

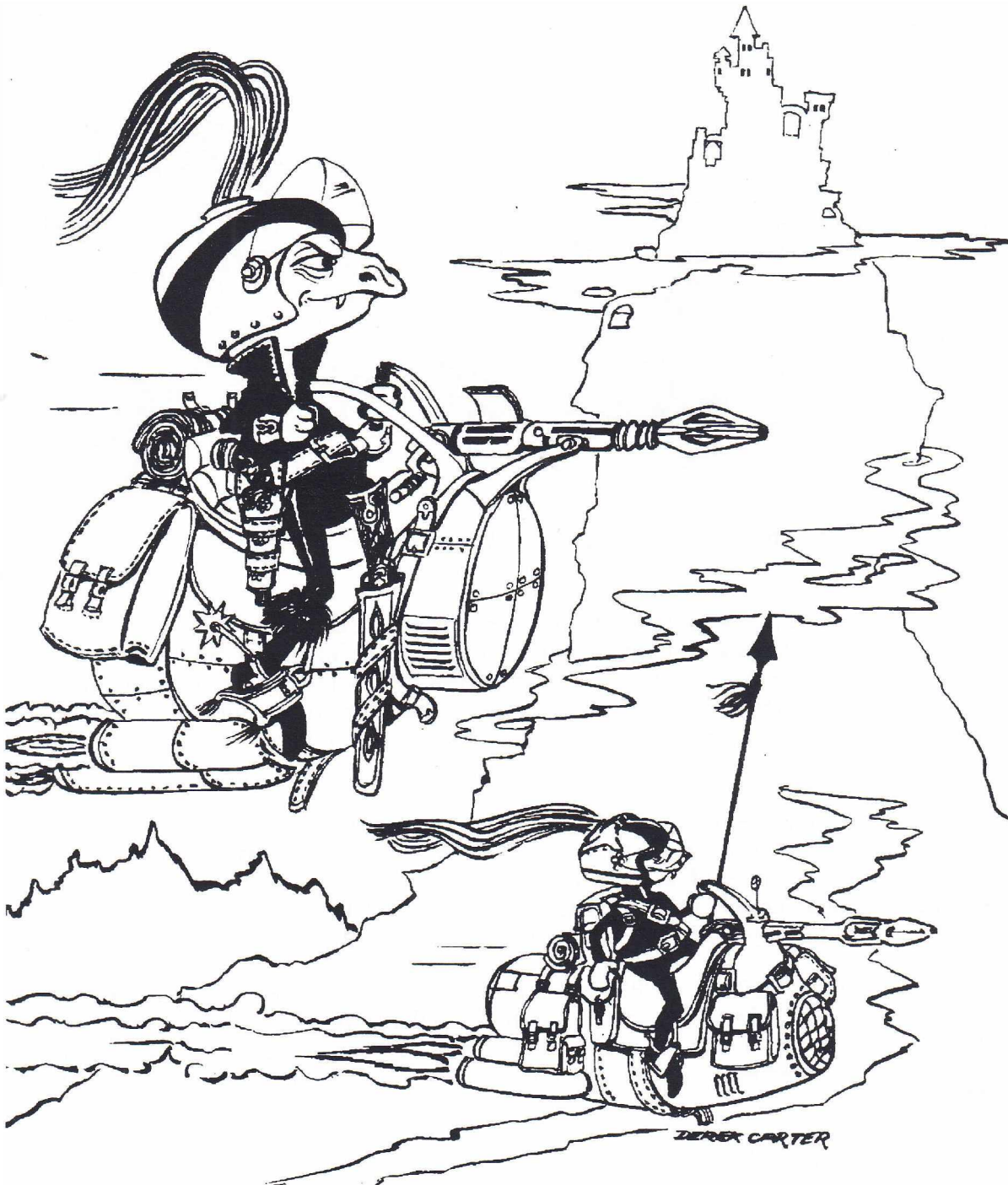
# The WSFA Journal

**Sept 2003**

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Edited by Samuel Lubell

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TV 2003: Year of the Quirky  
By Samuel Lubell

Each year, the television networks seem to get together in a dark room and decide what the trend will be that year. Two years ago, it was CIA/spy shows (I think only *Alias* and the Agency have survived). Last year, it was adults reliving their high school years (both died quickly). This year, the trend seems to be quirky shows that would make a great indie movie but which I just can't see having the mass appeal and continuing interest necessary for a TV series.

