

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Last weekend marked the sixty-ninth anniversary of the sinking of my father's ship, the U.S.S. *Bush*. As always I played *Anchors Aweigh* and Gordon Lightfoot's *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* and remembered those of the *Bush*'s crew who didn't get to come home.

— Lisa

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The 140th Running of the Kentucky Derby is **May 3, 2014**.
The 139th Running of the Preakness Stakes is **May 17, 2014**.
The 145th Running of the Belmont Stakes is **June 7, 2014**.

Pascha is April 20, 2014.

Printed on April 16, 2014
Deadline is **June 8, 2014**

Reviewer's Notes

My ability to focus has been low.

Some fifty years later, the title question of Earl Kemp's opus is being reasked: Who Killed Science Fiction?

In 1961, Earl sent a list of five questions to the hundred eight people he considered the leading lights of the SF field. Seventy-one replied. They, and the members of his APA, got copies. On the basis of reputation alone, that is, the work won the Hugo for Best Fanzine. Those were days when that award meant something.

But Earl's questions had more to do with the slump in the magazine field. There had been a massive dieoff in science-fiction magazines in the past few years; various causes have been put forth as the reason, and perhaps all contributed.

The fourth question was whether original paperbacks could take up the slump. Now for a while, that helped. Editors searched out writers and promoted their work. This has had mixed results.

Nowadays, the prospect is of the internet, of web magazines and self-published works. Web magazines have lived brief and heady lives. Self-published works suffer from a certain lack of preliminary testing.

Now, the original paperback is far more likely to be about a vampire hunter, a zombie fighter, or a steampunk advenurer. And all pitched to a different section of the market. Older writers fall into the habit of rewriting their "best parts", doing the latest installment of their universe, and the like.

There's little to bring in new writers. Chris Barkley has been pressing for a YA Hugo Award; Detcon will award a YA SF award. Will it draw in new readers?

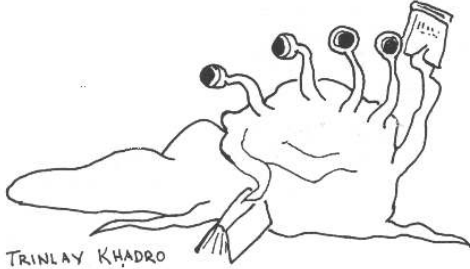
There have been a string of connected items, all of which were supposed to draw in new readers. Special books, from *The Lord of the Rings* to Harry Potter, media, gaming, were all going to attract new Fans. Existing Fans liked them, there were many people who liked them . . . but stayed there, or drifted off altogether.

In the end, with the last Fans in nursing homes, Not Talking To Each Other because of some forty-year-old feud over something none remember, there will be dissolving memories. Nothing left to get interested in, either.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Lisa was reading *Earthquake Storms: The Fascinating History and Volatile Future of the San Andreas Fault* by John Dvorak (2014) and ran across a picture of Charles Richter, he of the Richter Scale, taken in 1927. She said "Jeff Goldblum". I found a picture of Goldblum appearing in the series *Portlandia*. (You have to get the right combination of glasses and hairstyle.) Yep.

Now that the Poopy Panda Pals have announced that *Star Wars Episode VII* will be coming out, set thirty years after the end of *Return of the Jedi*, I have seen wise words of warning:

Dear J J Abrams

If you screw up Episode 7 then you will forever be known as Jar Jar Abrams

Meesa really likesa dat.

On **June 10, 2014**, Walking With the Wounded, the charity for disabled British veterans, will sponsor the 50th Anniversary Presentation of the movie *Zulu* at the Odeon Leicester Square in London.

<http://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/fundraising/zulu50/>

Nebogipfel Alert! Nebogipfel Alert! In *The Guns of the South* (1992), the time machine only worked in 150-year increments. Therefore, when the AWB departed for the Confederacy in 1864 they had to leave from . . . 2014. So they are doing it *right now*.

The latest complaint on the problems of being of that age is out: *The Baby Boom: How It Got That Way (And It Wasn't My Fault) (And I'll Never Do It Again)* by P. J. O'Rourke (2013; Atlantic Monthly Press). In his weirdly distant self-examination, the Republican Party Reptile describes the heady days of the sixties when revolution was in the air and change was possible . . . and shows how, how painfully, it was all a sham and pretense, empty posturing meant to be laden with meaning. Just like a New Wave story.

David Beasley's *Without Mercy: The Stunning True Story of Race, Crime, and Corruption in the Deep South* (2014; St. Martin's Press) is not quite, or perhaps more than, as advertised. The blurbs feature the assembly-line nature of criminal justice in 1930's Georgia, with convicted black men being executed without appeals. The larger story is one of a corrupt state government, with Georgia Governor E. D. Rivers awarding a lucrative asphalt-distribution contract to an old associate. The "old associate" happened to be Hiram Wesley Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Rivers had been a Great Titan (head of the organization in a district of a state). Given the political party they were members of, it seems unlikely they would promote the Republican candidacy of Charles A. Lindbergh, but I seem to be the only person ever with doubts about the background of *The Plot Against America*. (by Philip Roth; 2010; 2011 Hugo and Sidewise Award winner).

In *Churchill's First War: Young Winston At War with the Afghans* (2014; Thomas Dunne Books) Con Coughlin covers the background and history of the Malakand Field Force and its noted historian. For example, did you know that a relative of Sir Bindon Blood, the force commander, tried to steal the Crown Jewels? One suspects that Colonel Blood (described in George MacDonald Fraser's *The Pyrates*) might have done as well as his kinsman did in the long term in Afghanistan. As well, Coughlin goes into detail about the connections between then and now, which are all too repetitious. Not to mention how the insights of WSC still are relevant now. An all too useful book.

RALPH WAITE

June 22 1928-February 13, 2014

Mr. Waite had the role of John Walton Sr in the legendary series *The Waltons*. As such he was a regular guest in many households, mine included, during the years I was growing up. While watching my current favorite show, *NCIS*, I was delighted to see Mr. Waite in the role of a major character's father and saddened when I heard the news of his death.

Shirley Temple Black April 23 1928 February 10, 2014 Also passing in this period was legendary child star and ambassador Shirley Temple.

MONARCHIST NEWS

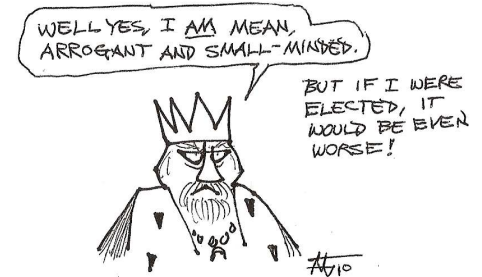
On **March 14, 2014**, the Honourable **Stephen Michael Wedgwood Benn** became The Right Honourable the Viscount Stansgate of Stansgate in the County of Essex. Avid readers of Sir Kingsley Amis will remember that in *The Alteration* (1976) his father was Grand Inquisitor of England. Fortunately for Amis, at that time the holder of the title had disclaimed it, under the terms of the Peerage Act of 1963.

FORTITVDO ET DECOR

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*
(AUC MMDCCLIII [AD 2000 CE])
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0172495/>

Quintus dixit: Fortitudo et decor.
Maximus dixit: Ad signam meum, solve lora infernis.



Ridley Scott was perhaps too presentist. The Roman government in AUC DCCCCXXXIII (AD 180 CE) was a republic, *res publica* ("public matter"). Marcus Aurelius (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus) had had eleven children, of which only one son survived, and at the time he looked like a decent choice; the alternative would have been a civil war. In this context, it's interesting to read Edward Lucas White's *The Unwilling Vestal* (AUC MMDCLXXI [AD 1918 CE]) and *Andivius Hedulio* (AUC MMDCLXXIV [AD 1921 CE]). Both are on the Project Gutenberg site.

In the first book, dealing with a young woman received into the College of Vestals and her lover, who in response tries every way to get himself killed available in the Empire short of having himself sold into the lead mines, Commodus (Lucius Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus — well, that was his name at the time but he changed it a lot) is the good guy, shaking up old stultified ways and saving the suicidal guy from himself, not to mention overseeing the Unwilling Vestal's exoneration from a false charge of unchastity. (As opposed to the usual cliché of such books, where the Vestal really has a lover, is convicted, and sealed up in a cave to die.)

In the second book, he's the bad guy, having Hedulio falsely accused and made a fugitive throughout all the exotic parts of the Empire. The ending, where Hedulio escapes three separate death sentences and ends up letting his estates remain in the possession of the new owner, is interesting. For what it's worth, White wrote horror stories for *Weird Tales*.

So Marcus Aurelius wouldn't have named Maximus as heir, with the intent of "restoring the republic". This was a not uncommon honor given emperors, *restitutor res publicae*. Usually, it meant that the Emperor had got the government working again. Of course, in many

cases it was more of a hope than an actual accomplishment.

But then, the previous received wisdom of the Adoptive Emperors, that each Augustus chose the best man as his successor, is more of a reaction to the results than to what they were doing at the time. Nerva chose Trajan because otherwise there would have been yet another civil war, and a respected and successful army commander could ensure loyalty and stability. Hadrian was Trajan's first cousin once removed. Hadrian's preferred successor was Lucius Aelius Caesar, who may have been related through his mother, who may have been an Aelian, from Hadrian's family. When he died, Hadrian chose Antoninus Pius as sort of an interim for Aelius Caesar's son, Lucius Verus, and Trajan's great-grandnephew and Hadrian's half-grandnephew-in-law Marcus Aurelius. The problems of family in the real world are not quite those of the worlds of *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*.

Other received wisdom sees Marcus Aurelius as just a philosopher. The real circumstances may be more like what Pat Paulsen said: "Kids nowadays say, 'Make love, not war.' Heck, when I was a kid we did both." Marcus Aurelius was waging wars, often in command in person, throughout his principate, even while he was pondering the whichness of why, following in the tradition of Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus). As Avram Davidson put it about Pliny:

... "What's all that commotion? Centurion!"

The centurion comes forward, dragging some wretched fellow in native dress. "We caught this fellow, sir, and think he's a spy; but he denies it."

"Of course he denies it. Let's see if he denies it after he's gotten 30 lashes. Give him 30 lashes, Centurion. We'll take a ten-minute break while you do it. And you, Amanuensis, get a nice clean tablet and prepare to write this down. — All right you, fellow, let's have the names of all the tribes in the area, in alphabetical order; you can talk while you're being flogged; eh, Centurion?"

"Yes, Colonel Pliny."

— "The Secret of Hyperborea" (Asimov's, a.d. xii Kalendis Ianuarius AUC MMDCCLXXXIV [AD December 21, 1981 CE], *Adventures in Unhistory* AUC MMDCCLXVI [AD 1993 CE]), Page 181

The Marcomannic Wars began in AUC DCCCCXVIII (AD 165 CE) and continued until Marcus Aurelius's death in AUC DCCCCXXXIII (AD 180 CE). They are not very well recorded. The evidence for them is

more from inscriptions, tombstones, and the Column of Marcus Aurelius than literature. Indeed, the Wikipedia article (usual caveats on that source) refers to one apparently significant commander who is *only* known from inscriptions, not from histories. And he wasn't named "Maximus Decimus Meridius", either.

[Sadly, but not surprisingly, the names got muddled. It would seem that the proper order would be Decimus Meridius Maximus, with "Decimus" being a *praenomen*, a "first-name" so to speak, and "Maximus" a *cognomen*, which means pretty much what it does in English usage. But names got really changed around from Classical usage as the years passed. When Commodus died, he was (take a deep breath) "Imperator Caesar Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Pius Felix Sarmaticus Germanicus Maximus Britannicus Invictus Hercules Romanus."]

The principal history of the period is the *Historia Augusta*. Now there is a little problem with this collection of imperial biographies. There are several verifiably wrong statements in it, the tone of the book is dubious, and it is not quite clear who the author is (authors are). Aside from a cut-down version of Dio Cassius's *Historia Romana*, that's about it. (A number of classical works are only known through what are called "epitome". The *Reader's Digest Condensed Books* edition of Justin of Trojanus, a history of Alexander the Great, or of Dio Cassius, in effect.)

With such a lack of background information, the habits of films have at least a modicum of justification. With this in mind, let's look at the opening battle.

The backbone of the Roman army is still the legionary. By this time, the familiar *lorica segmentata*, the body armor made of strips of metal, and the great half-rounded shield, the *scutum*, were standard. In *Rome*, Vorenus and Pullo wore chainmail, a point not always taken by other writers and directors, but then that was done by John Milius. (Imagine Milius doing *Rubrum Prima Luce*, the story of an Italian village being conquered by the Germans, and how a band of children styling themselves Gulones took up arms against the invaders.) The change-over was during Augustus's principate.

There may be a bit of a surprise that Maximus, after saying, "At my signal, unleash Hell," goes off to a cavalry unit. The Romans adopted their enemies' ways when such methods were shown to be successful. The cavalrymen are armored, with smaller shields, and shorter spears. The principal contribution of the stirrup to fighting was that the rider could use a longer spear with ease, and deliver more powerful sword-strokes. The Roman saddle was large and ungainly, but it did enable the rider to stay on horseback.

Quintus and Maximus have a disagreement about where to put the artillery; bolt-throwers and larger catapults. The legion was equipped with both and in real life these weapons were

used to considerable effect. In fact, since a legion had a cavalry detachment, it could be said to be an all-arms force.

The other stratagem shown involves having archers. These were the *Auxilia*, the non-citizen troops. Again, the Romans were adaptors; they enlisted archers from various subjugated lands (including Gaul). Other such units included slingers, lighter-armed infantry for screening and occupying advanced positions, and the above-mentioned cavalry.

The horsemen around Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris) are the *equites singulares*, elite cavalry, the horse-back version of the Praetorian Guard. That too is presumably present, though a Praetorian would have the same equipment as the ordinary legionary, albeit more finely-decorated.

Now there was a very large army massed here. As with Trajan's campaigns in Dacia and Parthia, the army was commanded by the Emperor in person, at least nominally. Epigraphic sources list a dozen legions as having participated in the Marcomannic Wars, along with detachments from a half-dozen more. Add to those the *auxilia*, and it can be seen that even if all the units were not in one army at the same time there could indeed be a very large army available to fight the battle. It's not quite like how Maximus of *Eagle in the Snow* (AUC MMDCCLXXXIII [AD 1970 CE]; discussed in *Alexiad* V. 7 #3) had it, with only one legion, an ala of cavalry, and various local militias with which to face the Germans — though he also had an subordinate named Quintus!

The lighting is poor but there are three legionary standards visible. One says "III Felix" and has a lion, which would be *legio iii Flavia Felix*, raised by Vespasian, which had fought in Dacia. One says "XIV" which would likely be *legio xiv Gemina*, raised by Augustus from Caesar's *legio xiv*, which had fought at Alesia, and itself fought in Germania under Germanicus and in Britannia under Claudius. The third one says "XX" but *legio xx Valeria Victrix* was in Britannia.

Maximus's battle plan is that he will drive the Germans into the open by setting the forest on fire, harass them with archery (fire arrows, no less; but having Everdeena Katnissa slip into the ranks of the *auxilia* would just not be *done*), outflank them with his cavalry, and have the legions fight. The ragged mob assault of the Germans, met by legions in orderly lines (including forming *testudo*, the all-round defensive formation, under arrow fire) until the two armies collide, is a realistic portrayal of how such an attack would go.

Then he has to get into the stock wild melee, which does have some justification given the dramatic, hectic charge of the Germans, except he has to have the scene where Maximus gets into the old hand-to-hand with the enemy commander. Except, in the days of the Republic, for a commander to face the enemy commander in hand-to-hand combat and kill him was a glorious accomplishment. Apparently some things hadn't changed.

(Given the Zulu chants the Germans are using, perhaps Maximus needed *cohors xxiv Limitanei Silurii*.)

As for what comes afterwards . . . passing over the bit about Maximus's latifundum (which would have to have not only his wife and son but several dozen slaves, whose executions don't quite seem to get any camera time) or the silly gladiatorial outfits (wouldn't it have been fun in Starz's *Spartacus* to have the lanista's wife Lucretia absolutely demand that they get this fabled Greek pirate warrior princess with a thing about Julius Caesar?), we'll get to Commodus at the film's and his end.

Fighting it out in a battle of mutually assured destruction, while a dramatic resolution, is not quite what happened. Commodus was strangled in bed with the connivance of his favorite mistress Marcia (Marcia Aurelia Ceionia Demetrias). The sources are a little down on him, so whether or not you believe he had harems of three hundred women and as many boys is another matter, but you will note that for all those women, plus a wife, he seems not to have had any children. Too many steroids?

(Marcia may have been a Christian; she was certainly friends with Pope Victor I. This didn't keep her from being executed by Didius Julianus, the Man Who Bought the Roman Empire.)

Oh, and Lucilla (Antia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla), Commodus's sister, had found herself in a situation rather common to relatives of the ruler. In AUC DCCCCXXXV [AD 182 CE] she was involved in a conspiracy to overthrow her brother, and was executed. No, not burned alive in the Forum (see *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (AUC MMDCXXVII [AD 1964 CE]) for that little number); executions would pollute the city, and so were carried out at a locus outside the city boundary. Lucilla and her daughter had been exiled to Caprae (Capri) and were put to death there.

[That movie would originally have starred John "Charlton Heston" Carter as the hero Lucius, but he turned the role down. The next choice was Kirk Douglas, and oy, wouldn't that have been a spectacle. Once they roll out the next video system upgrade after the one used to make *Wholock*, we can have Russell Crowe be romancing Sophia Loren as Lucilla.]

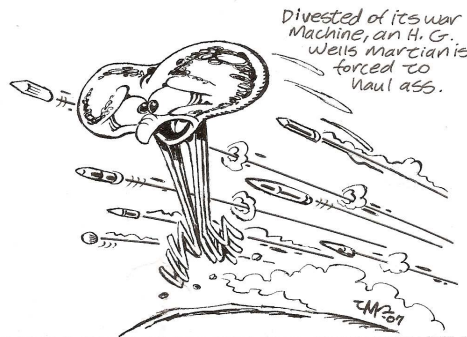
As has been pointed out by one contributor, the tipping-point seems to have been Commodus's resolution to begin the consular year with himself as consul — in the arena, in his gladiator's outfit. Imagine a president delivering the State of the Union address at half-time during the Super Bowl, wearing a football uniform (in red-white-blue, with the number 1 on the back, of the team "United States of America", presumably).

Thanks to DVDs, I can watch the battle, then turn the thing off. Technology advances.

Strength and honor.

THE MOON IS HELL Review by Joseph T Major of *THE MARTIAN*

by Andy Weir
(Random House; 2011, 2014;
ISBN 978-0-8041-3902-1; \$24.00;
Random House (Kindle); 2014; \$9.99)



John Campbell's *The Moon is Hell!* (1951) is one of his last few direct fiction publications. (There were some stories in *Astounding* and *Analog* where the proportion of original contribution to editorial rewriting may have been rather low.) The story is a terse, or perhaps sketchy, tale of a stranded Lunar expedition using scientific skills and engineering measures to send for rescue and to survive until then. (There is perhaps a bit of the Greely expedition at Cape Sabine there, too.)

Martian explorer Mark Watney doesn't have to worry about becoming one of the *Ghosts of Cape Sabine* (by Leonard F. Guttridge, 1970) because he's alone on Mars and so there's no one else to kill and eat him. However, unlike the diverse group in *The Moon is Hell!*, he's alone. So he has to deal with Barsoom is Hell all by himself.

It all begins when a dust storm hits the base on Mars, and everyone has to pull out double quick for the shuttle back to Earth. Except, the radio antenna collapses, knocking down Watney, and the other explorers, plausibly enough, believe him dead and unrecoverable. This also explains why he can't tell them otherwise, or even inform Earth that the reports of his demise are premature.

