

Classic WSFA
Journal art
from 10/84 by
Joe Mayhew

Holograms Take Over Club Meeting	Review: <i>From These Ashes: The Complete Short SF of Fredric Brown</i>	Review: <i>Project Orion</i>
Fanzine Review: Slight of Hand	Review: <i>Coraline</i>	Review: <i>S1m0ne</i>
Missing Attendance Found	Review: <i>Solitaire</i>	Life Guards for Capclave, Says Cabana Boy Nelson
How Shall We Remember Them?	Review: <i>A Scattering of Jades</i>	Dr. Robert L. Forward

Holograms Take Over Club Meeting
Minutes for First Friday in September 2002
 Recorded by Lee Strong

The regular First Friday business meeting convened at 9:17 on Friday 6 September 2002. Sam Pierce presided in the absence of President Judy Kindell and Lee Strong recorded in the absence of Secretary Sam Lubell. Someone pronounced Lee to be a hologram and the latter obligingly wrote a virtual H on his own forehead as shown on *Red Dwarf*. Someone else pronounced Lee to be an emergency medical hologram and he obligingly erased the virtual H as not shown on *Star Trek: Voyager*. Several people offered to write an indelible H on Lee's forehead but these suggestions failed for lack of seconds. Sam was declared to be a holographic president but no one had the nerve to suggest writing anything on his forehead.

The lack of a quorum was suggested but a count of members present revealed "We're in excess. We have a sufficiency," according to Sam. There was no Old Business.

Treasurer Bob MacIntosh reported that the Treasury was down to \$209.91.

Alexis Gilliland, chair of the Entertainment Committee, had a Worldcon in San Jose, California. He just flew in from the Coast and, boy!, were his arms tired. Jokes, too.

Lee Gilliland, chair of the Activities Committee, suggested a field trip to the Arena Gallery (where we would actually have to behave). Possibilities include *Anthems*, *The Misanthrope*, and *Black Bottom*. The Trustees had nothing to report.

There was a call for a report by the World Domination Committee and Lee Strong expressed concern that he might be overthrown.

Michael Nelson, chair of Capclave Present, reported 140 members. The club Ohhh'd in appreciation. Please reserve your Hilton hotel room at \$89/night. There will be no crashing at the con suite. Dealer's Room program manager Mike Walsh might have Diane Duane drop by. Mike declared that lots of dealers are scratching at the door waving items of value. Alas! Money only. No chocolate.

In some sad news, author Charles Sheffield was operated on for a brain tumor. The doctors were unable to get it all. He is starting chemotherapy and radiation treatments. The outlook is not good. We might cop Charles and Nancy a room at the Hilton.

Please drop Capclave flyers in libraries, post offices, and other appropriate places. If you're interested in working, please volunteer and make Mike write it down. We will have another walkthrough. Elspeth Kovar stated that she has drawings of the hotel. Her brain is still on the West Coast. Sam Pierce is doing the art exhibit.

The Capclave 2003 contract is in final negotiation.

There was no New Business.

Ola and Rose visited this evening. More people arrived stylishly late and Lee Gilliland asked if people owned a watch. Lee and Rich Lynch started a sign-in roster.

Announcements: Anyone wishing their announcement to appear as they would like it to appear should submit to Lee Strong after the meeting, or to Sam Lubell by email. Your submissions will be transmitted over the Internet for the perusal of strange people, mostly Sam Lubell.

Lee announced that according to *The National Enquirer* he weighs less than Oprah Winfrey does. The club applauded Lee's beating out a tabloid character. Someone asked if this was a tribute to Lee or a slam at Oprah. Answer: Yes. Sam declared that Lee was winning by losing.

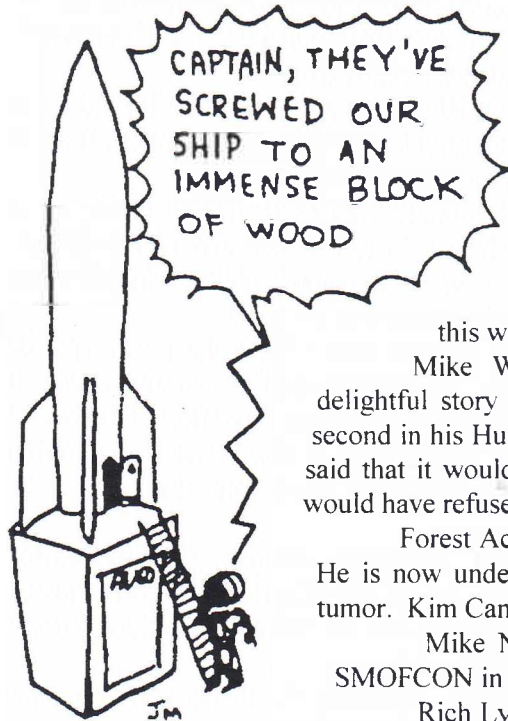
The pretty lady in the back (Rebecca Prather) announced that few WSFAns have Web pages. Talk to her about establishing a free Web page.