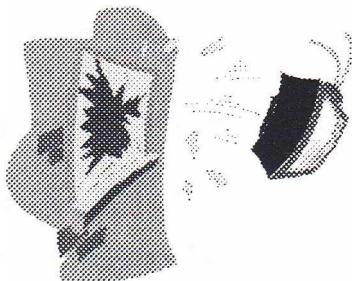
New Shows:

**TARZAN AND JANE** (WB 8 p.m. Sunday Oct. 5). Tarzan gets the now patented WB treatment (soap factor turned way up). This Tarzan is set in New York City where Jane (Sarah Wayne Callies) is a police detective who discovers Tarzan (former Calvin Klein underwear model Travis Fimmel (According to one critic, only on the WB would Tarzan be prettier than Jane)), the heir to the Greystone Industries fortune, running wild. But how can you do a Tarzan away from the jungle? (Yes, I'm aware that one book did, but that was just one out of how many?). Fans of the *Beauty and the Beast* show of the 80s might want to give this a try.



**JAKE 2.0** (UPN, Wednesdays at 9. Premieres Sept 10th). A *6 Million Dollar Man* for the oos. A computer technician gains super-human powers (superhuman strength, lightning-fast speed, heightened hearing, magnified vision and the telepathic abilities to communicate with computers) from computer nanites and becomes a secret agent for the National Security Agency (what happened to nice agencies like the OSI and IADC?). Running after *Enterprise* should help this show but competing against the *Smallville*/*Angel* combo on WB will hurt.

**TRU CALLING**. (Fox, Thursday 8pm, premieres Oct 30th) Morgue worker (Eliza Dushku (Faith from *Buffy*)) somehow gains the power to prevent the deaths of corpses by reliving their day. This is one of those quirky shows with minimal chance of success (especially since it is on Fox). Dushku did action/adventure well, but it sounds like this role requires greater drama skills. And the late start date (and rumors of postponement) is probably indicative of some last minute changes.



**JOAN OF ARCADIA** (CBS Friday, 8 pm. September 26) Family drama about a police chief's family whose daughter regularly meets people who claim to be God and who give her tasks to do. Even quirkier than *Tru Calling*. I can't see this lasting long although it might attract the *Highway to Heaven* audience.

**WONDERFALLS** (Fox Midseason) Souvenir shop worker has animal figures in the store talk to her to get her to help others. I'd be surprised if this airs at all as anything more than a pilot movie since this type of cutesy/quirky will

be very hard to pull off.

**STEPHEN KING'S KINGDOM HOSPITAL** (ABC Midseason) King's adapts a Danish miniseries that he describes as a cross between "ER" and "The Shining."



FEARLESS (WB midseason) Loosely based on the series for teen readers, this show is about a woman born without the fear gene who becomes a ~~green-lantern~~ undercover FBI agent (although last I heard, this may be tweaked into a special police unit). It stars Rachael Leigh Cook, Eric Balfour, and Bianca Lawson (Kendra on *Buffy*). A major problem will be that sticking to the premise and not ever showing fear will reduce a major tool for building up dramatic tension. Originally supposed to premiere this Fall, the show has been moved to midseason, an indication of problems.

#### Returning Shows:

WB's *Smallville* goes to 8 p.m. Wednesday from 8 p.m. Tuesday. Premieres October 1

WB's *Angel* (Wednesdays at 9, starting Oct 1) loses Cordy (vision girl) and gains Spike (Vampire from *Buffy*).

WB's *Charmed* continues as usual WB Sundays at 9. Premieres September 28

Enterprise continues on UPN Wednesday at 8. Premieres Sept 10.

### What About the Garbagemen?

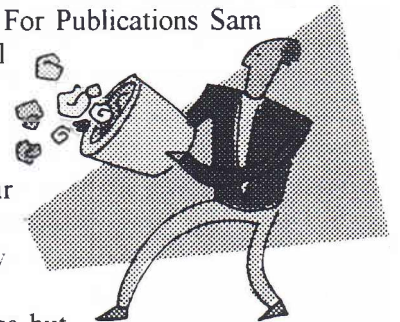
The 7/18 Third Friday for July began with VP Cathy going "Yo! Meeting starting." Lee furthered this by saying, "Alexis, shut up!" She got amused glances and explained. "I'm his wife. I can do that." There was no business at the Fourth of July meeting. Bob protested, "But lots of meat was consumed." The treasurer had \$1,391.20