He's not absolutely in a predicament like the guy in Sir Arthur C. Clarke's "Transit of Earth" (*Playboy*, January 1971). Another expedition will be coming, and he knows where. The base planning is very much out of Robert Zubrin (see *Mars on Earth* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #5) and *The Case for Mars* (1996, 2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #1) for more on this) so there are even supplies coming. The problem, therefore, is surviving until they do. Under pressure, Watney finds a way to communicate, and then rescue plans kick into high gear.

But equipment breaks down, plans change, improvisation and desperation become the norm — in short, the usual ways of the world. The ways where they can mean life or death.

It's not just Watney's own journal, though. The efforts required to save him show a similar cycle of equipment breaking down, plans changing, and improvisation and desperation becoming the norm. NASA pulls out the stops, others lend a hand, and the families agonize over the perils of life on the edge of the envelope being pushed out.

I am somewhat surprised that there doesn't turn out to be a legal challenge somewhere. Surely, someone would find some pretext to drag everyone into court with huge legal briefs and all kinds of strange invented jurisdictions and exemptions. At least Weir is hoping for some sense, as there are no psychics remote-viewing Watney as he struggles for survival.

(He doesn't do very well in the historical background, imagining a beautiful green princess slipping into his habitat. Yellow perhaps, black maybe, even white (and bald), but most likely red. "Dejah, could you find a girlfriend for this new Jasoomian?")

The final rescue is a flanging of improvisations and desperate efforts, the sort of bash-it-until-it-fits Britishness out of *The Flight of the Phoenix* (1964). With a desperate effort from all involved . . .

Campbell would probably have bought this book for *Analog*, barring some realistic but a bit too strong for Miss Tarrant's feelings incidents and comments. (For example, how Watney grew potatoes.)

Perhaps cooperation on such a scale can only come in the face of extreme desperation. "I have done it. damn the Admiralty," Shackleton said, with the help of Norwegians and Chileans.

(Note, the book was originally self-published back in 2011. Make of that what you will.)

AND SEXIER, TOO Review by Joseph T Major of *STEEL BENEATH THE SKIN*

(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$2.99)
THE COLD STEEL MIND
(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$2.99)
STEEL HEART
(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$2.99)
THE WINTER WAR
(Amazon Digital Services; 2014; \$2.99)
by Niall Teasdale

Well, I gave them a second chance. And the zombies turned out to be just one section of the third book, better yet, defeated without too much trouble and for good.

Aneka Jansen is a corporate security specialist from Britain. After a less than totally successful tour in Iraq in 2011, she runs into a different problem, namely being kidnapped by aliens. If it only stopped at anal probes . . .

A thousand years later, she wakes up on a

spaceship. Except, in a sense, it's not her. She was sliced apart, analyzed, and her mind put into a similar but enhanced robot body. And sexier, too.

The world outside has changed, too. The alien race that kidnapped Aneka also started a great war against humans, and against two other alien races that they encountered. The costs were high (but not on David Weber we-had-to-hide-from-extermination scales) and among other things, there was so much genetic manipulation that humans aren't "humans" any more; they call themselves "Jenlay". And sexier, too.

Aneka takes up with Ella, one of the women who was on the ship that found her. And there is a lot of **Hot Sex™** between the two women. For more conventional types, we get to meet Ella's mother, who is a stripper. See, traditional morality hasn't been abandoned.

And, over the spread of the books, we have the ordinary story of people trying to understand their universe and push out the envelope of knowledge. Aneka and Ella face various opponents, internal and external, strange and ordinary, and one who turns out to be surprisingly close to Aneka.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Aneka gets co-opted into the internal security service of the interstellar federation, which turns out to have its own unusual methods. One of which may be familiar to some readers.

The books are not extraordinary, though the extremes to which people go might seem to flatten suspense; as with Aneka's remarkable self-repair mechanisms. She seems rather accepting of her own nature, and it's perhaps not surprising that a legal challenge emerged, only that it took so long.

From the ending of the last book it seems likely there will be more. Again, it's nothing great, but it is entertaining, and with a protagonist who is not contemptible or overbearing. And sexier, too.

SHADOW, SHADOW ON THE WALL

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE OCEAN AT THE END OF THE LANE

by Neil Gaiman

(William Morrow; 2013;

ISBN 978-0-06-225565-5; \$25.99;

HarperCollins Publishers; 2013; \$7.99)

Nebula Award Nominee

Edward Hamilton Waldo was born on February 26, 1916. Due to some fixation on the part of the Library of Congress, he was stuck with that name until, I believe, even after his death. However, outside their limits, everyone knew him by the name he was given after his mother's remarriage, **Theodore Sturgeon**.

He explored the problems of blended families in his own way, in for example, "Shadow, Shadow on the Wall . . ."

(*Imagination*, February 1951), where a stepmother tried to punish an imaginative boy, only to learn that he won't be punished. This drives her to more retributive measures, which in turn provokes him to push back.

George, our protagonist, is not burdened with a wicked stepmother. He lives in an England that is fading, the traditional land of farm cottages and local tales. One of them being his friend Lettie Hempstock, who goes down to see the ocean at the end of the lane. To most people, it looks like a small pond.

But then there is something strange about the Hempstocks, Lettie, her mother, and her grandmother. Not just their talking about coming over from the old country before it sank — or was it the older country, which blew up? The Hempstocks seem straight out of Pratchett, with their ancient accents and unusual settled ways.

If that isn't enough, Lettie ends up persuading George to make a visit to another place. Where he somehow picks up a guinea worm. The NHS might not cover that; anyhow, he gets it out himself. Almost completely, unfortunately, though completion is beyond his powers.

His mother is on vacation, so father hires a new maid. Perhaps George is a little fey; he thinks Ursula Monkton the maid is the faerie guinea worm, given a human form. Given that his father had tried to drown him in the tub, he just might think she has undue influence over him, like when he climbed out the window and saw Ursula bent forward with her skirt up and his father behind her. (He also says that Ursula was the first woman, aside from his mother, that he had seen naked. There's something very strange about that family.)

Like the protagonist of "Shadow, Shadow on the Wall . . ." George has been relegated to the attic, and Ursula makes it clear that she intends to get him. Unfortunately, George can't push her into the shadows on the wall. Worse yet, it turns out that Ursula still has a hold over George.

He runs to the Hempstocks, who do have the means to counter Ursula and her ways. Or try to, but as the old man from Salem wrote, "doe not call up Any that you can not put downe". Which gives George and Lettie some hard times.

In the aftermath, there is a curious diffidence, George not quite believing what had happened and yet not quite disbelieving it either. It's not as bad as the cliché of the Faerie Folk making the venturers forget entirely about their Wonderful World-Changing Experience; more a sort of Sanchoism, as if those things couldn't really have happened, for all that they did.

IT NEVER REIGNS IN CALIFORNIA

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE EMPEROR OF CALIFORNIA

by Scott Freiheit

(Amazon Digital Services; 2013; \$3.99)

It was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café.

When the word came to me that our Emperor had broken from his cage on the island of Sante-Hélène, I knew that he could not but need me, the Brigadier Gérard. You must know, then, that I instantly made my preparations to travel to his refuge in Nouvelle-Orléans. When my good ship was stopped, by the warship of the English under the command of Admiral the Hon. Milor Sir Horatio Hornblower, the infamous brigand and pirate, my despair was intense . . .

— Not from "How the Brigadier Bore Himself in California" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

In the story "St. Elizabeth of Hungary", the lead story of *Hornblower in the West Indies* (American title *Admiral Hornblower in the West Indies*) (1958), the indomitable hero finds himself faced with a question of honor. A French "colonist" has procured a fast ship and a cargo of military equipment, with the intent of making a rapid descent upon the island of Saint Helena and rescuing Bonaparte. Can't have that now. With great moral struggle over his reputation for probity and honesty, Hornblower tells a lie. Then, by good fortune, it turns out to be a lucky guess. (Meanwhile, Brigadier Gerard was in the vicinity of the island, but again . . .)

Admiral Hornblower might be tasked in this situation with stopping and searching dubious commerce going to New Orleans. But first, there is the little question of technology.

Louis de Laval, having left his refuge in England to return to France in order to serve the new Emperor and resolve matters with his *Uncle Bernac* (by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; 1897), went to the Emperor's reception not long after his arrival. He managed to help the only other man there who spoke English, and in fact didn't speak French very well. This Robert Fulton had some insane plan for building a vessel that could travel under the water. (Louis also managed to be helped by a Hussar officer named Etienne Gerard, who didn't seem to have bragged about it to his drinking buddies later.)

In this book, such a proposition now presents itself to the exiled Emperor. This time, he begins to consider it. While dealing with his sour relations with his chief gaoler, Sir Hudson Lowe, and the need to keep the rest of his followers out of his confidence for their sake, Napoleon begins secretly planning.

It works. And as the world wonders, the exiled Eagle flaps his wings and flies to Louisiana. (The bit about the house prepared for him is a genuine story from New Orleans history, so it has at least a little confirmation.) But now that he's there, what's to do?

Lowe knows what to do, and gets in touch with some private-contractor double-oh types who head off to America.

The U.S. government seems a little uneasy

about this *pomme de terre chaude* that has been dropped into their lap, and negotiates discreetly, neither confirming nor expelling. Napoleon seems to get along better with the chosen envoy, Andrew Jackson, than they did in “If Napoleon Had Escaped to America” (by H. A. L. Fisher, *Scribner’s*, January 1931).

The double-ohs make an attempt, and Napoleon figures he might be better off for a vacation. Why go to New Jersey? It seems he has family there; his older brother, the sometime King of Naples and then Spain. The brother has a reconciliation. (The absence of the only family member who really seems to have liked him, Pauline, seems to be necessary, given the confines of the story.) But the pursuers also attack Joseph Bonaparte’s house, which persuades Napoleon that maybe he should really move on.

And, with a company of veterans (again, this part is from history), and a new female companion (a running gag in John Kendrick Bangs’s comic novel *Mr. Bonaparte of Corsica* (1895) is that each of the many women in his life is “the only woman I ever loved”), Napoleon decides to take in the then-clement climate of California.

And then, with the liberation of Spanish America, including Mexico, in train, new prospects open up, only . . .

Freiheit has the British government less perturbed than it perhaps should be by the escape of “General Bonaparte”. The French government should also be bothered. And you’d think there would be more discontented veterans selling their last brass button for the wherewithal to go join him in his new freedom.

DAS RICHTE ZEUG

Review by Joseph T Major of
V-S DAY: A Novel of Alternate History
by Allen Steele

(Ace; 2014; ISBN 978-0425259740; \$26.95;
Penguin Group (Kindle); 2014; \$10.99)

The little boy looked up at the silvery skin of the *Lucky Linda*. “Wanta fly. Wanta fly!” Elsie shifted little Homer in her arms as he held up his hands to the famous space plane, on exhibit in the Smithsonian.

She moved aside to let the young man in the white suit get closer. “Thank you, ma’am,” he said. “Cute little boy.”

“Homer, say thanks to the nice man — what is your name?”

“Tom Wolfe — people confuse me with the author. And who should I say hello to?”

“I’m Homer Hickam!” the little boy said. “And I’m going to launch my own rocket someday!”

Allen Steele is going to keep on writing this until he gets it down right. The original

version, “Operation Blue Horizon”, was published in 1988 in a very obscure magazine called *Worcester Monthly*, some sort of local mundane publication. In 1991, the story was republished in *Asimov’s* as “Goddard’s People” (July 1991). In 1996, along with a sequel, “John Harper Wilson” (*Asimov’s*, June 1989), the story was expanded into a thriller novel, *The Tranquillity Alternative*.

Throughout, the basic story remained untouched. In one of his daring exertions of his Indomitable Will, the Führer decides on an even more ultimate *Wunderwaffe*, the Eugen Sanger *Silbervogel* sub-orbital bomber, and immediately orders the German rocketry project to focus on this unstoppable weapon.

[Yes, it was a real proposal, proposed when Steele has it being proposed. As proposed, the heat shielding was inadequate and having sufficient shielding would have resulted in an inadequate bomb load.]

Well, maybe not so unstoppable. The development leaks out, through the French resistance and the SIS to the Coordinator of Information, Colonel William J. Donovan. As a result, Robert H. Goddard is dragged from his comfy long-term research sabbatical in the warm and dry climes of Roswell, New Mexico to the chilly and damp fastness of Worcester, Massachusetts, not far from his cherry tree.

A crack team of researchers into this weird and arcane field of rocketry get dragged into his research and development seminar. Since one of them is Colored/Negro (and I’ll avoid the worse words), the Homer Hickamish designation of “Goddard’s Boys” is not quite to his liking, and out of respect it becomes “Goddard’s People”.

Steele is not particularly sparing of the plight of n-----s, Colored, Negroes, Blacks, African-Americans in that era, as when one prospective test pilot refuses flatly to have anything to do with any project that involves “colored” folks. Not to mention separate but equal trains, washrooms, housing, etc. etc.

The reader might wonder if Goddard’s People didn’t drift into the field because they were otherwise excluded. The man just referenced is J. Jackson Jackson (and yes, the first name is “Jackson”, too), and is referred to as “Jack Cubed”. I’m surprised he doesn’t run into Joseph Heller. The other southerner is named Gerry Mander. What did their parents have against them, anyway? [Incidentally, Homer Hickam is “Homer Hadley Hickam, Jr.” This was why in the movie *October Sky* (1999) his father was called “John Hickam”.]

Under this impetus, the special research team sets about designing and overseeing the construction of a counter to the *Silbervogel*. Now there might be one or two problems with this as presented. There have to be more than nine guys doing all the work, yet the teams of engineers, metallurgists, chemists, avionics designers, and the like are mostly off stage. Indeed, there is little enough of the other rocket boys in the world; about the only mention goes to Jack Parsons, and how unsuitable he is.

There was always Bob Truax, not to mention the other members of Parsons’s Suicide Squad, and that was just in the U.S. And, given the immense diversion of effort, what’s going to happen when John Campbell asks the Street & Smith circulation director why all those subscriptions to *Astounding* are going to the same post office box in Worcester?

Perhaps the security, absurd and restrictive as Goddard’s People find it, has some use. In a rare case of competence, an assassin from the Abwehr actually manages to get ashore and inland without being noticed or giving himself up, goes straight to his target, and only is foiled at the ultimate last moment.

Well, one bunch of people are interested in seeing production and research, but Wernher von Braun is becoming speedily disillusioned at the means and methods. Particularly when the True Heinrich notices that Peenemünde didn’t look all that well after the big RAF bomber raid and managed to get control of the project, moving it to a site more under his control; Nordhausen. And seeing how much, or little, concern the SS had for the workforce doesn’t increase von Braun’s enthusiasm for the project.

But then the day comes. The Certified Aryan Hero Pilot boards the *Silbervogel* and is catapulted into launch. George Pal (who had a similar launch-track system in the movie *When Worlds Collide* (1951)) would have been pleased. However, warning systems are in place, and at the right moment, the American X-1 rocket interceptor *Lucky Linda* (named after the pilot’s girlfriend) is launched, armed with a profoundly simple weapon . . .

In the exuberance of getting dreams made into story, some problems may be papered over. As when, almost right at the beginning, the reader is confronted with an airborne early warning B-29 — almost a year before the plane actually entered operation! Somewhat more fundamentally, the feasibility of the *Silbervogel* given the state of aircraft design and metallurgical knowledge is open to question. Such matters could be altered, that is the point of such an excursion, but the author has to make an effort to justify them.

Steele mentions one consequence of this effort, but not another. With the diversion of the rocket developers into this particular effort, there is no development of the A-4 medium range ballistic missile. However, with manned spaceflight proven, it seems extremely likely that further development would ensue. What the author doesn’t mention is that with all the titanium used to build the *Silbervogel*, the supply for jet engines would be greatly limited, with consequences for that field of development.

The ending, set at the end of the reunion of “Goddard’s People” some seventy years later, the survivors being aged and worn, contains as a background item a spark of optimism, a note that some changes can be for the better. It’s well to find an alternate history that is not

Panglossian (never mind that in *Candide*, Pangloss was the butt of the joke), not saying that "Our Time Line is the best of all possible worlds".

Some things should have happened.

YOU MADE YOUR POINT
Con Report on ConCave XXXV
February 21-23, 2014

After weeks of biting cold, the temperature eased at the end of the week. It was almost like spring, though cold would come back again. In this temporary flurry of warmth, I did one last load of clothes and we packed.

February 21, 2014

Louisville — Bowling Green, KY

Lisa had a therapist's appointment that morning. Rather than wait, or go back and forth, we decided to load the car early in the morning and drive straight on from there.

I had a nice wake-up call about ten to six. Leg cramps. Since it got us both up, we got started and Lisa did the cat boxes while I paid the bills.

Nothing particularly untoward happened at the therapists, or during the drive; Lisa had eaten breakfast and I hadn't, so we stopped in Elizabethtown and I had something.

They checked us in early, and we unloaded the car and went out to get some things to snack on, along with lunch at Five Guys. By the time we got back, people were arriving and getting registered, including **Tom & Anita Feller**. Tom said he wouldn't be going to ConGlomeration, and didn't have any long-term plans at that point.

Ricky Sheppard was there, looking thinner and paler, and his wife **Elizabeth** also turned up. **Pat Molloy** and **Naomi Fisher** accompanied her daughter, who was selling Girl Scout cookies, and she had already heard the line from *The Addams Family*, so that was that.

A few years ago, the dealers' room had to be abruptly restructured due to a leak. Since then, the convention has taken to putting dealers in some of the atrium rooms, which means nice accessibility, but a cramped space and extra costs for the dealers. The choice now tends towards the younger sorts, with a tattoo worker, for example.

I had asked Steve Francis about various of the WorldCon bids. He pretty much confirmed my opinions, and I am curious about this who-are-they Beijing bid. (Loncon has only seven members from China.) I thank him for his patience.

We had dinner with my niece and her little boy, who was a little more awake this year. (Last year, you will recall, he went to the circus and was all circused out.) He is in first grade but already reading at a third-grade level. Naturally we were all proud of that.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 126.9
Sunrise: 7:26 AM (EST)

Sunset: 5:31 PM (CST)
Weather: Clear

February 22, 2014
Bowling Green

One of the advantages of ConCave is that it has, essentially, free meals. We came down and indulged in their breakfast, seeing people come out.

Tim Lane and **Elizabeth Garrett** arrived in time for lunch, catered as ever by my old friend Bob Embler, advertising his OutsideCon. Once Bob had received an aggrieved email from someone upset that he had not listed the hotel where the con was being held. This was one fan who definitely was not a slant.

We talked with Tom and some of the other people. I was quite pleased to see that Dan Caldwell had made it, albeit a little more worn than usual. A couple of years ago, Dan had collapsed at a ConCave and been sent to Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville.

Tim and Elizabeth had to leave. Lisa had to do some shopping so we went out to dinner as well. When we got back we wandered around for a while seeing things and talking to people, and finally took note that we were old fans, and tired.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 2.4
Sunrise: 6:27 AM
Sunset: 5:32 PM
Weather: Clear and warm

February 23, 2014
Bowling Green — Louisville

It was a late-starting day. Jodie Offutt was there, trying to reconnect after Andy's death, I think. Anyhow, she asked to get *Alexiad*, and gave me an address, but she got it wrong. If anyone knows her current address, please send it to us.

Checkout time was delayed, but we got the room cleared out, said our goodbyes (the Fellers, for example, aren't making long-term plans and I found out I was in the same condition) and left.

We unloaded the car, had dinner with Grant, and got things stored away after a nice get-together with the people we knew and liked. But fewer of them each year, so they get worn out.

