

# The WSFA Journal September 2002

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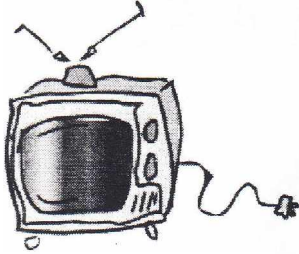
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WHAT IF

# Replay Redux: TV's 2002 Season Goes Back to the Future

By Samuel Lubell

As far as I know (and I'm sure someone will correct me if I'm wrong), there's never been a tv show about sending the mind of the adult hero back to his childhood days (although *Quantum Leap* did do this for one episode). So naturally, this season we get two such shows - although one is a comedy and one's a drama. Aside from this marginal SF, the only other new show that's traditional SF is FOX's *Firefly* by Joss Whedon (the writer/producer of *Buffy*) although we do get a couple of supernatural shows, a televised comic book, and a Dinotopia fantasy.



*Haunted* (UPN). Tuesdays at 9. Starts Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. Private detective hears ghosts and the supernatural. The buzz on this one is pretty good, but the premise seems a little worn. If it works, it would be a good partner for *Buffy* but how will it keep people from changing the station to *Smallville* or 24?

*The Twilight Zone* (UPN) Wednesday at 9. Starts Sept 18. Supernatural anthology show with self-contained 60-minute stories.

*Birds of Prey* (WB). Wednesday at 9. Starts Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>. Having done a pre-Superman *Smallville*, WB turns to a post-Batman Gotham. With the Caped Crusader missing, the former Batgirl, now in a wheelchair, uses her computer skills to fight crime as Oracle. Her partners are the Huntress, the daughter of Batman and Catwoman (same as the original Earth-2 comics version of the character), and the Black Canary (much changed from her comics version, she's a teenager with visions of the future (shouldn't that make her the oracle?)).

*Dinotopia* (ABC) Thursday at 8 PM. Starts Oct 10<sup>th</sup>. Based on the miniseries based on the illustrated books, this series picks up where the mini-series left off. Humans and dinosaurs coexist. The special effects budget for this will be high so there's no middle ground. Unless it becomes a big hit, it is doomed.

*Do Over* (WB) Thursday at 8:30. Starts Sept 19. This is the sit-com version of *Replay*, albeit without a laugh track. The premise may work better as a comedy. I don't watch sit-coms, but I might peek in.

*Firefly* (FOX) Friday at 8 PM. Starts Sept 20<sup>th</sup>. A "Western in Space" without any aliens, 500 years in the future, this show about the crew of a small spaceship in a noir-ish future has one thing going for it, *Buffy*'s Joss Whedon. I'm hopeful about this one (but if it's not great, I hope it fails quickly so Joss can go back to *Buffy* which really suffered from the lack of his attention last season.)

*That Was Then* (ABC). Fridays at 9 PM. Starts Sept 27<sup>th</sup>. 30-year old blames everything on one week of high school. He wishes himself back into his past over and over again to try to improve his present circumstances. This is the drama version of the *Replay* scenario. I'll give it a chance.

*John Doe* (FOX) Fridays at 9 PM. Starts Sept 20<sup>th</sup>. Amnesiac genius turned secret agent. Sort of the *Pretender* meets the *Bourne Identity*.

**Midseason replacements:**

*Dragnet* (ABC-Midseason). Revival of the original cop show by the producer of Law and Order.

*Miracles* (ABC-Midseason). Skeptic and believer investigate religious oriented supernatural activity.

*Veritas* (ABC-Midseason). Teenage boy and Indiana Jones-type father.

*Time Tunnel* (FOX-Midseason) Hopefully the special effects will be updated in this new version of the time travel show

**Returning SF/Fantasy:**

putting such a popular show in such a bad time slot? Isn't this rather early for *Charmed*'s innuendo?

- *Disney* (ABC) Sunday at 7. Starts Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. This has to be the longest-running TV show ever, under various aliases.
- *Alias* (ABC) Sunday at 9. Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. Spy show returns. Last season actually had borderline fantasy/fantasy elements. It's worth watching.
- *Touched by an Angel* (CBS) Sat at 8. Sept 28<sup>th</sup>. Religious fantasy.
- *Buffy* (UPN) Tuesdays at 8. Starts Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. Supposedly it will be less depressing than S7 with more of a focus on Dawn (perhaps in preparation for a post-Buffy spin-off). Other rumors suggest a Faith spin-off with Faith in the last five eps of Buffy.
- *Enterprise* (UPN) Wednesday at 8. Starts Sept 18. The prehistory of Trek. Anyone watching this?
- *Charmed* (WB) Now Sundays at 8. Two-hour premiere Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>. What are they thinking putting such a popular show in such a bad time slot? Isn't this rather early for *Charmed*'s innuendo?
- *Angel* (WB) Now Sundays at 9. Starts Oct 6<sup>th</sup>. Rumors suggest that there will be an attempt to recapture the S1 personalities (which I think would be a mistake, the characters have grown over the years) and Angel's son becomes a regular.
- *Smallville* (WB) Still Tuesday at 9. Starts Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. Rumors say another new superpower but still 'No flights, no tights' for this Superman.
- *Sabrina* (WB) Still Friday at 8:30. Starts Sept 20<sup>th</sup>.
- *24* (FOX) Tuesdays at 9. Starts Oct 29<sup>th</sup>. New story with some of the same characters, also using the real-time premise of each episode taking place during one hour of the same day.
- *Futurama* (FOX) Sundays at 7. Nov 10. Even though no more episodes are being made, FOX claims to have enough in its inventory for a season.