For Capclave Present, Sam promised to take steps if Judy had not sent out invitations to the guests. Future had nothing to say. Far Future and WFC were in Boston. Mike Nelson said that WFC rate increases at the end of the month. There's an 850 person limit so probably no at the door memberships. For Publications Sam Lubell pointed out that if Kendra Gresham could contribute to the Journal, you all have no excuse. The Austerity committee professed itself austere in its speech. The Entertainment committee reported that ten days ago Jay Leno stopped treating Weapons of Mass Destruction so gingerly. He did a joke and it went well so he's repeating it. Activities committee passed around information on how to have your name sent up to a comet <But look at what one did to Mark Clemens!> Cathy commented that comets don't leave the solar system. Garbagemen <That's what my notes say, but I've forgotten the reference.>

For new business Elizabeth said she will organize a fifth Friday at her house but realized she will be away so cancelled. Bob said there would be something at Worldcon.

Announcements: Online Hugos is working; Lee and Alexis will have their Anniversary party on Friday during WFC. Orange cat got kicked out of the house, but if you see him let Erica know. Eric suggested a movie, *Finding Theo*. Keith's been involved in WSFA for more than half his life. Tracey and Kelly were here for their third time, "You may now pay dues," said Elizabeth. Adrienne got a job making glasses. Madeline is looking for UNIX administrator jobs. Meeting unanimously adjourned at 8:35.

Attendance: VP Cathy Green, Sec and 2003 Chair Samuel Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Adrienne Ertman, Trust Keith Lynch, Trust. Steven Smith, Sheri Bell, Colleen Cahill, Alexis Gilliland, Erica Ginter, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Bill Jensen, Jim Kling, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Wade Lynch, Candy and John Madigan, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Marilyn Mix, Mike Nelson, Lance Oszko, Larry Pfeffer, Evan Phillips, Sam Pierce, George Shaner, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Chuck Divine, Chris and Shirl Hayes, Kelley Singer, Tracy J. Kremer, and Dave Taylor.



### Of Lice And Men By Alexis Gilliland

A recent study comparing the DNA of head lice and body lice, suggests that they became separate species rather recently, roughly 20,000 to 110,000 years ago. Maybe further work will refine the date a little, but modern humans appeared during the last ice age, about 50,000 years ago. The relevance to human evolution is that body lice live in clothing rather than on hair, and thus body lice could not have existed until the invention of clothing. Given the necessity of coping with an extremely harsh

environment, the invention of clothing would have greatly increased the survival rate of those humans who had the wit to clothe themselves. An analysis of the Y chromosome shows that today's six billion humans have descended from only six male ancestors, the Guccis, Bill Blasses and Yves Saint Laurents of their day. By now everyone is descended from all of the six, but males can only express one of the ancestral patterns in their Y-chromosomes. As a practical matter, those six males would have been the founding fathers of six different fashion houses, uh, tribes, all appearing about the same time. Since there are six rather than only one, it would appear to be a winnowing or selection of existing talents rather than a mutation. That selection, of course, was for superior hunting and coping skills to assure survival in the bitter cold of the ice age winters.



What was the source of these superior skills? The human skeleton appeared about 3,000,000 years ago, complete with a hand that could shape flint tools and wield them, and pre-modern humans, including the Neanderthals, were highly successful, spreading over the continents of Africa, Europe and Asia. There is nothing in the bones to differentiate modern and pre-modern humans; they were built to the same specification, and both used language to communicate. Clearly the hunting and coping skills of the pre-modern human were comparable to those of the modern

human. At least at the beginning. It wouldn't take many generations of ice age winters to move an isolated population of pre-modern humans two or three sigmas up the old Gaussian distribution curve. Especially when reproductive success was limited to the best and the brightest. Those six founding fathers suggest the success of one hunter and copier in a thousand or maybe ten thousand, from a population that had already displaced itself from the less able part of the curve. This shift in aptitude wouldn't be manifested in the bones, but in the few artifacts left by modern humans, showing superior weapon design and in a few surviving carvings--and the caves of Lascaux--an art that speaks to us today. What was the cultural change signified by these meager traces which were clearly the side effect of something that enabled survival in the terrible winters of the ice age? In those circumstances, the most logical candidate would appear to be the invention of clothing. For this invention, two things were needed, women with the skill and imagination to sew hides into garments, and men who were willing to break with millions of years of tradition and wear the new-fangled things. Given all the selection for hunting ability you could want, in the ice age winter a hunter wearing clothes would have a major advantage over one who did not.

