

ALEXIAD

(AΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

On May 10 there was a comic book convention in Mid City Mall. I had never really thought much about comic book fandom but as I walked along the booths it became clear that these were indeed fans. Their dealers had much the same kind of merchandise found at conventions. I had not realized the depths of comic fandom until now. Perhaps sometime I will visit a nearby comic shop.

June 6 was the anniversary of D Day. I spent several hours that day listening to rebroadcasts on the internet.

June? Came the news of the death of Chester Nez, last of the Navajo code talkers.

— Lisa

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Comments are by JTM, LTM, or Grant.

The 140th Running of the Kentucky Derby was **May 3, 2014**.

California Chrome won handily.

The 139th Running of the Preakness Stakes is **May 17, 2014**.

California Chrome won handily again. Hopes were up.

The 145th Running of the Belmont Stakes is **June 7, 2014**.

California Chrome faded and came in fourth.

The 89th Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 2, 2014** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The 60th Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 25, 2014** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 122nd Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 5, 2014** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

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Reviewer's Notes

In 1981, when the world was young and full of promise, I was in Bowling Green. There were two little bookstores there, a B. Dalton's and a Waldenbooks. I had no trouble going on a bookshopping tour and finding three books I could read and enjoy. And again the week after.

Then I moved to Louisville. Tim Lane, Grant McCormick, and I would go out to, well B. Dalton's and Waldenbooks. The problem was that they would, all too often, only buy two copies of a book we all wanted. This meant going around.

Today, the little stores are gone. In their place are the big box stores, Books-a-Million and Barnes & Noble, with as many SF&F books alone as were in the little bookstores. Beyond that is the web, with Amazon.com for new books and ABEBooks for old books. A vast richness of treasures, right?

If one likes vampire romances and zombie fights. Subtract further the steampunk works, the Arthurian works, the series novels, the series by Big Name Author "continued by" another, the Media tie-ins . . .

On television, they say "500 channels and nothing on". I once saw a chart which purported to explain why television was so mediocre. It had the reports of ten reviewers evaluating four shows. Four of them rated the first show as the best, three the second, and three the third. And so on down for second best and third best. They all rated the fourth show as the worst.

And so it got chosen for production. It had 100% of the audience.

Comparing the Hugos and the Retro-Hugos, there is a certain lack of venturesomeness in the former nominees. Part of it may be that the tropes have been done already; but surely it is possible to develop a new twist on an old idea. But it may not have 100% of the audience, while *Francisca Reade and Her Steam Brass Corset Meet Count Vlad Lovingood to Fight the Zombies* by "Noname" and Mary Sue Goggles will.

So I look at my iPad, which has a big backlit screen. There could be worse things.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



“The Dambusters a la Star Wars” is back up:

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

That fun-loving guy Henry V. Keiper has done a few more, including one mashup of *Zulu* and *300*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F2miVbTIVY>

And what he does with *2001: A Space Odyssey*! I’m afraid, Dave . . .

Among my Kindle buys was *Days of High Adventure* by Elliott Kay (Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99). It’s the old RPG players find themselves shoved into a RPG world plot. They manage to survive, and come out a little more interesting. However, Kay should be commended for his greater perspective:

WARNING: *Days of High Adventure* contains graphic violence, graphic pre-marital sex, graphic violation of college housing regulations, rampant geekery, multiple dismemberments, impalings, bad language, nudity, drug references, consumption of alcohol, destruction of private property, paganism, theft, arson, slavery, reptile-on-human violence, improper placement of hazardous materials, money laundering, illegal immigration, tax evasion, poor workplace standards, unwed cohabitating couples, kidnapping, assault under color of authority, bearers of false witness, human sacrifice, desecration of religious sites, unsafe work standards, uncredited film quotes, and references to games falsely accused of Satanic influences. There may be dungeons and/or dragons herein.

— *Days of High Adventure*

Anybody with that sort of spirit *deserves* encouragement.

A couple more Kindle AH books: *Pearl Harbor: The Unfought Battle* by Richard Peters (Amazon Digital Services; 2014; \$2.99). This is what Kimmel might have done if he had taken the “war warning” telegram a little more to heart. The Pearl Harbor strike goes better for the ships, but less so for the facilities; but I think Peters is too optimistic on what they could do to the fuel tanks.

Second Front: The Allied Invasion of France, 1942-1943 by Alexander M. Grace (Amazon Digital Services; 2014; \$9.99) has some more daring on the Allies’ part. A *lot* more daring in fact, as it has the TORCH landings taking place in — Southern France. Which seems a little too optimistic and risky.

I have out Ruth Downie’s latest C. Petreius Ruso book, *Semper Fidelis* (2013). No, Ruso doesn’t become an *hominis cadaver* for the *classis*.

For some silly fun, try Yale Stewart’s webcomic *JL8*. It has DC superheroes as first-graders, in their superhero outfits. So we have Hal Jordan taking Barry Allen and J’onn J’onzz to the Green Lantern Corps scout camp. Or Alfred Pennyworth calling the boy to dinner — with the Batsignal! The supervillains are the next grade up, and it looks just plain weird to see Alexander Luthor with hair.

Oh, by the way, Guy, it’s set at Schwartz Elementary.

<http://jl8comic.tumblr.com/>

<http://limbero.org/jl8>

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **William H. “Bill” Patterson, Jr.** on **April 22, 2014**. Born in 1951, Bill had been in fandom, in the greater sense, for several years, but became prominent with the publication of the biography *Robert A. Heinlein, In Dialogue with His Century*. Volume I was published in 2010 and was nominated for the Hugo for Best Related Work.

Volume Two of the book, after a long and painful generative process, was published **June 3**. There are bad times and less bad times to die, and Bill had one of the most tragic and unfortunate ones.

I have the book, but it needs a *very* thorough review. Next issue.

Noted science fiction writer Jay Lake passed on June 1. As well as being a talented writer he mentored many young writers.

— Lisa

MONARCHIST NEWS

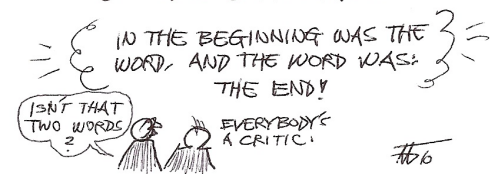
Juan Carlos I is retiring to Yuste. ¡Viva Felipe VI, King of Spain, of Castile, of León, of Aragón, of the Two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarre, of Granada, of Mallorca, of Toledo, of

Seville, of Valencia, of Galacia, of Sardinia, of Cordoba, of Menorca, of Murcia, of Jaen, of the Algarves, of Algericas, of Gibraltar, of the Canary Islands, of the Spanish East and West Indies and Mainland of the Ocean Sea, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, of Brabant, of Milan, of Athens, of Neopatria, of Limburg, Count of Habsburg, of Flanders, of Tyrol, of Roussillon, of Cerdanya, of Barcelona, of Girona, of Osona, of Besalú, of Cavadonga, Lord of Biscay, of Molina, etc. [King of Hungary, of Dalmatia, of Croatia, Duke of Limburg, of Lorraine, of Luxembourg, of Gelderland, of Styria, of Carniola, of Carinthia, of Württemberg, Landgrave of Alsace, Prince of Swabia, Palatine Count of Burgundy, Count of Arlois, of Heinaut, of Namur, of Gorizia, of Haut-Rhin, of Kyburg, Marquis of Oristano, of Goceano, Margrave of the Holy Roman Empire, of Burgau, Lord of Salina, of Mechelen, of Slovenian March, of Pordenone, of Tripoli; and Roman Emperor — Andreas Palaiologos sold the title to Ferdinand II of Aragon]!

¿What do you mean, “they don’t use all those titles any more.”?

HAVING A DREAM

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop. (1968)
By Robert Coover

THE AUTHOR DEATH
OF THE UNIVERSE

“Have you ever had a dream, Neo, that you were so sure was real? What if you were unable to wake from that dream? How would you know the difference between the dream world and the real world?”

— *The Matrix*

Robert Coover is considered a “magic realist” — in other words, he writes fantasy, but it’s so good it can’t be associated with that genre stuff, so it’s called something else to make it acceptable to literature departments. This realism has its own issues.

(Some of his other works have dated badly. Thus, *The Public Burning* (1977) is a vicious denunciation of American anti-communism, seen through distorted lenses. As when Uncle Sam sodomizes Nixon to herald his future ascent to the Presidency. Never mind that Nixon had nothing to do with the Rosenberg case, the “public burning” of the book, much less the subsequent revelations of VENONA

and confession — bragging! — by their controller, Aleksandr Semoyonovich Feliksov (*The Man Behind the Rosenbergs* (2001).)

The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop. is Coover's second novel. It has the exotic status of being interpreted as everything from a philosophically deep work of the nature of the universe down to a tragic story of a psychotic breakdown.

J. Henry Waugh is an accountant. He has a nothing life; no family, only one friend, and that more of an acquaintance, he works his work day and goes back to his apartment.

Which is where his life begins. He is in his own way a baseball fan. He is a devoted fan. Not a fan of any existing team; rather, he has created an entire baseball league, and his afternoons and evenings and weekends are devoted to a meticulous playing of the games of the league.

Beyond that, he keeps mind-numbingly deep statistics. In a sense, he doesn't even like baseball that much, but he likes the statistics (not surprising, considering). This is a league of the pre-expansion era; eight teams, no playoffs except for a tie, one hundred fifty-four games. He started out playing the games on a pinball machine; now, he has developed an intricate table-top gaming system for playing out the games. While there were earlier baseball board games, The Avalon Hill company, the first of the adult wargame companies, introduced its game *Baseball Strategy*, a game with a comparable depth of game mechanics, in 1960. Much of Waugh's discussion of game mechanics would be very familiar to game designers.

Beyond even that, Waugh creates a world for the UBA. Every player in every team is given not only a name but a biography. They have lives between seasons; they marry, have children, undergo the complications of life. Retired players get involved in management, age, and die. He even goes so far as to write stories about various incidents in the players' lives; for example, a ballad about a player who had the wrong idea about the proper location at which to conduct a romantic encounter. If he were thirty years later and a little more up on real teams, he would be a very interesting Fantasy Baseball player.

And he's done this for years and years; as the book begins, he is working on closing the fifty-sixth season. (To introduce a realistic problem; where does he find the time for all this? A full pre-expansion season would mean 616 individual games, assuming each team played 154 games. Never mind all the background material involved.)

This hobby is interfering with his work. Not only is Waugh distracted by his concentration on his hobby, but he has begun neglecting work for it. On top of that, he talks about the association as if it were real.

This building lives for the players leads to the initial problem of the book; a character Waugh has grown fond of, who is promising,

is killed due to a random event. (Some authors get too close to their characters to kill them.) Gaming details lead to emotional problems. Perhaps as a consequence of this event, his thoughts shift more into the world of the fictional league; the book becomes less and less about this bland boring accountant and more and more about the events of the UBA season.

Which sometimes leads to unusual scenes. He imagines some of the retirees talking about recent events. In the middle of the imagined conversation, he remembers that one of the people supposedly taking part in this talk is in fact dead. Oops. This is reminiscent of *Typewriter in the Sky* (*Unknown*; November-December 1940); when Horace Hackett the author changes a line in his swashbuckling buccaneer tale, Mike DeWolf, his friend who has strangely become don Miguel de Lobo, the villain of the story, notices the world change, abruptly and implausibly. (To further continue the trope, the author of *Typewriter in the Sky* wrote himself into the story by having the names of two minor characters be two of his pseudonyms.) If J. Henry Waugh owns a dirty bathrobe, it isn't mentioned.

In the "up there in a dirty bathrobe" situation, it has been noted that Waugh's name incorporates the Tetragrammaton JHWH, thusly: **J. Henry Waugh**. And he is the God of the Universal Baseball Association world, even if in the sloppy Horace Hackett style. Or, somewhat more casually, the careless and disorderly Koshchei the Deathless of James Branch Cabell's "Biography of the Life of Manuel" books, who we see in *Jurgen* (1920) sitting in a cave, before a blackboard with figures which have not been added up, but who had made all things as they are. J. Henry Waugh might feel a certain sympathy.

But then, Jurgen found Koshchei rather run-down and drab. (Not that he himself was much better, after being presented with the four exotic women he had met in the course of the book, he chose to go back to mundania with his first wife, Dame Adelaïs the daughter of Ninzian the pawnbroker.) So is J. Henry Waugh.

His not having a life, save in the game he imagines, might be found troublesome. For an example of someone getting too caught up in a game of imagination, see Robert Lindner's *The Fifty-Minute Hour* (1954) [and no, the question of who "Kirk Allen" really was is irrelevant here], about a fan fiction writer who took his composition a little too far. Outside the world of the Universal Baseball Association, Waugh is a pathetic man without a life, and one can imagine Lindner comparing him to "Kirk Allen".

In between, this could be considered a misdirected application of creative imagination. The mental effort put into composing the world of the Universal Baseball Association would seem to be ideal for a novel. (Which may be Coover's own "up there in a dirty bathrobe" moment.)

The varied and intricate world of the Universal Baseball Association, then, can be

considered a reaction to its creator's empty life. Set to work with figures all his life, he creates a world of his own where figures mean something, where he is the master of figures and the primary interpreter of them. The creator becomes subsumed into his creation.

Beyond that, Coover provides a description of an idealized and yet deeply resolved world of baseball. For a man who isn't much of a baseball fan, J. Henry Waugh is overwhelmingly capable of describing the sport. Coover's descriptions are there, the reader is on the field, having the entire strategy and effort described to him in full and consuming detail. In the world of the Universal Baseball Association, Inc., the comparison is with the idealized Middle Western twenties life of Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* (1957).

"And it's one, two, three strikes
you're out, at the old ball game . . ."

SEQUELS

Comments by Joseph T Major

I got a couple of sequels to books I read and reviewed earlier.



MOTHER EARTH, BLOODY GROUND

by R. E. Thomas (2014: Black Gold Media; \$4.99), sequel to *Stonewall Goes West*. (Reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #3). General Jackson continues to single-handedly contend with the impossible problems of the Army of Tennessee as he pulls off victories in that state. His subordinates scheme and plot while the battles continue to wear down both sides. I'm being reminded of the comment in Charles Fair's *From the Jaws of Victory* (1971) about how wars waged between able generals can be as indecisive as ones fought by incompetents.

THE GREATEST HEIGHTS OF HONOUR

(Aneka Jansen Book #5) by Niall Teasdale (2014; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99). Previous books reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 13 #2. And sexier, too. Aneka and her associates find themselves pitched into a war

which may be the continuation of the war that got Aneka re-bodied so long ago. Lots of action, some even out of bed, a smoothly flowing story, and some interesting revelations.

THE WEB BETWEEN FOUNTAINS

Review by Joseph T Major of

PILLAR TO THE SKY

by William R. Forstchen

(2014; Tor; ISBN 978-0-7653-3438-1; \$25.99; Macmillan (Kindle); \$10.99)

Arcot, Morey, Seaton, and Crane only had to deal with organized crime. Governments tended to let them do what they wanted in building their megaprojects. Indeed, in their intellectual spheres, greedy locals wanting to dip their beaks tended to be lackeys of World Steel or whomever. (Religious matters didn't come up.) Health issues weren't a problem, since all and sundry, even the bad guys, were 110% fit. Materials were whipped up in a weekend and in production by Wednesday.

It's about time for a Space Elevator novel written by someone who is familiar with both engineering and scientific obstacles, and here we go. Just as the people he has are going.

A team of materials scientists, rocket old boys, and financiers (at least not tennis partners) try an end run around the limits of rocketry, trying to put together the financing and materials for a space elevator. The engineering issues are quite enough to bother with, and political issues don't help.

In spite of everything, the tower rises . . . maybe. The chief innovators will not live to see the end, and it can be very moving to die in a worthwhile cause. But there are problems, and the problems are nothing so trivial as the guy in the next lab over having less than ethical friends . . .

WHATEVER DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRANGER

Review by Joseph T Major of

RESCUE MODE

by Ben Bova and Les Johnson

(2014; Baen;

ISBN 978-1-4767-3647-1; \$25.00; Baen (Kindle); \$9.99)

This is a work in "The Man Who Sold the Moon" mode, an attempt to show how it could happen. But in this case, the Mars Mission has problems more plausible than the captain getting another crewmember pregnant and her husband objecting.

The *Fermi* mission does have real problems, from protestors doing their protesting through nationalistic considerations. And once it gets going there are still more issues, including health ones. You will recall how the Biosphere Two stay had a bit of unreality when they had to open up to take one member out to have her mutilated finger treated; this isn't just fingers.

Then, once the mission is almost there, another problem hits them. This isn't just a figure of speech, when a meteoroid's orbit crosses the ship's trajectory, Things Happen.

So the mission becomes one with a different intermediation. Not quite as bad as "Transit of Earth", not quite as improvised as *The Martian*. And there are no indigenous Martians to take the survivors in either.

Bova has been telling stories of an inhabited solar system, ones more real than the old pulp stories with their alien sapient, more interesting in that their problems are real. Now, Johnson has added his deep knowledge of the means and ways to create an ordinary story of the future.