## WSFA to Buy Worldcom

The Third Friday 7/19 began with Bob yelling "Meeting time and banging the gavel in the absence of everyone else. "It's 9:23 by my watch." Lee asked, "Who died and made you god?" Ignoring this comment, Bob said, "Mr. Secretary anything... Hey! I'm off the hook" as Judy walked in. Everyone made kazoo sounds in an attempt to play Hail to the Chief. Steve S said, "It's not a kazoo, just a zoo." Sam explained about the annual switch in meeting locations. Treasury is \$239.91 "not much." Cathy suggested that we buy Worldcom. Eric asked, "But what would we do with the rest of it" Bob asked "What would we do with Worldcom." Better than they did. Judy said, "It takes threatening a Worldcon."

Entertainment committee saw Doonesbury comparing Bush to Whitewater er. Worldcom." Lee for the Activities Committee said she'd do a party for Goldmember if there was interest. There wasn't although Eric did suggest that it be Bobbitted.

Capclave 02 was here but incognito. Bob said membership was over 100 now. It is listed in Locus Online and SF net. And NESFA. "Sam, do you have anything to say about guests." Sam said, "We're planning on inviting some." Sam for 03 said, "We will have a guest and a way of registering members by Capclave 02." Lee said, "I am following Sam"

Erica for Austerity thanked people for making contributions. Lee said. "People are thinking it's their party and bringing stuff." Keith said, "Barry Newton will be helping to proof the graphics" for the online editions of the Journal.

New business. See Colleen if you have edits to the address list. Erica asked people to pick up trash. Cat said she has a job at Direct Sales Association. Comic writers and artists wanted [iconcomics@ebuy123.com](mailto:iconcomics@ebuy123.com). *Being Gardner Dozois* won the Locus award. Candy lost 30 pounds. Mimosa fanthology issue is out. Ivy's last meeting. The meeting was unanimously adjourned "At whatever time it is."

Attendance. Pres Judy Kindell. Sec & 2003 Chair Samuel Lubell. Treas Bob MacIntosh. Trust. Scott Hofmann. Trust. Eric Jablow. Trust. Nicki Lynch. 2002 Chair Mike Nelson. 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland. Bernard Bell and Sheri Bell. Colleen Cahill, Adrienne Ertman, Carolyn Frank, Alexis Gilliland. Erica Ginter. Cathy Green. Keith Lynch. Richard Lynch. Candy Madigan. Keith Marshall. Cat Meier. Walter Miles. Barry and Judy Newton. Steven Smith. Michael Taylor. Ivy Yap. Madeleine Yeh. Meridel Newton.

## Hugo Awards Winners

The 2002 Hugo Awards were presented Sunday evening, September 1, 2002, at the World Science Fiction Convention in San Jose, CA.



NOVEL *American Gods*, Neil Gaiman (Morrow)

NOVELLA "Fast Times at Fairmont High", Vernor Vinge (The Collected Stories of Vernor Vinge, Tor)

NOVELETTE "Hell Is the Absence of God", Ted Chiang (Starlight 3, Tor)

SHORT STORY "The Dog Said Bow-Wow", Michael Swanwick (Asimov's Oct Nov 2001)

RELATED BOOK *The Art of Chesley Bonestell*, Ron Miller & Frederick C. Durant III (Paper Tiger)



DRAMATIC PRESENTATION The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (New Line Cinema/The Saul Zaentz Company/WingNut Films; Directed by Peter Jackson; Screenplay by Fran Walsh & Phillipa Boyens & PJ; PJ, Barrie M. Osborne and Tim Sanders, Producers)

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR Ellen Datlow

PROFESSIONAL ARTIST Michael Whelan

SEMIPOZINE Locus, Charles N. Brown, ed.

FANZINE Ansible, Dave Langford, ed.

FAN WRITER Dave Langford

FAN ARTIST Teddy Harvia

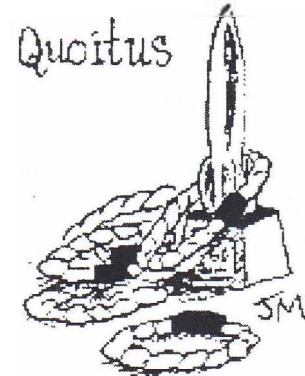
WEB SITE Locus Online, Mark R. Kelly, editor/webmaster

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Jo Walton

Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award: R. A. Lafferty

Big Heart: Pat Sims

First Fandom Awards: Sir Arthur C. Clarke (Hall of Fame), Martha Beck (Posthumous Hall of Fame) and Robert A. Madle (Sam Moskowitz Archive award)



### Review of Alexa Albert's *Brothel: Mustang Ranch and Its Women* (Random House) by Lee Gilliland.

This was a most interesting and entertaining book. Ms. Albert, while studying public health issues in college, became intrigued by the idea of licensed prostitution as a way to limit AIDS from spreading into the general population. So, as her graduate research project, (and I thought I had a liberal mentor) she spent six weeks at the Mustang Ranch, the well-known Nevada brothel.