And so to bed.

Miles driven: 118.5
Sunrise: 6:25 AM (CST)
Sunset: 6:29 PM (EST)
Weather: Chilly, rain and snow

Total mileage: 247.8
Gas bought: \$25.45
Time out: 9:08 AM
Time back: 4:35 PM

ConCave is a pleasant event to attend, but it is suffering from the general problem of the

transition from participants to consumers. Fewer of the sort who want to lend a hand are coming; they have other interests, other concerns, or other injuries. If you think this is bad, look at Midwestcon, once the premier event of Trufandom, where potential WorldCon bids went to justify themselves to the SMOFs. Now it's shrunk.

I was seeing signs that said:

ALL RIGHT WINTER
YOU MADE YOUR POINT

BACK IN BUSINESS
Con Report on **Holmes, Doyle, and Friends**
March 14-15, 2014
<http://www.AgraTreasurers.net>

The Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium in Dayton was one of the features of our annual congoing schedule. But in 2012 we couldn't make it because of a conflicting event, and then in 2013 Cathy Gill, who had taken over from Greg Sullivan, who had taken over from Al Rodin, couldn't give it.

The new management is still working out the bumps; there usual reception by the Agra Treasurers was in a different hotel, and in any case, after our dinner at Wertheim's, we got into Dayton right before it ended, so making it would not have done much good.

"It was pleasant to Dr. Watson to find himself once more in the untidy room of the first floor in Baker Street which had been the starting-point of so many remarkable adventures," as "The Mazarin Stone" begins, and so it was for us at the Clarion Inn. The lapse had made for fewer people, I suppose, and we sincerely hope that others will return, or come for the first time.

The papers presented were varied. Some were indeed about Doyle ("Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle, and the Irish" given by Dan Andriaccio), others about the background ("A Real Life 'Silver Blaze'" given by Kay Dawson, about the disappearance of Shergar), and still others about criticisms of the text ("The Coptic Monasteries of Syria & Egypt" given by Martin Arbagi, who pointed out that the Monophysites of Syria aren't called "Copts", they are called "Jacobites", and went from there to argue that Professor Coram in "The Golden Pince-Nez" was more interested in anti-religious propaganda than in actual research), and so on.

Regrettably, George Vanderburgh was unable to make it due to snowstorms in Buffalo, and so the paper on "The Current State of the Undershaw Restoration", the state of Doyle's neglected home, could not be given. This is a project well-supported by the Holmesian community, and we wanted to be brought up to date on the status.

The finale was a moving speech by long-time Symposium participant Bill Cochran, "I BELIEVE in Sherlock Holmes", on the devotion of Holmes fans and how it influences their lives. Fans in other fields would note the resemblances; indeed, Cochran seemed to be

going into FIAWOL.

Alas, we had to get back home and so missed the Banquet and the traditional Readers' Theatre, "The Case of the Hungry Swine" (which also would suffer from the absence of George Vanderburgh, since he had the scripts). Keep posted for next year's meeting, which we hope will be even better.

Gayla Gish Owens
December 25, 1962-February 26, 2014
by Lisa Major

On February 26 I got a call telling me that my stepmother's daughter had collapsed and been declared dead at the hospital. I sat in complete disbelief. My mind flipped back to the early days of grade school when Gayla and I had been best friends. Neither of us dreamed then of a future where we would be family. She was good to my father and adopted him as her father.

D. B. COOPER
by Lisa

The travel channel had an episode about notorious hijacker D.B. Cooper. Until 9/11 this was the most famous hijacking. It was one of the most brazen thieveries ever staged. If prior to the incident some novelist had written such a thing publishers probably would have rejected the book on the grounds of implausibility. Yet it happened. All these years later its perpetrator is still legendary. And all these years later, no sleuth has discovered whether or not Cooper got away with it or died in his epic attempt. My head says he died that night in the wilderness. My heart is divided. Part of me says he was just a thief. Part of me wants him to be on the French Riviera living it up. Thief though he was, Cooper had style.

MAN O'WAR'S BIRTHDAY
by Lisa Major

March 29 was Man o'War's birthday and marked the 97th year since the foaling of the great red horse. Since his racing career ended in 1920, there are not many left who can remember seeing the big red horse in action. Since he died in 1947, sixty-seven years ago, there are more who can remember seeing him in retirement and hearing Will Harbut, his groom, say "Stand still, Red."

DERBY PREDICTION
by Lisa

At the moment my Derby favorite is a sentimental one. It's the California colt, California Chrome. I favor him because his trainer was exercise jockey for Swaps, who won in 1955. It is roughly a month to the Derby. Many things can go wrong in that month. California Chrome easily won the Santa Anita Derby. On his sire's side he can trace his ancestry back to 1977 Triple Crown

winner Seattle Slew. On his dam's side he traces back to legendary sire Mr. Prospector.

THE BAG LADY OF ROCHDALE
COLLEGE
(A Worm's Eye View?)
Tara Wayne

I guess it's not a very flattering picture, but Judith Merrill as a bag lady was the image that flitted across my mind while searching for a title. She was said to have been a handsome young woman in the 1930s, but I only knew her much later in life, when her mannish features had been accentuated by age, and a casual disregard for her appearance. Often seen in ill-fitting, dowdy clothes, it was hard not to think of the sort of homeless female vagabond one sees witlessly wandering the streets. Yet Judy's mind was anything but dulled by hard booze and harder knocks.

In spite of the fact that I didn't know Judy well enough to call her by her first name, everybody did – so I will as well. But I doubt even her friends could deny that her normal attire would fit in around any casual male environment – a shipping dock, say, or a cheap diner on a bleak November night, where everyone else wears a patched parka with coffee stains on the cuffs and has fingers yellowed by years of the tobacco habit. Nor did Judy live a settled existence, ordered by the clock. Indeed, at times she did not even have a fixed address.

Judith Merrill was the first science fiction writer I met. At the time, I lived in Parkdale, just as I do now. But 1971 was a different era, and I was a different person. While I had always been fascinated with anything to do with astronomy or space travel, in 1971 I had only just discovered science fiction as a genre. A corner grocery down the street from my home sold used magazines for ten and fifteen cents each. One of them, in fact, contained the ad for OSFiC that lured me into fandom. Imagine where we would all be if I had passed up that creased, dog-eared copy of *Fantastic*, and had spent my dimes on *Befuddling Technoscience Tales*, instead?

The nearest library to me at the time was a modern reconstruction of what I seem to recall was a Shakespearean grammar school. When I moved back to Parkdale in 1991, I was pleased to see that, except for the addition of an absurd glass and steel entrance, the High Park Branch was much the same as it had been in 1971. By luck, I happened to pick up a pink sheet of paper from a table near the door one day. It said:

At High Park Branch, 228
Roncesvalles Ave.

SCIENCE FICTION EVENING
Thursday, March 25th, 8.30 P.M.

Come to discuss your favorite authors and books with Judith Merrill, science fiction writer and anthologist from the Toronto Public Libraries,

Spaced Out Branch.

ADMISSION FREE!
Everyone welcome

Naturally, I went. Looking back 42 years, I'm not sure if I even knew who Judith Merrill was at the time. But, whoever she was, the flyer said that she was a science fiction writer. What else mattered?

I arrived a little late and found a squat old lady with long grey hair seated in a plain chair, with a dozen or so listeners forming a modest audience around her. I was brimming over with questions to ask – though the nature of those questions now escapes me completely. Not one was ever answered, unfortunately. Judy had apparently just seen *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and that was all she would talk about. I went home a somewhat disillusioned young fan.

I didn't know then, of course, that I would be hearing a lot more about Judith Merrill in the coming years.

Judy was not native to Toronto. She was from The Bronx and had been a member of the Hydra Club, before the war. She married or slept with about half the Futurians, and had a brief but furious career as a writer, frequently collaborating with her lovers. For reasons sufficient unto Judy, she abandoned writing fiction herself, and turned to editing New Wave anthologies. *England Swings* launched a fashion for often unintelligible, pretentious "Speculative Fiction." Having lost interest in traditional pulp adventures, Judy had become a passionate advocate for any sort of remotely surreal, symbolist, or absurdist avant-garde literature. Dismissing the parochial name "science fiction," Judy rebranded it the much groovier-sounding "Spec Fic." The new fad resulted in a spate of New Wave anthologies such as *Dangerous Visions*. While they made waves at the time, unfortunately most of the New Wave looks rather quaint, today – it was so obviously desperate to borrow the luster from more "respectable" brands of literature.

Judy went one better than that, in fact. She adopted her favourite authors into the Science Fiction genre the way Mormons adopt dead relatives into the faith – whether or not they ever wanted to belong to the Church of the Later Day Saints, or had even heard of them. Similarly, it didn't matter to Judy whether Borges or Kafka had ever read or even known about Science Fiction.

Judy's interests had clearly become quite cosmopolitan, compared to her Hydra days. I remember that Madge, the first custodian of the Spaced Out Library, sometimes complained that Judy insisted that the collection waste a certain amount of shelf space on books that were about as relevant as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Mein Kampf* or Tim LaHaye's claptrap *Left Behind* novels.

Judy had heavy-duty influence on the Spaced Out, however, and could not be denied. She gained this influence through having somehow talked the Toronto Public Library board into founding a special collection for

“speculative fiction” in the first place. As the core of the new collection, Judy donated her own books and magazines. It was perhaps not as generous a gesture as it seemed. I overheard other remarks by Madge, at the SOL, that Judy had made a pretty sweet deal for herself – in exchange for a van full of ratty paperbacks, she had received a free office, a modest stipend from the TPL and other perks. The pages with Judy’s own stories had all been cut or torn out, and, even when not defaced, the material was not in especially desirable condition. Many, if not most, of the books and magazines in the collection eventually had to be replaced.

That was one of the things you learned about Judy, if you knew her at all well. Even while rendering valuable public service, she was expert at looking out for Number One.

She probably had to be. Judy seems to have been one independent lady, and, after a certain point in life, she never bowed to orthodoxy to get married again, or to find a regular job. She lived a Bohemian lifestyle that I can only admire, and have, in my own small way, done what I could to emulate. She lived by her wits, by her ability to charm, by her connections and by her chutzpah.

Judy was not too proud, for instance, to sell her soul to the CBC. Despite her own rarified tastes in SF literature, for a year or two she played host to Saturday-nights reruns of *Dr. Who*.

I had a personal experience of Judith Merrill’s survival instincts. The occasion was sometime in the later 1970s, when I was one of a number of precocious and rather aggressive fans. We weren’t part of Judy’s charmed circle, but she was a familiar figure. And Judy was always careful to remain on good terms with the local fandom, both from natural friendliness and the good sense to not alienate readers. One day we were having an early dinner at a place on Spadina Avenue called the Sun Wa. Spadina had turned into Toronto’s “new” Chinatown, and abounded in excellent Chinese restaurants of every description, that even we could afford. The Sun Wa specialized in savory noodle dishes: big heaping plates of flat noodles, round noodles, rice noodles, every kind of noodle, served with delicious black bean sauce, peanut sauce, oyster sauce or chili sauce. Any dish for a price that wouldn’t buy an entree anywhere else. We had no idea, however, that the Sun Wa was also one of Judy’s favourite Chinese restaurants. The place was packed, that day, when in through the door came Judy. She looked for an empty table, then, finding none, Judy recognized us. She didn’t hesitate a moment before pulling up a chair and joining us, just as though we were old friends. I think we were a little flattered and made room, as though we thought we were old friends, too.

It was one of those moments that make fandom a little special, actually.

Judy’s true friends were not really the local fans, though. I knew one or two of the older

OSFiC members were closer to Judith Merrill than the current generation, but they had drifted out of the club by that time. Judy’s private life was not unduly visible from outside. It was generally known among the fans that she had shadowy connections to media personalities in the CBC, connections in the Toronto Public Library board, and connections to literary doyen. She had had her career honoured by the International Authors’ Festival at the Toronto Harborfront Center, an unheard-of honour for a mere ghetto writer. Judy was a founding member of Rochdale College, a student-run college and co-operative living experiment, that – as a Marxist – must have seemed to her like a mission to raise consciousness.

Consciousness-raising, maybe. But I remember the few club meetings in the Rochdale building, downtown. The place was a dump. Dark, concrete tunnels with tiny rooms that looked like kindergarten classrooms. There were likely more drug dealers than instructors or professors. I never saw the dorms, but the smell in the halls was fecund, and you had to take care not to step in undesirable organic residues left by the half-wild canine population. After a few years, the college was closed, and the building itself gutted for redevelopment. It appears, in fact, that the establishment of the college had originally been a tax dodge, regardless of the idealism of some of the founders. It was neither the first nor last noble ideal to founder on human nature.

In an act of Establishment Revenge, the building was reopened as the Senator David A. Croll Apartments.

Cast adrift from Rochdale, Judy occupied a number of humble addresses over the next few years. Now and then I’d see her, frumpy and rumpled as ever, at conventions, but she didn’t seem to be in her natural environment there. What her natural environment might be was something of a mystery, though. She had an apartment, somewhere. When she couldn’t come up with the rent, she lived in her office at the Spaced Out Library – by then renamed The Merrill Collection. When I was mailing her complementary copies of OSFiC’s monthly newsletter, I addressed them to an apartment on Jarvis Street. Jarvis had once been a boulevard of millionaires. The families of the actor Raymond Massey and his brother, Lt. Governor Vincent Massey, had mansions on Jarvis Street, and had once paid workers to dump tons of snow on the street for the delight of an elderly family member on her deathbed. By the 1970s, though, it was a low-rent district, lined with nondescript low-rise apartments, and the mansions had become boarding houses or outright flophouses. Independence and the Bohemian lifestyle came at a cost.

Judith Merrill was also one of the founders of the Toronto Hydra meetings, created in imitation of the original New York writers’ club to which she had belonged 30 years before. With John Robert Colombo, she invited potential young writers to discuss the business of writing, the writers and writing itself. At least in theory. I can only name a few of the

members, and never witnessed them in actual discussion. Phyllis Gotlieb was a member, though, and also a good friend of mine. She kept putting my name forward – but her efforts were ignored, and I was never invited to attend. On the other hand, I wasn’t greatly exerting myself to write professionally, so I didn’t feel as slighted as I might have.

But since the group gradually grew to include other friends of Judy’s and John’s, who had no more ambition to become a professional writer than I did, the sense of being slighted was never entirely absent, either. It was one of many frustrations in life that I’ve learned to live with, and with little regret in retrospect. So much of fandom is about who you know ... but, for better or worse, also who you don’t know. If you don’t learn to be philosophical about it, you can spend a lot of time in a slow burn.

To tell the truth, I was never an enthusiastic reader of Judith Merrill’s fiction. I have a battered paperback edition of *Survival Ship and Other Stories*, published by Kakabeka Books. With a publisher named after a waterfall in Northwestern Ontario, who could resist? I also have an old Pyramid paperback with a neat Schoenherr cover, titled *Out of Bounds*, that I recently read ... and that partly inspired this piece. My collection is completed by two absurdly mispackaged paperbacks. *A Shot in the Dark* has a lovely cover – for a mystery novel. *Sin in Space* was originally *Mars Child*, before it was given a ridiculous cover painting of a stripping space blonde and leering astronaut. Actually, *Mars Child* was only half Judy’s. The name on the cover is “Cyril Judd,” a pseudonym for the team of Judith Merrill and Cyril Kornbluth. You have to wonder who thinks up these inappropriate marketing schemes.

When the biography, *Better to Love, the Life of Judith Merrill* was published in 2002, I manfully resisted the temptation to spend \$29.95 for a copy.

Clearly I don’t regard Judith Merrill as one of the giants of the science fiction genre. Her main accomplishments seem to have been as an editor and guiding light of the New Wave, and as one of the founders of the famous Milford writers’ workshop. In Canada, all that was pretty much behind her, as she shifted toward using her influence on her circle of friends and connections to act behind the scenes. The establishment of the Spaced Out Library was one of her accomplishments, as it was to gain a foot in the door for science fiction’s recognition at the Harborfront festival. One of her last ventures into editing, and the only one in Canada, was the first volume of the anthology of Canadian SF, *Tesseract*. She was named to the Hall of Fame by the SFWA. But to look at a list of her published fiction, I find it all a little puzzling.

It doesn’t seem to be what Judy accomplished as a writer that has left the biggest impression in people’s minds. Possibly not her role as editor, either. Frankly, I think she is overrated as a science fiction writer, and her reputation as an editor seems to have faded

somewhat over time. What she accomplished out of sight may prove to be more durable, as the Spaced Out Library, aka The Merrill Collection, is today housed in a state-of-the-art facility, occupying an entire floor of a gorgeous faux Art Deco building near the University of Toronto, and is considered one of the major collections of science fiction in the world. The Milford writer's workshops may have furthered the careers of many valuable writers who might possibly have slipped through the cracks, otherwise. Even Hydra North may have made a difference to someone's career.

What I think admire most about Judith Merrill isn't her career, but that she appears to have lived life entirely on her terms. Regardless of a relatively small body of writing, now mostly obscure, she possesses a significant reputation in the field. She made a place for herself in influential circles, and found ways to earn her living in Canada despite an obvious inclination to avoid regular, salaried employment. I doubt Judy ever tolerated a "boss" in her life, or ever did much that she didn't want to do. She lived a free, if probably not easy life. Judy did it for Judy, of course – not for anyone else. But, honestly, in what other way can a person get anything important done?

ConFusion Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

ConFusion is a science fiction convention held every winter in Detroit. This year it was held at the DoubleTree Detroit-Dearborn over the weekend of January 17-19, 2014. We had not planned to attend, but did so only because I was invited as an art programming participant. Because of the timing, we wanted to go a little early and celebrate a family member's significant milestone in the Fort Wayne area.

On Wednesday when we went up, the weather was actually pretty nice, albeit cold. But sometime overnight it turned nasty, and by the time we were ready to leave on Thursday to get to the Detroit area, it was snowing pretty heavily. The roads were slick, and I hadn't even gotten out of the Fort Wayne area before we had a close call. So I was on my guard, driving slow, as we headed across Ohio to Toledo.

In Toledo we saw some pretty nasty accidents, including one in which it appeared that the vehicle had flipped over the Jersey barrier in the median. We stopped briefly at the Sam's Club to get gas and some essential supplies, then continued toward Detroit.

Shortly after we crossed the state line, I hit a patch of ice and the van started skidding. I tried to counter-steer, but I just had too much mass and momentum to recover control. The next thing I knew, we were in the ditch, pointing back the way we came. We didn't hit anything, but we ended up sitting for over an hour waiting to be winched out. And worst of all, we were less than five miles from the place

where we were going to stay the night before continuing to the con hotel.

I'd been coming down with a cold, but I think that experience probably made it a lot worse than it would've been if we'd stayed home, or even if we'd had an uneventful trip. All night I felt as if I couldn't get warm enough, and my throat had become quite scratchy. I was a little more careful than usual when eating the hotel breakfast, since I didn't want to eat anything that would make things worse.

Then we had to pack our stuff and get it back out to the van. The parking lot was so full of snow that I ended up bringing the van to the hotel entrance and loading everything there rather than trying to drag the cart through the snow.

Then we made our way up to the con hotel. I was very skittish about the iffy roads, and the van didn't feel quite right, which made me worried that we'd done it some hidden damage. But we did get up to the con hotel and were able to get checked in before the dealers' room doors opened for dealer loading. That way we didn't have to try to unload our merchandise around our personal possessions, especially when we were unloading under less than ideal conditions. I felt like crap, and it was hard to maintain the necessary energy to keep working. Worse, we had a bad layout and minimal backspace, which made it hard to get stuff set up.