TRICK E. DIXON

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE MARATHON CONSPIRACY

by Gary Corby

(2014; SoHo Crime;

ISBN 978-1-61695-387-4; \$26.95)

Sequel to *The Pericles Commission* (2010;

reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #2),

The Ionia Sanction (2011, reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #1), and *Sacred Games* (2013)

<http://blog.GaryCorby.com>

Philip Roth's *Our Gang* (1971) is as much a dated political bleat as is "The Return of William Proxmire". In the final scene, President Trick E. Dixon enters the hospital to have some sweat glands removed from his lip. Or hip. He is found by his bed, dead, stuffed into a giant water-filled baggie.

The streets of Washington are filled with people confessing to the murder. Given that killing the president was a federal crime and false confessions can be prosecuted, as I said, a political bleat.

When a body is found in a cave near Brauron, bearing a bag of scrolls that come from the personal archives of Hippas, late Tyrant of Athens, the streets of the city are flooded with people confessing to having killed him. (Presumably not the late Simonides of Keos, Mary Renault's *Praise Singer* (1978), who had a far more positive view of his patron.)

However, the scroll case had spaces for five scrolls. The first finder said there were five scrolls. By the time the scroll case got to Athens, there were only four scrolls.

Perikles knows of one man who can resolve this dilemma, even if he has the most annoying younger brother ever. And Nicolaos son of Sophoniscos finds himself launched into investigating an epic and significant part of Athenian history. Hippas had been at Marathon, too. With the Persians. And his scroll case just might have some embarrassing information about noted Athenians.

Add to that the problems of Nicolaos's utterly unsuitable betrothed, Diotima the priestess, daughter of an hetaira and so not a citizen, her relationship with the priestesses of the shrine of Artemis at Brauron, near where the body was found, and several other issues, and you have enough of a burden to make you want

to drink hemlock. Did I mention the girls who vanished, one of whom was found partially eaten by a bear?

The case is one grounded in Athenian history, dealing with political problems of the sort that occur today, and involved with some curious side-effects, including that obnoxious younger brother. (Some may find Diotima to be just a little too anachronistic in her personal freedom, but then her mother was a loose woman.)

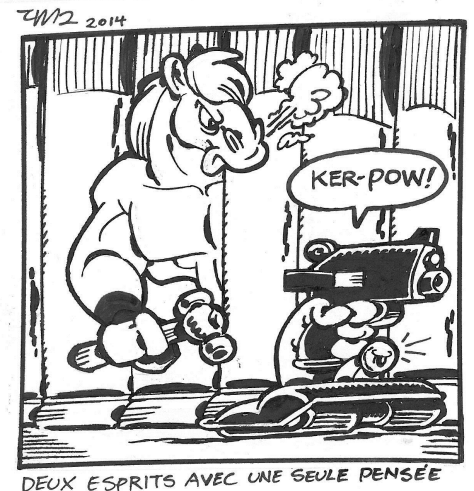
It's a fun read. Chaire!

HORSE NEWS

by Lisa

It is the night before Derby. I lie awake listening to strange sounds. There is loud yelling. Sirens go off. There are two strange instruments making noise I refuse to call music. The first sounds something like a combination of an Australian didgeridoo and a lawn mower. The second sounds something like a combination of drums and a lawnmower. At least I do not have to wonder why the police are in my neighborhood when the sirens go off. It is not an improvement. I consider going out into the street and shouting sleep no more! Macbeth doth murder sleep but a moment's reflection convinces me burrowing into the bed is a better option than venturing out into the madhouse my neighborhood has become.

California Chrome, the favorite, wins the Derby and goes on to win the Preakness. The Triple Crown vase is shipped to New York. But there is no joy in Mudville. Chrome takes a bad cut during the race which may have caused his dismal performance.



SHINGLES

Health Report by Lisa Major

On March 20 of this year I went to the doctor with what I thought was an allergic rash

caused by hotel shampoo. It wasn't allergies. It was shingles. I spent the next week and a half imprisoned at the house. The left side of my face and neck were red and inflamed. I went through a jar of expensive antiviral cream and a round of antibiotics. The first few days after I returned to work I felt that everyone could see the scars. That feeling faded slowly. I still bear the scars and according to the doctor will for some time.

Slightly Damp under Pressure

A review of *RAISING STEAM*

(Discworld Novel #40)

by Sir Terry Pratchett

Review by Grant McCormick

This most recent addition in the Discworld series is fully up to the standards of its predecessors, and I strongly suggest that you read it. Lord Havelock Vetinari is the Tyrant of Ankh-Morpork, and he is uneasy, because it's railroad time in Ankh-Morpork. It's a time of great potential advancement, but also great potential pitfalls. So he off-loads the problem onto Moist von Lipwig, who is the Master of the Ankh-Morpork's Post Office, of the Mint, and of the Bank; and who also is Lord Vetinari's go-to man, and his reformer and con-man.

With the help of his wife, Adora Belle, Moist organizes the individuals involved (Dick Simmel, the inventor; Harry King, the financier, the surveyors, the construction crews, and (eventually) the passengers.) Among these are Commander Vimes of the Ankh-Morpork Watch, and Lord Vetinari himself. *Raising Steam* is the direct sequel to *The Fifth Elephant*, *Going Postal*, *Thud*, *Making Money*, *Snuff*, and the most recent Discworld novels. There's a callback to the earlier Discworld novel *Reaper Man*, where the blacksmith was Ned Simmel. The Discworld wiki has that Ned was Dick's father.

Can Moist get the Hygienic Railway to the Sto Plains in time to get the harvest in? Can he get it to Quirm in time to get the catch in? Can he get it to Uberwald in time to save the Low King's throne?

ConGlomeration 2014

Con Report by Joseph T Major

April 11-13, 2014

<http://www.conglomeration.info>

ConGlomeration has been pulling surprises. This year, for example, they had some program items worth going to — and no parties.

Grant decided to go, so he got out a little. The dealers' room was about the same, with the usual sorts, including **Bob Roehm**, **Joel Zakem**, **Leigh Kimmel**, **Larry Ullery**, and the guys from **Blackwyrm Press**. Also present was the ever-optimistic Michael Z. Williamson, with his abundant display of

lethal edged items.

The guest of honor was John Ringo, who certainly made himself available to the congoers. This may have been why I found the panels worth going to.

The best item, though, was the scientific guest of honor, **Les Johnson**. He was even more available, and discussed a number of items, including the Arcadian fantasies of so many modern people. (As one of the other attendees put it, after looking around the room and noting that everyone there was over thirty, said, "In the world of *Avatar*, everyone here would be dead.") Welcome, and we will do our absolute best to get **Bill Breuer** to come next year and meet you — provided he can manage to work in a pause in his schedule of playing the Second Doctor. (He certainly looks the part.)

As I said, Friday night we went looking for party fliers. There weren't any. Saturday, the same. Was there something going on we didn't know about?

The masquerade was at ten in the evening. Old fans and tired can no longer endure the midnight maskeraid, it seems. The selection of costumes was adequate, and no one had a blunder. As was the custom, **B. J. Willinger** was announcer and interpreter, doing it with his perpetual good humor.



They have promised to be back next year.

THE MAN WITH ULTRA-VIOLET EYES

by Taral Wayne

How many fans were initiated into fandom by Bob Tucker, I wonder?

Oh, not in any *formal* sense, of course. Fans stumble into fandom by whatever path they happen upon — as often as not because they heard the news about some-thing called a *convention*, and went. I myself answered a blurb in the back of a magazine that advertised the local science fiction club. But that is simply to *discover* fandom, and stand and watch as it happens around you. You don't truly *belong* to fandom until you have participated in some of its curious institutions.

One of the most curious of fandom's institutions is "The Smooth."

Wilson "Bob" Tucker didn't *invent* "The Smoooooth," of course. Lucille Ball preformed it on television in the 1950s. Before Lucy, Red Skelton took "The Smooth" on the Vaudeville

circuit. Before that ... I suppose Plautus must have knocked them in the aisles with it in 200 BC. But, in fandom, "The Smooth" belonged to Bob Tucker.

The ritual began when a bottle of Beam's Choice Kentucky bourbon whiskey was opened and poured. Plastic or paper cups were passed around, each with sufficient to cover the bottom but no more than wet a whistle. On signal, cups went up, cups went down, and all those assembled chanted, "smmmooooooooothhhh!"

The original joke in the old stage routine was that the drink was cheap rotgut, and anything *but* smmmooooooooothhh! Not so Beam's Choice, of course. Tucker loved his bourbon, as everyone knew, and would hardly drink a cheap brand that still tasted of the unwashed jug.

I can still remember my first time. It was a Midwestcon, sometime in the '70s. I was in the room when the plastic cups went around, bobbed up and down, then everyone in chorus crooned "smmmooooooooothhhh!" All but *me*, that is. Back then I didn't drink, you see. Not at all. I do now, since I've discovered sweet liqueurs, ports and sherry. But back then, I was the Fraggles in the Rock who couldn't keep a tune, and *felt* like it. Tucker must have noticed, because he came over to me a few minutes later, giving me the chance to explain that I hadn't meant to be rude, but just didn't like alcohol, and — worse — just felt congenitally out of place whenever others participated in rituals of group bonding such as "The Smooth." Tucker understood perfectly, and reassured me that I had nothing to feel awkward about. And, for that moment, I very nearly didn't.

The 1970s were the only decade during which I traveled to conventions much, splitting my time between the East Coast and Midwest. Tucker must have stuck to his own backyard, the Midwest, since I only remember seeing him a few times in the next few years. Much to my surprise, he always remembered me, and knew my name. It shouldn't seem so odd to me now — but I was a pretty rough-hewn rock in my twenties, an unpolished chunk that was just as likely to turn out to be diamond, agate or worthless mudstone. I can't imagine what sort of an impression I made on Tucker. But he always remembered, and always found time to have a few words with me.

If only more of our conversations had stuck in my memory! Fortunately, two of them were unusual enough that there was no danger of my forgetting them. As a younger man, Tucker had variously worn his hair in a brush cut or combed back in a wave, but every time I saw him his hair was combed forward and swept slightly to one side. As it happened, I wore my own hair in a somewhat similar way, longer in back but hanging over my forehead. Tucker may have been the one who drew the comparison before confiding a secret — when I got older and my hair began to thin, don't let it hang *straight* down, like Moe Howard or Mr. Spock. Comb it just a bit to one side ... as he did. It would cover the thin spots better.

Now I'll confide a secret to *you*. 40 years later, I've discovered that Tucker was right.

On another occasion, Tucker made the unexpected statement that he saw in black light. He had suffered from cataracts and had the natural lenses of his eyes replaced by plastic ones that were transparent to more of the spectrum than ordinary people could see. Whereas ultra-violet light was blocked by your lenses or mine, Tucker's let the short-wave radiation right through to the retina. He could see in a black-lit room that was pitch dark to you or me!

Naturally, I wanted to know what ultra-violet light looked like to him. It would settle a philosophical point my friends and I had argued over in the past. It looked very deep purple, he said, but just purple all the same ... vindicating the position I had taken with my friends. Although the shorter wavelengths of light now passed through his plastic lenses to his retinas, they were the same retinas as before, and his brain had no means to register their stimulation in a novel colour. Tucker's colour vision was exactly what it had been before the operations.

Much as I like being right, it was disappointing to hear this from Tucker. Still, I'll always think of him as the Man With Ultra-Violet Eyes.

I still don't like bourbon, though.

ConGlomeration 2014

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

ConGlomeration is the annual science fiction convention in Louisville, Kentucky. This year it was held over the weekend of April 11-13, 2014 at the Louisville Ramada Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, where it has been most of its history (although many of those years it was a Clarion).

Since we wanted to be able to start loading in promptly when the doors opened Friday morning, we drove down Thursday night. Most of the trip went pretty well, but as we got closer to Louisville, we started running into road construction, which slowed us down. Just north of the river, we saw a sign warning of extreme congestion in the construction near the bridge, so we decided to take one of the bypass routes in hope of making better time.

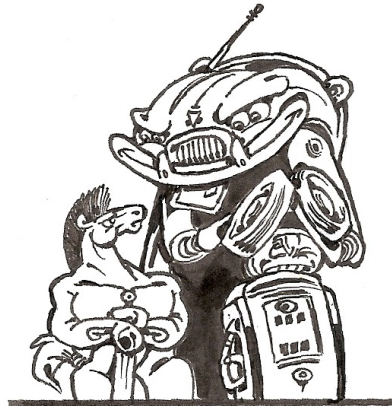
We got there in good time and stopped by the convention center, where we were able to get into the dealers' room and take a look at the table layout. However, the dealers' room coordinator was still at work, so we couldn't find out which tables were ours or verify that there would be some kind of security wall between the dealers' room and main events, which share the big main room.

After our visit to the convention center, we headed off to get checked into our sleeping room. Because we'd had several bad experiences with the con hotel botching reservations (including one with the new management, which gave us a room accessible only by stairs after being told my husband

needed disability access), we stayed at a nearby Sleep Inn. The first room we were given had a very definite odor, almost like cigarette smoke, although it was supposed to be a non-smoking room. So the desk clerk switched us to another room right beside it, which didn't have any odor, and we moved our possessions in.

Then we headed back to the convention center in hopes of catching the dealers' room coordinator. We went back and forth between dealers' room and con suite several times, and generally hung out until he arrived and we verified that yes, we had the same tables we'd had in the past. Thus we were able to do some planning on how we'd set things up, which would make our load-in a little more organized.

We returned to our sleeping room for the evening and I made supper. In the process I discovered that the three ramen cups I'd brought for my suppers had gone missing from the food bags. While trying to find a WalMart that was supposed to be down the road, I discovered the local Sam's Club and bought an entire case of shrimp ramen cups. I also took the opportunity to get gas for the van, which meant we wouldn't have to worry about it on the way back.



On Friday morning we got up early to get the hotel breakfast as soon as they started serving. Then we headed over to the convention center so we could be ready to start loading in the moment they opened the big doors. We got a couple of good helpers and a second cart, which really speeded up the process of load-in.

Even so, it still took us longer to get set up because we now have additional display structures to build, thanks to acquiring a huge set of additional hutch gridwalls. Being able to increase the verticality of our setup also meant that, instead of having to struggle to get all our merchandise out and having a lot left over as backstock, we ended up running short of merchandise and having to struggle to avoid winding up with ugly bare spots in our layout. Part of it was being on the tail end of a three-con sequence, which meant that we were short or entirely out of several lines of

merchandise that had sold particularly well. But a lot of it was just plain having more effective space.

Then I had to get my art onto the art show. Since it was almost time for the dealers' room to open, I got the paperwork and took it back to our dealers' tables to fill out. This way I could set it aside and deal with customers as necessary.

However, sales were slow, although it may have been just a matter of perception as a result of having become accustomed to the heavy sales traffic at anime conventions. I had to consciously remind myself that at science fiction conventions most people tend to window-shop the first day, trying to decide how they'll spend their money, and are less likely to give in to impulse buying.

On the other hand, I spent a lot of time visiting with friends, many of whom I hadn't seen in the year since the last ConGlomeration. I'd been fighting a cold ever since we got back from Shutocon at the beginning of the week, and loading in had dried my throat out more than I'd realized. By the time the dealers' room closed and we headed over to the con suite to have supper and visit, my voice had become noticeably hoarse.

There weren't any parties, so after hanging out for a while, we headed back to our sleeping room. By the time we went to bed, I was hardly talking above a whisper. Not a good sign for the beginning of a con.

When I woke up on Saturday, I'd hoped my voice would recover, but it was pretty obvious I'd overdone it. It took a real effort to get any volume, and even that was an ugly croak that would come and go.

We got to the convention center early enough that we could go to the con suite and hang out for a while before we needed to get to the dealers' room. I got myself a cup of green tea and dissolved a hard candy in it as a substitute for honey, hoping that it would help soothe my throat enough that I'd be able to do business.

However, by the time we got over to the dealers' room it was obvious I was going to have serious difficulty carrying on business. At least we didn't have to deal with anybody playing music at excessive volume like Nippon Academy at Eville-con two weeks earlier, but it still took an effort to speak aloud. Fortunately one of the volunteers noticed my plight and brought me two more cups of green tea, which I gratefully sipped.

During the afternoon, a representative from another convention came by our setup and invited us to their dealers' room. We asked a number of technical questions about their dealers' room operations, not easy when I could barely croak out words, and finally decided to go ahead and add the convention to our lineup.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed over to the con suite to hang out and munch. We'd hoped that there'd be some parties, but nobody knew of any happening. Someone said that the Ghostbusters

crew had wanted to hold a party, but couldn't round up enough people to do one. I'd halfway hoped someone would throw a Yuri's Night party, since April 12 is the anniversary of Gagarin's historic spaceflight, but nobody was doing that either. Finally we ended up heading back to our sleeping room to take it easy. I got out my laptop and went on the website of one of our wholesalers, where I started pulling together a restock order.

On Sunday we had to get our personal possessions out of our sleeping room and get checked out in good time. I was still hoarse, although I wasn't nearly as bad off as I had been Saturday.

We managed to get to the convention center early enough to drop by the con suite and munch a little on the breakfast foods. Then we headed over to the dealers' room to open our tables. I'd thought I'd left my shawl there the previous night, but discovered it was nowhere to be seen. I even checked under the tables, amidst the boxes of backstock, but without success.