Some of what happens to her could, of course, be Foreseen. For instance, she is invited to observe sessions with the women and their clients. (This is all I will say on this subject, except for the fact that the unforeseen consequences the first time she did this are hysterical. Now you have to read the book.) I was also surprised by the infighting between the woman about their position in the House pecking orders. There were, apparently, but two different buildings at the Mustang, both serving a different clientele and both with completely different House rules. I had not realized that it could escalate to the point where one woman put Nair in another's shampoo.

But what but what intrigues me most all was the day to day living presented in the book.



Apparently, for no reason I could see, the women who work in the ranch brothels are not allowed to leave after they began their contracted six months. They are allowed limited access to the world outside, with a special brothel worker delegated to run their errands. They have a pay phone they may use under certain limited conditions and they are not allowed any personal visits from anyone not clients. A good part of this may be this rigorous screening they must go through in order to become a licensed sex worker. (This process, detailed the book, is fascinating in itself.)

She also takes us lightly through the brothel

industry in Nevada, including a wonderful brush with a group known as the CyberWhoreMongers who apparently are a fairly well-known presence on the net.

Lively and stimulating, this book is not judgmental about the prostitutes and their lives but comes out very evenhandedly on the question of legalized prostitution. I strongly recommend it to anyone as a good evening's read.

### Review of Jon Ronson's *Them: Adventures with Extremists* (Simon and Schuster)

by Lee Gilliland

This book should be subtitled "And I thought they were scary", although after you finish reading it, some of them still are. This is one of the most unusual, funny, frightening, loopy, outrageous, and believable things I ever read. Mr. Ronson takes you from Vancouver, where the Canadian hate crimes unit was trying to ensure that David Icke not be allowed to speak (he thinks the world is run by twenty different species of outer space lizards, they insist he really means Jews), to an interview with one of the people actually involved the Bilderberg conferences (the meetings so many extremists denounce as the men secretly meeting in dark rooms deciding our destiny), to an absolutely hysterical description of a rather bizarre ritual, obviously handed down from the days of Edward VII, where they casually penetrate a meeting of more than tipsy millionaires, burning "dull care" in a rowboat and then urinating on all the trees in the grove.

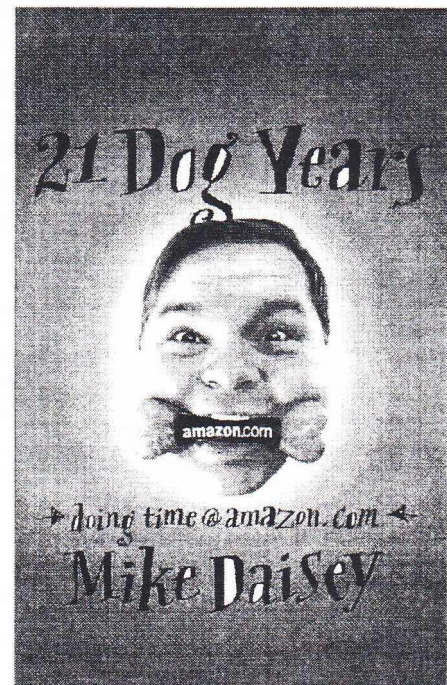
Interspersed with all this, he is chased by men "protecting" the people at an actual Bilderberg conference, chauffeurs around London a man claiming to be bin Laden's personally chosen leader of the Islamic revolution in England (the man does not have a car because he is on the dole, and can't afford one), is unmasked in the middle of an American Jihad training camp (he's Jewish), stumbles on the (then) leader of the KKK, who will not allow anyone to use the "N-word" in front of him, and learns the truth about those Secretive Men Meeting in Dark Rooms Deciding the Fate of the Whole World.

Funny, witty, frightening, and thoroughly enjoyable, this book is best read if you are not in a paranoid state of mind. It presents a remarkably level-headed assessment of extremists and their separate movements without taking them either too seriously or too lightly. Another strong recommendation for a good evening's read.

### Review of Mike Daisy's *21 Dog Years, or Doing Time at Amazon.com* (Simon and Schuster Auber) by Lee Gilliland

This is one of the stranger books that you can pick up this year. The perfect GenXer, Mike Daisy was a cynical, bored dilettante when he was offered a temporary job with Amazon.com. They had asked for freaks, and freaks they got with a vengeance. In the slightly more than a year that Daisy worked for Amazon.com, it went from a company with 300 employees to a company with 6000 employees.

This book takes you through his amazing time at the job. (The Years referred to in the title are an in joke at Amazon that Amazon time is the same as dog time.) You meet most of the stranger people working there during this interval. They range from the guy who built a bed under his desk to Warren, the Darth Vader of customer service. The story is strange funny and more than a bit absurd. At Amazon, you are expected to take an enormous number of calls for customer service and this is measured in your solve time. This guy gets





his good numbers from hanging up on people. The computers are present always crashing, resulting in a day's orders by credit card being written down on yellow stickies. The absurdity, silliness and down right weird behavior in the book defies description.

I give this a strong recommendation. I just wish that I could better convey both the fun and the absurdity of the book.