We thought we were doing well, but the next thing we know, the dealers' room coordinator is yelling at us about how we need to get the stuff out of the aisles, Right Now. So we end up frantically stuffing everything else under the tables, meaning that it was well-nigh impossible to find stuff when we needed it.

Not that we had a huge need for backstock, since our sales were pathetic. I had to leave for a panel on kids' anime, and my husband didn't have any great stress keeping up with customers in my absence.

In the evening we checked out the dessert reception, which had some pretty good food. Then we headed over to the hot tub to try to soak out our aches and pains. At least it was reasonably hot rather than bathwater temperature, but it was right beside a wall of windows, which meant the air temperature was less than ideal.

Saturday morning we dragged out to have breakfast. I thought I'd work some of the aches out by taking a really hot shower, but instead I managed to drop my blood pressure and was overcome with dizziness. I finally was able to get my feet under me in time to get to the dealers' room, but things kept spinning even as I was trying to finish the setup we'd been rushed through on Friday.

When I went for the Iron Artist activity, I was so sleepy that I literally fell asleep sitting up at my table. I was trying to do a portrayal of the Astronaut and the Man in the Moon from my short story "Tell Me a Story," but it came out really disappointing, nothing like the sharp imagery in my mind.

Then I went to a signing session, and was even sleepier. It didn't help that I wasn't getting

any activity.

As a result, I laid down the law -- I was going to get a nap after the dealers' room closed, for the simple reason that if I didn't get enough sleep, I wasn't going to be a safe driver. We thought that we might soak in the hot tub afterward, but we slept so long we decided to just give up and get the rest of the night's sleep.

On Sunday I was still feeling like crap, and then we got a phone call from the family members we were planning to stay the night with. They'd caught the same cold I had, and would prefer if we could just drive the whole way back home in one day.

As a result, we were going to have to start packing way early. That meant I had to bow out on one of my Sunday panels, although I managed to drag through the genre bragging one. I was a pretty miserable specimen though, and then I had to bring boxes in so we could start packing.

Once the dealers' room closed, we finally got two helpers and were able to get everything carried out in a reasonable amount of time. However, the dealers' room coordinator was decidedly unsympathetic toward my physical limitations, and was making threats about disposing of our boxes and merchandise if it got in the way.

The drive home was a very miserable process. I was sick, the roads were awful, and with the high winds, I just didn't feel safe driving very fast. It was almost midnight by the time we got home, and I just sort of collapsed in bed. In fact, with the bitter cold and my miserable weakness, I wasn't even able to unload the van until Friday.

Visioncon Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

Visioncon is a large media-oriented science fiction convention held every year in the Ozark Mountains region of Missouri. In most years it has been held in Springfield, but as a result of their former hotel being sold to a developer and demolished with almost no notice, this year it was relocated to the Radisson in Branson, Missouri, and was held over the weekend of February 28-March 2, 2014.

Because it is such a long trip, we made it over the course of two days, leaving on Tuesday after leaving our cat at the vet clinic. We made it to my parents' place in Illinois in good time that afternoon, and had supper with them. It's good to see them again, but sometimes it hurts to realize they aren't getting any younger, and the infirmities of age are creeping up on them.

On Wednesday we hit the road for Springfield, where we have some friends. We stopped on the way in Collinsville to get some stuff at the WalMart that's just down the road from the convention center where Archon is held. Then we headed across Missouri and into the Ozarks. At least this time I knew the van would not like climbing the mountains, and was ready to take it off cruise control as soon as it started having trouble.

We made good time and found our friend's

new apartment without too much trouble. It was good to be able to visit and catch up on news since the last time we'd seen one another. Because we knew we'd be driving down to Branson to load in the next day, we did turn in fairly early.

The next day we got the news that the dealers' room director had arrived early and we could start loading in early. So we quick packed our stuff and headed down to Branson. We were following another friend who knew the way, but they missed the critical turn to get to the hotel, and we ended up all having to turn around and go back several blocks. It's beautiful country, but very steep, to the point that the parking lot around the hotel had multiple terraced levels. It made me nervous to have to drive that big, heavy van around, and I wondered if it would stop properly at the edge of a parking spot. I sure didn't want it to go right over the edge and tumble down to a lower level.

However, we were able to get in place without incident, and we had some real good help loading us in. There was a little step at the door to the dealers' room, so we had a whole bunch of people just carrying everything in and piling it at our tables. As a result, we were able to get everything set up in good time and were able to get to the nearby cheap motel where we were staying the nights and get checked in before supper. It was rather nice to have some time to ourselves in the evening.

The next morning we did have to get up fairly early to get the complimentary breakfast at the hotel where we were staying. However, we didn't have a rush to get to the dealers' room, so we could take it easy for a change.

On the other hand, that may have been a mistake, because the dealer next to us hadn't even arrived when we finished setting up the previous night. When we did arrive, we discovered that they'd set it up to take up every inch of what they considered their space, including some that we considered common backspace for moving behind our tables. Their attitude was that it was our responsibility to make sure that we had a passageway to our backspace within our own space, and they were very reluctant to make any adjustments whatsoever in their setup to accommodate our need to get behind our tables. We finally got them to move one gridwall panel just enough that we could squeeze through, but it's a good thing neither of us are particularly large.

When the dealers' room opened, sales were slow. I think part of this may have been the dampening effect of having Author Guest of Honor Aaron Allston have a sudden fatal heart attack right after he'd arrived at the con. I know I was bummed, since I'd enjoyed a number of his works, particularly Doc Sidhe, and was looking forward to speaking with him.

However, the slow sales didn't mean much writing time for me, for the simple reason that I was feeling really tired and having difficulty

concentrating. Even after we closed our tables for the night and headed back to the other hotel and our sleeping room, all my efforts to write felt like crap. So I ended up turning in early.

Saturday morning we got up fairly early to get our breakfast. Then we decided to just walk over to the main hotel, since they were across the street from each other and the weather was looking nice. We got our tables opened for business and settled in. At first things were slow, but by afternoon things got really busy.

The weather forecast for Sunday also started becoming exceedingly worrisome. So we decided to see if we could extend our stay an additional night so that we didn't have to drive back to Springfield in slick roads in the dark. At least part of it was my being nervous after our horrible experience on the way to ConFusion. I sure didn't want to slide off on one of those narrow, windy mountain roads where the ditch is more on the order of a ravine.

Still, we tried to take it easy Saturday evening. I at least felt a little more alert, and did some more satisfactory writing. Still, we decided to turn in early.

By the time we got up on Sunday, it was already spitting wintry mix, which made the drive over to the main hotel a little uneasy-making. However, we certainly wanted the van in position to load out, since we had a lot of unsold merchandise.

Once we got our tables open, the business was fairly slow, so we decided to start packing fairly early. Because we didn't have a lot of backspace, I'd had to take most of our empty boxes back out to the van, so now I needed to retrieve them. By this point it was sleeting hard little pellets that were accumulating on the pavement and making it difficult to pull the handcart. Once we started carrying out merchandise, the sleet picked up to the point I was having to sweep it out of the van every time I opened the door to put in boxes. The sleet was actively painful whenever it hit our faces.

At least we had good help carrying out, but then one of our helpers had a medical emergency, which is very frightening. Fortunately, someone else had the necessary medicine to get the situation under control, but that helper was no longer able to do any of the physical labor of carrying out, just as things were getting really arduous. But another person pitched in, and we were able to get everything loaded before the deadline to get stuff out. Then we had to get the van back over to the other hotel for the night. The parking lot was slick, but at least the road between the two places had been plowed, so we were able to very carefully ease the van over there and get back to our room. I nearly lost our red insulated lunch bag when it fell off our luggage cart, but I noticed it was missing and went back to check.

Our friends decided to go ahead and return to Springfield, although we made it very clear they were welcome to stay the extra night as well rather than take unnecessary risks. However, they needed to be back, so they agreed to text message us as soon as they arrived. I was very glad to see those texts come

through and know they were safe.

It must've relaxed me, because that night I was able to get a critical turning point unstuck in the novel I was working on. I got several pages written and felt reasonably confident I'd be able to keep moving when I got home.

Monday morning, we got up to discover that the temperature had plummeted during the night and the sleet had turned into light, fluffy snow. Thankfully the hotel owners had gotten enough of the parking lot dug out that we were able to carefully ease the van out to the street.

The worst part of the trip was getting out of Branson. By the time we got to Springfield, the roads were pretty well clear. Although our friends were open to our staying an extra night, we decided to just pick up our stuff and head on to my parents' place. However, we had a little mixup in communications with my folks, and I ended up getting a couple of calls from my dad while we were on the road.

Even so, we still made good time to my folks' place, and we had supper with them. I also got all the accumulated dirty clothes through the laundry, which is always a good thing.

On Tuesday we headed back home. There was some snow in the fields, but the roads were fine. The cat was very glad to be retrieved from the vet clinic, although she remained a little miffed at us for a while. Still, on the whole it was a successful convention, if not quite as profitable as the previous year, probably because of the weather and the loss of the Author Guest of Honor.

NEBULA AWARD NOMINEES

Best Novel

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves, Karen Joy Fowler (Marian Wood)

The Ocean at the End of the Lane, Neil Gaiman (Morrow; Headline Review)

Fire with Fire, Charles E. Gannon (Baen)

Hild, Nicola Griffith (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

Ancillary Justice, Ann Leckie (Orbit US; Orbit UK)

The Red: First Light, Linda Nagata (Mythic Island)

A Stranger in Olondria, Sofia Samatar (Small Beer)

The Golem and the Jinni, Helene Wecker (Harper)

Best Novella

"Wakulla Springs", Andy Duncan & Ellen Klages (Tor.com 10/2/13)

"The Weight of the Sunrise", Vylar Kaftan (Asimov's 2/13)

"Annabel Lee", Nancy Kress (New Under the Sun)

"Burning Girls", Veronica Schanoes (Tor.com 6/19/13)

"Trial of the Century", Lawrence M. Schoen (lawrencemschoen.com, 8/13; World Jumping)

Six-Gun Snow White, Catherynne M. Valente (Subterranean)

Best Novelette

- "Paranormal Romance"**, Christopher Barzak (*Lightspeed* 6/13)
"The Waiting Stars", Alette de Bodard (*The Other Half of the Sky*)
"They Shall Salt the Earth with Seeds of Glass", Alaya Dawn Johnson (*Asimov's* 1/13)
"Pearl Rehabilitative Colony for Ungrateful Daughters", Henry Lien (*Asimov's* 12/13)
"The Litigation Master and the Monkey King", Ken Liu (*Lightspeed* 8/13)
"In Joy, Knowing the Abyss Behind", Sarah Pinsker (*Strange Horizons* 7/1 – 7/8/13)

Best Short Story

- "The Sounds of Old Earth"**, Matthew Kressel (*Lightspeed* 1/13)
"Selkie Stories Are for Losers", Sofia Samatar (*Strange Horizons* 1/7/13)
"Selected Program Notes from the Retrospective Exhibition of Theresa Rosenberg Latimer", Kenneth Schneyer (*Clockwork Phoenix* 4)
"If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love", Rachel Swirsky (*Apex* 3/13)
"Alive, Alive Oh", Sylvia Spruck Wrigley (*Lightspeed* 6/13)

Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation

- Doctor Who: "The Day of the Doctor"** (Nick Hurran, director; Steven Moffat, writer) (BBC Wales)
Europa Report (Sebastián Cordero, director; Philip Gelatt, writer) (Start Motion Pictures)
Gravity (Alfonso Cuarón, director; Alfonso Cuarón & Jonás Cuarón, writers) (Warner Bros.)
Her (Spike Jonze, director; Spike Jonze, writer) (Warner Bros.)
The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (Francis Lawrence, director; Simon Beaufoy & Michael deBruyn, writers) (Lionsgate)
Pacific Rim (Guillermo del Toro, director; Travis Beacham & Guillermo del Toro, writers) (Warner Bros.)

Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy

- The Coldest Girl in Coldtown**, Holly Black (Little, Brown; Indigo)
When We Wake, Karen Healey (Allen & Unwin; Little, Brown)
Sister Mine, Nalo Hopkinson (Grand Central)
The Summer Prince, Alaya Dawn Johnson (Levine)
Hero, Alethea Kontis (Harcourt)
September Girls, Bennett Madison (Harper Teen)
A Corner of White, Jaclyn Moriarty (Levine)

Damon Knight Grand Master Award:

Samuel R. Delany
Special Guest:
 Frank M. Robinson

FANZINES

Askew #8 March 2014
 John Purcell, 3744 Marilene Circle, College Station, TX 77845-3926 USA
j_purcell54@yahoo.com

Beyond Bree February 2014, March 2014
 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 #25, #26
 Taral Wayne
taral@teksavvy.com

The Drink Tank #364, #366, #367, @368
 Christopher J. Garcia
garcia@computerhistory.org
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Fadeaway #40
 Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Road, Oxford, MA 01540-2035 USA
fabficbks@aol.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Fish Out of Water #574, #575, #576, #577, #578
 Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

Jiant #1 March 2014
 Sandra Bond, 40 Cleveland Park Avenue, London E17 7BS, UNITED KINGDOM
jjiant@ho-street.demon.co.uk

Lost Toys #1
 Taral Wayne
taral@teksavvy.com

MT Void V. 32 #32 February 7, 2014— V. 32 #40 April 4, 2014
 Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA
eleper@optonline.net
mleper@optonline.net
<http://lepers.us/mtvoid>

Opuntia #272 February 2014, #273 March 2014
 Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7 CANADA
opuntia57@hotmail.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Due to rising Canada Post mailing rates, Dale has decided to make *Opuntia* an exclusively Net-distributed zine.

The Reluctant Famulus #98
 Thomas D. Sadler, 305 Gill Branch Road, Owenton, KY 40359- USA

tomfamulus@hughes.net
<http://www.efanzines.com>

WORLD CON BIDS

2016
 Beijing
<http://www.guokr.com/zone/worldcon/>
 Year of the Fire Monkey

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>

San José

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

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

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

Bids under consideration include:

2021
 North Texas

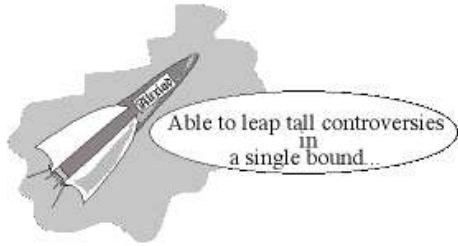
2022
 Chicago

Thanks to Mike Glyer for the updates.

Beijing and Kansas City have both filed for the 2016 WorldCon with the London committee. The Beijing committee still seems a little mysterious and there are no details regarding their proposed bid.



Letters, we get letters



From: **R-Laurraine Tutihasi** Feb. 11, 2014
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<http://www.weasner.com/>

It may be laughable to start planning for a trip three years away, but I caught your mention of the Neil Armstrong Museum. A reunion of Mike's high school class in Seymour, IN, is being planned for 2017; and we hope to attend and see sights and visit friends on the way and back. If it's not too far out of our way, that might be a nice place to go.

Since I'm planning for the August 21, 2017 solar eclipse, I don't think it's laughable.

March 23, 2014

We're planning to head north from our location for the 2017 eclipse. That would be Wyoming probably. So a DC worldcon would definitely not work for us; though whether we would even consider going there for a worldcon is uncertain at this point in time. I doubt we'd be able to afford Helsinki or Japan. Montreal might be a consideration.

My condolences to Lisa on the Broncos' loss at the Superbowl. Mike also rooted for them, based on the fact that one of its team members had in the past been part of an Indiana team; Mike is a Hoosier. My sister, who lives in Seattle, was happy, though she doesn't follow football.

Milt Stevens brings up an interesting point about the saturation point for mobility scooters at a convention. People who use them merely for convenience should realize that they may be shortening their lives by eschewing exercise. I have used mobies in the past when health problems made it necessary.

You say you don't feel welcome at Corflu. Have you ever attended one? If yes, did you make an effort to connect?

Look at Martin Morse Wooster's letter, or Cathy Palmer-Lister's. I wasn't doing fanzines in 1970.

— JTM

Health update: My health problems turned out to be the result of dental abscesses. According to a retired nurse, I was lucky the infection did not travel to my heart or brain. Whew! We have identified the tooth that became infected, and its extraction is scheduled for June.

I cannot ever recall seeing the italicize and underline rule for foreign book titles. Is this a rule you made up, or do you follow a style manual?

I followed *The Bletchley Circle* for a couple of episodes, but it seemed to disappear after that. I suppose I need to see about borrowing, renting, or buying the DVDs. There appear to be at least two seasons.

From: **Cathy Palmer-Lister** Feb. 19, 2014
Ste. Julie, Quebec, CANADA
cathyp1@sympatico.ca
<http://www.monsffa.com/>

Always a pleasure! Thanks so much!

I take issue with Rodney Leighton's LoC however. He says he had not read Graeme's letter but then proceeds to criticize it. I have read the letter. Oddly, he and Graeme on in fact on the same page. That the "trad fans" are unwelcoming to newcomers is exactly his point. Some of this debate on what fanzines are all about arose because some fan-eds were made to feel so uncomfortable in the fb group I created that two of them quit. I was really upset about this, and said so quite forcefully, which drew the remark, "But really, she isn't one of us." Heaven forbid, that some of us have dreams of becoming pros, or worse, some of us have websites!! OMG, imagine SF fans using new tech! Surely, the world is coming to an end. I'm relatively new to the scene, and I edit a clubzine, so you know I would not be welcome at Corflu, either.

But what really bothers me is that some fanzines (Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association) used to trade with dropped out of sight when we started posting WARP on line. I can't afford to pay postage to Canadian addresses, never mind Australia and South Australia, and neither can the club. Indeed, we can only just barely afford to print the zine for our members, and that only because the prez is a graphics artist and has a generous boss. The club executive said bluntly, "If they can't be bothered living in the 21st century . . ."

I'm disappointed, I always enjoyed hearing from far and away, but Canada Post is raising the rates again, so I won't even be able to send Christmas cards. I don't believe the clubs and eds we traded with were using typewriters and copy-paste, so would it kill them to email pdfs or upload them as we do ours? The few who do still send us zines in this fashion were not hit by lightning.

It cost almost as much to mail lastish as it did to get it printed.

Milt Stevens wrote: "At LASFS, there are

members who come to the club every week only to stare at a computer screen. I asked one of them why he bothered to come to the club to do something he could do just as well at home. He explained that he was a geek." There are always some who do the same thing at our club meetings, and some of them drive in quite a distance to be there. Boggles the mind. But, if LASFS has geeks (hate that expression) who apparently live in this century, why did they stop sending us their newsletter? I still send them the link for WARP, but never get a response of any kind. We share trade zines with our members, but I have a feeling they don't.

And Milt, I agree about the scooters! It's not just the indoor traffic jams, some of the drivers are careless and I've been nearly knocked over more than once.

Okay, now the serious stuff, (grin) Who's going to London? Will there be a feast? Reading zines is nice, but meeting the eds is nicer.

Who's going to Detroit?

— JTM

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** Feb. 24, 2014
6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA
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darrells@comcast.net

Taras Wolansky is trying to twist my words regarding Oscar Wilde, but not doing a very good job of it. I meant what I said. In a pragmatic sense, a libel suit can be a winning strategy if undertaken when you know your accuser cannot prove what he says. In a moral sense, it is time to sue when he not only can't prove it, but the charges are genuinely untrue and he is maliciously lying. But when Queensberry accused Wilde of being a "sodomite", despite his poor spelling, he was NOT lying. It was Wilde who was lying. Furthermore, when Queensberry (or the police) began to actually produce the male prostitutes of whose services Wilde had availed himself, Wilde was doomed. It was therefore folly for Wilde to sue at all because 1) the charges were true and 2) the opposition could prove it. Wilde doubtless felt that a lawsuit was the only way to save his reputation, but, as many of his friends (who must have known some of the truth) tried to tell him, it was the surest way to destroy his reputation. Basically, Wilde was bluffing and Queensberry called him on it. Wilde's only viable strategy would have been to deny everything, dismiss Queensberry as a ridiculous buffoon, then disappear behind an ink-cloud of doubt and go on a long tour of America or the Continent until the heat was off. Outside of a court of law, Wilde's wit might have prevailed. But of course he would still have been a liar, because the charges were true. It was most importantly true that Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas (son of Queensberry) were lovers, which was what had Queensberry in a rage all along.