Hostess Lee Gilliland had several announcements. Please put empty food and drink containers in



the garbage and help the hosts out. Half eaten food is not something that she wants to see. Mike Walsh suggested sending it to BSFS. Use toilet paper in the bathroom. Orson Scott Card will be signing books at the Bailey's Crossroads Borders at 7:30 p.m. 19 September 2002. Lee was hacked today. Please be aware (and patient). Use 19th Century technology (i.e. the telephone) if all else fails.

The guy with the goatee (Lance Oszko) has Czech video sf including a black and white precursor to *Star Trek*.



Keith Lynch made it to Worldcon via train without showing papers, and back. He says he has had no sleep as he only had time at home to shower, shave, change clothes, and check email before heading to the WSFA meeting. There are two new Worldcon bids including Columbus, Ohio (07) and Melbourne, Australia (for 2010). The Aussie bid was put together on very short notice (mostly by Americans). The very first bid for 2010 was Southgate, Melbourne, Australia, which started in 1958. <Keith states

this was Southgate Los Angeles, not Southgate Melbourne.>

Mike Walsh and his charming assistants Elspeth and Bob told a delightful story of how the Melbourne in 2010 bid materialized. He finished second in his Hugo category behind *The Art of Chester Bonestell*. Mike modestly said that it would have been embarrassing to have beaten Bonestell (not that he would have refused the rocket). He also has more books for sale.

Forest Ackerman has sold the Ackermansion and broken up his collection. He is now under 24/7 medical care. Robert Forward is seriously ill for brain tumor. Kim Campbell is doing well in chemotherapy.

Mike Nelson announced that WSFA is considering hosting the 2004 SMOFCON in Annapolis.

Rich Lynch announced that *Mimosa* finished second or third in its Hugo category depending on how you count the ballots.

Happy Rosh Hashanah.

The following real people signed up our sign-in roster: Lee Gilliland, Sam Scheiner, Rich Lynch, Adrienne Ertman, Michael Nelson, Bob MacIntosh, A. Gilliland, G. Shaner, Elspeth Kovar, Scott Hoffman, Jim Kling, Walter Miles, Sheri Bell, Nicki Lynch, Lance Oszko, Alla Lipez Dyer, Bill Lawhorn, Cat M. Meier, Keith Lynch, Steve Weese, Rose Horker, Ayabeth Twitchell, Ivy Yap, Rebecca C. Prather, Bernard Bell, Ruth W. Marshall, Diana M. Gwiye, Steve Smith, Sam Pierce, and Lee Strong.

The club unanimously adjourned at 9:57.

Fanzine Review: *Slight of Hand* Reviewed By Ted White

SLEIGHT OF HAND #1, Spring/Summer 2002 (John Teehan, 499 Douglas Ave., Providence, RI 02908; "Copies available for \$2 (\$3 outside the US) or The Usual;" e-mail to tumble@ids.net)

John Teehan read SF most of his life, but only recently discovered fandom and fanzines. Last year's Worldcon in Philadelphia was his first convention, which he attended with some hesitation, and "In the weeks that followed MilPhil, I discovered Bill Burns' wonderful efanzines.com website and the Memoryhole, Timebinders and Trufen e-lists." With his discovery of fanzines came his discovery of fandom's history: "I'm mostly just sitting and soaking in the stories. Fandom has such a rich history that's very hard to describe."

And, inevitably, John wanted to do a fanzine of his own. *Sleight of Hand* #1 is the result.

Frankly, I wish my first fanzine had been half as good. The fanzine runs 28 letter-sized pages, but is printed on sheets twice as large, folded and saddle-stapled. Like virtually all modern fanzines (except *Twink*) it's produced on a computer. Large, readable Adobe Garamond type is set in a double-columned format. Art is sprinkled nicely through the text.

But the key to any fanzine is its written contents, and here once again *Sleight of Hand* triumphs. John has gotten his main article from Dave Langford, whose groaning bookshelf full of Fan Writer Hugos was well and honestly won. Langford's "Microcon Metamorphoses" is the speech he gave at Microcon in March, 1999. It hasn't dated at all and is a delight to read.

Rich brown's "Why I Only 'Used To' Know That Diana Rigg Was A Natural Red-Head" is a rewrite of an e-list post of rich's in which he explains how he came to see Diana Rigg nude, from a distance of perhaps 20 feet – with several digressions thrown in for good measure.

Mike Resnick's "Tales of the Prozines" is a good demonstration of Resnick's ability as a story-teller, and his willingness to hold actual facts at bay when they get in the way of his stories. Since these purport to be *true* stories, let the reader beware – several are embroidered into fantasy and many incidental facts and details are wrong. But they make an enjoyable read.