**Review of Eric Kotani and John Maddox Roberts' *Legacy of Prometheus* (New York : Tom Doherty Associates Book, 2000) by Colleen R. Cahill**



Everyday we consume more and more energy and there seems no end to our appetite. As old sources of energy are exhausted, new and more renewable ones are needed. In Eric Kotani and John Maddox Roberts' new book, *Legacy of Prometheus* from Forge Books, one solution is purposed: solar satellites. Put in geostationary orbit, these devices would harvest the sun's power and beam it down to Earth. The result would be a safe source of gigawatt energy. But this novel is more than an argument for solar power. It is also a tale of espionage and competition, as three men try to be the first to set up a solar satellite.

Cash Carlson is an influential Texas businessman with a mysterious past. After almost magically finding the wreck of a Spanish galleon, he uses his new-found wealth to begin his dream of the commercialization of space. The first goal is a solar satellite. But he is not alone in this endeavor, as another American and a European consortium are also working on

launching their own satellites. The solar race is a tight one and Cash's rivals are not above using various means to slow him down. From unethical poisoning of his funding to more illegal attempts at sabotage, kidnapping and even murder, Cash and his staff have to stay on their toes. While all know there are plenty of markets for three or more solar collectors, each wants to be the first to provide this new power source and thus leave their mark on history.

The book is an interesting mix of hard science fiction and thriller. Much of the scientific information on solar satellites is laid out in an interview of Cash, but this is interrupted by an assassination attempt that climaxes with a rocket launcher attack. Obviously there are no holds barred in this race. This gives the story elements of James Bond, some of the pioneering spirit of rocket experiments of Robert Goddard and the feel of the Soviet-U.S. space race. To fill this landscape, the characters are larger-than-life: aside from Cash there is a Japanese journalist with a science background and martial arts training, an ex-Navy Seal considered the world's expert in security and a very reclusive computer hacker.

Overall, the book is a fast paced ride that does not skimp on the best features of hard science fiction. This is not surprising as Roberts is known for his mystery/thrillers and Kotani is the pseudonym for an astrophysicist who has worked at NASA for decades. Between these two, your appetite for science and adventure will be satisfied by *Legacy of Prometheus*.

Note from Rebecca: I notice that many WSFAns have Email. Few have web sites. I would be happy to tell anyone how to get a very easy to create, user friendly web site for free. To see mine go to <http://www.globebooks.com/publish/0001>

Note: the reference to Unicorn press in the last issue was supposed to be the placeholder for the announcement that Brian Lewis is now a published, if unpaid author. His zine, "Washington X" is now available through Unicorn Press at <http://www.unicornpress.com>

## WSFA Motto: If You Open It, Finish It

8/2 "Hey you guys, meeting time" Treasurer Bob tried to quiet the crowd in the absence of the president. "It's close enough for government work," said Alexis. "It's 9:15 by my watch," Bob said, showing that he works for the government. "I don't know where the VP is. I do know where the prez is and it's not here. Mr. Secretary, any old business?"

Sam confessed that he couldn't find his bag with the old minutes. There was a debate over whether Capclave was old business.

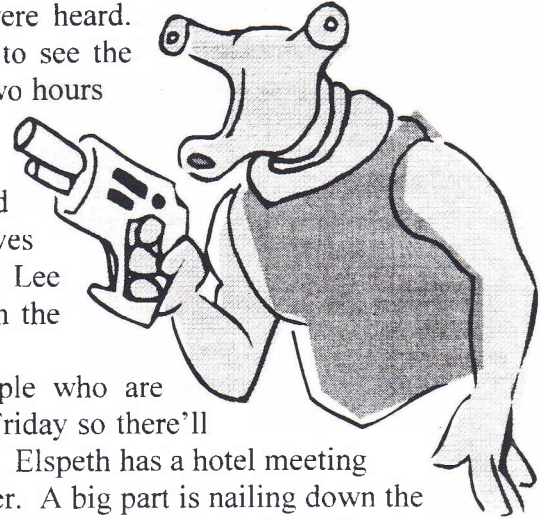
The treasurer reported \$251.91. No calls for parties were heard. Alexis for the Entertainment committee said, "Lee and I went to see the Egyptian exhibit. I wanted to be legal so I fed the meter with two hours worth. After touring the museum, I couldn't find it. I went to the police and reported my car stolen. They said it could have been towed. I said no, it was legally parked. The police called later and found the car two blocks away. Lee thought the thieves couldn't drive a stick shift so they left it. Only \$3 was stolen." Lee added, "One block from the police station. What's wrong with the police?" She was promptly informed that these were DC police.

For Capclave present, Sam Lubell gave a list of people who are coming. Bob reminded Sam that Capclave's Friday is a Third Friday so there'll be a WSFA meeting. "What if there isn't a quorum?" asked Lee. Elspeth has a hotel meeting and started negotiations for 03. She wants to get a corkage waiver. A big part is nailing down the date. Sam said that when he emails people who say they can't come, he tells them about Capclave '03. Lee said Capclave 04 has nothing to report.