By today's standards of course, the nature

of the “scandal” would be quite different, because it is not against the law (in most countries) to be homosexual or even to perform homosexual acts, so “outing” a celebrity is not such a big deal. Many of them out themselves these days. That leaves only the infidelity aspect. Wilde was in breach of his marriage vows with his wife.

By the way, to answer your question, yes the *Akademik Schokalsky* was indeed trapped in ice caused by global warming. This is something which, I admit, I had not thought through, but it makes perfect sense. As the glaciers of Antarctica melt at a record and increasing rate, they pour immense amounts of fresh water into the sea. This lowers the salinity level. Less saline water doesn't have to get nearly as cold to freeze. Thus the sea ice is spreading as the land ice is melting. At the North Pole there is no land, so there is no obvious source of freshwater melt, so the icecap is shrinking. A little farther south, there is a good deal of melt-off from Greenland, which is indeed lowering the salinity of the water and altering the Gulf Stream, since the more saline Gulf Stream water is heavier than the less saline Arctic water, and therefore sinks beneath it. The ice-build up that trapped the *Schokalsky* was also the product of unusual winds. We've seen a lot of unusual winds this year, haven't we? But don't forget that Australia has just gone through its hottest year on record, complete with catastrophic droughts and wildfires.

If you wonder why Global Warming science keeps twisting and changing to incorporate things like this, that is because it is real science, which is based on observed data and real-world experience.

Though its predictive value seems to be zero.

Consider then the denier position. Basically they are opposed to clean energy of all sorts, particularly wind and solar. They are saying we should not take measures to reduce carbon emissions, because, according to them, there is no problem. That oil and coal companies are paying people to create “doubt” in defense of this position is entirely understandable, but they are doing it for the same reason tobacco companies want to create “doubt” about the link between smoking and cancer. This is also consistent with Republican anti-environmentalism generally. It has nothing to do with freedom, but everything to do with short-term corporate profit. In the long term, of course, the resultant catastrophe will not be profitable for anyone.

Evelyn Leeper is quite right about “Sweep Me To My Revenge” of course. This is a time-travel-to-change-history story. By the end, history has indeed been changed. (Time-traveling professor prevents the death of Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe outshines Shakespeare. The crackpots are now “proving” that the Earl of Oxford, Francis Bacon, et al. wrote Marlowe. Shakespeare, as

a lesser figure, does not interest them.) It is as much of an “alternate history” as Bradbury's “The Sound of Thunder. This points out the hazily defined generic boundary between the time travel story and the alternate history story. “The Last Heretic” is one of those stories that merely starts in an alternate world, where something in our timeline worked out differently. (Constantius II did not die of a fever in 361, prevailed, and Arianism supplanted Athanasianism with the support of a continued Constantinian dynasty.) There are glimpses of multiple timelines. Someone is reading a version of Ammianus Marcellinus that has clearly leaked from our timeline, but to the characters this seems a “fantasy.” By the time we are done it is suggested that there is an infinity of timelines, about enough to make all the contradictions in Christian theology make sense.

I might suggest to Taral that the thing to do is to collect authors selectively. You *don't* need *Alternate Asimovs* or the Norby books. The core of Asimov is *I Robot*, *The Rest of the Robots*, the first two robot novels, *The End of Eternity*, *Earth is Room Enough*, *The Martian Way*, *Nightfall and Other Stories* and the original Foundation Trilogy. Later Foundation and robot books are optional, as are later collections. Time is going to do some weeding out, so there is no reason you can't too. As for Philip K. Dick, his short fiction was collected in five fat volumes by Underwood-Miller in hardcover. These have been reprinted in trade paperback. There might be a story or two missing, but you can certainly get the great bulk of his short fiction very easily. It is true that not all these collections were ever reprinted in mass-market paperback, but that is because the mass-market paperback was already in decline by the time such a definitive collection was made.

Incidentally, I was rereading some of the original *Foundation* recently. I was struck how prophetic it was. Hand-held calculators. When the naïve young man arrives on Trantor the ticket agent at the train station ... er, I mean, spaceport ... looks at a glowing screen and prints out a ticket. Quite a lot of this really does feel like 2014. Of course it is supposed to be 50,000 years in the future or thereabouts. No cyber-implants, no post-humans, no genetic engineering. I am sure that in a century or two this book is going to date very badly, like one of those 19th century novels in which the “future”, despite a few changes, is still Victorian. On the plus side, one thought that came to my head was “for a book in which nothing happens, this is quite fast-paced.” One could write a how-to article on that, observing Asimov's use of pacing through the development of ideas, not physical action. It was precisely this characteristic which he lost in most of his later work. I remember that somebody had an interesting idea in *Foundation's Edge* — so they talked about it for 150 pages, just talking heads against a blank background.

In other words, he had got to the status of not being edited, so he could write what he liked. Which was talking heads against a blank background discussion of interesting ideas.

The Seldon Crisis of “The General” is that Belisarius, that is Bel Riose, represents a threat to the Emperor and so will be sacked and the Foundation won't have to worry about him. Asimov didn't seem to have looked up Narses, Belisarius's replacement who not only defeated the Goths while starved of recruits and money, but kept in Justinian's favor. Must have been anti-eunuch prejudice.

— JTM

From: **John Thiel** February 25, 2014
pablolenis@frontier.com

I noticed in addressing this that your email has the word “iglou” in it. You're apt to be prepared for the snow you talk about in the February issue. I'm used to thinking of the southland as not having snow in it, certainly not Georgia, but folks in Florida were talking about snowfalls in some fanzines I've read. Could be they're getting snow down near the equator, but that's not the climatology I've been used to. Maybe the southland is getting snow from contact with the north, as might happen in the “diminishing world” we're in what with transportation development leading to greater proximity.

Bloch was really into this fandom of the future thing; he also wrote poetry about fans carrying on civilization in a new dark age, and proposed at one time that fans replace beatniks as rebellion in the news.

I'm wondering in what sense you're “eligible” to retire from work. Are you officially and legally bound to continue working until you reach a certain age, or do you refer to receiving retirement benefits?

With twenty-seven years working for the county, city, or metro government, an employee can retire with full benefits.

— JTM

There's been some public complaint about *Analog's* fiction similar to that of AL du Pisani, namely that the stories are getting darker issue by issue. I don't disagree with his notation that many of the stories seem to be taking place in “poverty-stricken hellholes”. That seems to me not to be the only magazine in which the science fiction is becoming morbid. Haven't seen a story about a successfully functioning utopia in years.

From: **Milt Stevens** March 1, 2014
 6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA
 93063-3834 USA

miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Alexiad* V13 #1, Lisa begins by talking about an ever popular topic, the weather. I haven't talked about the weather in Southern California in the last year. We've been having our problems, but they might not sound like problems to people in the rest of the country. It's raining today. That isn't a problem. It was raining yesterday, but that wasn't a problem either. The problem is that before yesterday we had only had an inch of rain since the beginning of July. It has been the driest year on record. For decades, people have been telling us all this sunshine would be bad for us in the end. Maybe they were right.

It sounds like Joseph could use a retirement job. Many people collect a pension and then get another job to supplement their income. Usually, such jobs are part time and less stressful than the original occupation. Joseph might try something like being prime minister of Italy or editor of *SFWA Bulletin*. For most people, working part time would probably be better than retiring entirely. It would give people something to think about and a little activity. Making retirement a gradual process would also be a good idea.

Since Joseph brought up the subject of Hugo nominations, I might as well list my own choices in the novel category.

The Arrows of Time by Greg Egan

The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman

Ancillary Justice by Ann Leckie

Neptune's Brood by Charles Stross

Burning Paradise by Robert Charles Wilson

The list contains four science fiction novels and one fantasy novel.

Like Taral, I went through phases of complete collecting. However, I didn't go about it the same way Taral did. He collected author by author. I started reading SF when prozines contained 98% of the material published in the field. So I collected all the magazines but *Weird Tales*, and I collected to the extent my wallet would allow. The Day Index didn't include *Weird Tales*, so I didn't feel obligated to collect it. The fact that I didn't like horror was a minor matter as far as my collecting was concerned.

From: **Joy V. Smith** March 2, 2014
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Pagadan@aol.com

Thanks again for all your reviews, which saves me a lot of time and tedium! However, *Murder in the High Himalaya* is another book you've reviewed, which gives me a history lesson. (Btw, have you read any of the Rule

of Ten books, in which the hero is an ex-Tibetan monk who's a PI? I just read the third one.) I enjoyed your road trip report and your description of vinyl records (a primitive form of encoding .MP3 files). Btw, I recently culled our LPs and gave a lot of them to a friend who has a store where they're in demand.

Interesting and thorough article by Taral Wayne re: early SF authors. (I haven't kept any of the books he mentions, though I've got shelves full of SF.) I enjoyed Sue Burke's Hispacon report; it's great finding out what's happening elsewhere on the planet. So I also appreciated the history, background, and reports in the LOCs. Re: translations (Sue Burke's letter), we get a couple Spanish channels here, and I miss the original actors' voices in all the movies.

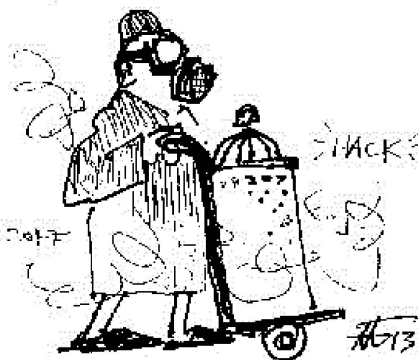
So, Losing Mr. Baggins is one of your funny articles? I checked the URL: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt8960737>, just to be sure. Well done.

The world has become so strange that my attempts at parody pale besides reality.

— JTM

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** March 4, 2014
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<http://www.alexisgilliland.org>

IN THE MEGACHURCH
THEY NEEDED A
MEGACENSER!



Thank you for *Alexiad* 13.1, that arrived along with a late February snowstorm. Well, anyway a couple of inches that melted off the streets and sidewalks in short order, so that no shoveling was required, but there was more snow and more cold weather as March came in like a lion. Monday morning we got the seventh

snowstorm of the season dumping about five inches of wet, heavy snow in my driveway, more than enough to shut down the government and schools. All this snow may be due to the recent warming of the Arctic Ocean, which has deflected the jet stream far to the south, causing floods in England and a 500-year drought in California. Or, for those who don't embrace science, consider that God may be punishing sinful humanity; pick any sin (except burning fossil fuel) you really dislike.

George Price continues to uphold the gold standard, though he concedes it may have flaws. One of those flaws is that gold is a commodity, like oil or wheat, and is therefore subject to market fluctuations caused by supply and demand. Which means that if the government sets and enforces the price of gold, it is interfering with the play of the market, which just naturally turns around and interferes with the play of the government. Conversely, if the government defines its unit of currency as some weight of gold, that unit will vary with the price of gold on the world market, having the potential to cause all sorts of unwanted instability—such as a suddenly ballooning balance of payment deficit that the government suddenly needs to deal with. Price says that we abandoned the gold standard “because the inflationists won,” which is a bit simplistic. FDR went off the gold standard in 1933 and Nixon went off the gold exchange standard in 1973, both acting during times of economic crisis, when keeping the gold standard seemed no longer worth the trouble. Events were what forced the abandonment of the gold standard, not the heirs of William Jennings Bryan. Was there an inflationist conspiracy at work? I don't think so only a posse of politicians reaching the consensus that future inflation was probably a lesser evil than the impending catastrophe they wanted to avoid. On global warming, Price dismisses the theories of the “warmists” on the grounds that the “Little Ice Age” ended 200 years before the start of the industrial revolution. Alas no. Wikipedia dates the Little Ice Age as 1350-1850, while the industrial revolution began around 1750. So anthropogenic carbon dioxide might or might not have been a contributing factor then, but it is certainly a contributing factor to the melting of the Arctic ice cap now.

Taras Wolansky calls the economy of abundance a myth and says: “Technological unemployment is also a myth,” as he cites going from 97-percent farmers then to 3-percent farmers now, without having massive unemployment. That might have been true in the past, Taras but the times they are a-changing.

Machines are getting smarter, and the high-skilled, high-paying jobs are increasingly being automated. Which is to say that capital has begun replacing labor as the best way to make money, to the advantage of the capitalists and the disadvantage of labor. Machines have the potential to do it all, except that for unskilled jobs—the lowest paying kind, it is cheaper to hire humans than to invest in the needed

machinery. Which supports my observation that inequality of income is increasing. If this goes on—a favorite trope in science fiction, we note that as machines get smarter, they will start to replace accountants and lawyers, CEOs, too, if stockholders find an app that gives them a better payout than the lying human swindlers who award themselves big fat bonuses no matter what sort of a year the company had. My dentist has a 3-D printer in his office that builds plastic crowns, replacing the skilled workers who used to make them. Doctors? There are already programs that diagnose conditions better than most human doctors. In short, the middle class is shrinking, starting with skilled labor like the autoworkers and going on to displace typists, secretaries, middle managers, and professionals. Taras suggests that a constant flood of uneducated (illegal?) immigrants might be what is swelling the ranks of the poor/lowering the floor for the middle class. Well no, the good jobs are going away, making it less possible for even the best of workers to enter the middle class and while a few in the upper middle class are making it into the lower upper class, most of the gains are going to the upper upper class, the top 0.1-percent, to which neither he nor I will ever belong.

Is the standard of living improving? Maybe a little, one small step towards the currently mythical economy of abundance. We have all sorts of computerized gadgets and toys, while the new cars built by robots are better made, longer lasting and cheaper than the human built cars of the last century. Also, fast food (junk food if you prefer) is cheaper, a good thing which has also contributed to the epidemic of obesity, a less than good thing. True, being poor in comfort is better than just being poor, but a wide disparity of incomes tends to destabilize the state, especially when the rich can let the poor make up any shortfalls in the national budget. On global warming Taras scores debater's points against Darrell Schweitzer for incorrectly citing the UN (United Nations) when he meant the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) an organization created by the UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) and the WMO (World Meteorological Organization.) Darrell is right on the facts—I cited the same facts after all, even if it is hard to keep track of all those initials, while Taras is blowing smoke in an effort to persuade the inattentive.

What else? In an act of war Russia has occupied the Russian-speaking majority part of the Ukraine around Sevastopol. Stay tuned to see whether Putin is an opportunistic idiot or a tactical genius.

March 17, 2014

This is a PS to my letter of March 4th. Last Friday we got off to a late start for Lunacon, with the result that we were driving around New York City at night, guided by a zombie GPS system, arriving at the convention after

eight in the evening. Lee enjoyed the convention, and on Sunday we went up to reconnect with her cousin Marilyn in Connecticut, so for her the weekend was both a fannish and a family success. However spending time with Marilyn meant that we got a late start heading home. Which also meant that we ran into the eighth snowstorm of the season coming np from the south about the time we crossed into Maryland. Sigh. The last hundred miles or so crept along with bad visibility and general slow going until we finally made it home about ten thirty. It was still snowing the next day, depositing about four or five inches of wet snow in my driveway, which T have just paid a volunteer to shovel clear. Did I enjoy Lunacon? A little, but maybe less than the trouble of driving up and back was worth. My last panel included an argument with an audience member who thought that (a) there would surely be an engineering solution to global warming, and fb) that the glaciers would be back in New Jersey within 100 years. I have had Hotter panels, and for that matter I have had better weekends.

From: **John Purcell** March 11, 2014
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Yet another issue of your fine fanzine has found its way southwestward from Louisville, Kentucky, to College Station, Texas, despite all efforts from the United States Postal Disservice, and I am glad it did. Once again another splendid issue to savor while quaffing a tall glass of Koolaid. No beer required here; it gets in the way of enjoying a fanzine.

We have only one membership in a discount club, that is if Sam's Club counts as a "discount" club. Quite often I have noticed that their prices aren't really a savings. For example, I can get much better prices on cat litter, OTC health goodies (vitamins and herbal supplements), and paper products at a nearby grocery store, to say nothing of the Dollar Tree. My income is stable, true, and sufficient for us to get by on, but I need to do some insurance shopping to chop off more bucks here there. So far that research process has yielded positive results: if we switch everything — autos, home, and Dan's motorcycle — to Progressive, for example, that results in a monthly savings of approximately 93 dollars. That is substantial, and we probably will go with them, unless I find a better deal elsewhere that provides the coverages we desire at a lower price, plus a solid service record. The insurance shopping goes on.

I used to be a member of Sam's Club, but I found that the store was so far out of the way that I wasn't using it enough to justify the membership.

The funny thing about doing online insurance shopping is that once you start

acquiring quotes, every single product insurer deluges your inbox with emails promoting their policies. Obviously the insurance market shares customer e-mail information and then some because these unsolicited inquiries know exactly what I'm looking for. So much for customer confidentiality these days, eh? Fortunately I once worked in property insurance as an assistant underwriter, so I am familiar with the names of reputable insurers and know how to recognize insurance scams. Have to admit that some of these latter efforts are getting very clever, too, but there are clues to watch for. If you don't recognize the company name, look for little things like URL endings (avoid anything with a .net, and the .com endings can be trouble, too, so search the Better Business Bureau website for the suspicious website) and misspelled company names — I have seen things like "Prudentail" and "Heartford"/"Hartfordd" — that are giveaways. Words to the wise, folks.

Interesting to see the heading "Into Thin Air" on one of the book reviews. In the ESL book I teach from there is an excerpt from Jon Krakauer's book used as an example of descriptive narrative. Unsurprisingly, this review warranted closer inspection, and I may just check out the provided website to decide if I wish to buy this book. Everest expeditions are fascinating, and your review of *Murder in the High Himalayas* definitely got me interested. You done good, Joseph.

I t's a very saddening book, and the most saddening part of all was that there was such a massive public indifference.



Taral Wayne's article about being a completist collector makes me glad I am not like that anymore. Time was I wanted every single publication by a particular writer — well, okay, quite a few writers, like Burroughs, Clarke, Asimov, and Sturgeon, plus a few dozen others - but those days are gone. Looking over a nearby bookshelf it's gratifying to see all five of Gail Carriger's Parasol Protectorate books lined up in their proper order (need to get the next Finishing School book pre-ordered), then two series of Cherie Priest's books, and I think I'm only missing a couple of anthologies edited by Lou Anders... Yup. Nice to see that I'm cured of that

completist habit.

Man, some of your loc-writers are long-winded this time around. As always, very interesting reading in the lettercolumn, and no discussions I feel adamant enough about to wade into. Rodney Leighton's loc reminds me to make sure to send him copies of the next *Askew* and *Askance*; the former is now done, the latter under construction. Oh, and Robert S. Kennedy: it seems as though many folks dislike DST for the same reasons you mention. As a side note here, it has been four days since the change-over and I still feel a bit wiped. Apparently the older I get the longer it takes for my body to adjust to the time change. Damn you, body clock!

The adjustment I have to make is having to walk to work in the dark again.

— JTM

So it appears I have come to the end of this loc. Again, many thanks for the zine, and I naturally look forward to the next issue.

