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## ***The Man of Maybe Half-a-Dozen Faces***

by Ray Vukceovich (New York: St. Martin's Minotaur, 2000)

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

A first novel by Ray Vukceovich, *The Man of Maybe Half-a-Dozen Faces* is a delightful title that covers a wonderfully quirky story. While a mystery, is it weird enough to be called a fantasy. The lead character is a private detective with multiple personality disorder; really, these are lead characters. This "group" is tracking down a serial killer who is strangling people who wrote bad documentation to computer programs. And if you have not run out to your local bookstore screaming "Give me this book!", wait, there is more.



The story opens in Eugene, Oregon, with Skylight Howell, the personality with the PI skills. His is a sort of noire perspective, with beautiful women and bad liquor, but all with a different twist, such as hallucinations of trained seals. His other "disguises" include Dennis, the Math guy, Lulu, who has a feminine outlook and Dieter, who knows the secret ingredient in good Mexican food. All these and a few other personalities get along fine and cooperate. Actually they make doing detective work easier, for as Skylight muses, he can see the cases from various perspectives at once. While the multiple personality disorder maybe a plus, our heroes still have a problem, a monkey on their back: an addiction to tap dancing. When the mood calls, a night or maybe even days can be spent in such seedy dives as Gotta Dance, where one can get "Karaoke tap 24 hours a day".

Skylight and crew are hired by the beautiful but slang-impaired Prudence Deerfield to find her missing brother Pablo and clear him of charges that he murdered his business partner. The team checks though many channels, starting with the Internet, looking at such sources as alt.dicks and [www.deadguys.com](http://www.deadguys.com). The Internet is a valuable resource of news, gossip and therapy for Skylight and Co.: they even use private chat rooms to discuss the case amongst themselves. The book is not all an armchair mystery and highlights downtown Eugene. Nor is this the only case that the agency has: one involves following a high school nemesis now police lieutenant to prove martial infidelity, the other is a client who want to track down one of the personalities to start up a computer software company.

While not essential to enjoying the book, a passing familiarity with computers and the Internet is helpful, as some of the plot rests on them. Many of the interesting twists revolve around these topics: for example, as the plot thickens, a software company named EES keeps cropping up. Eventually it is revealed that this company is based in Russia and is an acronym for Evil Empire Software. But this book is not all keyboard and networks. There are break-ins and fights, trailings and interrogations: all one could hope for in a mystery, but again, with a unique twist.

So if you have not yet run out to your bookstore, go and demand your copy now.

## FANZINES

By Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself – the past 70 years. Fanzines are a reflection of many fans' interest in the printed word and amateur publishing. The publication you are reading this in is a fanzine, but a specialized one. A variety of other fanzines are also available – many of them by request – and this column will cover some of them each issue.

All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as “egoboo” – is what fanzine publishing is all about.

Check out the fanzines below and broaden your participation in fandom.

MIMOSA (Nicki & Richard Lynch, P.O.Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885; e-mail to [fiawol@cpcug.org](mailto:fiawol@cpcug.org); website at <http://www.iophan.org/mimosa>; available for \$4.00 a copy, Letters of Comment, or a fanzine sent in trade)

*Mimosa* is a Hugo-winning “genzine” (general fanzine) which is available in two formats: the printed copy, and the website version. When each new issue is uploaded to the Lynches' website it joins the prior published issues there. And that means that anyone with a computer can effortlessly sample much of this fanzine's long run.

The current issue is #26 and its 56 double-columned pages contain a wealth of material, ranging from Forrest J. Ackerman's serialized memoirs (now up to Part 11) and Dave Kyle's reminiscences of the '30s and '40s (a series of different articles, this one about his attempts to become a professional science fiction illustrator) to tributes to the late Joe Mayhew (two-time Hugo-winning fan artist) and looks back at earlier Chicago Worldcons in the wake of last year's Chicon 2000. But that's not all! SF author Mike Resnick has an article about his days as the head of a rather sleazy fiction-factory, John Hertz explains the fannish fascination with Georgette Heyer's Regency England, and Ron Bennett remembers the British Eastercons of the '50s. The Lynches themselves provide a lengthy editorial introduction to the issue, and close it out with 12 pages of letters.