Eric said that Austerity has made a donation to Erica's floor. Erica said, "I don't know when in the meeting this is for but please do not put half full containers in the recycling bin or garbage into the bins. It shouldn't be necessary to keep harping on this. I'm just ticked." Lee said, "Part of the problem is that when we have a meeting it's fluid. People forget cans all over the house." Alexis said, "Occasionally a half-full can dribbles out when we do garbage." Erica said, "Karl is really pissed at the mess." Eric asked, "So we are in danger of needing to find a new place for third Friday?" Erica said, "Karl is thinking about not wanting WSFA back here." Colleen said, "If you see someone, don't be quiet." Walter said, "I have an idea. Let's reconvene in a couple of hours to get the people who come late." Erica said, "The homeless cans aren't as bad as the half-full cans." Zabeth said, "I'm not a member, but perhaps a sign-up for clean up." Erica said, "Usually those who are here late do help but if everyone pitched in at the end, it would be great." Lee said, "Leave the place better than you saw it." Someone said, "Fannish motto: If you kill it, eat it. WSFA should be, if you open it, finish it." Alexis demonstrated. Lee suggested doing a signup sheet but Erica said "I'd like to just think about it before we do." Eric suggested doing this at "Third Friday" Erica said, "I just wanted us to think about it. Thanks for listening to my rant."

Lee for activities said she didn't organize a trip to see Austin Powers, "Don't see it. It is stupid and gross. And that's kind. At the next meeting I'll have a list of movies." She also pointed out that the Arena stage offers discounts if we want to see a play. Lee pointed out that due to the switch, people are probably in Virginia wondering where we are and leaving notes asking. Sam said, "WSFA's version of an IQ test." Erica said, "If there are signs, don't bother." Elspeth said, "As I frequent forgetter, I sometimes leave a note because I'm amused at what an idiot I was."

Colleen showed off her copy of *Strictly SF: A Guide to Reading Interests* for librarians. The same people have volumes on Fantasy and Horror.





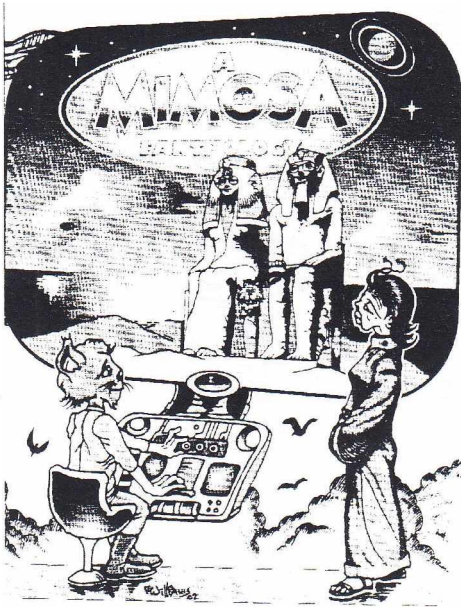
Chuck said, "Red Dress Run, October 5<sup>th</sup>. Lock up your daughters."

Keith said that Tom Clancy was doing a reading and that Keith was in a front page article in the Post. Is anyone driving to WorldCon. Someone suggested he get a ride from Thelma and Louise. Mike Walsh said that guerilla marketing has gone ape with an ad for the Locus award winning *Being Gardner Dozois*. He wants people to distribute copies of the ad to bookstores and insert them into copies of World's Best SF. Lee was shocked. "Oh my God, he's telling us where to stick it."

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:50.

## Fanzine Reviews

By Ted White



A MIMOSA FANTHOLOGY (MIMOSA 28), June, 2002 (Nicki & Rich Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885; copies available for \$5 (\$8 outside North America) or "a printed fanzine in trade;" e-mail to [fiawol@cpcug.org](mailto:fiawol@cpcug.org) or visit the website at <http://www.jophan.org/mimosa/>)

Until now I've refrained from reviewing subsequent issues of fanzines already reviewed in this column – in order to cover as many different fanzines as I can – but rules (even self-imposed rules) are made to be broken. And *A Mimosa Fanthology* offers a special case in any event.

Mimosa has been published since 1982, and is celebrating its 20th anniversary with the publication of two "fanthologies" and after that will cease publication with a final issue – #30. (There is an old tradition in fandom that few fanzines make it past

their 30th issue and the Lynches are adhering to this tradition.) So #28 is the first "fanthology" issue.

Most "fanthologies" are year's-best collections, drawn from a wide variety of fanzines (and in recent years have been published in cooperation with and the sponsorship of the annual fanzine fans' convention, Corflu) – but *A Mimosa Fanthology* is drawn solely from the first 16 issues of *Mimosa*. (The second *Mimosa Fanthology*, *Mimosa* #29, will be taken from issues 17-27.) So this volume (which contains 106 pages plus a wraparound cover) is the "best," or at least the editors' choice, from issues published between 1982 and 1994. There are 29 pieces, plus the Lynches' opening editorial and a connective narration which introduces each piece and places it in context. The material is presented chronologically, starting with a minor anecdote (less than a page long) from #1. Many, but not all, of the covers of these issues are also reproduced as thumbnails.

*Mimosa* evolved into a fanzine about fanhistory – publishing the anecdotes and memoirs of a number of older fans, going back to Forry Ackerman (the self-proclaimed *first fan*). But this is less obvious in the material from early issues, which is oriented more towards localized fandoms and personal reminiscences. But by *Mimosa* #5 and Dal Coger's "The Degler Legend" (about fandom's first Major Crackpot, back in the '40s), the die is cast.