So I headed over to the con suite, thinking that maybe I'd left it there while we were hanging out, hoping to find out about a party or two. However, nobody had seen it there either. So I called the hotel's front desk, hoping that maybe someone had found it and turned it in there. No joy. In desperation, I called the hotel where we'd stayed, thinking that maybe it had somehow gotten laid on the white sheets and missed. Since we were still in town, we could just drive over after we got done loading out, and wouldn't have the hassles of getting it shipped to us. However, the news wasn't good there either. They'd cleaned the room, but nobody had found anything that didn't belong.

When it came time to start packing our merchandise to load out, I kept watching in hope that it had just fallen into a box and been missed. But the further we went in packing, the more obvious it became that it hadn't slipped into any of the boxes.

By the time I was loading out the unsold merchandise, I had pretty well given up any hopes of ever seeing it again. I told myself I could find something similar on eBay or one of the wholesale sites, but I knew it wouldn't be the same. Mine had been my grandmother's, and a replacement bought from one or another Chinese exporter wouldn't fully satisfy.

And then one of the volunteers came looking for me. She had my shawl, and told me that it had been found under a stairwell. How it may have gotten there, I have no idea, and I'm not sure I want to know, whether it was a thief with a pang of conscience or a mischievous kid. I was just glad that it had come back to me after all.

With some good helpers, we were able to get everything carried out in time to make a brief visit to the con suite before we had to hit the road. We decided not to risk the traffic on I-65 over the Ohio River, so we went over to

catch I-264 and I-265 again. We made pretty good time most of the way, but as we were getting into Johnson County, we hit a horrible backup. For a while, traffic was almost completely stopped — and we'd just missed the last exit. So there was nothing for us to do but creep along, hoping that we'd get to the next exit soon.

As it turned out, the wreck that had caused the congestion was before the next exit, and it was a nasty one. One car had completely burned out, and I could only hope that everyone had gotten out of it safely.

Because of the delay, we decided to stop at the next exit and get a sandwich at Subway rather than try to get home for a late supper. We ate on the road and got home before it became too late.

HUGO AWARD NOMINEES

Awards Administration: Dave McCarty, David Gallaher, Vincent Docherty

Best Novel (1595 nominating ballots)

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

Neptune's Brood, Charles Stross (Ace / Orbit UK)

Parasite, Mira Grant (Orbit US/Orbit UK)

Warbound, Book III of the Grimnoir Chronicles, Larry Correia (Baen Books)

The Wheel of Time, Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson (Tor Books)

Best Novella (847 nominating ballots)

The Butcher of Khardov, Dan Wells (Privateer Press)

"The Chaplain's Legacy", Brad Torgersen (Analog, Jul-Aug 2013)

"Equoid", Charles Stross (Tor.com, 09-2013)

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

"Wakulla Springs", Andy Duncan and Ellen Klages (Tor.com, 10-2013)

Best Novelette (728 nominating ballots)

"Opera Vita Aeterna", Vox Day (The Last Witchking, Marcher Lord Hinterlands)

"The Exchange Officers", Brad Torgersen (Analog, Jan-Feb 2013)

"The Lady Astronaut of Mars", Mary Robinette Kowal (maryrobinettekowal.com/Tor.com, 09-2013)

"The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling", Ted Chiang (Subterranean, Fall 2013)

"The Waiting Stars", Aliette de Bodard (*The Other Half of the Sky*, Candlemark & Gleam)

Best Short Story (865 nominating ballots)

"If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love", Rachel Swirsky (*Apex Magazine*, Mar-2013)

"The Ink Readers of Doi Saket", Thomas Olde Heuvelt (Tor.com, 04-2013)

"Selkie Stories Are for Losers", Sofia Samatar (Strange Horizons, Jan-2013)

"The Water That Falls on You from Nowhere", John Chu (Tor.com, 02-2013)

Note: Category had only 4 nominees due to the minimum 5% requirement of Section 3.8.5 of the WSFS constitution.

Best Related Work (752 nominating ballots)

Queers Dig Time Lords: A Celebration of Doctor Who by the LGBTQ Fans Who Love It, Edited by Sigrid Ellis & Michael Damian Thomas (Mad Norwegian Press)

Speculative Fiction 2012: The Best Online Reviews, Essays and Commentary, Justin Landon & Jared Shurin (Jurassic London)

"We Have Always Fought: Challenging the Women, Cattle and Slaves Narrative", Kameron Hurley (A Dribble of Ink)

Wonderbook: The Illustrated Guide to Creating Imaginative Fiction, Jeff VanderMeer, with Jeremy Zerfoss (Abrams Image)

Writing Excuses Season 8, Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Mary Robinette Kowal, Howard Tayler, and Jordan Sanderson

Best Graphic Story (552 nominating ballots)

Girl Genius, Volume 13: Agatha Heterodyne & The Sleeping City, written by Phil and Kaja Foglio; art by Phil Foglio; colors by Cheyenne Wright (Airship Entertainment)

"The Girl Who Loved Doctor Who", written by Paul Cornell, illustrated by Jimmy Broxton (Doctor Who Special 2013, IDW)

The Meathouse Man, adapted from the story by George R.R. Martin and illustrated by Raya Golden (Jet City Comics)

Saga, Volume 2, written by Brian K. Vaughan, illustrated by Fiona Staples (Image Comics)

"Time", Randall Munroe (XKCD)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form (995 nominating ballots)

Frozen, screenplay by Jennifer Lee, directed by Chris Buck & Jennifer Lee (Walt Disney Studios)

Gravity, written by Alfonso Cuarón & Jonás Cuarón, directed by Alfonso Cuarón (Esperanto Filmoj; Heyday Films;

Warner Bros.)
The Hunger Games: Catching Fire, screenplay by Simon Beaufoy & Michael Arndt, directed by Francis Lawrence (Color Force; Lionsgate)
Iron Man 3, screenplay by Drew Pearce & Shane Black, directed by Shane Black (Marvel Studios; DMG Entertainment; Paramount Pictures)
Pacific Rim, screenplay by Travis Beacham & Guillermo del Toro, directed by Guillermo del Toro (Legendary Pictures, Warner Bros., Disney Double Dare You)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form (760 nominating ballots)

An Adventure in Space and Time, written by Mark Gatiss, directed by Terry McDonough (BBC Television)
Doctor Who: "The Day of the Doctor", written by Steven Moffat, directed by Nick Hurran (BBC Television)
Doctor Who: "The Name of the Doctor", written by Steven Moffat, directed by Saul Metzstein (BBC Television)
The Five(ish) Doctors Reboot, written & directed by Peter Davison (BBC Television)
Game of Thrones: "The Rains of Castamere", written by David Benioff & D.B. Weiss, directed by David Nutter (HBO Entertainment in association with Bighead, Littlehead; Television 360; Startling Television and Generator Productions)
Orphan Black: "Variations under Domestication" written by Will Pascoe, directed by John Fawcett (Temple Street Productions; Space/BBC America)

Note: Category has six nominees due to a tie for the final position.

Best Editor, Short Form (656 nominating ballots)

John Joseph Adams
 Neil Clarke
 Ellen Datlow
 Jonathan Strahan
 Sheila Williams

Best Editor, Long Form (632 nominating ballots)

Ginjer Buchanan
 Sheila Gilbert
 Liz Gorinsky
 Lee Harris
 Toni Weisskopf

Best Professional Artist (624 nominating ballots)

Galen Dara
 Julie Dillon
 Daniel Dos Santos
 John Harris
 John Picacio
 Fiona Staples

Note: Category has six nominees due to a tie for the final position.

Best Semiprozine (411 nominating ballots)

Apex Magazine, edited by Lynne M. Thomas, Jason Sizemore, and Michael Damian Thomas
Beneath Ceaseless Skies, edited by Scott H. Andrews
Interzone, edited by Andy Cox
Lightspeed Magazine, edited by John Joseph Adams, Rich Horton, and Stefan Rudnicki
Strange Horizons, edited by Niall Harrison, Brit Mandelo, An Owomoyela, Julia Rios, Sonya Taaffe, Abigail Nussbaum, Rebecca Cross, Anaea Lay, and Shane Gavin

"Best Fanzine" (478 nominating ballots)

The Book Smugglers, edited by Ana Grilo and Thea James
A Dribble of Ink, edited by Aidan Moher
Elitist Book Reviews, edited by Steven Diamond
Journey Planet, edited by James Bacon, Christopher J Garcia, Lynda E. Rucker, Pete Young, Colin Harris, and Helen J. Montgomery
Pornokitsch, edited by Anne C. Perry and Jared Shurin

Best Fancast (396 nominating ballots)

The Coode Street Podcast, Jonathan Strahan and Gary K. Wolfe
Galactic Suburbia Podcast, Alisa Krasnostein, Alexandra Pierce, Tansy Rayner Roberts (Presenters) and Andrew Finch (Producer)
SF Signal Podcast, Patrick Hester
The Skiffy and Fanty Show, Shaun Duke, Jen Zink, Julia Rios, Paul Weimer, David Annandale, Mike Underwood, and Stina Leicht
Tea and Jeopardy, Emma Newman
Verity! Deborah Stanish, Erika Ensign, Katrina Griffiths, L.M. Myles, Lynne M. Thomas, and Tansy Rayner Roberts
The Writer and the Critic, Kirstyn McDermott and Ian Mond

Note: Category has seven nominees due to a tie for the final position.

"Best Fan Writer" (521 nominating ballots)

Liz Bourke
 Kameron Hurley

Foz Meadows
 Abigail Nussbaum
 Mark Oshiro

Best Fan Artist (316 nominating ballots)

Brad W. Foster
 Mandie Manzano
 Spring Schoenhuth
 Steve Stiles
 Sarah Webb

The John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (767 nominating ballots)

Award for the best new professional science fiction or fantasy writer of 2012 or 2013, sponsored by Dell Magazines. (Not a Hugo Award, but administered along with the Hugo Awards.)

Wesley Chu
 Max Gladstone*
 Ramez Naam*
 Sofia Samatar*
 Benjanun Sriduangkaew

1939 Retro-Hugo Awards

Awards Administration: Dave McCarty, David Gallaher, Vincent Docherty

Best Novel (208 nominating ballots)

Carson of Venus, Edgar Rice Burroughs (*Argosy*, February 1938)
Galactic Patrol, E. E. Smith (*Astounding Stories*, February 1938)
The Legion of Time, Jack Williamson (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, July 1938)
Out of the Silent Planet, C. S. Lewis (The Bodley Head)
The Sword in the Stone, T. H. White (Collins)

Best Novella (125 nominating ballots)

Anthem, Ayn Rand (Cassell)
"A Matter of Form", H. L. Gold (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, December 1938)
"Sleepers of Mars", John Beynon [John Wyndham] (*Tales of Wonder*, March 1938)
"The Time Trap", Henry Kuttner (*Marvel Science Stories*, November 1938)
"Who Goes There?", Don A. Stuart [John W. Campbell] (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, August 1938)

Best Novelette (80 nominating ballots)

"Dead Knowledge", Don A. Stuart [John W. Campbell] (*Astounding Stories*, January 1938)
"Hollywood on the Moon", Henry Kuttner (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April 1938)
"Pigeons From Hell", Robert E. Howard

(*Weird Tales*, May 1938)
"Rule 18", Clifford D. Simak
 (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, July 1938)
"Werewoman", C. L. Moore (*Leaves #2*, Winter 1938)

Best Short Story (108 nominating ballots)

"The Faithful", Lester Del Rey
 (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, April 1938)
"Helen O'Loy", Lester Del Rey
 (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, December 1938)
"Hollerbochen's Dilemma", Ray Bradbury (*Imagination!*, January 1938)
"How We Went to Mars", Arthur C. Clarke (*Amateur Science Stories*, March 1938)
"Hyperpilosity", L. Sprague de Camp
 (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, April 1938)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form (137 nominating ballots)

Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne. Written & Directed by Orson Welles (The Mercury Theater of the Air, CBS)
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. Written & Directed by Orson Welles (The Campbell Playhouse, CBS)
Dracula by Bram Stoker. Written by Orson Welles and John Houseman; Directed by Orson Welles (The Mercury Theater of the Air, CBS)
R. U. R. by Karel Capek. Produced by Jan Bussell (BBC)
The War of the Worlds by H. G. Wells. Written by Howard Koch & Anne Froelick; Directed by Orson Welles (The Mercury Theater of the Air, CBS)

Best Editor, Short Form (99 nominating ballots)

John W. Campbell
 Walter H. Gillings
 Raymond A. Palmer
 Mort Weisinger
 Farnsworth Wright

Best Professional Artist (86 nominating ballots)

Margaret Brundage
 Virgil Finlay
 Frank R. Paul
 Alex Schomburg
 H. W. Wesso

Best Fanzine (42 nominating ballots)

Fantascience Digest edited by Robert A.

Madle
Fantasy News edited by James V. Taurasi
Imagination! edited by Forrest J Ackerman, Morojo, and T. Bruce Yerke
Novae Terrae edited by Maurice K. Hanson
Tomorrow edited by Douglas W. F. Mayer

Best Fan Writer (50 nominating ballots)

Forrest J Ackerman
 Ray Bradbury
 Arthur Wilson "Bob" Tucker
 Harry Warner, Jr.
 Donald A. Wollheim



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

The system is broken.

The Doctor Who mob dominates, but some of the other nominees are as absurd. Such as the single XKCD strip that was nominated as a "dramatic presentation". Or the **entire** "Wheel of Time" series getting a nomination.

The "Best Fan Writers" are all bloggers with followers. So are the "Best Fanzines", except for *Journey Planet*, which Chris puts a tidbit of his mighty fanediting energy into, and which no doubt will take off and conquer the universe once he can devote the effort to it he has been devoting to *The Drink Tank*.

Larry Correa got some notoriety (Mike Glycer pointed this out in File770.com and anyone who doesn't follow it is behind the curve) by proposing a list of other works to be nominated, of which seven out of eleven made the cut. One happened to be the story by the loathsome Theodore "Vox Day" Beale, the fugghead expelled from SFWA. As a result his blog is more popular than that of John Scalzi's, the SFWA president at the time.

The Hugo Voters Packet does not include the full texts of *Ancillary Justice*, *Neptune's Brood*, or *Parasite*. Leckie, Stross, and Grant have jointly protested this. By way of contrast, it includes the entire *Wheel of Time* series, all fifteen books. For \$40, that's a real bargain; on the other hand, it has been pointed out that this may mean several hundred Hugo ballots with *only* votes for *The Wheel of Time*. Among other things, that could mean that many categories would not be awarded at all, thanks to the 25% rule.

I don't intend to vote in the Best Fan Writer category. With one real choice in Best Fanzine and two in Best Fan Artist, the decision is clear.

In the Retro-Hugos, some people seem to be a little put out that *Anthem* made the ballot. And at least one of the Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form nominees seems to no longer exist; on the other hand, the famous "War of the Worlds" broadcast is included. As a historical note, in 1940 Orson Welles interviewed H. G. Wells on a radio show and managed to get in a plug for *Citizen Kane*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUdghSMTXsU>

I have listed the Awards Administrators for reasons of public information.

NEBULA AWARDS

Best Novel

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

Best Novella

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

Best Novelette

"The Waiting Stars," Aliette de Bodard
 (*The Other Half of the Sky*)

Best Short Story

"If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love,"
 Rachel Swirsky (*Apex* 3/13)

Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation

Gravity (Alfonso Cuarón, director; Alfonso Cuarón & Jonás Cuarón, writers)
 (Warner Bros.)

Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy

Sister Mine, Nalo Hopkinson (Grand Central)

SIDELINE AWARD NOMINATIONS

(Courtesy of Steven H Silver)

Short Form:

"The Weight of the Sunrise" by Vylar Kaftan
 "A Brief History of the Trans-Pacific Tunnel" by Ken Liu
 "Tollund" by Adam Roberts
 "Uncertainty" by Kristine Kathryn Smith
 "Cayos in the Stream" by Harry Turtledove
 "Blair's War" by Ian Watson

Long Form:

- 1920: America's Great War*, by Robert Conroy
The Secret of Abdu el Yezdi, by Mark Hodder
The Windsor Faction, by D. J. Taylor
Surrounded by Enemies: What If Kennedy Survived Dallas?, by Bryce Zabel

I'm not particularly fond of any of these. The Conroy is a rerun of his earlier *1901*. The Taylor is one of those fantasies of heroic antifas against a "Cliveden Set" Government. For the Zabel, see *Alexiad* V. 12 #5. And the Hodder is another "Burton & Swinburne" one, a sequel to his *Expedition to the Mountains of the Moon* (see *Alexiad* V. 11 #1), i.e., as unimaginative as most steampunk is (it doesn't live up to its potential).

FANZINES



Askance #31

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Auroran Lights #9

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Beyond Bree April 2014, May 2014, June

2014

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<http://www.cep.unt.edu/bree.html>
 Not available for The Usual; \$15/year, \$20
 foreign, \$10/year electronic.