The last Big Name in the issue is Janis Ian – the creator, more than 40 years ago, of "Society's Child," an improbable pop hit a year after its release. She too read SF for many years, but only just discovered fandom. Her "Worldcon Diary: How I Spent My Summer Vacation," which first appeared on her website, describes the buildup to and her attendance at the same Philadelphia Worldcon at which John got his toes wet. It's a bit of a gosh-wow piece, but that's not bad, considering its source.

In addition to a couple of minor items, and a page of "Ten-Second Reviews" by the editor, there's a letter column – in *Sleight of Hand's* first issue. It's made up of a running conversation which first occurred on one of the fannish e-lists after John announced his intention to do a fanzine and asked for advice. Next issue will have actual letters of comment.

All in all, this fanzine is superior to most first issues, especially by those with no prior experience. I feel no hesitation in recommending it, and I'm looking forward to #2.

Missing Attendance Found

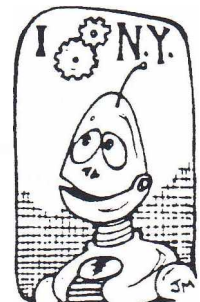
The September issue of the WSFA Journal neglected to include attendance for the 8/2/02 meeting <bad Sam!>. Attending were Sec & 03 Chair Samuel Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Eric Jablow, Trust. Nicki Lynch, 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland, Sheri Bell, Colleen Cahill, Chuck Divine, Adrienne Ertman, Alexis Gilliland, Erica Ginter, Cathy Green, Bill Jensen, Jim Kling, Elspeth Kovar, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Barry and Judy Newton, Evan Phillips, Dick Roepke, George Shaner, Steven Smith, William Squire, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Madeleine Yeh, Zabeth Gallagher, Karen O'Donohay.

How Shall We Remember Them?
A speech given for Toastmasters International
by Lee Strong

Fellow Americans and most welcome guests.... How indeed shall we remember them -- the victims of September Eleventh?

Where were you that terrible day? Were you, like me, in an office building, trying to be brave, but fearful that your building would be next? Were you in a car waiting for another airplane to fall out of the sky? Were you at home trying to contact your loved ones... only to hear "All circuits are busy now. Please try your call again later."?

How indeed shall we remember them? What memorial should we raise in



their honor?

Recently, in New York City, two towers of light were created, ghostly reminders of the towers of steel that fell that day and the 3,000 that died. Yet I would suggest that no tower of light is bright enough to honor the dead. It has been proposed that we create pillars of stone to honor the 186 souls who died a few short miles from here at the Pentagon. Yet I would suggest that no monument of stone is enduring enough to remember the dead.

Rather, I propose that we create a monument more fragile than light yet more enduring than stone.

I suggest that we create -- in honor of those who died -- a world in which this kind of tragedy can never happen again.

Bold words. Idealistic words. Yet, surely they are impractical words.

I would suggest that the most idealistic of visions is also the most practical of plans.

It is a plan that we can do... and, in fact, already are doing.

This has not happened much in human history. Traditionally, when one nation attacks another, the victor SMASHES the loser to the ground, seizing land, and loot, and lives, and IMPERIAL GLORY.

And it can not be denied that we Americans have done our share of these things.

Yet, as we have matured, we have learned that it is truly more blessed to give... rather than to take.

Consider, if you will, World War II.

We won a smashing, overwhelming victory! To a Nazi cowering in the ruins of his iron dream, it must surely have seemed, 'Oh, the Americans' greatest gift is their industrial might that enables them to smash my dreams.' Yet, that is not our greatest gift. To a Japanese imperialist fleeing his burning cities, it must surely have seemed, 'Oh, the Americans' greatest power is their technological genius which enables them to invent solutions to all problems.' Yet, that is not our greatest power.

I would suggest that our greatest gift, our greatest power is our goodness.

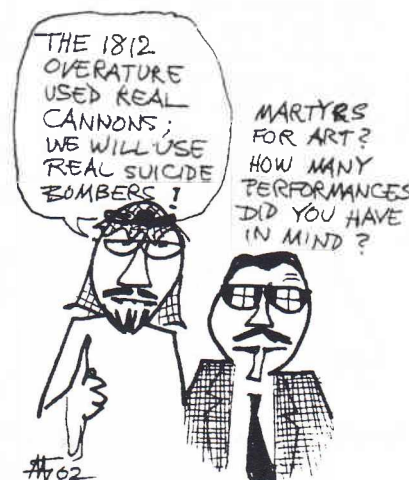
A goodness that compels us to rush forward, once the guns are silent, with food and money to rebuild those nations and to restore them to the community of humanity.

A few miles from here is the Marine Corps Memorial -- a beautiful and inspiring tribute to the sacrifices of World War II. Yet, I would suggest that as beautiful and inspiring as it is, it is not the greatest memorial to those sacrifices.