Mimosa has won several Hugo Awards for Best Fanzine, and the reasons for those awards can be found, in part, in this volume. And no doubt more will be found in #29, which the Lynches hope to publish "by the end of 2002." Frankly, I'm more interested in the final issue – #30 – just to see how they wrap everything up, since I've already read the material which will appear in #29, but these two *Mimosa Fanthologies* offer those of you who are new to fanzines an unparalleled opportunity to skim the cream from a Hugo-winning fanzine.

**The Library of Congress Professional Association's  
What IF... Discussion Forum for Science Fiction and Fantasy presents**

**"Creating the Illusion of Reality on other Worlds"**

by A. C. Crispin

author of *The Paradise Snare* & *Sarek*

<http://www.sfw.org/members/Crispin/>

Tuesday, Sept. 24th, 2002 12:10 pm, LM-G45, Ground Floor, Library of Congress, Madison Building

October, 2002

Terry Brooks, author of the *Shannara* books

Title: tba

<http://www.terrybrooks.net/>

November 15, 2002

Jonathan Carroll, author of forthcoming book, *White Apples*

Title: tba

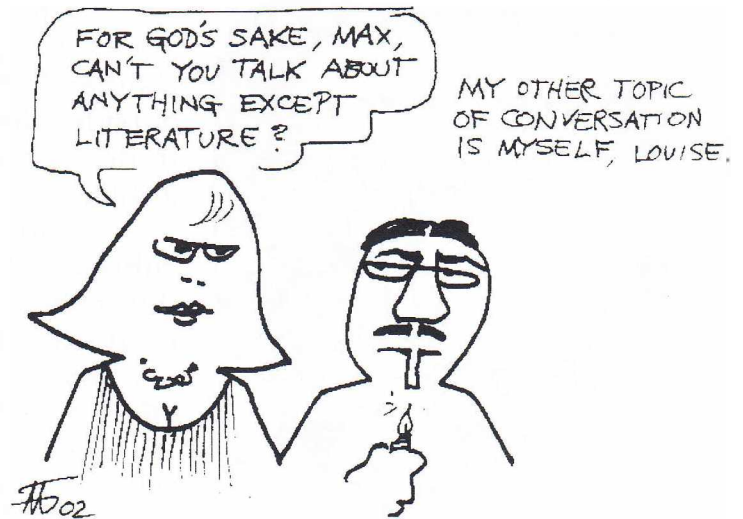
<http://www.jonathancarroll.com/>

November 26, 2002

Tee Morris, author of *Morevi*

Title: tba

<http://www.morevi.com/>



**Signs (Blinding Edge/Touchstone, 2002)**

Reviewed by Lee Strong

This is something that you don't see very often: a rather ordinary American family's unheroic reaction to an alien invasion.

Most invasion stories focus on national events and heroic soldiers and scientists battling the invaders. Here we look into the lives of ordinary Americans, already battered by the recent death of their wife and mother, struggling to deal with a possible extraterrestrial attack. Signs multiply and gradually the Hess family, including patriarch Mel Gibson, accept that they're under siege from forces from beyond.

This is an interesting take on a well worn SF plot, with no elaborate special effects light shows, mindless explosions or brilliant last minute inventions. Instead, we explore the hearts and minds of a family suffering multiple crises of faith. Unusual, but also subtle, powerful, and thought provoking.



I rate *Signs* as ★★ on the five star scale. -- LS

### Minority Report Reviewed by Lee Strong

This Spielberg production of a Philip K. Dick short story was predicted to be The Big Serious SF Film of 2002. I found it merely adequate.

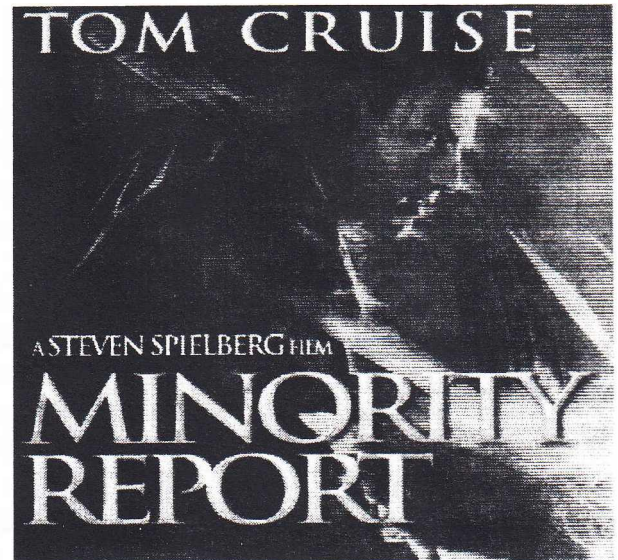
About 60 years in the future, Washington, D.C. police are testing a system of arresting people before they commit crimes. The system of precognitive precrime prevention seems infallible until it fingers the chief police officer (Tom Cruise) who must prove his innocence despite the system's perfect record. The rest of the film is a high tech car chase thru a gentrified and expanded District of Columbia combined with lots of bad police work.

Visually, this is a good film and the story is pretty solid, with a relatively happy ending. However, most of it has been done before and adding Hollywood star power didn't make the clichéd story any better.

Dick himself used the exponent-of-the-system-hoist-on-his-own-ego gambit several times. Most of the future technology struck me as gimmicky rather than logical. Having cars drive up and down buildings on autopilot is cute, but what purpose does it serve besides gee whiz factor?