Broken Toys #27, #28

Taral Wayne
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<http://www.efanzines.com>

The Drink Tank #369, #370, #371, #372, #373

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Fadeaway #40

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fabficbks@aol.com
<http://www.efanzines.com>

Fish Out of Water #581, #582, #583, #584,
#585, #586, #587, #588, #590

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 Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA

MT Void V. 32 #41 April 11, 2014—V. 32 #49
June 6, 2014

Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge
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Opuntia #275 Easter 2014, #276 May 2014,
#277 June 2014

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 T2P 2E7 CANADA
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The Reluctant Famulus #99

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Space Cadet #26

R. Graeme Cameron
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Spartacus #3

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The Zine Dump #31

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WORLDCON BIDS

2016

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

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

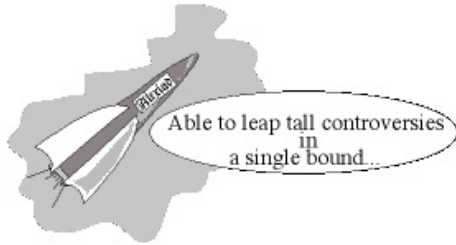
The Air Pollution Control District had trouble. A consultant was called in to do an audit. The audit recommended that there be a reorganization.

Under the reorganization, the employees all could apply for any job they wanted, including their former job. So I did.

They changed my job description. I wasn't rehired, I was laid off. My last day was May 2, Kentucky Oaks day.

I have filed an appeal of the layoff. The mills of bureaucracy grind exceeding slow. Stay tuned.

Letters, we get letters



The Global Warming debate is over. No one was saying anything new and tempers were rising.

From: **Rodney Leighton** March 25, 2014
11 Branch Road, R. R. #3,
Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia B0K 1V0
CANADA

My subscription to *Macleans'* has expired or is about to. The issue datelined March 24 arrived last week some time. Guess what? 4 page essay on the winter that ruined everything. Lots of photos. One statement: someone estimated that the weather has cost your country \$50 billion in lost production. And it's likely not over.

Kentucky spent \$68 million removing snow.

In fact there is a blizzard forecast for tomorrow. It's sunny and cool today. Forecasting 30 to 50 cm of the white shit and high winds tomorrow. It's a so called snow bomb.

I was going to quote some things. But I figured I would send it along. Save you editing: if you see any material in the article you would like to see in *Alexiad* you can put it in somewhere.

Saves me from pretending to write as well.

And then there was this book: *The Water Room* by Christopher Fowler. *Alexiad* readers would likely enjoy this novel. It features a pair of detectives who are quite a bit past their retirement date; one is kind of like an older Brit version of Colombo and the other guy is kind of like Milt Stevens, you know, late 70s, dapper, clever, in to computers, still screwing married women. I have no idea if much of that applies to Milt but he is a retired cop and clever. Fairly strange novel with Egyptian artifacts, numerous rivers under the city of London, rain follows rain, murder follows murder, the 4 elements, chases after ghosts who become homeless folks, rivers filled with animal organs and entrails and garbage and eventually covered over still flowing under all this and eventually a rather mundane ending with a cool epilogue. Published in 2004 by

Doubleday and in 2005 by Bantam, this is part of a series. But it takes the tact of calling this the first in the series, story carries frequent allusions to events of the past and apparently other books are about previous cases.

And in two different parts of the novel global warming is blamed for all the rain.

There have only been 2 times when I had any notion of going to a Worldcon. The first one was back in 2009 when I thought of trying to get to Montreal. That was almost entirely so I could meet you folks and a few other people I knew would be there.

London this year is the other one. Primarily because my benefactor lives not too far away and I don't think he goes to cons but I would certainly meet him. Maybe a few other Brits. And maybe some other folks. But also: according to this book there is something in London called Leighton House. Described as an extraordinary property, a national treasure. I have no idea if it is fact or literary license.

Strangely enough I seem to have an interest in this place. My friend will likely tell me what it is. Although he may not have any idea. Someone will perhaps look it up on the know everything network. For someone who has no interest in genealogy or history or houses full of art which the content of the book would suggest this is, I wonder why it interest me?

And there is also the Vessel of All Counted Sorrows. And a bitty intricately carved emerald Anubis the size of a duck's egg ... 3,000 years old.

Big postage increases coming shortly. Not sure what I am doing zine wise. Gafia of a sort beckons. Haven't had a fanzine this month so far. But I see deadline for the next *Alexiad* is April Fool's Day which is only a few days away. Next issue will appear sometime next month. I guess I will send this after that.

March 31. On the other hand, I have to go to the village ice storm or not and mail some stuff and I guess I will send this off.

The forecast blizzard was one. Probably the largest snowfall of this snowy winter. Yes I know it is officially spring. Yesterday they forecast lots of rain. All we got was ice. Today they forecast ice followed by rain followed by ice followed by more of that white stuff. For tomorrow. I am tempted to say global warming my ass. But who knows. Probably July will be too hot to breathe.

The Life of Rodney Year 65 #2 should be on efanazines if anyone wants to read it. Not sure if there will be any paper copies or not. Probably the last issue. I have a plan of resurrecting *The Leighton Look* again, of a sort.

And Dale Speirs gave up and put *Opuntia* entirely on efanazines.com because of that increase. It's a vicious cycle; higher rates induce people to use the Net more and physical mail less, and because of the reduced cash flow, they have to raise rates to cover their fixed costs, which

induces people . . .

— JTM

Tara! says he is up to *Broken Toys* # 27. How come you only list up to 23?

Ribbon is almost gone; got no money, not driving to Truro to get ribbons anyway.

None of this means anything to you; I expect I will get my income tax refund sometime and go get some ribbons next month sometime.

May 5, 2014

The daffodils came out, looked around and hung their heads. Staring at the ground half open they would take an occasional peek around and find nothing but water falling or dull, dank, dreary days and cold nights and they despaired. Then came a time, oh, look! Sunshine! Mild temperatures. Open up! Look up. Yikes! It's raining again!

Couple of weeks ago I said to a fairly recent emigrant from England: "What's the weather like in England these days?" "Much better than here!" he growled.

Got a paper on the weekend. Chronicle Herald stopped publishing on Sunday some time ago and publish a thing called The Weekender. Quite a lot in it, opinion pieces, letters, comics, coupons, even some news here and there. Thing costs \$2.52!. Came across the enclosed article.

One of the reasons I stopped loccing was the propensity of fans to jump on people without knowing what they are talking about. Ms. Palmer-Lister takes issue with my loc due to, so she says, I confess to not reading The Graeme's open letter but then have the nerve to criticize it. What I said was '...based on the parts quoted in *Fanstuff* 40 it was mostly about trufans and fringe fans and all that bullshit.' This lady apparently doesn't read *Fanstuff*. But she seems to agree with most of my comments.

Now that Dale has switched to electronic publishing and *The Life of Rodney* is in purgatory I wonder if there are any SF type fanzines on paper in Canada? Are there, Lloyd?

You're stuck, pal! It's law. You can retire anytime. But you can't get Old Age Security payments until you are 67. Unless Harper gets turfed and the new government reverses the law. But you know that ain't going to happen. I think Harper will be Prime Minister as long as he wants to be. And new governments never take away laws made by their predecessors.

May 20: IN the interim ...

I decided to discontinue *The Life of Rodney*. Not sure if *Year 65 #2* is on efanazines yet but I am sure it will be someday. No paper copies of that one. Felt that I might not see another fanzine until the next issue of *Alexiad*. Decided to launch another, slightly different zine like thing. Wondered if pointing readers at fanzines based on my name or writing being in it was egotistical or silly. Received a bundle of about 15 zines printed off the web. I was happy to see them. Discovered that if I were

going to do that fanac thing as planned I should write something about *The Zine Dump* #31. But since I am keeping *Rodney's Fanac* strictly paper from my perspective I am not writing anything about webzines in there. I mean, I suppose the things are paper zines when they come to me. But if it were not for my friend printing them off, I would never see them.

So, Joe: were you aware that I destroyed the entire letter column with that single page! Sigh! I guess it's just as well that Lillian doesn't send me his zines. *Challenger* would likely have elicited a loc and a review; this business, well, I would have ...no, stop. Throw this paragraph out.

Started a fire this morning!

These webzines things are actually good, as long as my friend continues to print them for me. If they had arrived individually I would have had to write a review if they arrived after I started RF, which is to say if they arrive today or later and also I would have probably sent a loc of some sort to Lillian, Purcell, Sadler. I am about halfway through that issue of *TRF*, highlight of the package so far. I liked *Sporadic* 24 except for all the beer chatter. Wasn't a thing in *Askance* 30 except that one plaint about underwear.

Lots easier for me to read what I want, probably write a sentence or so to my friend and then chuck the thing in the recycling bag.

Ah, I dunno Martin ...fanzines are fanzines. Lots of them are on line now. Fans are fans.

Guy Lillian has apparently decided he wants to be friends with everyone.

Many years ago Guy was trashed by Ted White and I came to his defense. Mr. White refers to me as "a firecracker." Someone in the other types of zines hobby described zines like this one as "cheater zines", being simply so many pages with a staple in the corner rather than the "standard booklet form". Got me to thinking about fanzines in digest or booklet form. In the SFandom field I didn't think there were that many. *Opuntia* of course. That one from the U.K. you reference. *Riverside Quarterly*. *Trap Door*. There was one a number of years ago. I can remember some things about it; they use to run articles about life in a circus. I recall that Lillian liked it; White trashed it as being: 'not a science fiction fanzine'; we had a bit of a tiff. What was the title, Joe?

But you know what? People are people. Fanzines come or they don't. Some are on the web. Some get printed off and sent to me. I could get a paper copy of *Trap Door* by the expedient of buying a \$5 US bill and sticking it in an envelope and I can get a cheaper and trashier version by asking my friend to print me one. I can't get my hands on *Banana Wings* for love nor money nor any damned thing else. But you get it. Joe gets it. My benefactor gets it. Just about the only thing I saw in *The Zine Dump* that I hadn't seen and can't get that I wish I would is *Beam*. Farey

and I used to fight like Bantam roosters.

Ah, that's enough of that. Don't want to ruin this letter column as well.

Here's a zine you might find of interest. Sent a copy of this to Laurainne one time. Never heard anything from her but I see she Locs every issue so I guess she likes it.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Apr. 18, 2014
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,
Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA
RichD22426@aol.com

If the quality of a zine is reflected in comments than the February *Alexiad* is the very height of zining.

They start with a comment on Taral Wayne's "Gotta Have Them All." It brought up an obsession that I once had, Asimov's Foundation series. At the time, I really loved the idea of a formula that predicted the future for thousands of years in advance. Did I say thousands? It could have been millions. Concerning that series, I became more obsessed with it than is good for anyone. Now, the world of the Foundation Series is totally a foreign world. Events there may as well be something happening in Tanna Tuva for all their relevance to me.

Jerry Kauffman complains that no one has told him the best books on the subject of the Gold Standard. I wouldn't know. However, the bibliography of the Wikipedia article, which Jerry consulted, lists a pile a books, articles, etc. on the subject of the Gold Standard. I take it that is the authors' opinion of the best materials. It is at the very bottom so Jerry might have missed it, but it is there.

Another gold standard is the Hugo Awards. John Purcell is very disappointed in the works that have won the Hugo. John blames it on the 'K-Mart shopper' fans, who are actually mundanes.

On the other hand, there is blame to go around. Literary fandom has not kept up on what fans are actually reading, thereby outmoding itself faster. In fact, I have been wondering how relevant the Hugos for Novella and Novelette are since so few fans read the science fiction magazines where they are published.

Would such things matter to Jim Stumm? I don't know. He seems more interested that the Supreme Court judge by the word of the Constitution and not make their own interpretations. However, he doesn't wish to change over to the German system where judges adjudicate cases by means of a short of legal calculus. This, I take it, insures every judge will reach the same verdict.

I imagine, instead, Jim believes it is common sense for the judges to interpret the Constitution like he interprets it. Don't we all believe that? In fact, I imagine each justice of the Supreme Court believes that all the other justices should rule his way too.

I doubt Jim seeks a litmus test for abuse of power by how judges have ruled on a certain

issue. Certainly, a few fans have to keep whom they consider unwashed out of fandom. Rodney Leighton suggests that it might be breaking down. However, not for trying. I heard someone tried to make a litmus test for fandom. They claimed no one could be a true fan unless they knew all the titles of Heinlein's juveniles.

I have a better one. That all 'real' fans have to have a bagged and preserved copy of the magazine *Spicy Zeppelin Stories*. I am following the rule that if there is a litmus test, it should be as outrageous as possible. The only problem with having that copy is that someone seems to have actually published a zine with that title.

Now we go from fandom back to white bread issues, in this case, oil. Sue Burke, inspired by the writing of Emilio Bueso, raises the spectre of a sudden breakdown in the supply of oil which would not allow a switch to alternate sources. When the time comes, the oil companies themselves would not realize that they have used up the last oil drop. The reason is that the powers-that-be have insisted on phoney reports of oil reserves.

I have a difficult time believing that. As far as I can tell, it hardly matters whether the reports are phoney or not. Long before the oil companies drain the last drop of oil, it will be too expensive for the average person; and they will have to switch over to alternate sources of energy.

Even switching over a short period of time hasn't proven impossible. Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa switched to coal oil over a comparatively short time. While both were reprehensible governments, nonetheless, that they switched over quickly proves my point. Having written – I hope – incisively on a big issue of world import, I wish to leave a personal note for Sue. Too bad about your sister, Elizabeth. I am glad she kept her sense of humor until the end. A lot of people in her position are rendered virtually bereft of one. Then all is lost.

In addition to this personal note to Sue, I can write one to Sheryl Birkhead on a less somber issue. I am glad that her cordless mouse is working even if it isn't as important now. One never knows when a resource will come in handy.

I have made individual comments to Jim Purcell, Jim Stumm, Rodney Leighton, and Sheryl Birkhead. Now I have a whole slough for George Price. They concern the rough and tumble debate we have been having, whether the Financial Meltdown of the 2000s was caused by the Community Reinvestment Act.

George, you find it unreasonable that I demand evidence for your scenario. What would I want, you ask. Mathematical proof? No, just information I can check either my memory or past news stories on.

Of course, there is an advantage to Could arguments: you don't have to prove your assertions in any way. That is unless someone demands actual proof rather than assertions.

As a lot of people who argue from Could,

you contend that your assertions have to be true if I cannot come up with an alternate explanation. The point in question is if not the Community Reinvestment Act, what culprit would I have for the rise of the 2003-07 Housing Bubble, which led to the Financial Meltdown 2007-2010.

I suspect you are hoping I won't be able to come up with an explanation. However, it is simple as pie. Namely, housing prices were already rising when a bank came up with the subprime loan to any Tom, Dick or Harry. It was because of the prosperity then. No need for a Community Reinvestment Act.

No rules were broken because the bank, or banks, in question were unregulated. Later, regulated banks wanted to get in on the action, and they engineered the jettisoning of previous financial requirements for mortgages. Since it was the Bush/Cheney administration and regulations were being jettisoned right and left, they had no trouble. So much for your unanswerable argument about the rise of the bubble.

The unanswerable argument is one weakness in your argument. I found another weakness as well. This time because you deviated from the Could argument. You added a part of the argument that could be checked up on. In fact, one where all the detail is in writing for all to see.

Previous to this, I got the impression that, according to you, the evil bureaucrats perverted the Community Reinvestment Act to justify sending out their thugs. Now you claim that the Community Reinvestment Act allows them to punish banks legally for not making unsound home loans.

According to a lawyer I spoke to, that is not the case, and what he said jibed with my reading of the Act and regulations several years ago. Loans to minorities are but one factor out of five that banks are to be judged on. In addition, it says explicitly that nothing in the Act should require unsound financial practices. Thus George, you would be better off claiming that the bureaucrats sent their thugs out.

[12 U.S.C. § 2901 et seq and 12 CFR part 25 et seq, part 202 et seq, part 228 et seq, part 345 et seq, 563e et seq.]

In any event, while sometimes assertions become checkable, like with the Community Reinvestment Act, the idea behind your argument is basically that it is uncheckable. It is one enormous Could.

This rubs me the wrong way so much I would like to offer you an argument to replace the Community Reinvestment Act Could. One I would much prefer to debate with you. To boot, laissez-faire economics says that business cannot cause recessions and depressions. Business men are too rational. It has to be the government doing it: the government is totally irrational.

It is logical. It doesn't require a thousand suppositions. If someone should ask you for details, you say you don't need to know them.

Instead, you have overarching reasoning, which does not need them. No need for a Community Reinvestment Act. No need for the government to send out its thugs. No need for the government to promise bankers a bailout.

In addition, you can still blame Barney Frank and Nancy Pelosi for the country's ills. In fact, you can blame Hillary Clinton as well. While Hillary is not being blamed for the Community Reinvestment Act, she, along with them, has been a supporter of big government, right?

Plus you have a theory that you believe in. Nobody believes in Could. It is an argument that sounds like it will win over the unwashed masses; but I suspect its bad logic sticks out like a sore thumb among anyone but true believers. On the other hand, many people believe that the free market is the root of all good and the government the root of all evil.

It does not even matter whether your listeners believe that, either. Even if they don't buy free enterprise as good and government as evil, they will see you as a person with integrity. One who is not trying to pull anything over on them.

I can foresee a big road block to you accepting this argument from Laissez-Faire. I can imagine that my advocacy has startled you, George. I don't blame you. Thus, you will be wondering what my ulterior motive is. All I ask is that you judge my substitute theory on its merits rather than the company it keeps.