As may be inferred from that brief rundown, *Mimosa* is a fanzine which concerns itself with fandom's past, serving to document the events and people of fandom's rich history as a “fanzine of record.” It's rather like hearing old family stories, some of them fascinating and all of them invaluable to anyone just beginning to explore fandom and curious about its past.

TIGHTBEAM (Janine G. Stinson, P.O.Box 430314, Big Pine Key, FL 33043-0314; e-mail to [tropicsf@aol.com](mailto:tropicsf@aol.com); published for The National Fantasy Fan Federation; inquire about availability outside the N3F)

The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) is the longest-surviving “national” club (its membership is international) in fandom, having been established in the 1940s. It has been the target of criticism over the years for its relative insularity from fandom at large, but a wide variety of prominent fans have passed through it – usually early in their fan careers. *Tightbeam* is the club's “correspondence zine,” dedicated to carrying letters from club members, and is published quarterly. The most recent is #225. The issue is a bit thin, carrying only two letters, 7 book reviews, a brief article, a puzzle and an editorial. In that editorial Jan describes her efforts to generate new members for the N3F by giving away copies of *Tightbeam* at a local convention, and she has been sending copies to others who requested it. If you're looking for a quiet spot in which to get your toes wet in the world of fanzines, *Tightbeam* (and the N3F) might be just for you.

That's all the space I have this issue, but I'll be reviewing more fanzines here in issues to come. --Ted White

## WSFA—Healing Your Pets Naturally

The 2/2/ First Friday in February meeting was called to order by Sam Pierce, “All right, let's have a meeting!” “Why,” said a WSFA n. “So we can get it over with,” Sam P replied.

For old business Sam Lubell reported "At the last meeting, in the absence of the President, VP, Treasurer, and trustees, Sec. Sam presided." Bob reported that the treasurer was \$1,954.05 and that "dues are due and payable." Sam P said, "I see we got dues for 25 people." Trustees? "No," Eric sighed.

The entertainment committee reported that "Huxatony Phil came out, TV was there, but someone turned on a strobe light. So now they think hell will freeze over." "Did he start breakdancing?" a WSFAn asked?

Lee's Activities Committee reported that "What I have here is a schedule, March 1<sup>st</sup> (Thursday), 4<sup>th</sup> (Sunday)." Sam P clarified. "What she's talking about is manning the WETA phones." Lee continued. "They want us on the 13<sup>th</sup> when Carl Sagan is on, that's the closest they get to SF. Kindred Spirits, healing your pets naturally..." Mike said, "We need to do Maryland. They show Dr. Who." Lee countered with an offer "But the Brew Pub is there [Virginia.]. Sun and Sat 4-7:30 weekdays. 7-30 to 11 pm. Also March 17 and 18<sup>th</sup>. Is anyone interested in a date other than the weekend <silence> good. <Chaos ensued> If we get 15 people in and out, next year they will have something we'd like on when we answer the phones." Erica commented, "But then we wouldn't be home to watch it." Four wanted to hear Charlotte Church in Jerusalem. Many hands (plethera) voted for the healing pets show.

Lee said we need new business cards and to change the Disclave to Capclave on it.

Austerity. Erica said tried selling our books but local Book Nook has so many books that having half price sale. So books may still be there next meeting. But we made \$38 on books, averaging \$30 for donations. Sam P. explained the austerity program, "People provide food, if want to bring beer okay and have a hat to pass."

For Capclave Bob said, "Nothing new, look at proposal on page 8 of *The WSFA Journal*. I want feedback. Everything else is progressing. Capclave Future, the ever-patient Mike Nelson announced, "Nothing new. Except that Sam Lubell has volunteered to do programming." Bob said, "He has his life planned out. Capclave chair in 2003?"

For new business Covert asked, "Is there a gavel for the Ginter meetings?" Lee gave Erica an extra gavel. "I haven't felt this powerful in a long time," Erica said. Eric asked, "Is this a gavel or a meat tenderizer?" Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:47.