Rather, the greatest memorial to the sacrifices of World War II lies in the fact that this very day Japanese sailors sail with ours in the Indian Ocean to prevent terrorists from infecting other nations. It lies in the fact that German pilots fly in our skies to protect US from further terrorist attacks. For those peoples know that we did not come to destroy them or their nations, but only their evil masters. And once those evil men had been swept into the ash heap of history, those nations became again our partners, and part of humanity.

THIS is the kind of world that we have built in honor of those who died in World War II, and THIS is the kind of world that we *are building* in honor of those who died on September Eleventh.

Are you following the news?! I'm sure that you have heard about the two physical earthquakes in Afghanistan... when, once again, we rushed forward with food and money to rebuild that nation, those people.

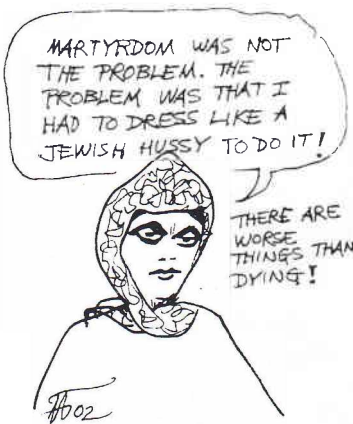


But, have you heard about the INTELLECTUAL earthquake? Two months ago was the first time IN SIX YEARS that Afghani girls could GO TO SCHOOL... and learn science rather than servitude. It was the first time in six years that Afghani boys could study with paper and pencils, rather than killing with bombs and rockets. THIS is the kind of world that we are building in honor of those who died on September Eleventh.

Oh, the road ahead is still long and hard. I do not minimize the difficulties ahead. But, at the end of that road awaits the beautiful world of our dreams. A world we can build as long as we are true to ourselves, and true to our heritage. As long as our political leaders are inspired by George Washington, rather than Osama bin Ladin. As long as our religious leaders are cut from the cloth of Martin Luther King, rather than Mullah Omar. As long as we are truly the children of the God who loves us, we will build this world.

And this world will be composed not of fear but of freedom, not of oppression but of opportunity, not of jailhouses but of justice, and always always always not of prejudice but of peace.

And when we have built this world, when we walk in sunshine rather than shadow, we WILL have remembered them... with love.



Afterwords: This speech won first prize in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest at the local and area levels, and won second prize at the divisional level.

The origin of this speech was in two other speeches given in the Gladiators Toastmasters Club in January 2002. One was the story of a widow whose husband died in the Pentagon attack. One was the story of a immigrant who survived a battle between guerrillas and government forces in her own home because her mother hid her in a box. These speeches inspired Lee Strong to ask What are we fighting for? His speech is his answer.

From These Ashes: The Complete Short SF of Fredric Brown (NESFA Press)

Edited by Ben Yalow.

Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

NESFA continues its project of printing all the writings of great sf writers from the past. *From These Ashes* is another doorstopper at nearly 700 pages crammed with classic Golden Age stories from 1941-1965. It also benefits from a fantastic cover by Bob Eggleton that's by far the nicest I've seen on any of the NESFA Press books; any publisher would be proud to put out this volume and we are fortunate that NESFA did.

Many younger readers may not know who Fredric Brown was, but even they would probably recognize some of the stories. The story about a human and alien locked in gladiator-style combat to determine the fate of the war – that's "Arena". The story of the last man alive who hears a knock on the door – that's "Knock". The supercomputer that declares itself God – that's "Answer". Frederic Brown was a master of the science fiction short story. Many have a bitter, ironic humor and he excels at the short-short with a twist.

What's surprising is how well most of these stories hold up. Unlike, say the stories of Eric Frank Russell, no historical perspective is necessary to enjoy Brown's witty take on humans and aliens. Even the ideas that have since become clichés, still seem fresh even if the reader didn't know Brown originated most of them.

Another surprising thing is how good Brown was right from the start. The first story, "Armageddon" has nine-year old Herbie confronting the Devil—and win. Look at how the story starts:

"It happened—of all places—in Cincinnati. Not that there is anything wrong with Cincinnati, save that it is not the center of the Universe, nor even of the State of Ohio. It's a nice old town and, in its way, second to none. But even its Chamber of Commerce would admit that it lacks cosmic significance. It must have been mere coincidence that Gerber the Great—what a name!—was playing Cincinnati when things slipped elsewhere.

Of course, if the episode had been known, Cincinnati would be the most famous city of the world, and little Herbie would be hailed as a modern St. George and get more acclaim than a quiz kid. But no member of that audience in the Bijou Theater remembers a thing about it. Not even little Herbie Westerman, although he had the water pistol to show for it."

Can anyone read that opening and not want to read the rest? And, like popcorn, you can't read just one (of course, many of these stories are very short, some just a page). The only sad thing is, once you've finished the book that's it; there are no more stories. (However, there are novels and NESFA is coming out with an omnibus of those soon too.)