With this long essay on the recent Financial Meltdown, and my shorter comments on other issues, I bid adieu until the next *Alexiad*.

From: **Lacy D. Thomas** April 22, 2014
123 Ivy Pointe Drive, Elizabethtown,
Kentucky, 42701- USA
dobfreak@aol.com

Jar Jar Abrams — love it. Also loved the movie "In Search of D. B. Cooper" — and I hope he's in the Caribbean!

I'm willing to compromise on
Bora Bora.

Lisa

From: **Bob Roehm** April 23, 2014
bobroehm@bellsouth.net

Thanks for the issue. I enjoyed Taral's reminiscences about Judith Merrill — as far as they went anyway. I hope some of your older readers will round out the picture. Her reputation should rest on her work as the editor of the long-running Best SF series (at least until the later volumes when her tastes were definitely leaning toward the experimental) and her stint as book reviewer for *F&SF*. No one in the field was more influential for many years. Of course, all of this is out of print and mostly unavailable. As an aside, I wonder if a collection of her columns, a la Algis Budrys, would be an interesting endeavor for a POD publisher? Merrill's fiction, while mostly

enjoyable, is not where her legacy rests, although "That Only a Mother" and *Shadow on the Hearth* are significant mileposts.

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** April 25, 2014
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19149-2128
darrells@comcast.net

On the subject of Roman armor, the main contemporaneous sources of data are the columns of the deified emperors Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. In any number of books you can see clear pictures of some of the reliefs from these columns. (I myself have had the opportunity to observe the column of Marcus up close, although I've not managed to get very close to that of Trajan.) On the column of Trajan, yes, the soldiers are definitely wearing the lorica segmentata, armor made of strips of metal that slide under one another like the armor of an armadillo. But on the column of Marcus, we get a different story. There is a lot of what looks like mail. The armor is very mixed. Most of the soldiers are wearing tight-fitting trousers that come down a little past the knees. There is a particularly interesting relief from some monument of Marcus Aurelius which has been moved onto the Arch of Constantine. (See Michael Grant, *The Army of the Caesars*, Scribner's 1974, pl. 11.) It is a traditional scene of the emperor standing on a pedestal, addressing the troops. Experts tell us this was originally an image of Marcus, but the head has been knocked off and a clean-shaven head of a later date has been substituted. (The Arch of Constantine was put together in a hurry, and as skilled artisans were not to be found, it was assembled out of recycled pieces of other monuments.) More interesting are the soldiers being addressed. These are the original 2nd century figures, with no alterations. One man wears metal strips, the lorica segmentata. Another has what looks like lamellar armor, i.e. made of little squares of metal sewn to a jacket. A third is wearing scale armor. Helmets vary from crested to plumed to plain, without ornamentation. So we have to conclude that in the days of Marcus's Macromannic wars, all sorts of armor was in use. On the column of Marcus there are scenes of Roman soldiers rounding up captives. In these the soldiers look like cavalymen. They are wearing the tight trousers (braccae). Their helmets are plain (without side pieces) although they have rings on the top where something could be attached. The shields are small and rounded.

The current theory is that the guys in chainmail are wearing reinforced armor to fight the Dacian falxmen, their kind of halberdiers.

So our hero in *Gladiator* would have had quite a choice of armor. He might have even worn a muscle breastplate on parade, though

such a thing wouldn't be much use in combat. Of course the movie is mostly fantasy with famous names attached. I've always felt that the real story of Commodus would be more entertaining, but no one has ever attempted it. He was a full-blown psycho with a Hercules fixation, who used to run around in a lion skin and carrying a club. He wasn't the neurotic Caligula-wannabe portrayed by Joaquin Phoenix.

By the way, any coin collector knows that the term "Res Publica" or "Rei Publica" is common on the coinage up to the end of the 4th century. *RESTITUTOR REI PUBLICA* and *SECURITAS REI PUBLICA* are common on the coinage of, say, Valens. (365-378.) Looking through Sear's *Roman Coins and Their Values* (the bible of this field) I see that Severus III (461-65) and Leo I (457-74) are still issuing "Salus Rei Publicae" coins. There is even a very rare bronze of Empress Verina (wife of Leo, later backer of the usurpers Basiliscus and Leontius) with this slogan on it. So, yes, they were calling it a "republic" to the very end. But the term mean something like "the commonwealth" or "the state" and did not actually refer to how it was governed.

As for long and confusing Roman names, somehow the simple system of praenomen, nomen, and cognomen got supplemented by quite a lot of accumulation by about the 3rd century. My favorite example is the emperor known (bit dimly) to history as Volusian. (251-53). His full name, without additional titles, was Caius Vibius Afinius Gallus Vendumnianus Volusianus. He was the son of Caius Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, who ruled with him until both were murdered by their soldiers in the accustomed fashion. I am not sure what the family name (nomen) actually was. Probably Vibius. If there had been a daughter named Vibia, it would be a bit clearer, but there wasn't.

As for the matter of Asimov and editing, yes, I am sure the problem with *Foundation's Edge* is that nobody was willing to edit it as harshly as it needed. The larger problem may have been that this was a single-united novel rather than a fixup of novellas and novelets. The discipline of being forced to write to lengths *Astounding* could use forced control of the pacing. You will notice that Asimov saw this himself and returned to the novella/fixup format in the very last book in the series, *Forward the Foundation*, which caused considerable improvement.

Chivalric/monarchist news: I am about to be knighted. The ceremony will take place at Eeriecon, next weekend. My feudal lord Derwinus, Count of Thxoio in the Empire of Trebizond (the writer Derwin Mak) has not only, in his benevolence, made me a Patrician of his court, but instituted an order of chivalry, the Order of St. David of Trebizond, since our last actually reigning emperor (deposed by the Turks in 1461 and martyred some while later) David has just been made a saint by the Orthodox Church. I am to bring the sword,

since Eeriecon is on Grand Island NY, near Niagara Falls, and Derwin is from Toronto and might not be able to get a sword across the border. I am bringing my ancestral sword, which is a German parade sword my father picked up in Japan at the end of World War II. (Apparently the Germans shipped the Japanese boatloads of these. They were all that was left for the American privates after the officers got all the good souvenirs.) Anyway, once this ceremony is performed, you may address me as "Sir Insignificant" rather than merely "Your Insignificance," which would otherwise be about right for a Patrician of Thxoio. (Thxoio, by the way, is a principality so insignificant no one knows quite where it was. It might be an alternate name for Miletus, but my theory is that it is under a parking lot near Ankara.)

Congratulations on your
knighting. Are there any kings of
Thxoio buried under this parking lot?

Lisa

From: **Robert Lichtman** April 27, 2014

A few comments on the April 2014 *Alexiad*: Your "Reviewer's Notes" on the front page goes from one low to another, concluding in the most dismal of scenarios in which "the last Fans in nursing homes" maintain old animosities rather than reaching out. It's rather the opposite of the fictional fan given immortality in Terry Carr's short story, "Forever and Fandom," who writes: "I must live till the end of fandom, and complete my fanzine collection."

In his article on Judith Merrill, Taral writes: "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 dime of *Befuddling Technoscience Tales*, instead?" I have similar thoughts about the copy of *Imagination* to which I was attracted on the magazine racks at the local store that had on the cover, "Special Feature: What We Will Find On Venus." That article was mildly interesting, but Robert Bloch's "Fandora's Box" column was much more so—and since it turned out that was the final issue of *Madge*, what might have happened if I didn't buy it?

Like Taral, I also resisted any temptation to purchase a copy of *Better to Love, the Life of Judith Merrill*. I see now that second-hand copies are available for under \$10, but I think that I learned all I really wanted to know about her from reading Damon Knight's *The Futurians*.

In the letter column, Rodney Leighton writes of "Trap Door #30...printed off the web." I suspect he may be bouncing off your review of that issue in the previous issue, because #30 won't be available online until early in 2015. It's #29 he may have printed

instead. He also writes about how he deals with electronic fanzines, saying that they "come in bundles of loose sheets" and "are read that way." I'm not sure what he means by "loose sheets," but he goes on: "*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." Well, yes. Because I use WordPerfect to put it together, each 8½x11-inch spread contains two pages. I make the finished issue into a high-grade Acrobat PDF, take that to my printer, and he reassembles it so that the pages will print as a digest: pages 1 and 60, 2 and 59, 3 and 58, etc. But even if I could post it in that version, I wouldn't; it would make it too difficult for anyone to follow—especially since I use few page numbers—unless they printed it out.

From: **Milt Stevens** April 30, 2014
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA
93063-3834 USA
miltstevens@earthlink.net

In *Alexiad* V13 #2, Joseph harks back to "Who Killed Science Fiction?" At the time that appeared, it seemed to me that science fiction was dying. I had always read science fiction in magazine form. I liked the editorials, letter columns, illustrations, and fan columns. I identified science fiction with magazines. Paperbacks just weren't the same. They didn't have any personality.

The tactics of being a fan have changed since 1961. Back then, you could read a fairly large percentage of what was being published in search of the good stuff. These days, there is just too much material being published. You have to put more emphasis on avoiding the bad rather than looking for the good.

As you know from my last LoC, I included *Ocean at the End of the Lane* on my Hugo nominating ballot. I like it quite a bit. As a very good novel by a well-known British writer, it should have made the ballot. One thing about the book reminded me of *The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag*. That was the way reality was just painted on. Once the reality layer was chewed off, you could the uncertain fog below it.

I can explain why Cathy Palmer-Lister no longer gets copies of the LASFS newszine. The reason she isn't receiving paper copies anymore is because we have almost entirely converted to electronic format. The last 14 years of the publication is available at <http://www.lasfsinc.info/deprof.html>. Before we converted, we were spending \$1200 a year on a paper newszine. Marty Cantor took over the editorial duties and privatized the publication. You can get an electronic copy for free. You can get a paper copy if you want to pay for it.

I've really been enjoying the last few Corflus. I don't like all of the attendees. By my count, there is one person I detest, one person who detests me for a favor he will never forgive, and one person who is an utter fool.

Out of somewhere around 90 people, that's not too bad. I hadn't thought about most of the attendees having started publishing before 1970. That seems basically accurate. Of course, everybody has their own conception of what constitutes an old-timer. Kids like me started publishing in the sixties. Old-time fans started publishing in the forties or fifties.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** May 1, 2014
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Many thanks for *Alexiad* 13.2, which was waiting for me when we got back from Ravencon #9 down in Richmond. About 1,100 in attendance—on a par with Lunacon and Philcon only increasing as they are declining, with gaming, filking, a concert, and a well attended, well run masquerade plus they had a lot of new authors, and a lot of young people (including a two-year old sleeping on the art show floor) so besides being lively and loud Ravencon filled the hotel. We had skipped last year's con after Lee resigned from the committee, but this year she was invited back, and warmly welcomed by her friends as even the anti-Lee faction managed to be civil. We came down early to help with the setup (truth in con running, I helped mostly by staying out of the way), and Friday's highlight was about 6 PM, when we were in our room on the 6th floor so Lee could change for the opening ceremonies at seven. At which point there was all sorts of violent weather; a tornado touched down a few miles away, and the hotel itself was hit by lightning (inside the hotel—at ground zero, you didn't hear any thunder as all the sound was moving away from you,) setting off fire alarms and forcing the evacuation of the building. Lee's son Jim saw it on the news (all those costumers standing under the awning as the fire trucks rolled up must have been a clue), and called the next day to ask if we were all right. Despite her knee brace Lee had some pain and swelling from walking down all those stairs, but with an ice pack it subsided in time for the opening ceremony. Saturday we made the rounds of all the listed parties, plus the unlisted Baen party that we located by ear. Sunday, we finished up by mid afternoon, but Lee wanted to stick around for the dead dog party at six. Sigh. About 30 people descended on this pizza place with only one waiter on duty. Lee had a glass of wine and I had a cup of coffee, and we put off dinner to get out of the Richmond suburbs and back on I-95 North while it was still light. Lee had a lovely time, a really great weekend, but she overdid it to the point where she took Tuesday off for rest and recuperation. Wednesday we had rain all day, flash flood warnings and tornado warnings, including a couple of tornadoes touching down in nearby Maryland, not to mention an incursion of water in the basement, and Lee felt all that bad weather gave her a further excuse to take things easy.

Long time passing I was captain of the GW chess team, so I was interested to see that the chess team of Texas Tech University left after Texas Tech refused to pay the one million dollars funding requested by coach Susan Polgar. This refusal prompted her move to Webster University in St. Louis, along with her team of grandmasters where they have since won two straight Final Four chess titles. The team's funding at Webster was reportedly \$635,000, which is a lot but peanuts compared with what regular sports get. Reflecting the fact that chess remains a game for nerds, the article appeared in the Metro section of the Post rather than in the Sports section. In the Ukraine, Putin has successfully annexed Sevastopol and the Crimea, and is taking his own sweet time about picking up however much of the eastern Ukraine he wants. His tactic has been to support local Russian speakers who want to rejoin Mother Russia with arms, money and special-forces troops in unmarked uniforms. Part of the problem is that the Ukraine's government has been a kleptocracy, as bad as Russia's if not worse, which earned no loyalty from its Russian speakers and little loyalty from the rest, beyond an unfocused Ukrainian nationalism. Corruption was (and probably is) rampant and the oligarchs have been stealing money intended for the armed forces, to the point where the government can't mount an effective resistance. Push comes to shove, and they have to give way, which is not the case with Poland and the Baltic states, all of whom have substantial minorities of Russian speakers. Those states are also members of NATO, and while it is uncertain how NATO could respond to Russia's masked warfare tactics, such an uncertainty might deter Putin from starting anything.

What else? Corflu #31 is this coming weekend down in Richmond, an easy two-hour drive from Arlington. Unlike Joe, I have always felt welcome at Corflu, but no longer have the stamina for conventions on successive weekends.

From: **Joy V. Smith** May 9, 2014
8925 Selpa Road, Lakeland, FL 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com

Churchill's First War sounds intriguing with a look back at Afghanistan — and I'm curious about the attempt to steal the Crown Jewels. I always appreciate your reviews, though this time I hadn't read any of them nor — even though I'm curious about some — do I plan to. (Still working through my reading pile.)

I enjoyed the con reports, though I see that those winter storms really made life hard for the con goers. Thanks for the news re: Nebula nominees, fanzines, and World con bids. And there's more info — and discussions — in the letter column. Interesting remark about SF becoming more morbid. Some children's and juvenile fiction is becoming darker too. (I scan a lot of blurbs.)

And I see that people not only rant about

politics and global warming in posts and letters, but at con panels. (It's amazing and irksome how fanatics go off topic to brandish their opinions.)

I watched the Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event (Cross-Country, Dressage, and Jumping) recently, which took place at the Kentucky Horse Park, which I was only aware of because of your visits there.

Interesting background on *Glinda of Oz*. Now I'm curious about *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* . . . Thank you all for another enjoyable issue.

The Rivet in Grandfather's
Neck is available on the Project
Gutenberg site.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10041>
— JTM

From: **Gregg T. Trend** May 14, 2014
trendart@yahoo.com

RE yr cts RE Rodney Leighton. CORFLU. My wife and I have attended Corflu most years since 2005. (My first was in 1987 with my first wife, who was not a fan.) I find most of these people quite friendly (some I have known since 1959.) I have read fmz since 1955 (age 12) and written for & done art for since 1958. I pubbed 3 issues of my own fmz. And I have been in apas since 1959. I was the youngest member of the Misfits, here in Detroit in 1958, when we were preparing our first & so far, only Worldcon. We will have a NASFiC in July(Detcon 1). I will be on at least a couple of panels concerning pro SF art and fmz publishing and art. Rodney & Joseph, I don't know what your problem is concerning attending Corflu. I've never been put off by their "attitude". If you want off-putting "attitude" go to Readercon. This is NOT a fannish con. It is a gathering of writers (or would-bes) and editors mostly. Not much socializing with those who aren't. However, we've enjoyed it because the presentations are so good.

Both of you strike me as what we "Core" fans call Readerfans. I've met those who mainly like to talk to their favorite authors, artists and writers and attend programming. But have no interest in socializing with mere fans. Well, OK, if that's what suits you. Then we have fans like Eric Mayer who seem to be afraid to go to conventions of any size.

I'm different from most fans: I was very social in high school and was fairly well-known. Girls liked me. I was not afraid of them. I started reading when I was 3-4 years old. My first SF book was *Space Cadet* by Heinlein at age 7 1/2. The first Asimov was *Currents of Space*, which I found in a classroom wall-bookcase in the 5th grade. My friends and I would attend Saturday matinees if there was an SF-theme film playing. My favorite was *Conquest of Space*. My mother (she was a grade school science teacher) took me to a showing of *Pinocchio* when I was 4. My mother and father took me to see *Invasion of the Body*

Snatchers. Remembered exclamation from a woman seated in front of us, "If I knew it was going to be like this I won't have come here!" (after the scene in the greenhouse with a clone revealing itself.)

So, Joe & Rodney, you think the Corflu group is exclusionary? Why don't you find out in person. We won't bite!

I wasn't there then.

— JTM

BTW, I'm not on Lichtman's mailing list (probably because I've never requested it, much less Locc'd it.) I do read issues much later at e-Fanzines.