How does this particular advantage extend into other areas, such as weapon design? The obvious answer is that in choosing the clothes you wear, the wearer must consider a number of mutually exclusive values, such as warmth vs. mobility and practicality vs. sex appeal. These considerations had never been applicable to artifacts before; you flaked a fresh flint when you needed to cut something, or replaced the broken antelope thighbone with a fresh one for your club. The habit of thinking about how to improve one's dress extended itself to the artifacts one used, and to improving the organization of the hunt and the war party. Our first question is: Was this nature or nurture, genetic or cultural? The answer is probably a bit of both. Given that we are dealing with small, isolated populations, genetic change would be possible and quite fast--five or ten generations--but no statistical evidence is available. A population deviating significantly from the pre-human norm--for which no statistical evidence is also available--would be expected in the circumstances. On the other hand, the invention of clothing is clearly a cultural event, but maybe such an event would not be possible without achieving some critical level of intelligence. The bottom line is that survivors breed, passing on their survivor traits; superior intelligence if we wish to pat ourselves on the back, vanity and clotheshorserery if we don't. We note also that when modern humans first appeared along the edges of the glaciers some 50,000 years ago, it took time for them to get organized. How much time? In the Middle East, where archaeology has shown that pre-modern humans coexisted with Neanderthals for hundreds of thousands of years, both groups were



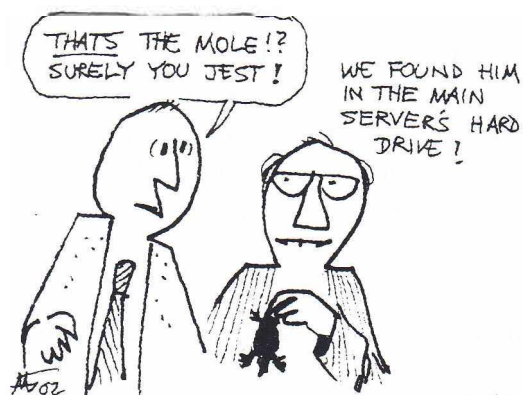
replaced by modern humans about 30,000 years ago. So figure 20,000 years, maybe twice the length of recorded history, plenty of time for modern humans to get their act together and their numbers up.

The second question is: Was there any interbreeding between the groups when modern humanity moved in? The fact that there were only six founding fathers for modern humanity suggests that pre-modern males died without issue. What about pre-modern females? We go back to the body louse, which had adapted to living in clothes, and to the continued loss of human body hair which was the result of wearing clothes--though pre-modern man may well have been less hairy than other primates. If the modern male was aroused by the naked, hairless body of the modern female, part of that attraction was surely that she kept her body enticingly concealed under all those clothes. The Neanderthal female would have been seen as ugly, and the pre-modern female, who was not, was more hairy and clothes-free than the modern male's ideal woman. Which would not necessarily preclude miscegenation. This loops back to the first question, which wondered whether modern humans might have become more intelligent. If, in addition to being ugly and hairy, pre-modern females were also seen as stupid, their chances of reproductive success would have been zero and none. The pre-modern female probably never got the chance to adapt to modern human culture, even as a chattel, and like the pre-modern male she died without issue. So we reach a couple of conclusions, first, in response to the challenge of the ice age winter survival required a significant increase in intelligence for the ethnoi who became modern humans, and it was this increased intelligence that made clothes--and the body louse--possible. Second, for whatever reason--and in modern times we have suppressed that primal inclination for genocide, except when we don't--these modern humans did not interbreed with pre-modern humans.



### Sippy Cups for Everyone

Cathy Green called the first meeting of August to order on the first day of August. She was told, "You're not official" since she wasn't using the gavel. There was no old business. Treasurer reported \$1,411.20. "Let's have a con". Capclave Present said there was a mailing after the meeting. Sam still hasn't been able to reach Judy the Programming person. Capclave Future doesn't like the idea of Capclave being the week before Thanksgiving. Lee said, "I was talking October but people don't like it due to Albacon and World Fantasy so I'd like a show of hands for October." The "Don't care"s won. Lee grumbled that we were no help. "There is no good time to have a con," she was told. Far Future said, "Wherever, whenever. The sooner it gets settled, the sooner we'll get a GOH." Colleen asked, "What size ammo for GOH hunting?" World Fantasy said it had over 400 members and the cost went up to \$150. Lee said she's having an anniversary party at the hotel, everyone here is invited. Elspeth said WFC hotel block closes at end of month. For suites, see her.