Attendance: VP Sam Pierce, Sec. Sam Lubell Treas. and 2001 Chair Bob Macintosh, Trust Lee Gilliland, Trust Eric. Javlow, Trust. Nicki Lynch, 2002 Chair Mike Nelson, Matthew Appleton, Covert Beach, Bernard and Sheri Bell, Alexis Gilliland, Erica Ginter, Scott Hofmann, Elspeth Kovar, Bradford Lyau, Keith and Richard Lynch, Keith Marshall, Walter Miles, Lance Oszko, Rebecca Prather, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Mike Taylor, Mike Walsh, Madeleine Yeh, Victorian Smith, William Keaton, Cathy Green, Adrienne Ertman, Robert Trmatar.

## Part II of ENIGMA

### A Cleopatra 2525 Fanfic Script by Charles "Gloriosus" Gilliland

*In part I, Sarge, Cleo and Mauser have agreed to a mission to recover a valuable object held by the Blackwatch bandits. Meanwhile, Blackwatch leader Shard has rescued Manon, a Blackwatch tech who had been captured by the good guys.*

*CUT TO Shard handing Manon a pair of web-shooters, while his men keep watch for pursuers.*

"Here you go," Shard said. Manon looked at the gauntlets. "I know they aren't yours, but this is the best we could do on short notice. Ready to go?"

Manon gave herself a shudder and tightened the clasps on her gauntlets. "All set."

*CUT TO The party heading down a corridor, racing for the shaft entrance, and like lemmings plummet off the landing.*

*CUT TO Sarge and Hel still backtracking and checking the telemetry.*

"Sarge! They're going down," Hel said, and Sarge took a look at the display, grabbing a hold on the team-leader's arm. The athletic lieutenant's eyes followed the plunging cursor, noting what level they were getting off on.

"Mauser, what Base Tube trains are scheduled leave soon?" Sarge asked their tech-support.

"Wait one," came the reply, "there is a white train going to Gallery D in twelve minutes, and a green train to Gallery B leaving in 30," Sarge's eyes narrowed.



"What is it?"

"Cathedral" Sarge murmured, and started back to sub-shaft 6, with a bewildered Hel following.

"Cathedral? Sarge, what are -"

"They're leaving this Gallery. See if you can get voice to vouch us some passes on the 'El' to Gallery D."

"Voice -"

"I heard, Hel, I'm making the transfer to your voucher now."

*CUT TO The Blackwatch entering the Bunker-like Base Station, Shard looked around and made his way to one of a row of cashiers in the crowded station.*

The Base station was illuminated by fluorescents and neon as blocky columns support the flat ceiling. Lying beyond the columns were the train cradles, arranged at right angles to each other, one set suspended over the other. Security guards, some of whom wore Blackwatch uniforms, patrolled the station.

Waiting in line, Shard finally saw a cashier's window flash indicating she was available. "Hi, thirteen for Gallery D," he said handing over a plastic card that the cashier swiped and examined it's contents on her Holo-Display. Satisfied, she handed his card back along with thirteen passes.

"On Lower Tube 2. Please remember to remove your weapon's power-cells prior to boarding the train."

Shard smiled, taking the passes. "Thanks, we will." He turned to rejoin Manon and his crew, distributing the tickets as they hurriedly made their way to the indicated tube.

*CUT TO Sarge and Hel arriving at Shaft 6.*

The two women fired their web-lines and began their ascent arriving at a bustling terminal, with a giant holo-display listing Arrivals and Departures hovering over the Magnetic Levitation Tubes, and embarkation platforms. The station was less crowded than the Base station, and the indirect lighting threw the molding of the arcing concrete walls and ceilings into high relief. From the elevated platforms columns seemingly poured like some milky liquid, tapering down to a slender base to support the platforms from the space between the suspension tubes. Sarge and Hel worked their way over to an 'El' cashier. "Two for Gallery D," Hel said, handing over her voucher chit. The cashier slid the chit into her reader and scanned the information. Nodding, she handed the Voucher back along with the two passes, and indicated the upper tube for Shaft D, with a waiting train hovering suspended in its boarding cradle.

*CAMERA PANS following the two woman up.*

*CUT TO Hel and Sarge embarking onto the cylindrical train that sat suspended in its berth. The two move forward to some vacant seats as they removed their blasters from their gauntlets.*

"Hard to believe that humanity could build something like this," Sarge remarked wistfully, gazing out the window. "I remember when I first made it to the Underground, I used to come into this station just to watch the trains come and go."