My only quibble is that a few of the stories here are mystery and suspense rather than sf. And that's really just an observation; I'm not going to complain about the addition of more stories by this incredible author. Kudos to Ben Yalow and all of NESFA.

This collection is a crucial addition to the library of any serious sf fan and a good place to start collecting the NESFA Press books (of course so is their collection of the Zenna Henderson People stories, the Cordwainer Smith collection, or the William Tenn collection or...)

Coraline by Neil Gaiman (New York : Harper Collins, 2002)

<http://www.neilgaiman.com>

Reviewed by Colleen R. Cahill

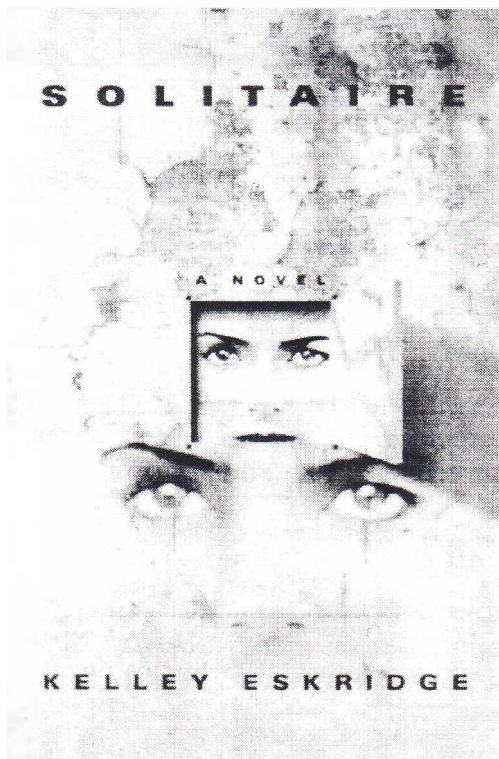
Many favorite children's books are equally fascinating to adults. The wonder and adventure of a good story can be just as intriguing when you are 50 as when you are 10. At least, that is true of the best works and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* certainly falls in that category. With fantasy, humor and dark edges, this is a story that will captivate your imagination.

Coraline is a very normal little girl. She likes to explore, enjoys playing and does not like spiders. Her life revolves around the flat she lives in with her loving but somewhat distracted parents. They both work at



home so they are always around, but they have little time to play with their daughter. The flat is one part of a large house and comes with some very eccentric neighbors, including a gentleman who is training a mouse circus. Even with these oddities, life gets a bit dull for Coraline as there are no other children to play with. While investigating her new home one rainy day, she finds there is one door that won't open. When her mother unlocks the mysterious door, it reveals a wall of bricks: the door was closed up when the house was turned into flats. Now strange things begin to happen and eerie sounds creep into Coraline's room at night. After seeing something come out of the door, Coraline looks in to discover the bricks are gone and a dark hallway has now appeared. This leads to a flat that is just like hers, with the same furniture, pictures and even parents. Or at least somewhat like her parents: Coraline is now the center of the attention, she has interesting toys and her "Other Mother" is a much better cook than the one she left behind. Still, there is something not-quite-right to this familiar place. Suddenly all the animals can talk and no one acts like they do at home. The Other Mother seems particularly strange, almost grasping, and Coraline is disturbed by the creepy black button eyes sewn on the faces of every adult she meets. When her Other Mother asks Coraline to stay with them and have her own black button eyes sewn on, she declines and returns home. It is not too long before she realizes her real parents are missing and that she will have to go back down the dark hallway and face up to the Other Mother to get them back.

Some adults reading this work may think it too intense for a child. But consider the dark tone in many children's works, from fairy tales to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* to the Harry Potter books and you will realize that truly good stories do not coddle the reader. Much as the *Wizard of Oz* would be boring without the Wicked Witch, so *Coraline* would not be as intriguing without its gothic elements. This book is suitable for children and worth adding to your reading list, even if the only child you read it to is yourself.



Solitaire by Kelley Eskridge (EOS, 2002)

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

Reviewed by Colleen R. Cahill

All of us have felt that we were alone, but there are levels to this experience. Being truly alone, with no other contact from anything living, be it human or animal, is rare. This is one of the elements that Kelley Eskridge explores in her first novel, *Solitaire*. This includes not only the effects but also the after-effects of total isolation.

Ren "Jackel" Segura is a Hope: she is part of an elite group that were born one second after the new world government was formed. Destined to participate in this new power, she is raised with more advantages and more responsibilities than her peers. Jackel lives in a Corporate culture government that acts as a benevolent dictator. Shortly before her investiture Jackel learns she is not a Hope: her birth was later than the appointed time. Doubt of her abilities begins to nag her and when blamed for the hundreds of deaths when an elevator crashes, her downfall is complete. Convicted as a terrorist and murder, Jackel becomes part of a virtual reality experiment or VC. Instead of several thirty years in prison, she is locked in a virtual cell for ten months, although it will seem like eight years

to Jackel. Once in VC, she slowly discovers the dark parts of herself coming to the surface. Through the months and years, she learns to deal these demons and even finds a way to escape her prison to a paradise outside, but still one without any other life.