You may note this too: I am now 70 years old. In the MiSFts I was the youngest; in the Wayne 3rd Foundation (which I've been in since 1978) I'm the eldest.

From: **Jim Stumm** March 13, 2014
Post Office Box 29, Buffalo, NY
14223-0029 USA

Rod E. Smith, GREENLANDERS: Canadian author Farley Mowat wrote *Westviking - The Ancient Norse in Greenland and North America* in 1965. I haven't read that book, but I have read his 2002 book *The Farfarers* in which he proposes that the Norse weren't the first to reach Iceland and Greenland. They were preceded, he says, by people he calls Albans, who were originally from what was to become England.

About Greenland he says (page 210) that countless scholars have tried to account for the disappearance of the Greenland Norse, but the truth is that they never did disappear. He says that they went native and merged with the Thule-Eskimos. He notes that every observation of Greenland natives going back to 1500 indicates that they were, and are, a mixed race with significant differences from pure Thule-Eskimo culture in appearance, activities, possessions, and behavior. The present-day inhabitants of Greenland are the descendants of Eskimo and Norse people who came to Greenland 1000 years ago, who remain there still. So Mowat says.

George W. Price, ECONOMY OF ABUNDANCE: I don't have all the answers about the abundance economy I described. I see it only dimly. But here are some thoughts:

You're right that "decisions will still have to be made about the best uses of available resources" but there may come a time when intelligent machines can make those decisions, guided perhaps by consumer choices, IE. make more of what consumers desire more and less of what they desire less.

I hope this takes place in a society with a high degree of personal freedom, so no one will be forbidden to do anything that's peaceful. And no one will be forced to participate in this machine economy, but what alternative will most people have when unemployment is around 90 percent more or less because

machines are doing most of the work and there are few jobs. The capitalism that still exists will be different from what we see at present because there will be no mass market to sell to (so no Walmart, MacDonalds, Apple etc.) when the masses, being unemployed, will have no income to buy.

People may still think up new inventions which they will have plenty of time to work on, being "retired." But how will they market such things if few people have any money to spend? Perhaps an inventor can handicraft a few units in his workshop and sell to the few people who have money to buy. If in that way he shows that there is some demand, the machine administrators may buy the rights and add it to their product line.

Another aspect I haven't mentioned is that I see this machine economy as a non-profit charity that would distribute the goods and services it makes for free. It would not require continuing charitable contributions or tax funding. It would rely on a sort of endowment consisting of the built self-replicating machines. The original start-up capitalization would come, I would hope, from private philanthropists.

Catastrophes and unpredicted changes: I don't see why intelligent machines would be unable to cope with such things. Outside attacks, IE. national defense: The military is getting more automated all the time. Where will that end?

Many of us consider national defense to be one of the few proper duties of govt and that leads me to wonder what the role of govt would be if machines become so dominant. And how will govt be financed if 90 percent or so of the people have no income?

Lisa, D.B. COOPER: I have a DVD from the Discovery Channel that argues that D.B. Cooper was Richard McCoy. If McCoy wasn't Cooper, he was a copycat.

D.B. Cooper's skyjacking took place in Nov 1971. He parachuted from the plane with \$200,000 in cash. This DVD argues that he survived the jump but became separated from the cash and lost it.

In April 1972 Richard McCoy pulled the same stunt, a skyjacking with a similar m.o. He demanded and got \$500,000 in cash and ended up jumping from the plane over Nevada. A search of the area failed to find him, but police received a number of tips that led them to McCoy who lived near where the skyjacker had jumped. They interviewed him and he willingly gave them his fingerprints and a writing sample. His handwriting matched that on notes the skyjacker had passed to the pilot. And his fingerprints were found on the plane. With that, police obtained a warrant to search his house and found a duffel bag full of cash, just \$30 short of \$500,000.

McCoy was tried, convicted, and sentenced to 45 years in prison. But he had no intention of doing his time. Instead he escaped with some others from a Federal prison in Pennsylvania. He was on the run for 3 months before police tracked him down in Virginia. He refused to surrender and shot at police who then shot back

and killed him.

Was he D.B. Cooper? He claimed he wasn't but who knows? Googling Richard McCoy will lead you to more details about this case.

D.B. Cooper and McCoy both skyjacked the same kind of plane, a Boeing 727 that had a rear door and stairs under the tail that facilitated parachuting. Since these skyjackings, doors on passenger planes have been changed so that they can't be opened from inside while the plane is in the air, so it's no longer possible for a skyjacker to jump from a plane in flight.

From: **Lloyd Penney** May 14, 2014
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Many thanks for the newest *Alexiad*, whole number 74. I've been a part of a massive catch-up at home here, with April being pretty much a lost cause for doing anything. Comments will follow...

I confirmed things with Yvonne re your job status, and the fact your job description was rewritten, which suddenly disqualified you for holding it...in my country, such a thing is illegal, and actionable through the provincial labour board, and quite possibly through the court system. It's called constructive dismissal. Employment law here is quite comprehensive and binding, and many companies pull this kind of stunt without knowing what is legal and what is not. I hope you can take similar action where you are.

Fandom is indeed drifting apart. In the modern day, fans, or at least enthusiasts of modern science fiction, failed to create some kind of community for themselves. I will admit there is a form of community among them on social media, but I think that few real friendships arise from social media. I will enjoy such communications through Facebook, but otherwise, I try to keep up with the friends I do have. I have created many more new friendships through other interests (Murdoch Mysteries and steampunk), but I will miss those long-term friendships made through SF fandom. Not even nostalgia is keeping us together...

We've only been to two cons this year, Ad Astra in March, and CostumeCon 32 in April. Both were a little cold, but at least relatively snow-free. CostumeCon 32 was a four-day con, a great time, a time to see old friends, some we hadn't seen in decades, and a showcase of some amazing creativity. For us, it was also an opportunity to take a dealers' table and sell over \$500 of merchandise, and make the weekend both fun and profitable. Coming up in a couple of weeks is Anime North, a 25,000+-person anime convention, and we have a table there, too. Fingers crossed that we can make that weekend just as profitable.

Taral's article on Judith Merrill was interesting to read. I've laid out my own opinions of her in another fanzine, and I will not repeat them here, for I have been taken to task

for them. I admit they were very negative, for I found her own actions and opinions to be the same. However, they are still my opinions, and I stand by them, and that made me appreciate Taral's article all the more.

I have been to exactly two Corflus, one in Las Vegas and one in Toronto. While I enjoyed them both, I did feel like I was looking in from the outside; always have here. I have tried my best to be a part of things, but I am most comfortable with local fandom; they are the ones who know me best. Toronto has no local SF club, so I am happy to support the clubs in Ottawa, Montréal and Vancouver as best as I can with letters to their clubzines. The rising postage rates are ridiculous, but they are what they are, and .pdfed zines are now the norm. We'd like to do Christmas cards, but postage? The current rates are in Dale Speirs' letter. Just insane.

Who's going to London? Who's going to Detroit? Not us. We've cancelled our hotel room, and we are on the brink of selling our memberships. Detcon is just down Highway 401 from us, but we can't afford that, either. For us, big cons are a thing of the past, and I think we are now just local fans.

Rodney Leighton sure sounds right about my job hunt, but I hope he isn't. The resumes continue to streak out, a local community college is helping me with my search, and I hope within the next few days to hear from a local publishing company who might hire me. The first interview was a good one, they are talking to my referees (those who gave me a good reference), and I hope to get the second interview any day now.

My loc... I stated that *Babylon 5* books were considered canon, but as the screaming idiots on the B5 Facebook page have told me time and time and time and time again, only certain books are canon. We may still get all of them, if they are available, and carry on our enjoyment of B5, screaming idiots or not. CostumeCon 32 came and went, and while Linda Wenzelburger did come to Toronto, Chris Garcia did not. I hate to see any couple break up.

Yvonne will be home shortly from another job interview, so I'd better get some lunch on the go. Off this goes to you, please relay hello to Lisa, and see you with the next issue.

From: **John Purcell** May 19, 2014
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j_purcell54@yahoo.com

I think before I get back onto working on *Askance* #31 — almost done, thankfully — a quick letter of comment to you about your zine will get me into the fanzine production mindset. Usually this works pretty well.

Another varied issue again, Joe and Lisa, and the first page is where all of my responses come from. For instance, Lisa's opening comment about the 69th anniversary of the sinking of her father's ship, the U.S.S. *Bush*,

reminded me that this coming October 23rd to 26th will be the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, in which my father served on the U.S.S. *Kitkun Bay* escort carrier as a radioman as part of Taffy Group 3. As we come up to Memorial Day next Monday, let us all remember the brave men and women who have served this country in all wars and in peacetime.

USS Kitkun Bay (CVE-71), which earned the Presidential Unit Citation for her part in the Battle off Samar. Hit by a kamikaze plane afterwards, and another during the invasion of Luzon.

<http://www.hazegray.org/danfs/carriers/cve71.txt>

Also coming up shortly is the Belmont Stakes, which will be run the day before the deadline for your next issue, so we shall see if California Chrome will be the first Triple Crown of Horse Racing winner since 1978. Many have come close, but failed. I'd like to see it happen.

Man, Joe, you really know how to quash a good mood, don't you? "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." Uh, that's rather heavy-handed, don't you think? On the other hand, I can understand where you're coming from thanks to not only your lead-in to that final paragraph, but also given the crap you're going through in your personal life. I won't get into that here — that's your tale, so I'll leave it up to you if you're planning on writing about that in the June *Alexiad* — so instead I shall go onto what probably spurred your frame of mind: the final ballot of this year's Hugo Awards, particularly the fan categories. At least that's my guess as to what is fannishly bumming you out.

It bothers me that only a handful of "traditional" fans and fanzines made the short lists, but at the same time I'm not surprised. Our hobby interest has always been influenced by communication technology, so the incursion of blog writers onto the Best Fan Writer and Best Fanzine lists bugs me only a little bit mainly because I don't live on the Internet — the computer, well, yeah, but a lot of my professional work is done this way, but that's different — and so the potential of thousands of readers of these bloggers' works can result in many registered WorldCon members to vote for their favorite bloggers. I have a couple of these, too, but I won't cast a vote for Jim C. Hines (he's not nominated; I'm just using him as an example) as Best Fan Writer since he is a published professional author, too. As for this year's Best Fan Writer other nominees, never heard of any of them. I just opened another tab and brought up the 2014 Hugo nominee listing, and it is quite telling that of all the fan writers, fan artists, and fanzine nominees listed, the only "proper" fanzine is *Journey Planet* and just two "proper" fan artists are named: Brad Foster and Steve Stiles.

I see you agree with me. The mad dogs have kneed us in the groin again — and none of those bloggers will understand the meaning or even origin of that.

Now, I know that Chris Garcia and others will defend all nominees, and that's laudable. But my point here is not to cry about "we're not represented anymore! They've stolen our awards! Waaahhhh..." Nope. Not doing that. My point is that sf fandom has practically shifted completely to electronic media as far as the Fan Hugos are concerned. After all, there is that Podcast category now to serve as fair warning of Days To Come. Oh, eventually print fanzines will go the way of the dinosaur, but that's years if not decades away. My plan is to still be putting out paper copies of *Askance* (more than I usually do, that is) and *Askew* (my paper-only personal zine) for quite a few years yet, and there are enough fanzine fans still cranking these things out to provide that necessary fanzine fix.

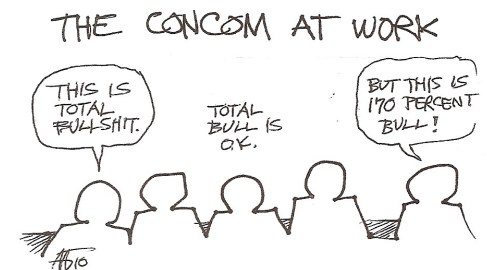
So yeah, I think I'll keep on doing zines even from the Home, where-ever that is. That, my friend, is going to be a damned long time from now, so I'm not going to lose sleep over it. Bad enough I'm on a liquid diet all day today, but that's temporary. Let's hear it for paper zines and enjoy each other's company while we're here, okay?

And cheer on California Chrome June 7th! I really want to see a Triple Crown Winner again.

Hmm. By crackey, I really DO feel like working on that fanzine review section of *Askance* #31 now. See? Works every time.

From: **Beth R. Willinger**
(from Facebook)

May 21, 2014



I am an atheist. Both a Kentucky atheist (I don't believe in basketball) and a political atheist (I don't believe in politics). That being said, I am going to go against my normal instincts not to choose sides in fan politics... because there comes a time that a true fan must stand up for an injustice within our community.

Uncle Timmy Bolgeo has been accused of being a racist on the basis of the newsletter that he sends out every Tuesday to those who want a chuckle; most of which has been gathered and sent to him by other fan from various sources... mostly facebook I'm thinking, because a great portion of these jokes/pictures/silliness I see echoed on facebook daily. Someone 'took

offense' at some of the material he sends out... ethnic jokes, blond jokes, fat jokes, doctor jokes, fan obituaries and the like. I have come to think of his newsletter (and yes, it is a newsletter; not a blog, not a dot com) as a fan family facebook. The info is sent to him by MANY friends and fans and includes political views (both sides) as well as interesting pictures and scientific articles as well as news within our fannish community.

Uncle Timmy has been in fandom for over 40 years and is well respected and LOVED within Southern Fandom (and yes, we are a sub-community of fandom with our own flair of doing things). He has done a LOT to help Southern Fandom flourish. He has been supportive of many of the other southern conventions in our area, and has shown on many occasions a generosity of spirit that is uncommon.

His accuser? Someone who created a TROLL persona on facebook in order to accuse him of being a 'racist'. Why? Because of Obama jokes? Does that make him racist? He also does Rush Limbaugh jokes, and pokes fun at a lot of silliness that exists in our modern world, including the uber political correctness that is skewing the common sense and common courtesy that used to exist.

So this TROLL (with a whole 7 friends) is able to get Archon bleating like a bunch of frightened sheep and recind their invitation for Tim to be a guest at their convention. Wow. Really. And how many of the concom actually READ *Revenge of the Hump*? Nah... why bother; just string him up and get the tar and feathers.

Racist? When JJ Johnson was murdered back in the 80s Timmy helped establish a scholarship in his name... and JJ was black. No one missed JJ more than Tim, and he had to do something about it. He couldn't bring JJ back but he could try and honor him when most would just shed a quick tear and walk away.

Generous? Personal story on that one. We got stranded on the southern side of Mt Eagle during a snowstorm, and the car broke down. Tim drove 40 miles to pick us up and put us up at his home for three days while our car was repaired and was a gracious host.. and I am not the only one who has benefitted from his caring attitude.

Archcon, you have chosen poorly... Tim Bolgeo is the real thing, and you are the one who will be the lesser for not knowing him. I stand with Tim; as a friend, an admirer, and proud Southern Fan. You've done him an injustice, Michigan Fandom.

**If one person's veto governs
civil society, then civil society is
dead.**

— JTM

From: **Sheryl A. Birkhead** Jan. 31, 2014
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg, MD
20882-3422 USA

I had hoped to have this done before the Run for the Roses, but....

The Derby was fun to watch and I can't say that has been the case every year lately. True, some horses that would have been classified as favorites had to be scratched, but it was still an enjoyable few minutes.

I hope not to jinx it, but with the performance, it seems as if there might be enough there to go for the Triple....

Your favorite was favored!

I don't know what to suggest to make the Hugos more closely match my view of them. Hey, wait a minute, that is not what they are supposed to do. For better or worse, they are evolving. The fact that I am not happy with the changes is my problem and not theirs. I do think no one is standing up to the actual definitions as they are currently accepted (and even those I feel need to be tweaked, sigh, to make things more closely fit my pre conceptions). I like fanartist being..urn..well, what it used to be. However, it is just that — what it used to be. So, either the definition needs to be refined or I need to get used to the nominees not resembling my idea of a fanartist at all. Please note that this does not mean they are not notable and ghodd at what they do — just that they do not neatly fit my, personal, definition. The cloak of fandom has spread and grown — whether I like the changes and new coverage (perceived or real?) or not.

Congratulations to Curt on winning the TAFF race.

I tried to remember to watch part of this year's Corflu on live streaming. My several quick stops to see the two set-ups did not translate to finding the transmission up and running each time I went back. Ah well.

I can commiserate with Leigh Kimmel on travel and the miserable weather for ConFusion. Yeah, this year I think we were all ready for winter to be over a lot sooner than nature was ready for it. Now we slide into the tornado..oh wait, at least that is a bit further west.

The Bletchley Circle (as seems to be true of most of the British "series") seems to have a season of 3 or so episodes. I'm not quite clear on whether or not one episode is shown over several viewing dates or not. Just as I, after several years of waiting, was getting used to watching *Sherlock*... hey where did it go? Season over! The third season of *Bletchley* has now been shown — but I have yet to get to those tapes! If it follows the trend it will be made up of 3 or 4 episodes. Project Free TV has season 2 available, but not 3, so I am hoping I managed to get all the episodes onto those stacks of tapes sitting on the desk! Netflix has 2 seasons available on live streaming and one season on DVD — but not season 3 — that I can find. Eventually I'll find out! Hmm, at least I think this is the third season.