From: **Brad W. Foster** March 11, 2014
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75016-5246 USA
bwfoster@juno.com
<http://www.jabberwockygraphix.com>

February issue of *Alexiad* in this past week, just in time to give me something to read while sitting at a small crafts festival over the weekend, and mostly not selling anything. Sometimes it's magic, sometimes ... you have time to catch up on reading.

Yeah, what's with all the icy weather in the south this year? Dallas has been hit by nasty ice about a half dozen times, which is about five times more than we get in a usual winter. Just not ready or equipped around these parts to deal with that for long periods. Cold I can put up with, even cold and rain if I have to. But icy roads? Too much slipping and sliding for my taste!

Cindy and I will actually be eligible to nominate and vote on the Hugo awards for the first time in over a decade. And, of course, I am completely behind on any current reading, so will be relying on the recommendations of trusted friends as far as what stories to go for. Too many books, never enough time. (Or at least at my reading speed — am always astonished at your *On the Road* reports, such as in this issue, where you manage to polish off one or two books a day — while you are on a road trip!

Liked the toon from Alexis on page 5.

Taral's "Gotta Have Them All!" struck home. Though, luckily, I recognized my urge to be a completist early on in life, and was able to mostly break myself of that. It was when the DAW books line started. They had those nice boxes on the front of each book with the number of the book, not in any sort of multi-digit code, but start with 1, then 2, then 3 in an easy to follow way. Hey, now I could

make sure I read all that sf. Enjoyed most of them, looked for those I had missed. Then one day, standing in a used book store scanning the spines for the familiar yellow color, I realized the list of "books to find" in my hand was not full of book titles, or the names of authors, but just numbers. That I wasn't looking for books because they would be interesting to read, but to fill in the gaps in the collection. That is *not* the way to read books, and so have not been overly concerned with having to "get them all" ever since then. About the only thing I have to be said to collect these days is toy robots, and even that is less "collecting" and more simply "accumulating".

Milt Stevens talks about Lisa talking about techy toys. I got a nice surprise at Christmas when a friend sent me a kit for "The Useless Box". Took getting the help of *another* friend with better soldering-iron skills than I have to put it all together, but now have this wonderful little black box with a simple flip-switch on the top. When you click it on, a piece of metal comes up and immediately turns itself off. That's it. I will flick that switch several times a day, and it still makes me smile. Like every small child who has ever begged for a toy, I promise that I will NEVER grow tired of this!

Lloyd Penney mentioned me and my eye surgery in his loc. Not sure where I've sent what updates on all that. But in reply to his comments there, it ended up that the cataract developed on the eye even before the surgery from the retina had cleared up, and so I had no real vision at all in that eye for about five months while gave time for the first surgery to heal completely before having the cataract surgery. That went okay, and while I now have vision in both eyes, the operated one seems to react differently to light, and has an odd off-focus. I can read, write, draw, etc, just takes a second or so when I shift my vision from one thing to another to "lock in". Still, better than having no right eye at all, right? Big fun is now trying to stretch out the various payments to doctors, hospitals and various ancillary groups. A new bill popped up out of the blue the other day. Fun, right? But, again, better than having lost the eye, so I will try to keep my complaining to a minimum!

I think it depends on the hospital. Insurance companies set a fixed payment, so some hospitals get around it by being a cover group for doctors, medical staff, housing and catering services, and so on, each of which bills separately. Like those employers which claim that all their "employees" are actually "subcontractors", saving them the need to pay various taxes.

— JTM

Oh, and finally from the locs: was finishing up reading the zine Saturday night in bed, and when came to Robert Kennedy's comments about daylight saving time, I realized I had

forgotten all about that, and adjusted my watch then and there. Thanks for the timely reminder, Robert!

From: **Rodney Leighton** March 1, 2014
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

I think this is 3 consecutive issues I have located.

That little horse must be strong, huh? I sent some stuff to Taral awhile back and his response was: "was what you sent me a letter or a zine?" Huh, who knows. Pages 2 and 3 were intended as something you could turn into an article if you wished or use as a loc if you wished or toss in the trash if you wish. Don't know how successful I was. I was going to go do some harvesting. Too much snow. The guy I mostly work for is about 50, a workaholic who goes like, well, me when I was 40 or 45. He says there is too much snow. Got a bunch of my regular work to do. Way too much snow for that. All this jabber about global warming and the dangers and adverse effects of it is sort of aggravating given that there is no evidence at all of any such thing here. On the other hand ...almost everything was 2 to 3 weeks early last year. Maybe the cold will break, the snow will go and I can go to work by April and make some money and not go bankrupt..

Reading *Trap Door* #30 ...printed off the web ...I note that Robert has perhaps the best colophon of all: "Available by Editorial Whim for the usual or \$5 per issue." It was ... issue before that was a lot better. Ezines come in bundles of loose sheets. Some zines are read that way. Sometimes I sort them out. I was intrigued with one package. *Trap Door*, at least the one I got, is a digest. But folding it didn't work, didn't make a bit of sense. Something to do with the layout no doubt.

Journey Planet, on the other hand, demanded to be folded up before read. I have never seen a paper copy of those and don't know what format they are but that one, #18 I think, absolutely insisted on being folded. I don't suppose that makes any sense but maybe it does to paperzine folks. Got a new *Purrsonal* zine from Lorraine.

The guy mentioned up there has a small farm. Doesn't do any farming except make hay. Got one horse. Superhot teenaged daughter is supposed to ride it. They sold some hay to a woman, I went along when he delivered it. Hot woman, she has 2 horses, one to ride and one old nag that is a companion I think, I believe she said that one is 19 which is actually not ancient but is fairly old for a horse. And 4 goats including a couple of Pygmies. 20 acres. If I were a bit younger ...

Here's a tale...

My benefactor has been sending me novels, 6 or 8 to a lot. For various reasons most of them were set aside to be read soon. Came a time I realized there were 50 or 60 of the things I had yet to read. I decided I should concentrate on those. Also I had a pile of magazines that I

wanted to go over before I donated them to the charity table.

I am the stereotypical bachelor hermit; my house is a confusion of what my father used to call 'junk' intermingled with furniture coated with dust, cobwebs hanging everywhere. So I started moving some books around with the idea of cleaning the shelf they were on; gotta clean things every few years, right? Finished the novel I was reading and came to a bunch of novels sent by my friend a couple of years ago. Took the first one on the pile, knocked most of the dust off it and started to read it.

Hey, this novel is mostly set in Alaska in the snow and ice. It's pretty good. Entitled *Beneath the Snow* by Caroline Carver published in 2005, it is a story of 2 estranged sisters. Abby mostly stays at home in England with her somewhat disabled mother and does horticultural stuff. Lisa the younger sister is a scientist in Alaska. On a 2 week trip Abby has an affair with a married guy, she and Lisa have a big fight about it and she goes home. 4 years later Lisa goes missing in a blizzard. Mum thinks Abby should go find her. And off she goes.

It is felt that Lisa has gone skijoring. Huh, wonder what that is? Very good book. Outdoor adventure novel. But then it gets serious. It seems as though Lisa may have been attacked. She has invented something called Meg, along with another scientist. Stay at home Abby gets into all sorts of stuff; kidnapped, locked in a cabin for a couple of days, guys come to get her and are attacked by a mother grizzly; Abby who has never seen a snow machine manages to hop on this one and drive it over the kidnapper who is not fighting the bear and escape; buries the machine and walks for miles; rescued by an old guy and so on. Somewhere in there, Lisa took 2 Huskies with her and she released one named Moke and sent him home. He's important. He attaches himself to Abby.

This thing called MEG turns out to stand for Magnetic Energy Generator. A bitty thing about the size of one of those Kindle readers, MEG would collect energy, convert it into electricity and do so very cheaply. So it's a science fiction book, right? NASA sends a couple of scumbags to try to find it although they at least offer to buy it.

The villain of the piece turns out to be a fat female scientist turned murderer. Abby figures out where Lisa is and goes off into the wilderness. They have a big fight and then a reunion which is interrupted by someone shooting a dog. Cal, the lover, possible bad guy shows up and is conked on the head; then Connie the killer arrives. Gets fairly nasty for awhile. Connie gets MEG and with the gals and Cal tied up she douses everything with gas and sets it afire and off she goes. Cal recovers enough to get the women out. Lisa is also shot. But MEG is all important and she begs and demands that Abby get it back.

So she finds a snow machine and takes off across country, literally flying in places. This woman has never operated one of these things

except for 5 minutes when she got stuck. But anyway, she reaches a lake, bad turn on the road. It's spring, lake is starting to thaw in places. Sets a trap for Connie which partly works. Then there is a section in which she is running around on the lake avoiding holes while Connie is ice skating after her. Bad broad falls in a hole. Abby stands by and watches her die. Then she starts out, in a blizzard, walks in a circle without falling into any holes. Then Moke shows up. Followed her all the way from the cabin and leads her out to safety. Maybe it's a Fantasy.

About two thirds of the way through this book *Alexiad* #73 appeared. Naturally I read some of the locs. Global warming is a major topic. Reading the novel in the morning I came across: "The average date of break-up was eight days earlier than it was in the 1920s and although most Alaskans appreciated having one less week of winter Lisa bitterly resented it because it was caused by global warming."

Read a bunch of Locs. Later, reading some of the novel, I came to: "In Alaska alone the temperatures have climbed seven degrees and the sea ice, they tell me, is 40% thinner than it was twenty years ago."

Couple of years ago I did some work for a couple who have a cottage by a river on an old woodlot Thinning trees out, cleaning up dead trees, like that. A combination of factors have prevented me from going back. Last time I talked with the owner she said he wasn't going to hire anyone else. But time has slipped away. Thinking I should contact him, I kept putting it off. I disconnected my phone. Shortly after that I thought about this guy. Well, I will send him a letter. But I couldn't find an address. Well, he's a lawyer, his firm advertises in a certain paper or two. But they are not sold in Tatamagouche. So I took a drive out to Wentworth, home of world famous ski hills and also a small store which does sell that paper. Came home and clipped out his address, sometime later wrote a letter and started to address the envelope and discovered that I had clipped and saved the wrong corner of the page. Or something. Well. Number of bad words directed at myself, some depression due to idiocy and declining brainpower. Decided it wasn't that big a deal. It's on the way to Turo, I am going down there sometime to get a zine copied, will get a paper and mail the letter then.

Decided I would not do the zine for a few weeks yet and the store also sells good pickled eggs, not bad fried chicken, various good sweets and cigars. So I took a drive out there yesterday. Jumping Jesus there's a lot of snow around! They had no eggs and the one lot of chicken didn't appeal but I got some cookies and cigars and a paper. It's an OK paper for what it is. Costs \$1.42. Nothing in it of interest to me; I spent that money for that guy's address. Figured I should look it over. And discovered a story about skijoring. Woman using a bitty horse to tow her along. Meanwhile, this part of the world is locked into an old fashioned Nova Scotian winter. Somewhere between 1 and 3 feet of snow on

the ground depending on various factors. Temperatures drop to about minus 15C at night and up to around 0 by noon. All indicators are that winter will be here for at least another month. Global warming my ass!

No, it's proof of global warming.

— JTM

Sometime, about the time Lisa was writing her bit about the ice, I think, I took some ashes out of my stove. Usually put them on the ground where I might garden if or when I ever start doing that again. But I didn't feel like wading through 2 feet of snow to do so. We had had some rain. I took the ashes across the road to dump in the ditch. Stepped in the wrong place. Ass over ash bucket, up in the air, flat on my back, thump! There was a ridge of ice where the plow had come through and scraped off some slush and left that ridge. Lungs did not appreciate landing on that! Laid there thinking, Christ, I broke my back."



No you didn't, get up. Thinking the boss's wife would be along in about 2 minutes on her way to work and would have the ambulance on the way before she stopped her car I forced myself up. Didn't see her, young fellow went by and saw me down and turned and came back to see if I was all right. Sent him on his way. Later that day I was thinking I should have gotten him to drive me to the hospital. But I could tell nothing was broken. Spent 2 days when I could barely move, getting up and down was rough, I couldn't sleep laying down and it hurt like hell to get up anyway; couldn't get out of my easy chair, spent 2 nights in an old sliding rocking chair filled with pillows, waking up every 20 minutes. But it all got better. Still some twinges. Lungs are messed up anyway But I found I was afraid to go outdoors for awhile and going to get the mail was baby steps, trying to find bits of dirt to step on, shuffling like some decrepit old man. Well, I guess I am getting there.

Well, see, Joe, instead of travelling all over the country to cons and buying thousands of

books and eating almost all of your meals at restaurants, you should have been investing your money in something. Racehorses. Fandom seems to consist of a number of levels of financial status ranging from millionaire to poor as hell. Dale Speirs saved his money, invested his money and is now rich and complaining about not being able to slow down.

Lloyd Penney seems destined to be continuously seeking employment until he is 70 years old; well, with the conservative government changing the old age pension eligibility to 67 in a few years, I think that is what Lloyd is looking at. I was old enough that mine started at 65. But the bureaucrats deemed me ineligible for one pension. Thus I have to unretire. Can't live on what they provide. Bastards can spend 160+million dollars on what amounts to a con for politicians but senior citizens are expected to live below the official poverty line of \$15,000 income per year. I'm a bit over that. But I know people who make less than that.

And gas is now \$1.42 per liter for regular self serve. Bah.

From: **Jim Stumm** March 13, 2014
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Jerry Kaufman: USA was on a full blown gold standard from 1873 to 1934. During that time the fixed price of gold was \$20.67/oz. The US Govt issued gold coins in denominations of \$5, \$10, and \$20, and anyone could own gold in any form in any amount.

In 1934 FDR issued an executive order confiscating all privately owned gold. All persons in USA had to turn in their gold coins and bullion to the Govt in exchange for paper money at the exchange rate of \$20.67. US banks had to hand over their gold reserves in exchange for paper "gold certificates." People could keep any rare gold coins whose value was a lot higher than the value of the gold they contained. Once they had all the gold, the US Govt raised the fixed price to \$35/oz.

After that, until the 1970s, the US Govt exchanged gold for dollars only with foreign central banks, never with private persons. In 1971, following a steep decline in the amount of US Gold reserves due to heavy redemption of dollars by foreign banks, Nixon "closed the gold window," that is, the US Govt no longer exchanged gold for dollars with anyone. With that action, the US dollar was no longer backed by gold in any meaningful sense. Briefly the official gold price was set at \$38 then \$42.22 and then the official price was abolished and gold soon shot up to \$120/oz. on the open market. In Dec 1974 it again became legal for private persons in USA to own gold in any form in any amount. By comparing the average annual inflation rates during these 3 periods: 1873 to 1933, 1934 to 1970, and 1971 to the present, you could see what effect a gold standard has on inflation.

I saw a chart of gold inflow-outflow at the US gold reserve. Gold holdings peaked in 1948. A table of inflation showed that the dollar in 1948 was the equivalent of 59¢ in 1933 — the ratio of the \$20.67 to \$35 prices.

Robert S. Kennedy: I keep a list, on paper, of the titles and authors of all the books I have read to the end, and have done so for many decades, so if I'm considering buying a book and think I might have already read it, I can look it up on my list.

Wind Power: Besides the problem of killing birds, wind power (and solar) is intermittent. To supply electricity when the wind isn't blowing, every wind power system needs a back-up, usually uel-burning generators, able to generate the same amount of electricity, built, connected to the grid, and ready to be turned on the instant the wind dies down. The cost of these back-up generators should be (but isn't) added to the cost of the wind generating system when calculating the cost of wind-produced electricity.

Wind and solar can make some contribution to the electric grid, but to think we can rely on them completely is a pipe dream. Alexis A. Gilliland: There you go again claiming that the IPCC is "very conservative." If the leftist UN bureaucrats who make up the IPCC are conservatives, Miley Cyrus is a nun.

The book *Unstoppable Global Warming, Every 1500 Years*, by Singer and Avery says (page 104): "Global warming in recent decades has generated at least \$2 billion per year in research funding." — So that's a lot more than the few million dollars you estimate.

Global warming is where the money is, but only for those willing to sing from the official IPCC hymn book. Heretics need not apply. I notice you badmouth energy producers but you say nothing about energy consumers who are undoubtedly very glad to have heat and electricity so they don't freeze in the dark during this very cold winter.

I was taken aback by your mention of Krakatoa in connection with global warming since Krakatoa is practically the poster boy of global **cooling**. Krakatoa, a volcano in Indonesia, erupted in Aug 1883, hurling 11 cubic miles of debris into the atmosphere. The dust and gases, including sulfur dioxide, dispersed around the globe and stayed aloft for years. The sulfur dioxide in particular reflected sunlight away from Earth, reducing global temperatures up to 2.2 degrees F for up to 5 years. I suppose there was also some CO2 expelled in this eruption, but I've never seen any mention of it. It was the SO2 that was the dominant gas and that caused global cooling. So I'm at a loss to understand what your "one Krakatoa's worth of CO2 every year" is supposed to mean.

Darrell Schweitzer: None of your evidence has any bearing on whether global warming is anthropogenic rather than just another interglacial warm period between ice ages like

many others that have occurred in the past long before humans could have had any effect on climate.

Winter 2014: Is this how an ice age begins?

No, it's proof of global warming.

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** March 18, 2014
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Thank you for Vol. 11, No. 1 (January 2014), Whole Number 73.

It's been many years since I read a Tom Clancy novel. His last novel (with Mark Greaney) *Command Authority* was indicated as being a President Jack Ryan novel so I obtained it from the library and read all 739 pages. Actually, mainly it is about his son. But, who would have ever thought that the authors could predict the future? "Czar" Vladimir Putin invades the Crimea. An impotent West is powerless to act and the Ukraine loses that part of its territory. (By the time this letter is published we should know the real life result. One thing is certain. No matter the outcome Putin is and will be laughing.) That's only a part of the novel. Overall it reminded me again how very much we need a Jack Ryan in the White House. But, I don't see that ever happening.

Like A Mighty Army by David Weber (the 7th book in the *SAFEHOLD* series) was purchased from the SFBC. It was enjoyed just like the previous six books in the series. Given that they come out once a year the next in the series will probably be the end of this year or early 2015. I hope to live long enough to see the end of the series.

Joe: You comment that you found the DVD of *Going Postal* at Barnes and Noble. That reminded me that I have a copy and made mention of it sometime back in *ALEXIAD*. It's on 2 discs. Disc 1 is approximately 185 minutes plus 5 minutes with Terry Pratchett. Then disc 2 is approximately 62 minutes of bonus material. That's 4 hours and 10 minutes! It's an excellent movie and your mentioning it makes me want to watch it again.

Sue Burke: The train you took to HISPACON XXXI 1 QUARTUMCÓN traveled 200 miles in an hour and a half? That's really fast. Does going that fast leave you any time to enjoy the scenery? In May I'm taking the train to the U.S. Navy Cruise Sailors Reunion which will be held at a hotel on an island in the Columbia River that is actually part of Portland, Oregon. I'll leave on a Saturday morning and arrive late Sunday afternoon. I'm also taking the train back home. I have not been on a train for 30+ years and am really looking forward to it.

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** 3/18/2014
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Many thanks for *Alexiad*, and I'm sorry I've been away. Here are some general comments.

On global warming. How much warmer do Alexis Gilliland and Darrell Schweitzer think the earth will get in the 21st century? One degree? Five degrees? How can they be sure of this? Do they think the pause in global warming since 1998 is faked? If so, who faked it? Do they support Michael Mann's lawsuit against *National Review*? If so, why? I'd say more but you really don't want to get me started.