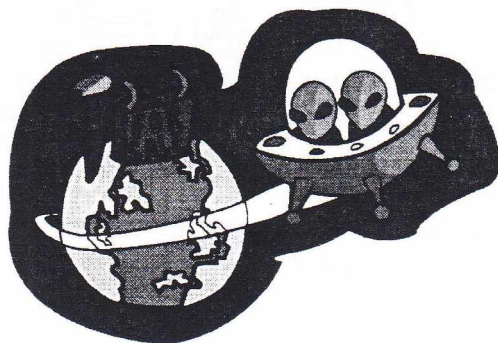
*Minority Report* includes a debate over police power and the uses of apparently infallible precognition that is supposed to be cutting edge, particularly in the wake of 9/11. However, I found it to be superficial given the serious nature of the issues. Important alternatives to official theories are ignored, and obvious constitutional problems with preventive incarceration are largely dismissed. Moreover, the underlying assumption about how time flow works (predestination) is definitely *not* cutting edge physics (free will in multiple universes). These devices might move the story along, but they're neither meaningful informed debate nor playing fair with the viewer. The film works as an action-adventure in a particular setting, but rather poorly as an important piece of science fiction.

I rate *Minority Report* as ★★ on the five star scale. -- LS



### Imposter Reviewed by the real Lee Strong

Someone made a mistake releasing *Imposter* and *Minority Report* so close together in time. Their similarities create the sensation of watching the same so-so film twice.



About 60 years in the future, Earth is at war with the unseen Centauri aliens. An important scientist (Gary Sinese) questions his work building a super bomb to destroy Centaurus, especially since Earth has become an inefficient police state. An ominous security officer wants him for questioning about an accusation that his wife is an alien android spy/bomb so he runs for his life thru Earth's obligatory poorly lit cyberpunk underworld. Along



the way, he meets the obligatory street people with hearts of gold and serious medical problems who he helps at other people's expense.

While this film had some good plot twists and turns, most of it seemed very clichéd with the filmmakers phoning in a double order of Emotionally Troubled Scientists, Threatening Security Officers, and Lovable Street Rogues to go. It may have been "edgy" when Philip K. Dick wrote it, but now it's somewhat boring. I rate *Imposter* as ★★½ on the five star scale. – LS

### MIIB (Men in Black II)

Reviewed by Agent L

Ted White once questioned why anyone would want to read pseudo-science. This movie (among others) answers Mr. W that you can make entertaining films out of the stuff.

The Men In Black are a super secret agency dedicated to policing the Alien-American population concentrated in and around New York City. Agent J's life isn't rough enough with giant worms in the subways and talking dogs for partners, but a really good looking... er, ah, I mean really bad alien shows up threatening to capture the light of an alien civilization and destroy Earth or some combination thereof. J re-recruits his retired mentor, K, who may possess the key to the mystery in his previously freshly laundered brain, and a really good looking... er, ah, material witness. Together they navigate a maze of clues, alien enclaves and general craziness one step ahead of the evil alien and her two headed (but still brainless) sidekick.

This comic look at the hidden alien invasion theme is fun stuff provided you don't take things too seriously. At the same time, it delivers a few good thoughts on love, friendship, and the call of duty. Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones – inspired casting! – and the special effects department deliver solid performances and plenty of laughs. And, No, the guy in the propeller beanie is not One Of Us.

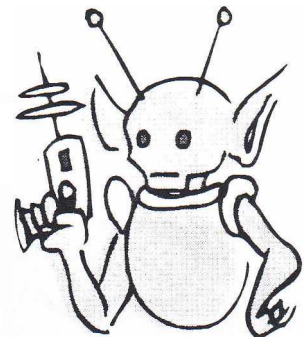
I rate *Men in Black II* as ★★★ on the five star scale for reasons that are CLASSIFIED ABOVE YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE. – L

### The Usual Crowd of Thieves

The 8/16 meeting began with Sam Pierce commenting that "Judy will show up as long as I start." Secretary Sam said that "At our last meeting we WSFAns said we would be more conscientious about cleaning up." Alexis clarified, "Empty your cans in the sink."

Any money? Barely. \$234.91. "That's barely. alright." confirmed Lee.

Capclave present? "That's me," said Mike. "I have an announcement. Elvis is still dead. Membership is up by 110 members." Sam read the list of confirmed guests. Elspeth said, "We have more program participants than rooms. As of the last meeting with hotel we had only 11 rooms booked. I was the only WSFAn. Please register now. I got space for next year and negotiations will be easier if more have taken rooms. It would be nice if more people register before my next meeting with the hotel after Worldcon." Elizabeth said, "I have to yell at you if you don't sign up." Elspeth said, "None of us want to see me mad." Mike Walsh said, "We've had dealers scratching at the door. Usual crowd of thieves." Sam P said, "We need a floor plan." Elspeth said, "I'm talking to Dan. We have the mid-sized room." Mike W. said, "We have the same dealers as last time. They're still stunned by how much money you all spent. If they did that much per guest at Worldcon, they'd need a van to cart away all the money." Eric asked about security in light of the Balticon robbery. Someone asked what this was. Mike



said, "They didn't check the bags and people weren't careful." Sam Lubell said, "You mean there was no honor among thieves?" Bob threatened, "When we next convene, membership will be \$35 so buy now." Mike N said, "At Worldcon we'll join the east coast conspiracy for a party."