The price to join Sam's Club has climbed. It is not close. It is not convenient shopping. There is no way they have much of anything I would purchase in a volume that makes cents to me. That having been said, its pharmacy has won the local evaluation for lowest pricing for at least a

handful of years in this area. What most people don't know is that you don't have to be a member if all you want to use is the pharmacy. They also have a good plan through the pharmacy that can locate unusual drugs or a source of one vial instead of a multipack. I did try a membership several times but never even came close to recouping the cost. Neither Costco nor Sam's are convenient and economical. Sigh, nice idea.

I gave up Sam's Club when I realized the only thing I was getting there was envelopes, and the cost in gas and time was more than I was saving, never mind the membership fee. Somehow I still get emails from them.

(agh- want to get back to this and can't find the ish, but if I wait a few more days I can see if the Triple Crown win is still alive — pardon me while I look...)

There appears to be an abundance of websites along the line of 10 (or some other number) items to buy at along with the flip side-10 (same comment) items never to buy at. I went through the ones I located on the Dollar Store and Trader Joe's — and found I had already figured out most of the information for myself- but there were some surprises. Helps save both money and disappointment.

Hmm — was over 90 degrees yesterday and now back into the 60s — guess Mother Nature isn't quite finished yet with the surprises.

Okay — since it is now up to May 21st, no questions about the Preakness outcome. The dream is still alive!

Kentucky Derby 1¼ mi	Win 1¾ lengths
Preakness 1 3/16 mi	Win 1½ lengths
Belmont Stakes 1½ mi	

Interestingly, from watching both races on TV, I would have said that the win in Kentucky was more than that so I would be a bit concerned about staying power for that next 5/16 mile needed for the Belmont. We'll see.

I see a few comments about the price of gasoline. When the mower suddenly had serious issues and I could not get the trimmer/edger to start, I looked into the routine maintenance I should have been doing all along (mind you it doesn't mean I'll do it in the future since I cannot find anyone locally that does routine care, just that I know what I should be doing). I found that the largest problem seems to be the ethanol/gasoline mixture. Okay, I'll try to see if it stays at the 10% ethanol (at 15%, all the paperwork says things will get really bad really fast); I'll remember to get the Sta-Bil and not leave any gas in the tanks. I am not sure what happens if all the stations start carrying the 15% that is being discussed...

I continue to hope that Lloyd and Yvonne can afford LonCon 3 — if only to represent the rest of us who can't quite manage it! Chez moi continues to be welcoming — instead of hotel

costs I just have to cough up the property taxes!

Agh, Dale Speirs' loc shocks . . . *Opuntia* no longer a paperzine (sigh- how soon "zine" morphed into . . .). As postage costs kill off zines one by one my mailbox will start getting lonely. Well, maybe then I'll actually have the time to do the drawing I have wanted to work on for a loooong time...well, I can hope.

Please add my condolences to those going to Johnny Carruthers on the death of his mother.

I have hoped/planned to get this mailed yesterday- so much for that idea. So, I will end this now and get it into the mailbox today. Fingers crossed for the Belmont!

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** March 18, 2014
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Thank you for Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 2014), Whole Number 74.

And a Happy Birthday to me.

I finally read *The United States of Paranoia: A Conspiracy Theory* by Jesse Walker (2013) that was reviewed by you in Vol. 12, No. 6. Met some old "friends" like Ruby Ridge, Waco, and the McMartin Preschool. The "A Journal of the Proceedings in the Detection of the Conspiracy" which was apparently published in 1744 (p.86) refers to "Negro and other Slaves". I am aware that there were White Slaves here in the early 1600s. But, was it still the case in 1744 or is it referring to some other Slaves? Just wondering. Good Woody Allen quote on page 291: "Socrates is a man. All men are mortal. Therefore all men are Socrates." Walker's mention of Bob Fletcher of the Militia of Montana was interesting because many years ago I had a conversation with Fletcher mainly concerning his appearance before a Congressional Committee. He told me that the Committee and staff were taken aback and didn't quite know what to do when they discovered that James Johnson from the Militia of Ohio was a Black.

As opposed, I think to Indian Slaves. I've heard that Tituba of the Salem Witchcraft was an Indian.

Good review of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman. I commented in a previous issue that the book was enjoyed but that I was not really happy with the ending.

On May 17 I boarded the train (for the first time in almost 40 years) and headed for Vancouver, Washington (not British Columbia) for the U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Reunion in Portland, Oregon. It was an overnight train trip. The reunion was at a hotel on an island in the Columbia River. (The Washington train station was closer to the hotel and they did not provide service from the Portland train station.) I will not go into the various activities and tours. However, I will mention that the speaker at our

banquet was Ken Buckles whose Great Uncle was Frank Buckles the last World War I United States veteran who died at the age of 110 years and was previously mentioned by Joe. On May 23 I again boarded the train for the return trip home. The train round trip was interesting and enjoyable with the exception that they need to work on their meal offerings. Oh, my reading was the latest Terry Pratchett Discworld novel *Raising Steam* about building the first train system on Discworld. For all Discworld fans the novel is highly recommended.

Sue Burke: Cats killing birds is an act of nature and I doubt that they are killing eagles or other large birds. As I understand it they mainly get birds that are old and/or ill so that they are slow. One day at work I was eating in the company cafeteria and sitting next to a window. A bird flew into the window and fell, apparently lifeless, to the ground. After several minutes it got up and flew off. I primarily favor nuclear power, natural gas, coal (under certain conditions), and Solar. I now question the later; at least on a large scale. The Ivanpah Solar Plant covers over five square miles of desert southwest of Las Vegas and cost some \$2.2 billion. Apparently it will produce less than a natural gas plant and cost some four times as much. Also, it's killing birds.

Sheryl L. Birkhead: The Sarah Clemens art that I purchased is approximately 9" by 13". It is titled Uncle Fang and was created in 2013. It portrays a dragon head and neck. There is a cat asleep on top of the dragon's head. It triggered a memory from when I was quite young. No, we did not have a dragon. But, we did have a dog and a cat. One day I went into our back yard. There was the dog asleep with her paws stretched out in front of her. The cat was asleep with his head resting on the dog's paws. I immediately got my mother to come out and see it. Sadly, my mother who was usually a picture taker apparently failed to take a picture so the scene just rests in my memory.

I went to the site you furnished for the CBI. The California Bureau of Investigation really does exist (even if I had never heard of it) and is apparently a part of the state Attorney General's office. That makes what happened with the CBI on the Mentalist even more confusing. Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

The California Bureau of Investigation (CBI) provides expert investigative services to assist local, state and federal agencies in major criminal investigations across the state. These specialized services include criminal profiling, polygraph examinations, sexual predator tracking, hi-tech crime and violent crime investigations.

Major CBI responsibilities are to:

- Perform investigations for the Attorney General's Legal Divisions;
- Assist district attorneys and local law enforcement agencies in complex or multi-jurisdictional

investigations, and in cases where local conflicts of interest arise; and

- Conduct special investigations as directed by the Attorney General in response to requests from the Governor, the Legislature or other state agencies.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** May 28, 2014
921 S. St. Bernard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143-3310 USA

I live an uninteresting life. I do not travel to cons and cannot report on miles traveled, traffic conditions, weather, and equally fascinating matters. This leaves me with reent reading, little of it of recent vintage. I am in the middle of *Queen of Scots* by John Guy (H. M. Co., 2004), a good enough narrative history which I expect to keep in preference to Antonia Fraser's 1989 book. Guy claims to have more significant documentary discoveries. One flaw that I do find is his fondness for dead metaphors, ancient and modern. I have not yet glimpsed the tip of any iceberg, but the smoking gun was there, sure enough. I do not tremble at the thought of all the great evils at large in the world; but the misuse of language and logic does rouse me to comment and correction. I am in my element as copy editor.

An interesting book seen at the library was *The First World War in 100 Objects*; its companion work for the Second was not available. I set limits to what I will read about either war — but there else could you get close-ups of the Pickelhaube, the Adrian helmet, or the Blue Max? The selection for WW II Probalby does not include the German soldier's gas mask in its cylindrical container; these were prominent among the castoffs that littered a roadside in Ruhpolding in late April of 1945. Of German-made objects of that era, I preserve a thermometer on which 18° C is designated as "room temperature". In the postwar years, we had to make do with less.

I have found, on a patch of rainwashed soil, an Indian head cent (1891), filling my quota for the year. When was the last time any of you found any such thing? Foreign coins, recently lost, turn up here in the big city; but why anyone would carry around (and then lose) a Syrian one-pound coin of 1972 date is more than I can figure out.

Tyson's "Cosmos" has told me little that I did not kniw, but held interest just the same.

PS. I see where a horse has run faster than two bunches of other horses.

From: **George W. Price** June 1, 2014
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April Alexiad:

John Thiel observes, "Haven't seen a story about a successfully functioning utopia in years." Gee, could it be that authors and editors

are finally catching on that the laws of economics and the limitations of human nature make utopias utterly impossible? But no — wishful thinking will persist.

Well, L. Neil Smith is still grinding them out: the webcomic Roswell, Texas and the Ngu Family Cycle for example.

As ever, Alexis Gilliland is stimulating. First, he points out flaws in the gold standard, notably “that gold is a commodity, like oil or wheat, and is therefore subject to market fluctuations caused by supply and demand. . . . [I]f 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 payments deficit that the government suddenly needs to deal with.”

Yes, in theory that’s possible. But it is unlikely because in a gold-standard economy the quantity of gold used as a store of value — money and jewelry — is usually very much greater than the quantity needed for other purposes. Changes in the demand for gold as a commodity usually cause only ripples in the general price level, and that is a lot more tolerable than the wide swings that fiat money systems suffer. There is no perfection, but the gold standard is far better at keeping the value of money reasonably stable.

The problem Alexis sees would indeed crop up if we tried “bimetallism”: defining the currency in two different metals at the same time, as William Jennings Bryan wanted. He demanded that the monetary value of silver and gold be held constant at sixteen ounces of silver equals one ounce of gold. That would have broken down as soon as the commodity-market values of the two metals deviated significantly from 16 to 1. By the way, the market ratio of silver and gold is now about 66 to 1.

When the gold standard does break down, it is almost always due to politicians refusing to abide by the gold standard’s rules — and I say “almost” just to allow for cases I’ve never heard of. Could we even have “a suddenly ballooning balance of payments deficit that the government suddenly needs to deal with” except as a consequence of the government hampering free trade and mucking around with the money supply and currency rules?

Alexis says, “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.” All perfectly true. But were not the “crisis” and “events” themselves caused and worsened by refusing to pursue policies appropriate to the gold standard, such as

balancing the budget? It’s like the defining example of “chutzpah”: the man who murders his parents and then begs for mercy because he’s an orphan.

This seems to be a chronic disease of democracy. Politicians want desperately to spend money, which helps get them re-elected, but they fear to raise taxes, which may get them dis-elected. So they run deficits and cover them by inflating the currency, just what the discipline of the gold standard aims to prevent. Abandoning the gold standard — that “barbarous relic,” as Lord Keynes called it — is easier than restraining spending to what honest taxation allows. And of course, when the inflationary crisis inevitably shows up, they blame it on “the rich” and/or “Wall Street” and/or “the international Jewish bankers” and/or whoever else makes a handy scapegoat.

Secondly, Alexis has some thoughts on increasing inequality of income, which he attributes primarily to the disappearance of middle-class jobs. He cites his dentist using a 3-D printer to build plastic crowns, displacing a skilled worker. (He does not cite the new jobs of designing, making, and servicing those 3-D printers, nor the jobs — probably not so skilled — supplying whatever the dentist buys with the money he saves on making the crowns.)

We might also consider how the disappearance of some skilled but routine jobs, such as building cars, might be connected to the appearance of other skilled jobs. For example, there are now multitudes of jobs in programming and other computer-related work, jobs that didn’t exist fifty years ago. Where did all the people to fill these jobs come from? Could it be that they are available only because they are no longer needed in those factories which moved overseas to find cheaper labor?

To be sure, the new jobs usually require a good education — solid literacy and numeracy at a minimum, though not necessarily a college degree. Failure of many public schools to provide such an education means that we are breeding millions of unemployables. That certainly increases income inequality. (I leave open the question of why schools are failing. Is it the way we run the schools? A lower-class culture that doesn’t value education? Both? Neither?)

I also wonder to what extent the job market is made “sticky” by excessive rules and regulations, especially those intended to make bosses treat workers “fairly.” Jobs would be much easier to get if employers could fire workers out of hand without having to worry about lawsuits for “wrongful termination.” (I could tell you some horror stories from my own career — it took us two years to get rid of one woman whose work was good but who had a nasty personality that kept her department in an uproar.)

True, if we went back to complete “at will” hiring and firing, more bosses would more openly indulge in racism, sexual harassment, and

other managerial sins. This drawback should be far outweighed by the flexibility of being able to try out people for a short time, and then fire them if they don’t work out. As it is, employers are very reluctant to take on people who may be hard to dump if they don’t pan out. In short, “hard to fire” means “hard to hire.”

John Purcell finds that Sam’s Club prices quite often “aren’t really a savings.” I joined Sam’s Club in 1995 because it was next door to where I worked. I kept up my membership after I retired, even though I must now drive eight miles to shop there. Nearly all Sam’s prices are substantially lower — gasoline is about 40 cents less than near my home. The biggest drawback is that Sam’s sells mostly in quantity, and with fresh foods the smallest package is often more than I can eat before it spoils.

Roger Fox in FoxTrot would go to “CostClub” and come back with things like 128 fluid ounce tubes of pimple cream, which made Paige (his vain and insecure daughter, and if Jason were your little brother you’d be insecure, too) scream.

— JTM

Sue Burke notes that far more birds are killed by cats than by wind farms. I can believe that. When I was growing up, circa World War II, we took for granted that cats would roam freely. I was in my twenties, I think, before I ever heard of people not letting their cats go outdoors. Nowadays, making cats stay indoors is so common that I rarely see one outside. (There are also far fewer dogs running loose.) I wonder how many fewer birds we would have if this cultural change had not occurred?

However, predatory cats are not the only reason for a bird population to drop. As a child I would often see dozens of sparrows perched in a row on a telephone wire over the alley. I never see that now. I deduce that after the war the number of sparrows fell sharply because in the post-war prosperity the numerous horse-drawn delivery wagons were all replaced by trucks. For those too young to see the connection, sparrows love horse dung. They pick out the undigested oats and other grains. No horses, no dung — and far fewer sparrows.

From: **AL du Pisani** June 2, 2014
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It has been an interesting couple of months here in sunny South Africa. The rainy season is over, and the dry and cold winter lies ahead. Not that it had been all that cold as of yet. More as if it had cooled down a lot, but not yet cold.

In my last letter I mentioned a bit about

South African options for getting on to the Internet, and why in most cases Telkom ADSL is the most cost effective. I since then have had the joy of the other end of Telkom's service, when my telephone line stopped working, probably due to the heavy rain falling at the time. It took a month of increasingly exasperated calls before I got my line back. And in the process I had the experience of having the Telkom technician phone me, to phone the husband (at work), to explain what is going on, so that he can call his wife (at home), to let in the Telkom technician, outside of their gates, so that he can repair the telephone line, running at the back of their yard. That this was two weeks since the previous technician could not get access, and walked away, increased my vexation.

In the end I had my line back, and now, sometimes, I get all of 50% of what I am paying for. Usually it is 25% to 10%. Even if I got 100% (highly unusual), I am still paying a lot of not very much.

Shortly after this experience, I also had the joy of having my geyser burst. Luckily, while I was at home. I could immediately call an emergency plumber to disconnect the water, power of the geyser, and get all the remaining water out. Since I had already had a lot of water come down my ceiling.

It turned out that the previous idiots that had worked on my geyser had not done all of the work I had paid them for, and disappeared with my money. No attempt to get hold of them afterwards had born any fruit.

Your house problems sound like Sheryl Birkhead's.

This allowed me to do something I had been musing about – put in a solar powered geyser. Interestingly enough, solar powered geysers fully installed cost between 2 and 4 times as much as the plain electric ones. But they do promise an about 40% reduction in electricity costs. I have not yet seen much of a decline in electricity costs, since I made a couple of lifestyle changes, with a side effect of using more electricity at home. And the annual electricity price increase has also come and gone.

So far the solar geyser has been a good experience. The water is hotter than before. This may be because I have not had any grey days like we have at the end of January, where it can be overcast and rainy for weeks on end. (This year, I had about three weeks of not seeing the sun.)

There also was the elections. My experience of it was that I waited until late afternoon to vote, since I had in the past spent long hours queuing to vote. That did not help me – I still stood in line for 90 minutes. The reason for that was that even though there were no less than 4 rooms set up at the polling station, every single person had to go past the one election official with an electronic barcode reader. The barcode reader vetted all ID books, to see if we were

valid voters. Unfortunately, there was one, only one and exactly one reader at the station, and all 4 000 voters had to go past him. No wonder that earlier in the day people queued for four and a half hours to get in and vote.

So you have Voter ID. Maybe that's how we can silence the opposition. "That's how they do it in Nelson Mandela's country." (But in Kentucky we have to show picture ID, and no one complains about it here.)

