Chicago today. Now that's a subject that could fill up several issues of *Alexiad*. But in brief, the city has improved in some ways and deteriorated in others. The political system is not quite as dirty as it used to be, but the politicians are just as irresponsible in their spending. Chicago is well on the road to bankruptcy, though not as far along as Detroit. Not yet. To top off, our mass transit agency just rolled out a new fare-payment system that works almost as poorly as the ObamaCare website.

I am happy to join Alexis Gilliland in denouncing government bailing out big business "by being their insurer of last resort." As he says, "Moral hazard also affects the government, which enjoys the popularity (and higher taxes) of boom times and fiddles to keep the good times rolling."

And in bad times the government fiddles to revive the good times, with massive "stimulus" spending which is actually a drag on the economy. Since stimulus spending is money taken away from taxpayers (or lenders), it makes sense only if what the government spends it on is better for the economy than what the taxpayers (or lenders) would have spent it on if the government had let them keep it. And how often is that the case? This is the "Papa knows best!" nanny-state mentality in full flower.

Jim Stumm notes that, in denouncing same-sex marriage, I cited an editorial "that says we should have laws that promote the flourishing of children." It's too late, he says; "That ship sailed 50 years ago when LBJ's War on Poverty began subsidizing bastardy. . . . What we need is take-care-of-your-children laws, aimed at criminally negligent mothers." He's right, of course, and such laws have to be part of recalling that ship. It is said that the single best marker for predicting if a child will become delinquent — as by joining a street gang — is whether he is raised by a single mother. (There's room for a lot of research on the role of gangs as surrogate fathers.)

This is a problem too large and

complicated to discuss now, but it will surely need a massive change in morals and social attitudes. It may well require killing the welfare state and depending on private charity to care for the poor and afflicted. With lots of hard work and good luck, we just might get there without a complete social collapse. I don't expect to live long enough to see it.

The struggle against same-sex marriage has been lost in Illinois. This is absurdly bad public policy, but at least it was done in the constitutionally proper way, by act of the legislature. That's more honest than judges pretending to discover a previously unknown constitutional right.

I asked Sue Burke if "those reckless private borrowers [would] have dared to take such risks if they hadn't known the government would bail them out?" She gives a resounding "Yes, they would. Again and again. With and without bailouts. Bubbles and panics abound in history, including recent history."

True, but with a critical difference. When there is no government support and bailout, the bubble collapses much sooner. The damage is less, and is inflicted mostly on those with the bad judgment to have believed in the bubble, not on taxpayers in general. The creators of the bubble usually wind up broke. When the bubble is government-supported, the damage goes on and on. The malefactors don't get punished, and indeed may be left in charge so they can repeat the offense. I note that Rep. Barney Frank, who strenuously and successfully obstructed efforts to damp down the housing bubble, became co-author of the new law supposed to prevent future bubbles. Not a good sign.

Taras Wolansky, discussing *Foyle's War*, says, "at least, they're willing to admit that the Soviet Union under Stalin was a nasty place, and that the Soviets were worse than our side." Yes, leftists do occasionally admit having been wrong, but (as Taras says) usually not until after it no longer matters. And I have yet to see anybody on the left express even the slightest regret that, because of the way the Cold War ended, we can't hunt down and punish the masters of the gulag.

From: **Timothy Lane** December 1, 2013
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I see Darrell Schweitzer continues to place faith in those who call themselves scientists and agree with his "climate change" dogma than in the actual science (which involves checking out theoretical predictions against new facts). It's been a bad year scientifically for the cultists of Catastrophic Anthropogenic Global Warming, what with less actual severe weather than they expected (no Atlantic hurricanes hit America, for example), Arctic ice cover shrinking far less

this summer than it has in recent years, and Antarctic ice cover actually growing.

Now some German climatologists (as reported by Michael Bastach of the Daily Caller) have concluded that the pause in global warming since 1998 (which is why the cultists now talk of "climate change" instead of "global warming") will continue for the rest of this century. They base this partly on the 200-year De Vries cycle of solar activity (which apparently is at its peak, hence the warming from the late 1970s to the late 1990s) and the 65-year Atlantic and Pacific oscillations.

Meanwhile, in the name of preventing climate change, the federal government is planning to issue a rule allowing wind turbines to continue to kill endangered bird species such as golden and bald eagles without facing the severe penalties anyone else not so politically favored would. This comes after they finally did issue a fine to Duke Energy for the eagles they've killed. (I assume this means Duke Energy made the mistake of contributing to the wrong campaign.)