With fanzines, we're really at an impasse, aren't we? On the one hand you have the Corflu types. I had thought about going to Corflu in Richmond this year, but if I understand a con report by Rob Hansen in *Banana Wings* correctly, in order to *really enjoy* Corflu you have to have been active in fanzine fandom in 1970. I am too young for Corflu, and I started reading for and writing fanzines in 1975. Moreover, the theme of this year's Corflu is the enduring greatness of Ted White and Dan Steffan. I got into a titanic feud with White in 1982. I have not spoken to him since, and I have no intention of starting now. Moreover, the idea of a con whose theme is "things were so much better 40 years ago because, heck, we were 40 years younger!" is unappealing, to say the least. I cannot understand how anyone under age 50 would enjoy Corflu.

I think that in the end, they will be reduced to two guys in their nineties living in nursing homes, not talking to each other because of something one said to the other back then, but they don't remember who or what but they still Are Not Talking To Each Other.

But the fan activities of Gen X and Millennial fans aren't that appealing, either. The great joy of the Internet is that they can greatly magnify fan feuds. I will admit that reading about these fan feuds is fun (I dutifully followed all the posts about Jonathan Ross) but I am glad that I am not part of them. And I will admit that I blog, at *Philanthropy Daily*. I enjoy blogging. I read Stross and Scalzi. But it's not the highest form of fannish achievement.

Here's a question for fans in the two generations after me: why are *SF Commentary* and the *New York Review of Science Fiction* the only critical zines about sf? Why can't you produce one? Or is the idea that fans should criticize the field obsolete? (After all, writing a thoughtful article takes time, which could be used for tweeting or feuding.)

I happened to be looking over various free (and most of them worth every penny) Kindle novels,

and they all were praised to the hilt. There's where they are.

— JTM

I saw the first episode of *Chasing Shackleton* and enjoyed watching it. From what you say, the off-stage bureaucracy must have been daunting, and the idea that you are filming people who are pretending to be alone in the South Atlantic is, um, paradoxical. But the series is as close as I will ever come to seeing Shackleton and his men in the cold isolated water beyond telegraph range living on hoosh, a mixture of beef, fat, and glop. It was one of the better PBS series.

From: **George W. Price** March 25, 2014
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February *Alexiad*:

Darrell Schweitzer and Alexis Gilliland expound at length on the scientific evidence for climate change. While I remain skeptical, I cheerfully concede that they may well be right. I do not understand climate science well enough to judge, so they shall pass unscathed.

I'm neutral, not because I'm indifferent, but because the argument will make no difference. Regardless of the truth or falsity of global warming theory, we should not cut back on fossil fuels (unless we can replace them with nuclear power, which seems unlikely). The proposed cuts would deeply damage our economy, and without staving off the warming. That's because no matter what we do, the poorer parts of the world will not — repeat, not, not, not — stop trying to become rich, and their rising energy use will swamp any cutbacks we might make. As I have remarked before, we will have a hard time indeed persuading the Chinese and Indians and others that for the sake of the planet they must stay poor. Sorry, ain't gonna happen. If their leaders tried to enforce cuts, they would likely be lynched.

So what should we do? Plan to survive the climate changes, if and when. Get ready to move agriculture northward, get ready to build seawalls or move cities away from the present coastline, and so on. I say "plan" and "get ready" only; we should not start the moving and building until the climate actually does change and makes it necessary. That will save a lot of expensive wasted effort if the climate does not change, or (much more likely) changes in unanticipated ways.

We should also improve our technology as rapidly as possible — using as much fossil fuel as necessary — to make us better able to ride out whatever changes may come.

How much have climate and weather changed already? I see a psychological reason why we are prone to believe that the weather now is much stranger and more variable than it used to be. When I was a small child in the

1930s, my father would complain about how strange the weather was, compared to when he was a youngster in the 1890s. He blamed it on the years of cannonading during World War I. Then in the 1960s people complained about how strange the weather was compared to the 1930s; they blamed it on the nuclear bomb tests in the 1950s. I suspect that what really happens is that as we grow older our childhood memories flatten out and merge into a general average, so that we remember mainly "summer hot and winter cold" and forget all the odd fluctuations. So maybe the weather now isn't much if any stranger and more variable than it always was; we just notice it more because we are living through it day by day instead of remembering a hazy average.

Before the days of intimate probes, the saucerians used to inform the contactees that Earth should stop conducting nuclear testing for that reason.

Jim Stumm says that the "economy of abundance" might be practical "if machines progress to where they can make any goods or services faster and better than humans. . . . Von Mises wrote about economies where the workers and central planners were all humans with certain human limitations and foibles. That won't necessarily apply to an economy run by autonomous productive machines where machines do all production of goods and services and humans are all retired."

I remain very dubious. Will people stop thinking up new goods and services? Who will decide which goods and services to give up to get those new ones? Who will respond to unpredictable changes in external circumstances, such as natural catastrophes, or attacks by people outside the automated society?

We can become so enormously productive that most people could enjoy a life of leisure. But decisions will still have to be made about the best uses of available resources and labor (including the labor of robots). This will always be true, because no matter how vast our resources, they will never be infinite. So von Mises still rules!

Sue Burke answered some of my questions about the novel *Cenital*, as to why the state oil companies in the story would lie about their reserves. This raises a further question. Since each company's masters knew that its own reserves were about to run out (regardless of what they had been telling the public), how were they planning to handle this? Did they intend to just suddenly reveal that their oil was all gone, shut down the company, and tell their customers to go buy oil somewhere else? I can believe that each company's masters would think that theirs was the only company whose

reserves were exhausted, and it would be a horrible shock when they finally learned that all the other companies were out of oil too. Now that would be a bitter irony!

I agree with Darrell Schweitzer that the uncut version of Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* was inferior to the edited version in the first book edition. On the other hand, Horace Gold was wrong to omit the famous last line ("Death and Destruction!") from the *Galaxy* serial version. I see the entire story as a build-up to explain and justify the genocidal hatred expressed in that line. I guess it was just too strong for Gold.

There are one or two scenes cut from the edited edition that I think reinforce the story; i.e. the description of the uncensored broadcast from occupied territory. Just as, while the unedited *Stranger in a Strange Land* is too verbose, there is one scene where too much was cut and as a result of the editing, the description was misleading.

— JTM

Jerry Kaufman asks, "[A]m I right in remembering that when we were on the gold standard, there were laws requiring that only the Federal government could own gold?" No, that misbegotten law came when we went off the gold standard in 1933. Under the gold standard, people had an unlimited right to own gold. In fact, the defining characteristic of the full gold standard is that everyone has the right to turn in paper money and demand gold at any time and for any reason. That restrains the government (and private banks) from excessive issuance of paper. When President Roosevelt took us off the gold standard, the Federal government didn't just stop redeeming paper money; it forced everyone to turn in all their gold money in exchange for unredeemable paper. That was barefaced robbery. But if the Feds had not seized the gold, people could have continued making transactions in gold, and refused to use the government's unbacked paper money. That would have made it much harder for the government to inflate the quantity of paper money, and we couldn't have that, now could we?

I have long fulminated about politicians fostering inflation by running the government into debt. The ancient Roman custom of "decimation" inspires me to modestly propose a constitutional amendment that just might discourage irresponsible borrowing:

Section 1. Within two months after the close of any fiscal year in which the Federal Government has borrowed more money than it has repaid, one tenth of the full membership of the House of Representatives and one tenth of the full membership of the Senate shall be chosen by lot and expelled from office. The vacated offices shall be expeditiously filled by election or appointment, in the manner prescribed elsewhere in this Constitution.
Section 2. Except as provided in Section 3 below, those expelled shall not be eligible to be elected or appointed to any Federal office of trust or profit for a period of three years for expelled Representatives and seven years for expelled Senators.

[That is, a full election cycle must go by before any of the buggers can get back into Congress. And "Federal office" includes the judiciary and any job in the bureaucracy. But they could still become private lobbyists.]

Section 3. However, those expelled shall remain eligible for military service.

[Reservists and Guardsmen would not lose their ranks or commissions, and could still be called into active service.]

We know that Congress will never propose such an amendment, so it would have to be initiated by the states. Once in operation, if it proved to be not strong enough, we could make it two tenths, or even go to summary execution (which would render Sections 2 and 3 superfluous).

From: **Rod E. Smith** March 26, 2014
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I got a grin out of John Purcell's response to my most recent JOHT column. (About WIMPs and the meek inheriting the Earth.)

Your response to George Price about the Inuit taking over Greenland after the Norse settlers died out reminded me of one archeologist wistfully speculating on what might have been if the newcomers had been more receptive to the lifestyle of their neighbors to the north. (IIRC there actually were Inuit or their precursors in the northern part of Greenland before the Norse arrived.)

The Medieval Warm Period ended and the Little Ice Age began. The farming methods the settlers had were no longer sufficient. If they had switched to fishing they would have had a better chance.

— JTM

Not much else to say. Had a good time at MillienniCon despite fighting a mild bug the whole weekend. Last year I got caught in the blizzard which moved in Sunday while on my way home. This year it was rain turning to sleet by the time I reached Frankfort, but the roads were clear until well after I got home, so that much was better. I also took Interstates almost the entire way home this time, instead of taking I 71 to US 127 to Frankfort, which I did last year.

I am currently trying to complete a contemporary fantasy novel by the end of the month. I just crossed 85k words, and probably have another five to ten thousand to go, so it'll be tight.

From: **Sue Burke** March 29, 2014
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This month I don't have much to say about myself. I've done little these past two months besides write, translate, read, and cook dinner. It has been heaven.

First, I want to thank Taral Wayne for the lively and complete article about completionism. Like him, I only aspire to have a complete collection of my own published works, and like him, I find even that a challenge. Electronically published works are especially elusive.

And I want to thank AL du Pisani for presenting a picture of an even bleaker government than Spain's. It's sort of a consolation to know things aren't that bad here, and I hope for his sake a miracle happens in South Africa and things improve significantly.

Darrel Schweitzer is right, the Jews under Queen Isabel were allowed to take their children when they were expelled, but the Moors were not, so almost all of them stayed, converted, and became Moriscos – only to be expelled in 1609 by King Felipe III, about 300,000 of them to various countries mostly in northern African, where they were more or less welcome.

Speaking of the Sephardi Jews who were expelled, Spain's government is now offering a more streamlined means to achieve citizenship to their descendants to correct a "historical mistake." Some estimates say that up to 14 million Jews might be Sephardic descendants, although the legislation stipulating how they prove this – through culture, language, surname, or other evidence – has yet to be written. If any Sephardim are reading this, don't pack your suitcases yet. The current administration has a hard time getting around to passing legislation to implement all sorts of promises despite having an absolute majority in Parliament.

Moriscos have asked for the same treatment, but the government says Morisco culture and lineage is too hard to prove, although that is debatable. Most of them

eventually did become Muslims again, and although Spain is less hostile to Islam these days than many other European countries, they still aren't really welcome. Besides, Jews have more money than Moriscos, and some skeptics claim the real reason behind the citizenship offer is the hope of luring spenders and even investors to help Spain's sputtering economy.

Speaking, as Darrell Schweitzer and others did, of wind farms, they now generate 21% of Spain's electricity. They dot the peaks of mountain ridges across the country. Spain is historically fond of windmills. In 2005, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of *Don Quixote*, TVEspaña hosted a series of advertisement-length spots in which volunteers read the entire novel, bit by bit. King Juan Carlos I started out with "En un lugar de La Mancha..." The passage about Don Quixote attacking a windmill was read by a windmill engineer, and in the background a modern white windmill spun slowly and gracefully, churning out electric power.

But don't they kill birds? Yes, but relatively few, which is why, Robert S. Kennedy, bird lovers aren't screaming about them. An article in *USA Today* on January 30, 2013, quotes a study by the Smithsonian and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which found that house cats allowed to roam outdoors and stray cats kill between 1.4 and 3.7 billion birds each year in the US. According to an article in *Bloomberg* on December 6, 2013, another billion are killed flying into windows, cars kill 60 million, and communication towers kill 4 to 5 million per year. Wind farms kill only about .5 million.



We would do enormously more good for birds by eliminating outdoor and feral cats than closing down wind farms. Birding groups have known that for a long time. In fact, cat predation is the chief cause for the drop in songbird populations in the US, according to research by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, which I used to be a member of. Songbird breeding pairs need a rough average of 0.6 surviving offspring each year to maintain a stable population, but cats destroy so many nests and eggs and kill so many fledglings that year after year a breeding songbird pair may see no offspring at all survive to adulthood.

Taras Wolanski thought I should have had a thrilling romantic adventure on my train trip to Celsius 232. Since I am happily married, my life is a non-stop thrilling romantic

adventure with no need for handsome strangers.

Joe noted, in response to my LOC last month, that in French dubbing, Pepe Le Pew is Italian. In Spain, dubbing of *Fawlty Towers* varied among regional languages regarding Manuel, the bumbling waiter from Barcelona. In the Castilian dubbing, he became Paolo, an Italian from Naples who wanted to make lasagna, not paella. In the Catalan dubbing (Barcelona is in Catalonia), he became a Mexican with a Mexican accent. (The French also made him Mexican for some reason.) In Basque Country, however, he remained Spanish, since many Basques do not like to think of themselves as Spanish.

I'm reminded of the translation of Lysistrata which made the Boetian woman speak with a rustic Scots accent.

Joe also thought a bus trip from Madrid to London would have an interesting stretch between Calais and Dover. Yes, since it would travel through the Chunnel on the Eurotunnel Shuttle train – which reaches 99 mph during the 32-mile trip in the tunnel under the English Channel. Riding a bus aboard a fast train: that's an interesting way to travel indeed.

Spring has sprung. Spain enjoyed on an average winter overall: record-breaking rain on the west coast, record-breaking drought on the east coast with winter forest fires, record-breaking destructive storms on the Atlantic coast, and all quiet on the Mediterranean front, so in Madrid, in the center of the country, it averaged out. The economy also seems to have bottomed out and will probably stay there for a while, so to raise funds for research, the national weather agency, Agencia Estatal de Meteorología, will soon allow businesses and individuals to adopt and name a front. Prices will vary from €199 (US\$275) for low-pressure fronts to €299 (US\$410) for high-pressure fronts, which tend to last longer. There were 29 low-pressure storms between January 1 and February 28 this year, many of them dumping rain on the west coast.

As a member of SFWA, I assiduously read my voter's packet, at least for short works, and my votes were: Best Novel, "Annabel Lee" by Nancy Kress, although "The Weight of Sunrise" by Vylar Kaftan was a hairs-breadth close second; Best Novelette, "Pearl Rehabilitative Colony for Ungrateful Daughters" by Henry Lien on the strength of the narrative voice, although there were other fine stories in that category; Best Short Story, "If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love," by Rachel Swirsky, although I was torn between that and "Selkie Stores Are For Losers" by Sofia Samatar. For Outstanding Dramatic Presentation, I consulted my beloved husband, who watches more movies and TV than I do, and went with *Gravity*, which I had seen and enjoyed – but is it science fiction? Well, it is science and fiction, and that's good enough for me. I'm sorry I didn't have time to read all the novels and young adult fiction because many of

the works sounded promising. The awards will be presented on May 17.

Finally, the laughably stylized movie *300: Rise of an Empire* opened here in March, the sequel to the equally ludicrous *300*, but as history-lovers know, a genuine story lurks behind the slow-mo bloodshed. The Battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. changed the course of Western civilization. An award-winning Spanish author, Javier Negrete, has written an excellent historical novel about it; he teaches Ancient Greek, so he knows his stuff. The novel is being translated into English now, and a sample, *The Man of Salamis, Part I: The Road to Marathon* is available inexpensively (or free, if Javier can get Amazon to agree) at Amazon, amazon.com/dp/B00IUJP0JE

You mean you don't like the torrid love scene between Themistokles and Artemisia?

— JTM

From: **Lloyd Penney** March 29, 2014
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<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>

I am attempting a grand catch-up with my writing, and a large stack o' zines is in my ZINES TO LOC folder on the desktop. Time to just make a number of deadlines, and with a couple of days to spare, here's a loc on *Alexiad* WN 73.

We had quite an ice storm ourselves up here, and with spring almost here, there is still a myriad of broken branches still to be picked up by the Parks Department. I certainly agree with your observation that everyone else has more income and bigger cars, and regular vacations. I think my last vacation of any kind was the Reno Worldcon. Around here, those fans who flaunt their wealth, and brag on Facebook about regular Florida vacations and new cars all work for either the federal or provincial governments. 'Twas always the case that rich fans have great-paying jobs, and government usually provides that.

I will turn 55 years old in June, and I fully expect that when the time comes in about 10 years (possibly 12 years if our government is able to hike the retirement age to 67), I will be eligible to retire, but not able. I feel a little deprived by this idea, but when I think back on how Bob Sabella and Mike Glicksohn passed away not long after they retired, perhaps not being able to retire isn't such a bad thing. I voted in the FAAn Awards, but when it comes to the Hugos and Auroras, I will not nominate. I don't feel like I am competent to nominate for either award, and if I do not recognize anyone in any of the categories, especially the fan categories, I shall not vote. Again, I don't think I would be competent enough to make any kind of decision.

We may have to become local fans only when it comes to fanac. We still have some hopes to go to Loncon 3, but I am STILL job

hunting. What little we've saved may have to go to paying bills. We're not even considering the NASFiC in Detroit, which is just down the highway from us. Just not feasible. We have reinvented ourselves as dealers, and we will have two tables at CostumeCon in Toronto in April, and Anime North in Toronto in May. I think those expenditures will bring us sizable returns, I hope.

I have wanted to be a completist, but really never was able to afford to do so. I've had to be happy to have a lot, and hope to complete the set at some point in my life. I have a ton of Asimov books on my shelves, but never thought to have them all. Who does? Wanting the whole set of anything, may be obsessive-compulsive or some other mild psychological disorder, but whole sets are valued by many, and libraries often have whole sets of any series for lending. Just today, we watched the last Babylon 5 video, and now we can say we have seen it all. There's some satisfaction in that, and regret that there isn't more. Video, that is; the B5 fans out there say that the related books are canon, and we may have to reach out and buy those books to see if they fill in gaps in the saga.

With some writers, there's a need to get the entire story. Others have issues, as with (for example) all those Tarzan novels from the thirties with essentially the same plot; any one would have been interesting but over and over again . . .

— JTM

Loscon 40 . . . after our wonderful time at Loscon 39, we sure would have liked to have been there again, and meet up with friends. I am sure Chris Garcia had a good time there, but he and the lovely Linda Wenzelburger are planning to come up to Toronto next month for CostumeCon 32, so will have some good times shortly.

The local . . . I remember mobility scooters at the 1998 Worldcon in Baltimore, and there were so many there was a traffic jam in one of the Baltimore Convention Centre's widest hallways. Torcon 3's mobility person told me he literally rented every wheelchair and mobie available in the Greater Toronto Area, and it still wasn't enough to meet demand at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre or the Royal York Hotel.

My thanks to Richard Dengrove . . . I like to say that if I had \$5 for every resume I've sent out over the years, I wouldn't need to send out resumes. I have an interview at the beginning of April, so once again, fingers are crossed.

Hello to Sheryl . . . we have friends and family who flaunt their wealth, and want us to be happy for their successes, and we are happy, but somehow, it seems unfair of us to want a little bit of that success for ourselves. My sister-in-law has been to Tanzania twice,

and the only reason Yvonne ever got to Hawaii was because her sisters and mother organized a trip there without asking her, and then Yvonne got to go because her mother became ill. They don't ask because they know the answer will be no, but still, it's nice to be asked. One day, it might be yes, but we are not holding our breath.

Sunday will be crazy, Monday is getting ready for five days of high school test marking, Tuesday is a job interview, and Wednesday to Friday and Monday and Tuesday again are the test marking, and Wednesday will probably an appointment with the dentist. My days are planned for me, but at least I have the opportunity to make a few bucks, and perhaps get myself the full-time job I've been searching for for far too many years. Thank you for this issue, and see you with the next one.