Entertainment committee has a commercial for an anthology, *Stars*, that includes his cartoons. The website will have a chat. Austerity Committee is being austere. "Donate money, bring food." Publications plans to finish off Lee Strong or at least his issues. But some earlier issues have copyright notices for articles and don't know whether we have copyright clearance for this. There is a law working its way through Congress on that. Cathy suggested to leave it out. There was much discussion. Sam finally moved that the publications committee write a disclaiming saying we will remove items if asked. Rebecca raised the issue of linking. The motion passed.

Announcements: Lee asked that people wipe up spills; otherwise we'll get non-spilling drinks. Sippy cups for everyone. Lance wants liquor smugglers. Rebecca is looking for a ride and roommate. Civil War Days at Smithsonian mall. Hackers are coming. Walter Matt Jefferies, designer of original Enterprise died. Jim Kling got a part time writing job. Meeting adjourned 9:40, unanimously.

Attendance: VP Cathy Green, Sec and 2003 Chair Samuel Lubell, Trust. Adrienne Ertman, Trust Keith Lynch, Trust Steven Smith, 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland, Sheri Bell, Colleen Cahill, Alexis Gilliland, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Bill Jensen, Jim Kling, Elspeth Kovar, Brian Lewis, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Wade Lynch, Keith Marshall, Walter Miles, Mike Nelson, Lance Oszko, Kathi Overton, John Pomeranz, Rebecca Prather, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, William Squire, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Preeti Singh, TR, Michael Walsh, Cover Beach, Steve Mith, C. Key.

Fanzine Review  
By Ted White

ASTONISHING TRAPDOOR STORIES / TRAP DOOR #22 (Robert Lichtman, editor & publisher, P.O.Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; email to [locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com](mailto:locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com); available "by Editorial Whim for The Usual (letters, contributions both written and artistic, and accepted trades) or \$5.00 per issue")

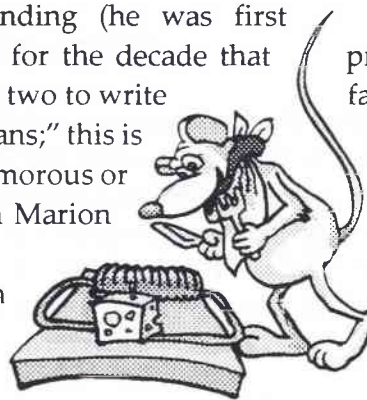
Herewith I break an unwritten rule of this column – not to review a fanzine previously reviewed here. I reviewed the last issue of TRAP DOOR about a year ago (which gives you an idea of its publication schedule), but this is a special – unique in fact – issue. The title – *Astonishing Trapdoor Stories* – gives a clue. This 60-page issue (published as usual in the folded half-lettersize of 8.5" x 5.5") is overwhelmingly devoted to one piece of fiction, "Sense of Wonder" by Gordon Eklund. The issue has only an introductory two-page editorial (largely given over to appreciation of the late Harry Warner) and a three-page reprint (from 1946) of Charles Burbee's "Invasion 1949" to bookend Eklund's novella.

Eklund is a major SF writer of long-standing (he was first published in 1970), but he was a fan of some note for the decade that preceded his professional debut. In recent years he's combined the two to write fanfiction.

"Fanfiction" is defined here as "fiction about fans;" this is its original definition and it still flourishes. Most fanfiction is short and humorous or satirical in its writing style. But some fans – notable among them Marion Zimmer Bradley in the '50s – have written serious fiction about fans.

Most of Gordon's previous pieces of fanfiction (all published in fanzines over the past 10 or more years) have been short and ironic. "Sense of Wonder" is at once both longer and more ambitious, incorporating an actual SF plot (time-travel) and a journey back to the days when Hugo Gernsback was cooking up the first issue of *Amazing Stories*. The story is told first-person by Charlie Frap, and has the feel of a loopy '40s time-travel story by Robert Bloch – but translated into fannish terms: a fannish "Lefty Feep" story. I'm not convinced by its time-travel logic (which seems to me to have several huge holes), and I've written a letter to Lichtman and Eklund about that, but I am impressed by the overall concept and execution of the story, which is fully professional in quality.