Capclave Future has to figure out a GOH. Far Future promised "We're going to have a con in 2004."

World Fantasy objected to being passed over. Lee laughed, "That picture of you is hysterical." Mike W said, "A convention in DC, some of the same people, but the dealer's room is more expensive."

Alexis had a birthday. He is 71. Lee for the activities committee wanted to sing the birthday song, but the club didn't sing. Keith for the publications committee said that everything is online from July of 1994.

New Business. Sam pointed out that there were Five Fridays in August but Bob said the West Coast will be hosting that.

Announcements: John had a guest, Andrew Adams from England and announced a party. He played a game of charades to say that his Mayan Worldcon bid will host a party at Worldcon. Elizabeth said that a Star Wars fan film is looking for people. Lee said that the Loch Ness people are looking for Nessie. Walter asked, "Is that in the toilet too?" Lee continued saying "They've given up on sonar and now have Nessie webcams. They figure that's the only way. Let them know if you see her." John said he saw a snakehead there. Rebecca walked the Brice canon and has parts from upgrading her computer. Keith said that he has some math problems and WSFA can win \$300 if we solve them. When someone called this 'chintzy' Keith said, "There are million dollar problems but we don't have much hope of solving them." Elspeth offered "Nothing to make Sam P's ears red" and points out that while she was in the shower when he came by, "I put on a bathrobe." Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:47.

Attendance: Pres. Judy Kindell, VP Sam Pierce, Sec & 2002 Chair Sam Lubell, Treas Bob MacIntosh, Trust Scott Hofmann, Trust. Eric Jablow, Trust. Nicki Lynch, 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland, Bernard Bell, Carolyn Frank, Alexis Gilliland, Cathy Green, Jim Kling, Elspeth Kovar, Bill Lawhorn, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Kathi Overton, John Pomeranz, Rebecca Prather, Doc Ryl, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Ivy Yap (Mark II), A3, Sam Schwartz, John Mann, Charles Gilliland.

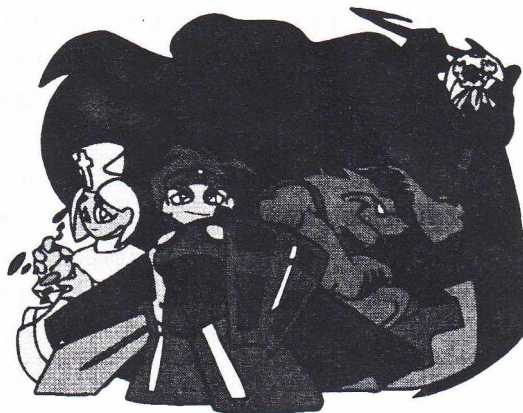
## Mode Q by Lee Strong

Bob was on the 149th page of his PowerPoint briefing and his audience was motionless – rapt with attention. His voice droned on, "... and this reorganization will take approximately six months to complete."

He electronically flipped to the next page which asked "Any questions?" in three colors and a starburst. "Any questions?" he read. There was silence from the employees.

Bob knew that there were always questions. His people were just too polite. His eye passed quickly over the multitude of seemingly blank faces and settled on one employee industriously typing notes on his eClipboard. As the latter finished, Bob barked, "Ted! Any questions?!"

Startled, Ted shot back, "No, sir, no questions. We'll implement Mode Q immediately!"





"Mode Q'?" puzzled Bob aloud. "What's Mode Q and what does it have to do *our* state of the art Twenty First Century Reorganization Plan?" Bob leaned on the possessive slightly – by implication stressing Teamwork, Partnering, and Group Harmony.

Silently, Ted deleted an expletive and wrestled with his conscience. His conscience won. "Sir, Mode Q is a short description of your reorganization." He held up his eClipboard which showed a numerical matrix. Bob could read brief phrases from his new reorganization plan along one side of the matrix, a numerical score, and a list of letters with "Q" highlighted.

Ted continued, "You reorganize every other year and there are only so many possible organizational plans if we're going to get anything done. Over the years, we've done everything at least once. So I developed a checklist of actions to take when you want to reorganize. We just check off this year's buzzw... ah, key management phrases, add them up, and that tells us which Mode to implement. This year's plan is Mode Q."

Bob was horrified. *Almost a full year of planning...!* But...! Ted was also the ultimate team player.... If he said that the employees were braced to the make the change... Bob coughed. A good manager is always alert to possibilities.

Bob turned and strode purposefully over to the door. Yanking it open, he gazed out of the conference room into the main employee working area. "Attention, everyone," he called. "Execute Mode Q!"

The employees had looked up when Bob called for attention. Without exception, they turned back to their desks and squinted at the backs of their nameplates. Most reached into the bottom drawer of their desks and took out a stack of nameplates. They flipped thru the stacks until each found a particular plate and placed it on his/her desk., consigning the other plates to the bottom drawer. Some pulled out mimeographed documents and began reading.

Bob strode quickly to the nearest employee's desk and grabbed the startled woman's nameplate. The front gave her name and new divisional organization. He flipped the plate around. In tiny letters were the words "Modes A, B, J, L, P and Q." The mimeographed document was a refresher course describing her work responsibilities... according to "Mode Q."

Ten minutes later, the reorganization was complete.