"Uh-huh," Hel remarked flatly, drawing Sarge's sharp stare. "Would you care to tell me what 'Cathedral' is?"

Sarge shrugged, "It used to be a giant depot, with over a dozen entrances and exits making for easy distribution of supplies. Several years ago we -" Sarge stopped and corrected herself, "THEY had driven the Cubs out, and the Blackwatch used it as a swing space when they moved from one lair to the next. Or else it acted as a staging area if multiple chapters planned to hit a secured level."

"And you think they're there?"

"It would make sense as a rendezvous point," the lieutenant remarked, "especially if they were looking for Manon before our agent was discovered. It's a space that all Blackwatch members generally know about."

The last of the passengers boarded the train before the ramps drew up and the train doors shut and sealed themselves. The air whispered as the train pressurized, and then smoothly began to slide forward, gently propelled by the tube's electro-magnets.

Blue clad conductors begin to roam the aisle asking to see the passenger's passes. Hel and Sarge handed theirs over when he came by, and the passes were slipped into the base of the conductor's baton confirming that these two belonged on this train. The conductor then handed them back and made his way down the aisle. When he came to the lone, female passenger in the back of the car, Manon handed him her pass.

FADE TO BLACK

## ACT TWO

*FADE IN Interior of a large warehouse style facility, complete with gangways, suspended lights, and empty shelves. The remaining boxes are arranged to act as pseudo-partitions in the cavernous space. The Blackwatch chapter finished entering the space, dropping off the hauled equipment they had brought with them from their recently abandoned lair.*

*ZOOM IN on one member who deposits a large metallic ovoid onto a hastily set up table.*

*CUT TO Valdis and Zorya.*

"What word on our raid," Valdis asked.

"They successfully raided the facility, liberating Manon," the petite lieutenant reported, "and are taking the Tube back to this gallery."

"Excellent, and our men in the station are instructed to keep their eyes open for them, and provide whatever assistance they need?"

"Yes, Valdis," Zorya said, turning away to address her microphone.

Valdis studied the module for a moment. "Bring a torch. Let's crack this baby," he barked at his minions. He then leaned forward to examine the casing more closely.

*ZOOM IN on Valdis' reflection on the brushed metal Ovoid surface. Etched lines forming various sized squares, rectangles, rhomboids and quadrilaterals criss-cross the module's surface. In the background Zorya asked for survey status of their search for a new base of operations while her muscular boss quietly asked the mysterious module, "What are you?"*



Art by Randy B. Cleary from  
<http://personal.rdu.bellsouth.net/rdub/rb/rbclearv/SF-Images.htm>

*CUT TO Tube Station, Gallery D, as the train slides into its embarkation cradle. The platform ramps lower as the doors align themselves, and with a slight gush of pressurized air the doors open to disgorge streams of passengers, among them is the Blackwatch party with Shard and Manon.*

*CUT TO "El" Station as Manon disembarks from the train and heads towards the camera. CAMERA ZOOMS past her shoulder to focus on the figures of Sarge and Hel stepping down a ramp and turning away from the retreating form of Manon. CAMERA FOLLOWS as they make their way clear of the terminal.*

"Okay, Sarge, where do we go from here?"

"We've a number of options," replied the athletic lieutenant pulling up a holographic map of Gallery D that was provided by Mauser. "I think our best bet is to go up two levels and then over to Shaft 17."

"Are you crazy?" asked the dusky team-leader. "That's going way out of our way."

"Yeah, and chances are it won't be covered by Blackwatch so it'll be faster. This way." Sarge said pointing as they turned the corner to approach a shaft. Firing their spinnerets, the two women ascended off the landing.

*CUT TO interior of the cavernous Cathedral. Light plays against the walls from the arc-welders being fruitlessly applied to the module casing. CAMERA PANS to reveal Valdis standing back from the laboring welders, watching their progress.*

"Anything?"

A welder looked up, dowsed his torch and shook his head.

VOICE OVER (Shard) "Hey, Boss, lookee what we got."

Valdis turned around to see Shard walking in with his team and Manon in tow. "Shard, I knew I could count on you. Welcome back, Manon," Valdis said, gesturing to one of his men to examine the young woman.