I'm also very impressed by the *look* of this issue, which is completely due to artist Dan Steffan, who has illustrated the entire issue. The front cover – logo and all – is marvelously evocative of the SF pulps of the '40s, while the back cover creates the cover of the April 10, 1936 issue of *Time* magazine – the one with Hugo Gernsback on the cover (in "Sense of Wonder"'s universe, anyway) – with striking fidelity to the look of the magazine at that time. Inside the issue Dan opens Gordon's story with a double-page spread and follows that with five full-page illos. And his half-page illo-title for the Burbee



short (a delightful story which could have appeared in an early issue of *F&SF*, but didn't) is a bold piece which stands out on its own. Steffan is long overdue a Fan Artist Hugo; he towers over recent winners.

### Letters to WSFA

From: "Joseph Kelly" <bjornagainindustries at hotmail.com>

Date: Sat, 09 Aug 2003 13:36:59 -0500

Hello, I deliver to you bad news. David Halterman, whom I know was involved with the WSFA, passed away suddenly a few weeks ago. He is referenced in the Feb 2000 minutes of a meeting...

"David Halterman is still alive; his address is 920 E. Park Street, Panama City, FL 32404. WSFA used to meet at his house."

Would you please, if possible, see to it that the necessary members are informed? Thank you.

Joe Kelly

Hello,

As Capclave "Celebrates the Short Story in Science Fiction", I would like to suggest Howard Waldrop for consideration as Guest of Honor at a future Capclave.

Mr. Waldrop who is known for his short stories and novellas, has been nominated for Hugos, Nebulas, and World Fantasy Awards and has won a Nebula, a World Fantasy Award, a Locus Award, and a Readercon Award all for short fiction. More information can be found at the Locus Index To Science Fiction Awards web page, as well as Waldrop's very out of date web page at SFF Net People Pages.

Howard Waldrop is an author we do not see very often at East Coast conventions, and is certainly the type of author that Capclave likes to showcase.

Thank you for your time,

Mark Klause

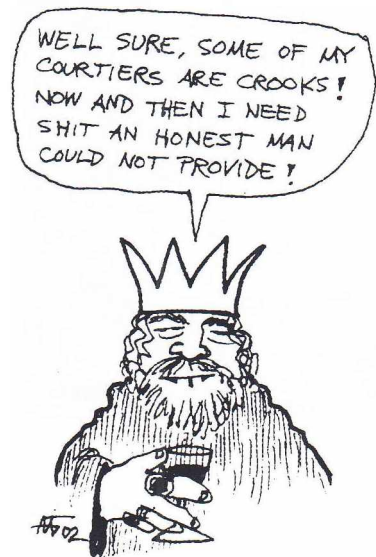
Hyattsville, Maryland



### Review of *The Paths of the Dead* by Steven Brust

Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

The Dragaeran version of Alexandria Dumas has done it again. Paarfi of Roundwood, once again -- as in *The Phoenix Guards* and *500 Years After* -- channeled through Steven Brust, has written a new adventure story in his unique (and long-winded) style. *The Paths of the Dead* begins a three-book sequence, *The Visicount of Adrilankha*, that together comprise the third volume of the trilogy begun in *The Phoenix Guards*. These books are set centuries before the events in Brust's popular series about Vlad Taltos, yet, due to the long-lived nature of the Dragaerans, contain some of the same characters -- here, for instance, readers see how Morrolan got his name -- and fill in some of the history behind the events of that series (assuming, of course, that readers can trust Paarfi, which is by no means certain.) In the last book, the four musketeers, er, Phoenix Guards, failed to prevent the capital of the empire from turning into a great sea of chaos, the emperor from being killed, and the magical orb that regulates magic in the empire from vanishing. In this book, the son of a severely dispirited Khaavren is recruited by the Enchantress of Dzur Mountain in an effort to find the orb and restore the last surviving Phoenix to throne. Meanwhile, the schemer Pel is involved in yet another attempt to reunite the empire. Meanwhile, Morrolan, unaware that he is a Dragaeran, is learning witchcraft and has begun serving the Demon Goddess.





This book is mostly setup. There are a few fights with bandits and some initial scheming, but not much. In the hands of any writer but Paarfi, the entire book would be no more than the initial opening of a long fantasy novel. Fortunately, the reader is too busy laughing at this very subtle spoofing of both Dumas and fantasy novels to care. Still, this is a read at the library or buy in paperback book.