Darrell does make some excellent points about the nature of Islam. I do have a couple of minor points to make. First, while the Jews of the Old Testament could be very bloody when Yahweh commanded it, there was no general commandment to convert at the point of the sword (unlike Islam). Fortunately, there are no Amalekites for the modern Hebrews to target.

The other point is that the dichotomy is not between Islam and Darrell's beloved Secularism, but between Islam and modern civilization. No other religion of significance, for example, treats women anywhere near as badly as Islam does. No matter what Darrell believes, for example, fundamentalist Christians educate women and allow them to be independent members of society.

And Taras Wolansky is equally accurate about the intolerance of other religions in Islam. Adherents of the religions of the book (i.e., Judaism and Christianity) are to be tolerated only as long as they know their place (to use a Southern expression that seems apt). But this presupposes a Muslim world; they divide the world into the City of Submission (Dar al Islam) and the City of War (Dar al Harba). The religion also has the doctrine of taqiyya, which calls for deceiving the Infidels if that is necessary. One needs to remember this whenever one hears a Muslim proclaiming his moderation. Is he telling the truth (no doubt some are), or following the call to deceive the Infidel?

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Martin Morse Wooster, with the same.

THE DECADENT EMPIRE

... the ritual for succession is that the Imperial Ordinance of Succession, stored in the Dynastic Casket in the Imperial Throne Room, is consulted. If the Wangdi were even to have prepared such a document, it was inevitably destroyed.

The choice for a successor thereupon falls upon the Grand Deliberative Council. Inevitably, they have chosen among the youngest sons of the late Wangdi, ostensibly to facilitate the steadiness of a long reign. After his proclamation and installation the newly enthroned Wangdi is removed to the Exalted Chambers of the Forbidden Palace.

The Wangdi is kept stupefied with alcohol, hemp, and opium. His education is abandoned, and should he survive to maturity, he is endowed with harims of women and boys. He never marries, since such an attachment would create a First Consort, the existence of such creating a separate locus of power which would diminish the power of the Grand Deliberative Council.

Few Wangdi survive their third decade. The Grand Deliberative Council consists of the other Princes. They are ill-educated, if at all, given to the most extreme of perversions and to the excesses of consumption. Much of their effort is expended upon contriving the murders of their colleagues, which plots so often fail because of the ineptitude or incapacity of the assailants.

Subordinate to the monarchy, the Three Departments and Six Ministries are established as the governing bodies of the empire. The order of the administration is that there is a Principal Minister, assisted by a Grand Minister of the Left, a Grand Minister of the Center, and a Grand Minister of the Right, overseeing the Minister of Personnel, the Minister of Revenue, the Minister of Rites, the Minister of War, the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Works.

No appointments to these positions have been made in living memory. The emoluments and benefits pertaining thereunto accumulate in the treasury, or would were there any collection of taxes.

The structure of the Ministries provides for a civil service, filled by examination. In this manner, the most able and intelligent will be associated with the management of public affairs.

The examinations grew more strict and exacting with the passage of time, reaching a level of complexity where none were able to fulfill the requirements. The existing body of administrators jealously hoarded their authority and strongly warded their community, desiring to not dilute them by expansion. The Board of Examination died off with the passage of time, and while the examination halls still exist, the examinations have been postponed to a later date which has not yet been announced.

Indeed, the entire civil service has perished with the passage of time. In its final years, every official strove to enrich himself with bribes, yet could not succeed in this effort, as his superiors required of him greater payments, which were required to fulfill the exactions of their superiors, and thusly upwards.

The accumulation of wealth in the private sphere is massively deterred. Any who saved foodstuffs would have them confiscated by bandits, often operating under the color of tax collectors. Similarly, any who developed a useful mechanic art would be slain by his fellows, jealous of his advantage.

This conflict militates against the continuation of literacy. Education has lapsed, as the struggle for mere subsistence has become predominant. There is no wherewithal to sustain a specialization in education, even as such people fall under suspicion as having wealth, to be taken from them for sharing out. Beyond that, the preservation of written records is nonexistent.

This structure would collapse, were any to be found to assail it. None should be surprised that the actual control of the land is exercised by bandit gangs, yet they too fail to coalesce, as any bandit chief of resolution is generally slain by a jealous subordinate striving for a momentary advantage.

Without the empire, a few roving nomads seek possession of greater things. Their numbers are inadequate to obtain any substantial control. Betimes, some more successful bandit has secured dominion in some more fertile region. These leaders seem inevitably to fall prey to the addictive seductions of drugs or the jealousies of subordinates, or both.

Some fantasy realms just don't seem to work right.

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This is issue **Whole Number Seventy-Two (72)**.

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

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

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A Question for the Jedi

by Paul Gadzikowski