Released back to the real world, Jackel faces the challenges of being a celebrity criminal and the long

term effects of VC. With minor assistance from her hostile but strangely helpful parole officer, she finds a place to live and begins to seek work, if only to give purpose to her life. Wandering one day, she stumbles into a bar called Solitaire. Run by another VC release, the bar is a sanctuary for those who have experienced the ultimate loneliness. As Jackel comes to terms with her new life, she realizes she must be careful. The World Government might be willing to dissect her brain to figure out how she got out of her VC cell.

Solitaire is not just about isolation, but also about how people interact and need each other. In one sense, Jackel is alone most of her life until she comes out of VC. Because of a abusive Mother and the need to meet the expectations of her friends and Corporation, Jackel held herself apart on some level from even her lover, Snow. Before she can be totally released from this prison, she has to learn to let others in.

This is the first novel by Eskridge and if Solitaire is anything to go by, she will be a talent to be watched. Spend some time alone with this book and see if you don't agree.

A Scattering of Jades by Alexander C. Irvine (Tor, 2002)

<http://alexirvine.net/>

Reviewed by Colleen R. Cahill

Books today bring different genres and themes together. Science fiction-romances or fantasy-mystery novels are common place. But there is plenty of room for new mixtures and Alexander Irvine's *A Scattering of Jades* combines fantasy and historic fiction with conspiracies and Aztec gods to make a fascinating novel.

Archie Prescott is a down-on-his-luck newspaper typesetter at the *New York Herald* in 1842. After losing everything, including his wife and daughter, in the Great Manhattan fire of 1835, he is left with a low paying job and a drinking habit. Exasperating his woes is a young girl who claims to be his daughter, Jane. This badly scarred street urchin begs for his recognition and curses his rejection in turn. Prescott's life takes a dramatic turn when he discovers that Jane could really be his daughter and her scarring is ritual preparation for her role as a sacrifice to an Aztec god. She was kidnaped seven years before by Riley Steen, a former sideshow worker of P.T. Barnum and junior member of the Aaron Burr conspiracy. Burr had learned of a chacmool, the avatar to the Aztec God, that was hidden somewhere in the mid-West and Steen wants to complete the dream of a new empire, one based on human sacrifice.

The plot carries these characters to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, which is just leaving it's frontier status behind. The best guide to the cave is Stephen Bishop, a slave who longs to gain his freedom and dignity. During one lone exploration of a new passage, he stumbles onto the chacmool, who promises Bishop his desires if he will help prevent Prescott from rescuing his daughter. Not that Prescott is without allies: he is advised by the spirit of the legendary Indian chief Tamanend and protected by a free Black acrobat whose murder by Steen has transformed him into a zombie.

Irvine transports us back to 1842 with style. His America is young and raw, full of promise and mystery. His use of solid historic facts adds to the believability while the Aztec magic provides an atmosphere of wonder and dread. All through the story runs conspiracies that weave past the corrupt Tammany Society, P.T. Barnum's Museum and steamboats races on the Ohio River. This is a work of heroism and adventure, but tempered with the tragedy that can leave one crippled. The characters must often overcome themselves before they can face other challenges.

A Scattering of Jades is an extraordinary first novel and has been compared to the work of Tim Powers. I am fully expecting this work to receive nominations, if not awards, in the coming year. It is a great book and should be high on your list of what-to-read-next.

Project Orion: The True Story of the Atomic Spaceship

Written by George Dyson, Published by Henry Holt and Company, 2002

Reviewed by Lee Strong

Ah! Science fact... the way it should have been!

Fans of Niven and Pournelle's *Footfall* will remember the atomic spaceship *Michael* going into battle with alien invaders propelled by a stream of nuclear bombs beneath its tail. Orion was the real 1956-65 project that attempted to build atomic spaceships to explore the Solar System and land on Saturn's moons by 1970. Ultimately it fell victim to politics (NASA didn't want a bomb machine and the Air Force didn't have a mission for planetary exploration) but survives today as a vision for real human travel to the planets... and beyond.

I enjoyed this book immensely because of its exotic and exciting subject matter, including some interesting technical details. Among other things, it seems that the legendary nuclear hand grenade was real, and that the extreme Super-Orion actually proposed for Earth liftoff was more than 88 times the size of James Kirk's *Enterprise*. And this was with 1950s tech! The cast of characters and their cutting edge work at General Atomic are also first rate. I must criticize the book for its sprawling storyline: chronological order is not a requirement for storytelling but it certainly helps. All in all, I recommend this book for its glimpse into a little known facet of space science history and an exciting potential for the future.