### Review of Greg Keyes' *The Briar King*

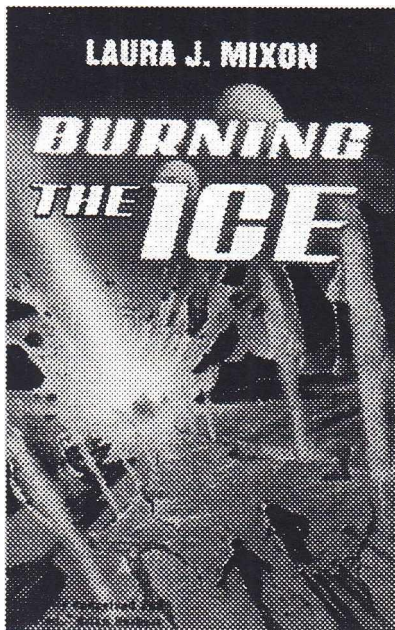
By Samuel Lubell

The author formerly known as J. Gregory Keyes' when writing such interesting works as *Newton's Cannon*, has written a more typical, one might almost say pedestrian, fantasy novel, *The Briar King*, as Greg Keyes. This is identified as *Book One of The Kingdoms of Thorn and Bone* which could be a trilogy or even longer. It hits all the usual notes, a tomboy princess who has to learn to grow up, a naïve priest who encounters reality, a noble knight unprepared for court intrigue, a charming rogue, magic and prophecies, traitors in the court etc. There are a few twists on the familiar themes – the princess is sent to learn how to be an assassin, the Briar King of the title would easily fit into a work of horror, and the forester was raised by elfin gypsies. Those who high fantasy will find this one better written than most with characters who are more than just stereotypes and an engaging plot. But it's essentially cotton candy and quickly forgotten. Fans of Eddings and Jordan might want to take a look. Everyone else can safely skip it.

### Review of *Burning the Ice* by Laura J. Mixon

Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

Most sf/fantasy books pad. A novella's worth of ideas gets stretched into a novel while novels become trilogies. In *Burning the Ice*, Laura Mixon has the opposite problem – she has far more ideas than can fit comfortably into a novel. I can handle the story of a singleton in a world



of clones, first contact with a strange alien species, survival on a hostile world, conflict between colonists and those who placed them there, and AIs and cyberspace conflicts. But putting them all in one novel limits the attention the author can give each one – diluting the impact. Still Mixon almost pulls it off.

The main character, Manda is part of a family of clones, but is the only one without a twin. Possibly as a result she has the reputation of being overly irritable, not fitting into the elaborate politics of the clone families, even her own. This is dangerous on freezing world of Brimstone where planetary conditions, including earthquakes and the gradual failure of technology left from the colonizing ship, require people to cooperate in order to survive. Manda's family are leaders in the terraforming movement but Manda refuses to join that project, instead using waldos to look for life in the planet's seas. Then, the syntellect (artificial intelligence) that manages the day-to-day functions of the colony reveals to Manda that the colonizing ship has not really left the system. The ship is run by humans whose personalities have been stored in computers; unfortunately they develop multiple personality disorder, and some want to wipe out the colony and start

over.

When the terraforming drilling produces a cave-in, Manda helps save several people but in a way that annoys some influential clone families who kick her off the recovery team. When she asks why she is told, "Because you're a pain in the ass, Manda," another one said. "Nobody likes working with you. You're disruptive, insulting, and insubordinate, and I-we refuse to have you on my-our team." But, when Manda's work pays off and she discovers aliens, she becomes the



colony's only hope as the ship humans try to destroy all evidence of life, using their control of the colonists' machines. This leads to some wonderful scenes of trying to establish communications with the aliens in order to get their help against the colonists' own equipment.

As befits a novel about clones, characterization is interesting. Members of each clone family share certain characteristics, and have an especially close bond with their twin, in many cases finishing sentences and needing to be close to the other (although, when the plot calls for it, Manda's lover is able to be separated for quite some time from his family). As a singleton, Manda is unique and since most of the novel is from her viewpoint, she is more resentful of the clones' closeness than anything else.

This novel is chock full of ideas, interesting situations, and personality conflicts. It is hard science fiction with rigorous science combined with excitement and adventure, plus good solid characters, an intriguing sociological system, and lots of imagination. Anyone who thinks that writers do not write solid SF in the way they used to, should read this book. It is full of good old fashioned "sense of wonder" with a modern sensibility. I liked the author's previous book, *Proxies*, too. I just wish she wrote more.