The room set up for voting was mostly empty, with the usual station for the official marking me in the voter's roll, the official marking my thumb to show that I have voted, and the official that gave me my two ballots. The voting booths was the usual IEC flimsy plastic impregnated cardboard, wobbling as I cast my votes. As was the ballot boxes. The previous government did a couple of things better than the present one. Three of them were to provide decent thick marking pencils, for the voting, solid wooden voting booths, and metal ballot boxes.

It was because the government looked at what was going to happen with a lot more people voting, ordering more voting booths to be manufactured, that was the excuse for the IEC to take over the running of the elections. The IEC have never had decent polling booths, and looks as if they never will have. And for all the public talk about the independence of the IEC, it is surprising how much of their top management structure are solid longterm ANC members.

In any case, the whole issue of a single person vetting all voters have been the bottleneck in the previous two elections. It looks as if the IEC is very happy with the way the system works, and are not going to change it, by for instance, having a second barcode scanner vetting ID's.

I am in a very DA ward, with about 80% of the votes going to the DA. The DA did well in the election, retaining the Western Cape, and gaining in most provinces, especially in Gauteng. Unfortunately, after the elections they decided to wash a lot of dirty linen in public, and had much of a leadership meltdown.

As expected, the ANC won the election. Jacob Zuma celebrated by having the largest cabinet in the world, with 35 ministers, and 37 deputy ministers. Initial estimates was that this is going to cost the county R145 Million a year – recent estimates are talking numbers in the region of 8 times more. And most of the cabinet are party apparatchics that have never done anything but politics, and nonentities at that. Most of the few decent and/or competent ministers are either out or have moved sideways.

At some stage when you see somebody being hellbent aiming for oblivion, all you can do is get out of the way, and wait for the idiot to (hopefully) kill himself, without too much collateral damage. It looks as if the ANC want to destroy South Africa. They are succeeding in

many instances. Yet, this is my home. I do not want to leave. And I keep on hoping.

I have recently gained a new source of books, and have started to read a lot more than I have been for the past couple of years. Much more of these books are stuff I like. Hopefully, this is leading to more of my kind of stuff being published.

I hope that you are well, and that you also are finding more of your kind of books available.

I have been reading more and more Kindle books.

— JTM

From: **Sue Burke** June 6, 2014
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¡Viva el Rey Felipe VI! By the time you read this, Spain should have a new king. No one felt completely surprised when King Juan Carlos I abdicated on Monday morning, June 2. People had been talking about if and whether he should set down the crown for the last couple of years. At age 76, a knee implant and two hip implants with complications have taxed his get-up-and-go, and some recent missteps have sent his popularity to a low of 3.72 on a scale of 0 to 10 – although he's still rated much higher than any politician or political party, the Parliament, the government administration, and the Catholic Church.

The soon-to-be King Emeritus has also grumbled about the way Prince Charles of Great Britain has been kept waiting and wasting away. He would not do that to his own son. In his address to the nation, he said a younger generation could bring about the "transformation and reforms that the current situation demands." High unemployment and deep-seated political corruption along with regional independence movements frustrate everyone, but what a king can do about them in a constitutional monarchy remains to be seen.

Yet somehow, Felipe has to prove his worth fast. A hefty minority is calling for a third republic. They won't go away, and they will persuade others if they get the opportunity.

On another subject – the Hugo Awards – my husband was outraged by nominees. How could *Pacific Rim* be considered for best long-form dramatic presentation? I couldn't answer that, although I did explain some of the other controversies on the ballot. He thought those were even more unfortunate. As for myself, I'll read as many of the nominees as I can – not all 15 *The Wheel of Time* novels, sorry; but thanks, Tor, for letting me put them on my Kindle – and I'll vote for what seems to me to best represent the genre.

Among other nominees, I've read the novelette "Opera Vita Aeterna" by the infamous Vox Day: a weak story with little tension or plot, borrowed tropes, and bloated writing. I don't

believe it got on the nomination list by its own merits – especially compared to Ted Chiang’s thoughtful and thought-provoking novelette “The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling.”

My sympathies to Joe for the loss of his job. My husband’s job is iffy after this fall, too, so he’s studying statistical analysis, networking software design, and another foreign language to try to position himself for the next job. We can get by on savings for a while, but unemployment here in Spain will likely be stuck at 25% for the coming few years.

Also condolences to Lisa for the loss of her semi-sister, if she can be called that. I miss my sister every day.

And thanks to Taral Wayne for his thoughtful and complete report on Judith Merrill.

Robert S. Kennedy asked what scenery is like moving at 310km/190mph. It’s sort of like riding in an airplane. Close-up stuff whizzes past in a blur, but more distant scenery drifts by at a more stately and easily enjoyed pace. It’s so pleasant that now more people get from Madrid to Barcelona by train than plane, since the trip is just as fast by rail as air: 1.1 million train-riders from January to April this year.

In a cartoon, Alexis A. Gilliland asked for a megacenser. There is such a thing here in Spain, the silver-plated botafumeiro or *smoke expeller* at the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela: 80kg/175lb and 1.6m/5.25feet tall, stinking up the place since the early Middle Ages. Used only on special occasions, it has 40kg/88lb of charcoal and incense shoveled into it before being swung on a centuries-old pulley mechanism; ropes are replaced regularly. There have been a few accidents, and while no one has ever been hurt, in 1499 it somehow disconnected from the rope and smashed through an upper-level window.

I remember reading James A. Michener’s description of the botafumeiro in Iberia (1968).

In a more recent Spanish development, a Costco opened in Seville in May, the first store of its type in the country. It had 15,000 members at its opening and expectations to sign up more as people see how it works. The first person to sign up was a transplanted Yankee. Costco plans to open stores in Barcelona, Valencia, and Madrid. Since I don’t own a car, I doubt I’ll join, but it’s a tempting idea.

Apropos, a little, to our ongoing discussion of Jews, a town called Castrillo Matajudíos (population 56, surrounded by almost as many electricity-generating windmills) had a referendum in May on whether to change its name, which means *Jew-Killer Town*. (A *castrillo* is a small walled town.) According to the mayor, who had pledged to quit if the name change was not approved, the town was founded in 1035 by Jews who had fled from a nearby town that killed 60 of its Jewish residents and destroyed their neighborhood. They named their new town Castrillo

Matajudíos, *Jew-Hill Town*.

In 1623, however, more than a century after the expulsion of the Jews, the town’s name was noted as Matajudíos. It may have been an intentional change to demonstrate the residents’ conversion to Catholicism, but Mayor Lorenzo Rodríguez says it was more likely a typo.

In the 1980s, residents considered a name change but nothing became of that. In 2009, the issue came up again, and finally last month, after a public meeting with an archeologist, they held their vote: 29-19 on favor of changing the name. Voters even had a choice of new names, Castrillo Matajudíos or Castrillo Mota de Judíos, the latter impervious to scandalous typos. (Mata de Judíos would be *Jewish Shrub*.) Mota de Judíos won with 26 votes.

Rodríguez says the paperwork for the name change should be complete within a year.

In bullfighting news, a fight had to be suspended in Las Ventas bullring in Madrid on May 21 after less than an hour. Usually, in a bullfight, three matadors face six bulls, two bulls apiece. The first bullfighter, David Mora, was ready and waiting as the first bull came out, but rather than charge at the cape, it trampled him, tossed him around, and finally gored him twice in the thigh, tearing open a major artery. He was taken to the medical complex under the ring for life-saving emergency surgery and blood transfusions. At that point, as is usual in these cases, the third bullfighter of the day, Antonio Nazaré, came forward and killed the bull.

Then bullfighter number two, Jiménez Fortes, faced the second bull. Soon he was thrown to the ground, and as is usual in these cases, Nazaré came out with his cape to distract the bull so Fortes could scurry to safety. However, the bull managed to hook a horn in Nazaré’s leg and throw him around, wrenching his knee and tearing a ligament. He retreated to the medical unit. The bullfight continued and Fortes sunk his sword into the bull to kill it, but in its death throes it attacked and gored him in a leg down to the bone three times. He limped off to the medical unit and was in no condition to return.

So the afternoon ended early with no matador left standing. All three bullfighters are looking forward to returning to the ring as soon as possible. Injuries are “the price you have to pay” to be a bullfighter, Fortes said. Matadors are not normal people. The leftover bulls, by the way, will be used in other fights.

Southern and south-central Spain is suffering from a record-breaking drought that will seriously reduce grain, olive, almond and grape harvests, in addition to eliminating pasture. Meanwhile, about 1800km/1100miles to the east, the Balkans suffered record floods, with the added disaster of land mines from the war 20 years ago being washed into new places.

In literature trivia, Kindle España has compiled the most highlighted sentence among Spanish Kindle users. It comes from a historical detective novel by Marcos Chicot, *El asesinato de Pitágoras* (*Pythagorus’ Murderer*): “El objetivo de cada hombre no debe ser llegar a un

punto, sino avanzar desde dónde está.” (“The objective of every man should not be to arrive at some point, but to advance from where he is.”) Most highlighting in Spain actually takes place in self-help books, although this quote seems to be somewhere in that ballpark.

That sounds like Coubertin’s description of the Olympics:

“The important thing at the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not to conquer, but to fight well.”

— JTM

Regarding my own literature, I have a short story, “Summer Home,” scheduled for publication in the December issue of Asimov’s. I also turned in a translation of *Prodigies* by Angélica Gorodischer, an Argentinian author, to Small Beer Press – a very poetic fantasy that some people will love and others will not. I’m currently translating a Spanish steampunk novel, very different from the usual Victorian setting. And I’m writing my own stuff and waiting for news I can announce.

From: **Timothy Lane** June 8, 2014
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I notice the discussion of Oscar Wilde and his ill-conceived libel suit against the Marquis of Queensberry. As it happens, I just read a collection of Sherlock Holmes pastiches by Donald Thomas that included the Wilde case. Holmes recommends that Wilde simply ignore the accusation, and Thomas notes afterward that there were those who felt this was the best approach. This is very close to what Darrell Schweitzer thinks he should have done, except that the idea would be to ignore it, neither admitting nor denying anything.

From: **Taras Wolansky** June 9, 2014
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April 2014 *Alexiad*:

To answer your question, I do plan on attending Detcon. I have faith in the machine gun nests, mines, and barbed wire that encircle the Detroit convention district.

Beijing 2016 Worldcon bid: Would this be the first Worldcon held in a non-democratic country? Maybe we should get used to it – we’re plum out of Churchills and Reagans.

The Dramatic Presentation Nebula: only one *Doctor Who* nominee? How did that happen? Good taste, or a one-nominee-per-series rule (as I proposed for the Hugos)? Since *Pacific Rim* is also a nominee, that probably rules out good taste.

Commentary on Ridley Scott’s Gladiator: This was rather hard to follow, but I get the impression that the movie was not quite as

unhistorical as I thought it was.

Taral Wayne's memoir of Judith Merrill had me scratching my head. I've always thought Merrill's greatest SF achievement was the series of highly literary "Year's Best" anthologies she did in the Fifties and Sixties, yet Wayne mentions only *England Swings SF*, the unappetizing New Age caboose to the series.

R. Lauraine Tutihasi: The Bletchley Circle came back, but missing its chief and (excellent) cast member, the beguilingly named Honeysuckle Weeks (from *Foyle's War*).

Darrell Schweitzer: Accurate predictions in an old SF novel, like *Foundation*, will tend to be invisible to the reader. Of course the hero has a hand-held calculator. Of course he can get money from a cash machine (*The Door into Summer*).

"Taras Wolansky is trying to twist my words regarding Oscar Wilde". If by "twist" Darrell means "quote accurately"!

On reflection, that's not as silly as it sounds. There is one's intended meaning, and then there is what one actually writes. Thus, an accurate quotation really may "twist" or misrepresent what one *wanted* to say.

In any case, I'm glad Darrell and I are on the same page as to Oscar Wilde's unethical conduct in trying to incriminate the Marquess of Queensbury through perjured testimony.

Sadly, in at least one of Clifford Simak's time travel novels, we "learn" that William Shakespeare was really a butcher, not a playwright.

I recently read *Contested Will*, a history of the Shakespeare authorship controversy. The final section presents some of the evidence that Shakespeare was Shakespeare. One line of evidence I didn't know about before is that while at the time plays were published without the author's name (the acting company was considered the owner), people who bought the plays wrote in the name. And, of course, the name they wrote on Shakespeare's plays was Shakespeare (or some variant like "W. Shak.").

But one of those inscriptions, on a play not by Shakespeare, was particularly interesting. An important court official had picked up an old play at the bookseller and asked a knowledgeable friend who the playwright might be. The friend said that he had seen the play and that the playwright, a minister, had performed the lead role himself; but he, too, couldn't remember the name. So the official put what information he had on his copy of the play, sourcing it to his knowledgeable friend, you guessed it, William Shakespeare.

Alexis Gilliland: Taras **"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 achanging"**. In other words, the historical record is on my side; your unsupported belief is on the other!

Here's what I think a lot of people are missing. Let's say the widget industry produces ten million units at \$1 apiece; total product, ten

million dollars. Then automation strikes and it's now producing 100 million units at one cent apiece; total product, one million dollars! In other words, as production of a good is automated, it diminishes in importance as part of the economy, even though in purely physical terms production has greatly increased. Economic value is determined by scarcity relative to demand; automation makes goods less scarce.

Sue Burke: **"Some estimates say that up to 14 million Jews might be Sephardic descendants"**. That's roughly the total population of Jews on the planet, so it may be a little optimistic.

Too bad *300: Rise of Empire* left out the bizarre events that really happened, like Themistocles using the Persian Navy to block his unreliable allies from running away, or Artemisia attacking her Persian allies so the Greeks don't sink her.

Robert S. Kennedy: After swallowing Crimea, I think Putin backed off from additional annexations of Ukrainian territory because, to his chagrin, he discovered that even in Russian-dominated Crimea support for what he was doing was only lukewarm. In 2008, Sarah Palin was famously ridiculed by liberal "experts" for predicting Putin would do exactly what he has done (if the U.S. elected a weak leader like Obama). Prior to making that (accurate) prediction, she and McCain had been briefed on the danger by the Presidents of Ukraine and Georgia. My sister was the interpreter; she recalls the fierce intensity with which Palin drank in the conversation.

Here's a terrific hard SF TV show for you: *The 100* on the CW network. I think its first season is drawing to a close, though.

Lloyd Penney: The sequel series to *Babylon 5* was called *Crusade*. Unfortunately it was canceled after 13 episodes, just as it was finally coming together. (It's amusing to think that, just a few years later, the producers would never go for such a title.)

George W. Price: I happened to look at the Wikipedia entry for *Stranger in a Strange Land*. No indication that most critics deplore the "uncut" version.

From: **Murray Moore** June 11, 2014
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Sue Burke's Hispacon report make me want to go to Spain. Sue's description of the ease of travel by public transport in Spain impresses me. The Spanish may be broke but they got a good transportation system for their money. Good food, interesting locales, small convention: but I don't speak or understand Spanish.

The equivalent to Hispacon, but to which I can drive, is Congrès Boréal, an annual convention somewhere in Quebec, usually in Montreal, beginning in 1979. Congrès Boréal has had English-speaking guests, including Delany and Gibson: but I don't speak or

understand French: I can puzzle meaning from text thanks to five years of high school French in the 1960s.

I know two Congrès Boréal movers and shakers, not from my attending a Congrès Boréal, but because I met them at conventions outside of Quebec. I last saw my friend Christian Sauve in Melbourne in 2010 during Aussiecon 4.

During DeepSouthcon 52 (and where were you, Lisa and Joe?) I confessed to Curt Phillips that I have not read any of the Heinlein juveniles. From his stock Curt suggested I buy and read *Have Space Suit, Will Travel*. Buy I did and read I have. Having read, I understand why people who read HSS, WT when, or close to when, it was published, and who were of the age intended to read it, think well of it. I am 62 years of age not 12 however. Not to say I might not read another Heinlein juvenile.

Heinlein's *Children*, the invaluable guide to all the juveniles, will soon be available in ebook format.

— The Author

Joe your remark you don't drive epic distances in a day anymore. We took two days each way to drive between Mississauga and Bristol to attend DeepSouthCon 52. Although I think it was an illusion, driving through West Virginia seemed to take a greater percentage of the travel time than in reality.

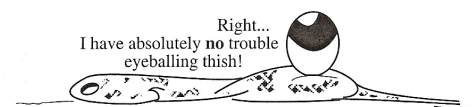
Re: gold and the gold standard, a brother-in-law this past Sunday told me he has a computer program running that "mines" bitcoins; he said that at the end of a month the software has created 1/3 of a bitcoin, and that a bitcoin (last Sunday) had a cash value of \$700.

I took Joe your suggestion and I did invite, with an explanation, last year's Hugo-winning Fan Writer, Tansy Rayner Roberts, to contribute to Fanthology 2013. She did not respond to my invitation. Fanthology 2013 is viewable at and downloadable from efanzines.com. Writers in it hail from Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, and your country.

Somehow I'm not surprised.
And this year's nominees are all bloggers. Will they even respond (or not-respond) to such an invite?

— JTM

WAHF:
Lloyd Daub, with various items of interest.



Sorry, but I just don't feel like writing anything funny. I think that right now Paul Gadzikowski is much the same about drawing.

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Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph, Major, Lisa,
& McCormick, Grant
Tech Staff: Grant C. McCormick

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

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

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