Manon gave a shaky smile, "Good to be back ... Boss." She gave a slight twitch as the henchman ran a scanner over her. After the scan the henchman looked at Valdis and shook his head indicating the lack of a transmitter on the Manon while Shard looked on in bemusement.

"Yeah," agreed the Blackwatch leader with a smirk. "We got something here that should be right up your alley."

"What?" Manon asked.

"Consider this a test," Valdis explained, "we've been infiltrated once, I'm not in a hurry to have it happen again. Prove that you are our tech." He then gestured towards the smudged module. "Open it."

"Ummm ... right." Manon said hesitantly, and with a wary eye on Valdis, she moved towards the unit as the Blackwatch leader drew his blaster when she passed.

To be Concluded

## MilPhil Hotel Information

By Mike Nelson

Hotel reservations are going to open on March 1st. If you are booking in the Marriott make sure you indicate when you make your reservations if you want a quiet or party floor.

SUITES - If you want a suite you need to contact the suites reservation folks at [suites@milphil.org](mailto:suites@milphil.org). If you are taking any rooms beyond those attached to the suite you should book that separately.

BLOCKING - If you want booking please contact [blocking@milphil.org](mailto:blocking@milphil.org). This is also the address to use if you are going to want a bunch of rooms together or around a suite. You still need to make a reservation with the hotel.

REMEMBER: Blocking will just move your room, not book it. You must book your room yourself.

1. Marriott Philadelphia, 1201 Market St., Philadelphia 19107; (215) 625-2900, (800) 228- 9290, (215) 625-6000. [www.philadelphiamarriott.com](http://www.philadelphiamarriott.com) On- line reservation codes (Go to hotel's URL to make on-line reservations.): WSFWSFA (S/ D), WSFWSFB (T), WSFWSFC (Q). Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$135; D \$145, T/ Q \$160, Rollaways \$20. Kids under 18 free. Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs

2. Wyndham Franklin Plaza, 17th & Race Sts., Philadelphia 19103; (215) 448-2000, (215) 448- 2864. [www.wyndham.com/FranklinPlaza](http://www.wyndham.com/FranklinPlaza) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$99; D \$109, T \$119; Q \$129, Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs

3. Courtyard by Marriott, 21 N. Juniper St, Philadelphia 19107; (215) 496-3200, (800) 321- 2211, (215) 496-3696. [www.courtyard.com](http://www.courtyard.com) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$125; D \$135, T/ Q \$145, Rollaways \$20. Kids under 18 free. Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs
4. Hawthorn Suites, 1100 Vine St., Philadelphia 19107; (215) 829- 8300, (800) 527- 1133, (215) 829- 8014. [www.hawthorn.com](http://www.hawthorn.com) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S/ D/ T/ Q \$124 Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs
5. Hilton Garden Inn, 1100 Arch St., Philadelphia 19107; (215) 923- 0100, (800) 445- 8667, (215) 925- 0800. [www.hilton.com/hiltongardeninn/hotels/PHLGIGI/](http://www.hilton.com/hiltongardeninn/hotels/PHLGIGI/) On-line reservation code: WSF004 (Go to hotel's URL to make on-line reservations.). Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S/ D/ T/ Q \$124, Jr. Suite \$134, Rollaways \$20. Kids under 18 free. Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs
6. Clarion Suites, 1010 Race St., Philadelphia 19107; (215) 922- 1730, (215) 922- 6258. [www.clarionsuitesphilly.com/](http://www.clarionsuitesphilly.com/) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$122; D \$129, Rollaways free. Kids under 18 free. Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs
7. Loews Philadelphia, 1200 Market Street, Philadelphia 19107; (215) 627-1200, (800) 695- 8284, (215) 564-1985. [www.loewshotels.com/philadelphia/](http://www.loewshotels.com/philadelphia/) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$135; D \$145, T/ Q \$160, No rollaways. Inquire in advance about cribs
8. Hampton Inn, 1300 Race St., Philadelphia 19107; (215) 238- 1046, (215) 922- 5439. [www.hampton-inn.com](http://www.hampton-inn.com) Room Rates (plus 14% tax): S \$119; D \$129, Rollaways free. Kids under 18 free. Inquire in advance about rollaways and cribs

The information provided was obtained from a variety of sources and may change before the convention. If something is particularly important to you, check it directly with the hotel. We are less than confident about, for instance, promises of Ethernet connections. For updates, see the Millennium Philcon Web site, [www.milphil.org](http://www.milphil.org) Cancellations must be received at least 48 hours before scheduled arrival time. Later cancellation will result in a penalty of one night's room charge.