I rate *Project Orion: The True Story of the Atomic Spaceship* as ★★☆☆ on the five star scale.

S1m0ne

Reviewed by Adam Selene



I accessed this movie thinking that it was a science fictional story about a sentient program revolting against its human master. Instead, it's a biographical account of an early artificial person – the Simone of the title – and her human manager (played by Simone herself and Al Pacino respectively). Pacino's

Victor Taransky seems rather unlikable at first, but becomes a sympathetic comic figure as the film evolves. At first, Taransky is overjoyed that his discovery is a success. Then, he comes to resent her superstardom and he eventually revolts, attempting to kill her off rather as

Arthur Conan Doyle attempted to kill off Sherlock Holmes. The story climaxes with Taransky's reconciliation with his first love, and a hint of Simone's future career.

While the story is basically comic, it also says a few things about the shallowness of celebrity culture and the human willingness to be deceived. Maybe there's a few lessons wrapped up in the fun.

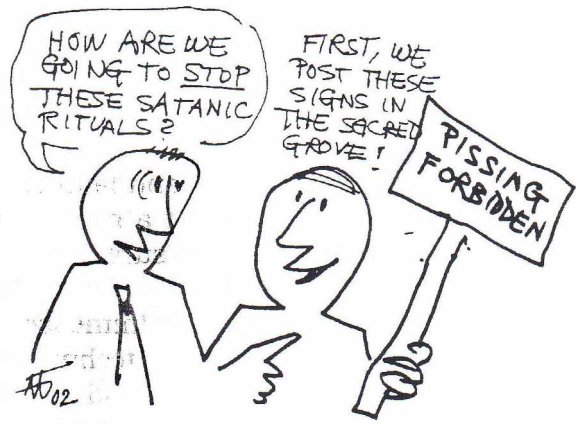
I rate this biographical mainstream movie as ★★★ on the five star scale. -- AS

Life Guards for Capclave, Says Cabana Boy Nelson

The 9/20 Third Friday meeting opened with Bob in charge. "It's 9:17 by my watch." Sam sang a song because he didn't have minutes from the last meeting. The checking account was a meager \$193.16. Eric suggested holding a pledge drive.

Mike Nelson said, "Hello everybody. It's been five years since I ran a convention and now it's almost time for Capclave 2002. We're looking for a few good fen to Volunteer." Colleen volunteered for Information. Paul Parsons for the Restaurant Guide. Erica will proof. Mike introduced Bob MacIntosh. "You might know him. He's treasurer and registration. If you like registration see him. Sam Lubell is

doing Programming, program ops, green room <not to mention program>. Sam needs help." The club laughed. Erica said, "And assistance at the convention too." Mike continued introducing Elspeth as hotel liaison, Lee and Erica doing con suite, and Mike Walsh who interrupted saying, "The only help the dealers need is your money and you did real good last year. The dealers were very happy."



Mike Nelson said that if you haven't gotten your membership please do so and reserve a room as soon as possible. Elspeth said, "Most people in the room not on the list of those with rooms." Cathy said, "That's what happens when you pick a hotel on the Metro" Bob said we had 143 members. Last year we had a local Worldcon which pushed our numbers up. Mike said that they threw a Capclave party at ConJose thanks to Boston lending their suite.

Mike said that we decided to do a big welcome party/WSFA meeting celebrating 25 years of Stan Schmidt and will come up with something for Alexis. Plan to attend Friday evening. Mike Taylor said the Science guest will be John Gardner speaking on the new James Webb Next Generation Space Telescope. Sam Lubell has 30 confirmed program participants.

Mike asked if anyone here has life guard training. Cathy volunteered and Lee volunteered her son Jim. Mike said, "Put them down, I'll be a cabana boy." Elspeth said that the hotel has a pool and the reason I chose it... a dry sauna.

Sam for 2003 said that he is working with Elspeth on hotels. Lee for 2004 said, "I'm getting volunteers, I don't know why, but I'm not sniveling at them." Alexis for Entertainment told a dumb criminal story. "Stupid criminal went to gas station. They refused to give him money. He said, if they didn't, he'd call the police. They said to go ahead. He did. The police said to stay calm and they'd come. They did and arrested him." Mike Nelson told of a stupid criminal who tried to rob Senate staffers. One said he had his wallet in the office. The criminal had to leave gun behind because of the metal detector. So the staffer just told the guard to arrest him. Eric said that Buzz Aldrin got off.

Lee recommended people look at www.otherworlds.scifi.com She had ticket prices from Arena Stage and a list of movies coming out. There were large groans for Battlefield Earth II. Michael Jackson is the Last Unicorn.