From: **Taras Wolansky** March 31, 2014
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February 2014 *Alexiad*:

Tara Wayne ("Gotta Have Them All!"):
"There was a grander scope of history to Asimov's fiction than in Heinlein's." Looking at the sequence of events, it appears that Asimov's "Foundation" future history was inspired by Heinlein's, which John W. Campbell had identified a year earlier.

As a writer of fiction, Asimov couldn't hold a candle to Heinlein. I read Asimov's books but, unlike Heinlein's, I was rarely moved to reread them and don't remember them well, in many cases not at all. It may have been Heinlein's wide-ranging life experience, something Asimov lacked, that gave his stories a richness and plausibility that Asimov could rarely, if ever, match. (Though you could make the case that Asimov's later bad stuff was not as bad as Heinlein's later bad stuff.) Heinlein's stories have the messiness of real life about them: the "lived-in future", as some have described it.

BTW, Asimov said he stopped writing fiction in favor of nonfiction merely because it paid better. And, I suspect, with his trick memory he found it easier to do: to read up on a subject and then regurgitate it. However, when I read his *Opus 100* and *Opus 200* collections, I found I preferred the fiction selections. His nonfiction, he said somewhere, was aimed at a moderately intelligent 16-year-old, and I found those selections rather dull.

You've probably heard of the latest Asimov continuation: *Robots of Arrakis*.

AL du Pisani: Over time, I guess, South Africa will come to resemble the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa more and more. Just as the United States will gradually adopt the predatory politics of Latin America.

Bill Patterson: Ben Franklin's *Autobiography* is actually deceptive, in that it conceals many of his achievements to make him seem more relatable, a "regular guy". In reality, he was the *Homo Superior* of SF's imagining.

It also doesn't mention his working for the British Secret Service. "Franklin . . . [puff from clay-stemmed pipe] Ben Franklin."

Alexis Gilliland: Zoologist, former *Economist* editor, and science writer Matt Ridley (that's Viscount Ridley to you peasants) recently pointed out that the scientific part of the UN climate report has, from version to version, been dialing back the doomsday scenarios – but the *political* summary, all that is normally reported in the media, is another matter.

The Right Honourable Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bt. Viscount Ridley, BA (Oxon), DPhil (Oxon) would be Matthew White Ridley VII in the U.S.; the Ridley family has a traditionally British eccentric custom of naming heirs.

He writes, "In climate science, the real debate has never been between 'deniers' and the rest, but between 'lukewarmers,' who think man-made climate change is real but fairly harmless, and those who think the future is alarming." He gives Richard Lindzen of MIT and Judith Curry of the Georgia Institute of Technology as two examples of "lukewarmers".

John Hockenberry did a TV documentary "expose" of climate skeptics and tried to make them look dangerous, but the images and story made it obvious that these are tiny little foundations holding shabby little conferences: there's a thousand, ten thousand times the money on the other side.

One of the things he discovered was that only one oil company – Exxon-Mobil – had given any money at all to these tiny foundations but, under political pressure, it stopped years ago.

Because liberals are, for the most part, economically illiterate, they find it hard to understand why oil companies *don't* subsidize climate skeptics. It's called positive externality, or the free rider problem: whatever benefits there are to such spending, it's shared with every firm in the energy industry. Instead, it makes more sense for an oil company to spend money that will benefit that particular oil company, itself. An example of this is how BP touted *its own* alleged "green" credentials and sucked up to the Obama Administration.

BTW, this is also why it makes sense for a corporation to lobby for government subsidies and anti-competitive regulations – for itself – rather than make the argument for a free market – for the benefit of all.

By contrast, a climatologist who exaggerates the dangers of global warming benefits *personally*: research grants and promotions and publications.

Darrell Schweitzer: "It was one of the hottest years on record . . ." Because temperatures have actually been stuck on a plateau since the late 90's, this is a little bit of

a scam: they're calculating the Earth's temperature to hundredths of a degree. The error bar is actually so big that you can't really tell if temperatures are very slowly rising or very slowly falling.

Not that this invalidates global warming by any means: two steps forward, one step back is still an overall upward trend. Though it does suggest the climate models are not very good.

The "millions of Muslims [who] just get on with their lives" are not the problem. The hundred million or so who support terrorism are.

The only case where I see a significant proportion of children actually separated from their parents in post-Reconquista Spain is the expulsion of the Moriscos (Christians of Moorish ancestry) in the early 17th century. This grotesque fit of scapegoating appears to have grown from Spain's reverses in its war with England (e.g., the Armada), much like Germans blamed Jews for their loss of the Great War. Religious authorities felt it was "unfair" to damn the souls of children under six for their parents' "apostasy", i.e., by letting them emigrate to Muslim countries.

Tarzan and the Valley of Gold was not only the first authorized Tarzan sequel, it was also a movie tie-in. (Mike Henry played Tarzan.) As I recall, Fritz Leiber (a very peculiar choice) wrote the book in a dense, literary style entirely inconsistent with ERB's work, though I remember liking the book on its own terms.

That's one of the problems of having an author's work continued. If the new writer is any good, he is more likely to have developed his own style, habits, perspectives, and beliefs, which often clash with those of the original author. If he isn't any good, it's just a lousy story.

— JTM

From: **Dale Speirs** April 1, 2014
opuntia57@hotmail.com

Today Canada Post killed *Opuntia* as a print zine. Domestic postage is now 85 cents, USA went to \$1.20, and international mail is \$2.50. My zine will continue as a pdf on the www.efanzines.com site. I'll see *Alexiad* there, so you don't have to send print copies anymore.

You asked: "Does it ever seem like everyone else around you has a much bigger income and membership in some secret discount club? When I see co-workers drive to work in SUVs and talk about their three-week vacations in India or Peru, it's discomfiting."

Don't be discomfited. They're deep in debt and/or living from paycheck to paycheck. I'm sure that in the privacy of their homes they're worried sick. Not too many people want to live within their means

anymore if it means driving a Honda Civic instead of a fully-loaded SUV, or doing without those three weeks in India they think they deserve.

And these are people with families, big new houses, and the like. While I have struggled to get along ever since I left U of L.

— JTM



From **Timothy Lane** April 1, 2014
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I found Darrell Schweitzer's comments on global warming aka climate change rather amusing, though it's impossible to take him seriously until he stops misstating my own position on the matter. (It's easier to "refute" someone when you beat the heck out of a straw man instead of actually confronting his arguments.)

Darrell (who apparently has decided to be unaware that there has been a pause in global warming since 1998, or maybe even a year or two earlier) maintains that the climate models have been superbly borne out by experience. I'm curious where he got such an absurd notion. If it were even remotely true, the alarmists wouldn't have had to change their phrase from "global warming" to the vague "climate change".

Perhaps someday Darrell will grasp the full concept of the scientific method (though since such alleged scientists as Michael Mann ignore it, I can't blame him for doing so). You come up with a theory to explain some natural observation (such as the greenhouse-gas global warming theory to explain the modest warming since the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850). You then make predictions from this theory (and the models are simply a form of theory), which can be compared to the results of experiments or future observations. If the results match, this is an indication that the theory is right, but it's never absolutely proven true. (A theory never becomes a fact. All it takes is one falsified prediction to require modification or even rejection of the theory.)

An important aspect is that of falsifiability. If you cannot theoretically prove a theory wrong, then it is no more scientific than "scientific" creationism (for the same reason).

So: what climatological observation would disprove the theory? No matter whether the weather is too cold, too hot, too wet, too dry, or simply too normal, the alarmists will claim it proves the theory.

Some claim that storms such as Hurricane Sandy or other extreme conditions "prove" the theory, though this leaves out the fact that serious storms, droughts, and other serious conditions have existed throughout history. In reality, people who check recent weather extremes against recorded history find that hurricanes, tornadoes, and droughts are NOT particularly high at present.

The key to all this is something I learned while researching the issue for an article on global warming in Salem Press's *Encyclopedia of Environmental Issues* a few years back: carbon dioxide and water both block certain frequencies of infrared radiation (which is the cause of the greenhouse effect) — the same wavelengths. Others aren't blocked, at least by them. As a result, there is a Law of Diminishing Returns effect in the greenhouse effect. This is probably why the increased carbon dioxide has had little actual effect on overall global temperature.

I notice that George W. Price and Taras Wolansky both discuss the corrupt version of crony capitalism prevalent in China, and George makes a particular mention of their wretched environmental record (which was also a massive problem in Soviet Russia for similar reasons). As I recall, some of the climate alarmists have rated China as handling the issue better than the United States. In reality, their record is as poor as George says, but they also maintain more social control of the country, which is the real goal of Greenpeace and other "watermelons" (green on the outside, red on the inside).

I remember reading Jared Diamond's *Collapse* (2005; reviewed in *Alexiad* V.4 #3) and being struck by his admiration for how authoritarian societies could protect the environment.

— JTM

From: **Sheryl L. Birkhead** April 10, 2014
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I am far too tired to re-tell the tale of taking this laptop in for repair. Suffice it to say that there is a battery in place (sort of)—so I can use the charger and there it was free other than the consternation and aggravation of the drive and horrendous traffic issues (drove over 70 miles, took an two hours and a half—should have been about 50 miles and a little over an hour). I never want to hear the phrase You can't miss it again. So, for the time being I will enjoy the luxury of the laptop being a...well...laptop!

The comment about vacations sounds familiar. Each year my brother (who spends about 9 out of every 12 months on cruises all over the world) asks me where I will be going

on vacation this year. I tell him the same place as the past 20 years... *chez*.

Yeah, might be nice to go somewhere but only if I could afford to relax and not worry about every penny...so not going to happen.

Taral's mention of completist had me thinking. The main time I have tried to have a complete "set" is of James White's Sector General writings. I know I got a signed copy of a Worldcon publication, but somehow it is not with the other books and I had to put it back on my list of RSN purchases...but it won't be signed. At one point I was trying to get all the Retief stories, but I lost track of how far I had progressed, so I guess I am not really all that involved.

The problem there was all those anthologies that had several stories, but only one new one. Some people got very frustrated. Since they all had the same basic plot, you would read them for the bizarre society Retief, occasionally Magnan, and Ambassador Incompetent had to deal with.

Robert Kennedy's conreport piques my interest about the artwork— I was hoping there would be an accompanying illo so I could get a look at what had interested him enough to keep pursuing it!

Sue I really like the idea of cons happening in small towns, but they simply don't have the same draw as the larger venues. In the US there is also not the support structure—so congoers want to get onestop "shopping". Of course this also means the price-tag is substantial when compared to small towns. Sigh.

Seeing Brad Foster's comments (ghood luck to both Brad and Cindy for TAFF) reminds me I still have not found that extra hour a day to draw. I managed it, sigh, one day and realized how much I enjoyed unbroken time to just sketch or try to finish up something (anything). I keep hoping to get back to it, but so far that hour continues to be elusive.

Jerry — I am not sure at all if this is a good reference, but if you have access to Dale Speirs' *Opuntia*, he has, lately talked a lot about books and such in relation to wealth. I don't know if the knowledge therein would be of interest or not, but it was a very informative read.

Drat — just looked at the clock, need to put a rapid stop to this tonight and pick up tomorrow. Yup, this is the same way my drawing time just...um...evaporates!

I do a lot of book listening while on the road. This past Sunday I was at the very end of a Robin Cook book (*Marker*), so I sat in the car and listened to the end. Um...Monday afternoon (ostensibly my day off) I went out to make a Post Office run and...oops. Apparently I left the keys in and active and...well the battery did what it does so then it wouldn't.

However, since I learned (with a Harry Potter book, no less) my lesson early on, I have a household battery charger. I simply took it out and hooked it up- then waited. Yeah, I missed the Post Office, but bright and early Tuesday the car cranked right up and off I went.

The time that happened to us was at the Henry Ford. (Worse yet, my cell phone battery had also run down.) Three people offered us a jump start while we were waiting for the AAA truck to come. That was nice.

Rodney, Mike Meara's wife has contributed cover material (a pun, sorry, since it is a quilt) for his zine. There are fanzine pubbing couples that have both names on their zine, yet one or the other personality is the only one that seems to be present. Oh yes- by the way, most of what I "do" I figure fans aren't curious about.

For example- two full days have been spent researching metoclopramide — does it exist in the generic injectable form (answer — yes, but totally unavailable) — do the serious side effects in humans extend to felines? So far no answer on that one, but no one is willing to commit to "no". Is the other clinician on the case willing to accept my recommendation to go off label on the dog maropitant and give it to a cat long term? That involved calling the manufacturer for comparison between the two drugs — is there data (no). All off label, so they will not talk with me on the record. Then a call to the veterinary pharmacologist from VMRCVM (at Va Tech)-- the switchboard man aged to call her on her forwarded phone while she was chairing a meeting in California—so my name was mud for a while. Can AI (OH)3 be made up in a suspension greater than 300 mg/ml? No one has a scientific answer—just that no veterinary formulary/pharmacy makes it. I spent several hours locating USP grade powder @1200mg/5ml and placed an order so I can give directions to have it made up by the foster at twice daily feedings. I went on to nebulous causes for a 25-30 year old Belgian draft horse—an abuse survivor- to be found suddenly down. Non-specific signs, but known to have GI ulcers and been on omeprazole since July. Owner and an emergency vet called in on a Sunday managed to get the horse up- but fear the barn structurally cannot be used to sling him. Luckily he has responded (but no idea why) to a shopping list of medications and seems to now be picking on the resident pony. Do the bigstore pharmacies carry both/either verapamil and enalapril in low dose size (no, but given time some will do a special order). Those are some of the things I have been working on over the past few days—only touch ing the surface.

Robert Kennedy — I was curious when the *Mentalist* began and researched the CBI — yup, it really does exist (unless I am mis-reading . . .), Here is one of the links to it:

<http://www.ossh.com/firearms/caag.state.ca.us/cbi/index.htm>

Everything I read about it makes it very apparent that it does not have the magnitude of presence or public awareness as Patrick Jane's group. Somewhere along the line I missed the episode that did in Red John and I have not been able to reconcile the story line since then. As a result, I gave up and just enjoy the story. I have about two months of taped shows to watch-RSN. To make matters worse, I tend to knock over one of the 4 stacks (and of course they all get out of order)-- then, if I see an hour available for taping...I do and that makes it all the worse. Ah well, it is only TV.

I bought myself a cd/vinyl player—so I would have the best of all possible worlds. Unfortunately, the cd player portion died very early on. For the past two years I have had a good cd player and a turntable (separately or in combination) on my want list.

I have now seen both *Ender's Game* and *Gravity* off my Netflix list. I enjoyed both, for different reasons. I am reminded that SF requires a suspension of disbelief. If the tale, whatever it is, exceeds ones ability for such disbelief (and the extent differs for each of us and from tale to tale!), then it is found to be "unbelievable". To me, that term really applies to all-just at varying levels — and that is when the suspension steps in...to me at least!

Granted, I saw *Gravity* after the Oscars. I had already heard a lot of comments about the movie- with the one that puzzled me being her hair!!!! All the comments made it sound as if the comments were in bold print! I have to admit that I agreed- but not quite in the bold range. Sheesh- too long to actually just sit still and too short to gather up and tuck away. Irritating and just...there. Story-wise I can't honestly think such a newbie would have lasted even a real time hour—so I didn't think realistically. Instead, I just savored the gorgeous (to me at least) special effects. The Oscar for special effects I get.

At one of Les Johnson's panels at ConGlomeration, one of the attendees mentioned the hunter-gatherer society in Avatar, looked around, and announced that in said society, everyone in the room would be dead.

— JTM

So- until the Kentucky Derby issue....

WAHF:

Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.

Patrick McCray, with thanks.

Bob Roehm, about his con plans.

Dainis Biseneks, with a letter on gray paper in faint type.

Our condolences to **Johnny Carruthers** over the death of his mother.

RESOLUTION

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
GLINDA OF OZ (1920)
 by L. Frank Baum
 [and James Branch Cabell]

Most of us are aware of the movie, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Many, after seeing it, track down and read the children's classic novel it is based on, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), by L. Frank Baum. Only a few are aware that in the early part of the twentieth century, there was a "Oz" business as it were.

Almost annually, or so children hoped, Christmas would bring a new Oz book from Baum's prolific pen. This became harder for him in his final years; he was bedridden for some time before his death in 1919. But the Oz series was as anticipated and popular as, a generation later, Fans would wait for a new Lensman story from Doc Smith, or another generation later, a new epic of Retief or the Berserkers, or a generation after that, the next "Star Wars" movie . . .

But this nascent Oz fandom abruptly died. The last book, *Glinda of Oz*, was so different that the series became unsellable. Even now, when original-printing Tom Swift books, mass-produced hack-authored volumes from the machine of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, go for three figures, and brightly colored, tattered volumes of, say, the Adventures of Uncle Wiggly (written by Howard R. Garis, the man usually behind "Victor Appleton" of the Tom Swift books) are found on the Net for as much, old Oz books go for a few dollars.

As most readers will admit, *Glinda of Oz* had a decidedly different style. The book begins with the usual discovery of a new and bothersome land in the diverse and wild country of Oz, and with Queen Ozma, the ruler, dispatching Someone to find out.

The Someone, as it happens, are Dorothy and the Wizard, the original antagonists of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and the reconciled friends of *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* (1908). The events of their Investigation are darker.

The bulk of the story, as Dorothy and the Wizard journey to the Land of the Flatheads, is the Wizard's tale of his adventures before he came to Oz, as a travelling juggler and conjurer. (Some scholars have pointed to a strange coincidence, claiming to find a resemblance between the Wizard's career as given here, and the life of comedian and juggler W. C. Fields; Fields, of course, was originally cast to play the Wizard in the movie, but left due to delays in the shooting.)

The Wizard's adventures at first seem reminiscent of the two con men in *Huckleberry Finn*; he pretends to be noble on an escalating scale, using his status to trick and fool people. The phrase "such a monstrous clever fellow as I" becomes almost his slogan. Each stunt ends with a fall, so to speak, and his escape to learn better.

The members of my family who have investigated its ancestry have inevitably encountered a book with the hope-inducing title *The Majors and Their Marriages* (1915). The author, Virginia journalist James Branch Cabell, composed this investigation into his wife's ancestry in order to please her. Now Mrs. Cabell's ancestors are not mine, for all that mine are mentioned in the book.

Thus I was aware of Cabell. He had also written a few novels, including one with the remarkably Mary Shellyish title of *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* (1915).

What I hadn't known, and I would like to thank my fellow investigators who are descended from the Major family of Cabell's book for the information, was that Cabell was hired to complete *Glinda of Oz*!

According to his letters, he had had a downturn in his fortunes at the time. He had apparently conceived the idea of a series of novels that would cover an imagined past history — imagine what Heinlein would have done had he decided to follow the example of Leslie Barringer in his Neustrian Cycle [*Gerfalcon* (1927), *Joris of the Rock* (1928), and *Shy Leopardess* (1948)], set in an imaginary part of France, and written an imaginative history with fantastic elements. This was Cabell's intent.

Then he took the job of finishing Baum's novel. Somehow, that killed any desire in him to write further fiction.

The story of the composition of *Glinda of Oz* shows the perversity of editors. Once Cabell turned in the manuscript, they had to run it, the book was promised and desired. That broke the chain, as it were, and there would be no more such works.

One wonders how such a dark and yet diverse world would "sell". Surely there would be some people who would read such works.

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

This is issue **Whole Number Seventy-Four (74)**.

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

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

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ALEXIAD

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POURED MYSELF A DOSE OF
 NYQUIL IN HOPES OF AVOIDING
 POST-NASAL-DRIP-INDUCED
 COUGHING IN THE NIGHT



CHOKED ON IT



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