## **Fanfic by Lee Strong**

A Paid Political Announcement  
by the Committee to Redeem America

The commercial opens with a video shot showing the candidate in his study. He is reading a book when the commercial opens, but put it down as the camera focuses on him.

The candidate looks into the camera and smiles.

He says, "Good evening, my fellow Americans. You know me. I am a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and I would like to be *your* candidate."

He shifts in his chair to face the camera more directly.

"When Ronald Reagan and Hillary Clinton each announced their candidacies for the Presidency, they both asked 'Are you better off now than you were four years ago?' History tells us their answers. I would like to ask you the same question and tell you my answers to our national problems.

"Are you better off today than you were four years ago?

"Are you better off paying higher taxes and fees for less service? If elected, I will restrict all taxes to no more than 10 percent of your income rather than the current average of 39 percent.

"Are you better off shivering in the dark because bureaucrats won't authorize building adequate energy generators? If elected, I will make providing basic services our first priority.

"Are you better off paying high prices for life saving drugs that are available far more cheaply in foreign countries? If elected, I will make healing the sick a top national priority.

"Are you better off sending your children to crumbling schools that teach nothing but pornography and finger painting? If elected, I will insure that every level of our national schooling system provides top quality education for all.

"Are you better off when corporate fatcats cheat you and escape punishment because of legal trickery? If elected, I promise to create a new legal system based on truth seeking and moral righteousness, not legal trickery.

"Are you better off when your sons and daughters are 'nation building' everywhere in the world except here, in America, where it counts? If elected, I will withdraw our soldiers from foolish foreign adventures and return them to the defense of our homes.

"Are you better off with police corruption and militarization? Are you better off when our police firebomb churches and kidnap children on national television rather than protecting your rights as citizens? If elected, I will create a new force of 'proctors' who will make service to the citizens their top priority.

"Are you better off with endless scandals in the White House? If elected, I promise that the White House will no longer be a public brothel.

"Are you better off when elections are decided in the courts rather than at the ballot box? If elected, I promise you that you will never have to worry about corrupt elections again.

"If your answers to these questions were 'No', then I ask you to vote for me. I ask you to put God in the White House and elect Nehemiah Scudder President."



### Sam Lubell Reviews:

#### ***The Color of Distance and Through Alien Eyes* by Amy Thomson**

John W Campbell, the legendary editor of *Astounding*, used to challenge his writers to create aliens who think "as good as a man, but different." Too often science fiction fails at this, producing "alien" cultures that are less alien than many here on Earth. *Star Trek* is a frequent violator of this concept, most notably in "The Inner Light" in which they had an entire episode on an alien planet that was basically a medieval European village (with a central conflict being the scientist father over his son becoming a musician.) But in *The Color of Distance* (Ace,