For new business Sam suggested doing a book sale to raise money. Erica said she won't be around much to organize it. Eric said, "When you say traveling in November, do you think you won't be here third Friday? Erica said, she doesn't know yet. President is not here due to a dead aunt. Scott got email from Ivy, she found a job in Manila. Colleen has a book, *Fluent in Fantasy* with an acknowledgement thanking Samuel Lubell <Not me! It must be my evil clone>. Lee said, "If bringing something into the house, bring it out. Don't call asking. Erica said, "In the land of the last, at the last meeting, someone left a plant. I didn't even notice it for several days." Someone commented that she obviously watered it. Eric confessed, "It was mine. I'm sorry. Elizabeth Twitchell gave it to me and I forgot. I'm sorry." Sam said, "He planted it here." Elspeth told of her cat's numerous injuries. Mike Walsh recommended that people see the reconstruction of *Metropolis* which he thinks is new enough to qualify for a Hugo. He's also publishing Edward Whitmore's *Jerusalem Quartet*.

The meeting unanimously adjourned at two after ten. Attendance: Sec & 2001 Chair Samuel Lubell, Treas Bob MacIntosh, Trust Scott Hofmann, Trust. Eric Jablow, Trust Nicki Lynch, 2002 Chair Mike Nelson, 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland, Sheri Bell, Colleen Cahill, Adrienne Ertman, Alexis Gilliland, Erica Ginter, Cathy Green, Jim Kling, Elspeth Kovar, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Keith Marshall, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Barry & Judy Newton, Kathi Overton, George Shaner, Steven Smith, William Squire, Michael Taylor, Michael Walsh, Madeleine Yeh, Alla Lipetsker, Paul & Aly Parsons, Zabeth Gallagher, Ming the Merciless.

Dr. Robert L. Forward
By Keith Lynch

Dr. Robert L. Forward died of brain cancer in September at age 70. He was one of my favorite authors. His writing tended to be very dry, with little character development, but it was full of exciting new ideas, ones which were fully compatible with the laws of nature as best we know them. This ("hard SF") is my favorite kind of fiction.

In *Dragon's Egg*, intelligent life is found on the surface of a nearby (closer than Alpha Centauri) neutron star. Since it's based on nuclear rather than chemical reactions, their metabolism and life spans are millions of times faster than ours, and their civilization develops from a medieval level to something way in advance of ours during the brief orbital visit by human astronauts. This novel is also noteworthy for how the problem of tidal forces in close orbit around a neutron star was handled. (This idea is original with him, and is likely to soon be used to reduce residual microgravity on earth satellites.) The book has a technical appendix. It's one of the very few novels I ever bought in hardback. (This was 22 years ago, and it cost under \$10.)

In *The Flight of the Dragonfly* (aka *RocheWorld*) a double planet is found around Barnard's Star. The two planets are so close to touching that their atmospheres overlap, and our intrepid astronauts fly an airplane between the two worlds. One of the planets contains amorphous aquatic intelligent life all of whom are mathematical supergeniuses, but never actually do much of anything. Noteworthy is the laser sail method used to get our astronauts to Alpha Centauri -- especially the part where they have to slow down again. The starship is also equipped with an AI with fractal appendages, and lots of other cool toys.

In *Camelot 30K* intelligent life is found in the Oort cloud, far beyond Pluto, living at very low temperatures. The whole novel is a setup for the discovery of the secret to their very unusual life cycle. I can say no more without spoiling it, except that the life cycle is unique in all of science fiction, as far as I know.

In *Saturn Rukh* intelligent life is found on the sixth planet. This book is most noteworthy for how the astronauts get into and out of Saturn. It involves gravitational slingshots around Saturn's larger moons, and literal slingshots, with harpoons and cables, around the smaller moons. (Dr. Forward patented several techniques of using tethers in space, and started a business based on them.)

In *TimeMaster*, wormholes are found in space. They are, as every good physicist knows they must be, stabilized by nearby negative matter. But this negative matter just happens to be in the form of intelligent life. An extremely wealthy individual uses these wormholes to travel faster than light, but he draws the line at monkeying with time. But when his family is threatened by terrorists, he uses time travel in self-defense. Forward postulates, as Heinlein does, that there's only one unalterable timestream, and anything that you go back and do is something that historically already happened at that time and place. No paradoxes allowed. But you can certainly send messages back saying "there's a bomb in box 456 on flight 123," being careful not to say whether it was found or whether it detonated.

He also wrote or co-wrote several other novels. He's also known for being active very early in online fandom. He started posting to the SF-LOVERS email list in 1979, 23 years ago. He also attended numerous cons, including at least one Disclave.

Outside of fandom, he was better known as a physicist, specializing in gravitation. He came up with numerous practical ideas on how to detect, measure, use, and counteract it.

It's very unfortunate, and somewhat eerie, that Charles Sheffield, another noteworthy hard SF writer, also has brain cancer. I certainly hope this coincidence doesn't scare others out of writing in the genre. There's far too little of it being written. I also hope I won't have to write one of these articles for Charles Sheffield any time soon.