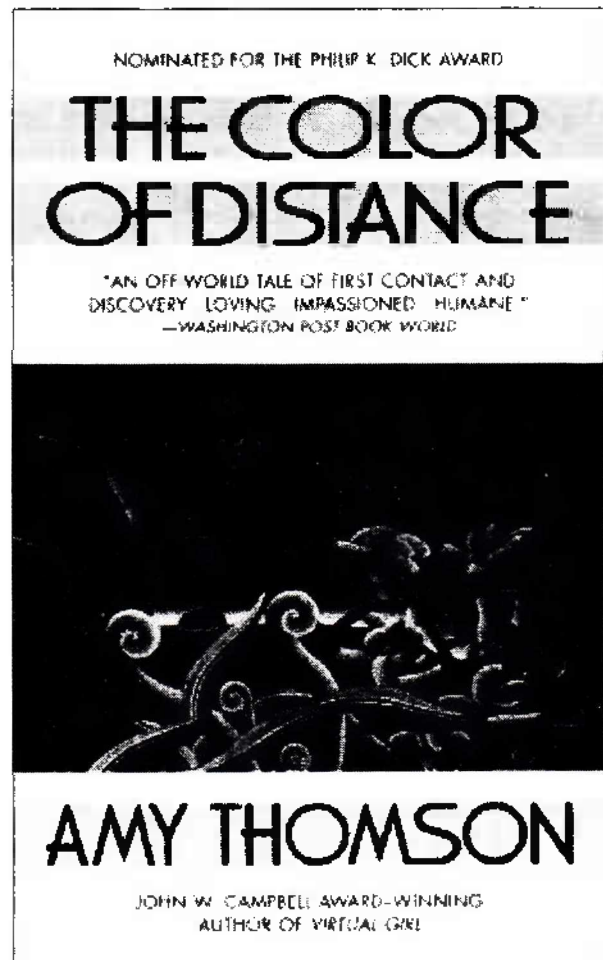
1995) and its sequel *Through Alien Eyes* (Ace 1999), author Amy Thomson writes anthropological science fiction and creates a very elaborate culture and society for these aliens.

The basic action of the first book is familiar. A lone human must survive on an alien planet until the rescue ship can arrive. But the focus isn't exciting adventures fighting monsters or puzzle solving scientific gadgets. The stress here is on the culture of the alien Tendu. In fact, individual aliens are central characters and the book opens with an alien scene, with alien words. "Ani was gathering tender bibbi shoots when a patch of white on the distant forest floor caught her eye. She pointed it out to Kirito, and her sitik, Ilto. Curious, they climbed down to investigate." The aliens have the ability to read and alter genetic codes and are able to adapt the human, Juna, to survive on their planet. In the course of the book, Juna learns about their complex culture and one of the aliens, Anito, accepts her destiny to leave her village (the aliens are very clan-centric) and become an enkar (sort of a judge/troubleshooter).

The author is careful not to make the mistake of showing either culture to be better than the other, just different. For all their biological prowess, the Tendu have no technology and perceive the computer as a "living stone". However, the author does have Juna take an action to save one of the aliens when the aliens would have let it die, an act that leads one of the aliens to question their society's beliefs. Fortunately, this is less frequent than Juna's attempts to learn about and fit into the Tendu culture or to make amends for the destruction the Earth spaceship caused.

The second book, *Through Alien Eyes*, reverses the first book by having the aliens come to Earth. Much of the first half takes place on the starship taking Juna and two of the Tendu back and dealing with the captain's suspicion of Juna and the aliens. Then the author has the Tendu experience Earth's colonies and then Earth itself. There is a nice scene where, after the aliens use their healing powers in a hospital, one of them learns about the Earth doctrine of noninterference in alien affairs and decides that this should apply to him too, and stops healing humans (turning the *Star Trek* idea of the prime directive neatly on its head.) Overall the second book is less innovative than the first (possibly because the setting is more familiar, partly because the aliens themselves know more about humanity so are less alien, but it is still an interesting and intriguing read.

Together the two books raise interesting concepts of human and alien, contact and coexistence. Should humans ever really encounter aliens we should not expect them to have the same values, concerns, and thought processes as we do. Too many science fiction stories simply have aliens as humans in funny suits. *The Color of Distance* and *Through Alien Eyes* remind us of the strangeness and mysteriousness of aliens, their worlds, and their cultures.



## Space – The Final Frontier

For the Third Friday 2/16/01, in the absence of Secretary Samuel Lubell, notes were taken by Erica Ginter (Thanks Erica!).

Trustees: Lots of new people

Old business

New business

Announcements

Lee: If you run out of toilet paper and there's none under the sink, use Kleenex. Do Not use paper towels.

Erica: Diet soda is now in small refrigerator in family room

Chuck: Procrastinator's New Year's Party. Sat March 31<sup>st</sup> at 8 pm at Chuck Devine's.

Unknown: To demonstrate the laws on nonprofit web sites John Pomerantz created a fictional [www.dragonlovers.org](http://www.dragonlovers.org)

Meeting adjourned 9:48

Attendance: Eric Jablow, Bob MacIntosh, Keith Lynch, Dandice Davis, Lisa Kessler, Judy Kindell, Barry Newton, Judy Newton, John Pomerantz, Kathi Overton, Will Lith<handwriting trails off>, Sam Pierce, Evan Phillips, Mike Taylor, Alexis and Lee Gilliland.

## WSFA Treasury

By Treasurer Bob MacIntosh

### Expenses:

First Friday	\$25.00
Third Friday (Jan & Feb)	\$40.00 (\$20.00 each)
WSFA Journal	\$52.71
Renewal of Domain Name	\$70.00 (we do it annually)
New WSFA Business Cards	\$31.50
Total expenses	\$218.21

### Revenue:

Dues collected: \$90.00 (Vicki Smith, Lance Oszko, Steve Smith, Scott Hefman(new), Sheri Lynn Bell (new), William Keaton (new), Erica Ginter, Bob Thorton (new), and Adrienne Ertman (new))

Contribution: \$6.00

Total revenue \$96.00

Net decrease for month \$122.21

Surviving balance: \$988.55

WSFA ANSWERS PHONES. Sunday, March 11, from 4 to 7:30 pm. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE THERE THE WHOLE TIME. All they ask is for 10 to 15 bodies show at a time. The program we will be watching will be about healing your pet naturally - and yes, I understand this includes holistically. Contact Lee if you want to participate.



## Prospero's Children

by Jan Sigel (New York: Ballantine, 1999)  
A review by Colleen R. Cahill

The opening prologue of this book sets the mood that is both dark and magical. A very un-Disneylike mermaid holds a key she took from a sailor she drowned centuries ago. A fisherman catches her and she hands over the key as treasure. Because the mermaid has caused the death of his son, the fisherman destroys her, but does keep the key.

The rest of the book is actually two stories, melded nicely together. The first is in the present day England and the plot revolves around Fernanda Capel, a controlled and controlling sixteen-year-old. While she can manipulate her widowed father, she has less success with her younger brother, Will. This family leaves London to investigate a house in remote Yorkshire left them by a great Uncle. This Uncle was a sailor who traveled the world before he settled in the family home. Fern, as she is called, finds the house as a haunted feeling, with its ugly idol in the parlor and the surrounding moors. A strange animal that tries to enter the house by night and a mysterious stranger adds to this dark feel. The stranger, who has the wonderful name of Ragginbone, is a mysterious and interesting character who travels with a very intelligent wolf. He warns Fern that there is more to the house than its atmosphere, as the woman who is her father's romantic interest is also a witch.

The key reappears and is taken by the witch, who tried to open the door to Death but instead causes her demise and almost Fern's. The door, now invisible, is an opening to the past that is allowing monsters to roam the countryside. Ragginbone tells Fern she has powers that allow her to work magic: ancient blood runs in her veins. The failure to prevent the door from being opened and this new power changes Fern, making her less sure of herself and her ability to decide the fate of others, such as her father. This welcome epiphany makes her a more likeable character: it also gives her the resolve to journey into the past to close the door. Through the aid of a magic picture, she is transported back to fabled Atlantis.

One of the things I enjoyed about this book was the elegant way Ms. Sigel handled Fern's time travel. Even as the character is getting ready to leave, she thinks of the problems she will have: she won't know the language or be wearing the right clothes. Fern heads back none the less. As the second story begins, she is climbing a long stair for what seems to go on forever and as she reaches the top, her memories are altered. She is no longer Fernanda, a 20<sup>th</sup> century girl, but Fernani, a girl from a remote village sent on a quest which she would know how to fulfill when she reaches the city of Atlantis. Now she has the language and background to move about the city. The culture of Atlantis is interesting, with a upper-class with magical powers lead a by Queen who plans to open the door of Death. This is the quest Fern is on: to close the door, as she cannot prevent it from opening. A sense of doom pervades this chapter, as we know, even if Fern does not remember, that all the people she meets and loves in Atlantis will be destroyed.

While this book has a teenage heroine, it is not a children's book. Nor does it have the feel of oppressed teen discovers great powers and happiness. If anything, Fern gets few of her personal wishes. She is transformed in the book and becomes a more interesting and likeable person. But she loses much of what she desires and suffers great losses. There is an implication that a sequel is in the offing and hopefully it will be a book as full as atmosphere as this one.