### Review of *Rapid Transit* by The Ratbastards

Youngstown, Ohio : Velocity Press, 2002 <http://www.taverners-koans.com/ratbastards>

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

At a recent convention I picked up a chapbook of four short stories. There was a good review of the work in *Locus* and the title, *Rapid Transit*, peaked my interest. But even more interesting was the group moniker for the four authors: The Ratbastards. Certainly, it was not a name one would soon forget. And this is also true of the stories. Each is an attempt to experiment with science fiction and fantasy and to bend the "rules", seeking new literary territory.

Each story is by one author. "The Blue Egg", by Christopher Barzak starts us off with a tale that seems familiar but quickly goes to unexpected places. Down-on-her-luck Mia finds a glowing, blue egg outside her apartment door. Such eggs are a mysterious things that change the lives of people who find them. And it certainly changes Mia's life and her dreams, as the egg invades her sleeping hours. It is an unsettling story with fascinating atmosphere: it brushes the edges of surreal but also captures the world we know while looking at the differences between choice and fate.

The second story, "The Psalm of Big Galahad" by Barth Anderson, is the most science fictional of all the works. A group of dark riders looks to save the Body from a virus. In a mix of the Holy Grail and microbiology, the riders fight an infection that can turn any of them into the enemy. "The Psalm" has fantasy and science fiction elements combined with both lyric and hard-edged language, giving us interesting characters and plot twists.

The most experimental of the three stories is "A number of Hooves" by Alan DeNiro. Structured as a series of numbered sentences that follow several storylines, it begins with "A girl fell in love with a centaur." This is part story and part poetry, showing different sides and views, like a kaleidoscope. It took more than one reading for me to wrap my mind around this one, and I am sure there are parts for me to explore further.

Finally, Kristin Livdahl gives us the warmest story with "Even a Worm Will Turn". Tori buys an old house in a run-down neighborhood because she longs for a garden and it is the only area she can avoid. Through hard work and love, she transforms the yard from a urban trash dump into a green Eden. The effect goes beyond her property and local kids begin to help her change the landscape. But the transformation is not just to the land and the neighborhood, but also on the people and in more ways than just brightening their day.



There is a limited outlet for short stories and the market is often rigid in what it defines as "publishable". Fortunately, small presses allow for more unusually pieces to reach us and the Ratbastards are one of the gems of this source. The four stories in *Rabid Transit* have succeed in their goal of stretching the literature of fantasy and science fiction. A fusion of many styles, they are quirky, original, emotional and very good reads. You may have to search a bit for a copy of *Rabid Transit*, but you will find it worth the effort.

**Donald Wandrei's Frost (Minneapolis, Fedogan & Bremer, 2000)**

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

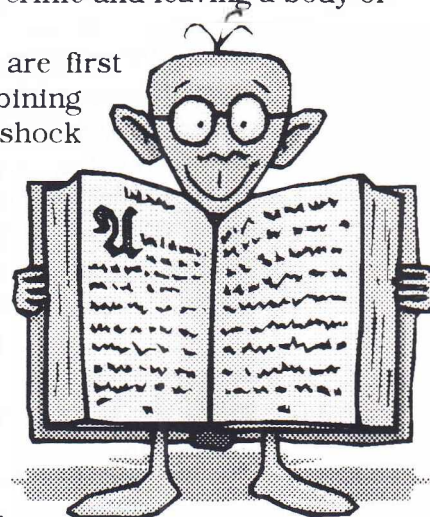
The rollicking pulps of yesterday had a charm to them: the tall, handsome hero and his lovely, often helpless assistant root out crime with high tech gadgets and savoir faire. You can enjoy this genre again through a collection of Prof. I.V. Frost mystery stories by Donald Wandrei. These mid-1930's stories capture the essence of this style, with a few different twists.

Frost is not your typical pulp hero: he has a hatchet face with a build like "a loose-jointed scarecrow." He dresses in old, worn clothing and projects a cold, clinical front. His passion for crime solving is not due to moral reasons, but to stimulate his mind and divert boredom. Not what most women would call their dream man. But what Frost lacks in looks he makes up for in intellect and ability. He hires the lovely Jean Moray as his assistant, not just because she is a trained scientist but because her extraordinary beauty will distract the villains. Jean is not a shrinking violet, as she craves excitement and carries a gun in her purse-- and under her skirt. Together you get a team that takes on the most unusual cases, solving crime and leaving a body or two ... or three in their wake.

The collection opens with Jean and Frost meeting. Here we are first exposed to Frost's tools of "observation, analysis and synthesis". Combining these with two-way TV, an X-ray Buddha and weapons like electric shock devices and gas bombs, Frost takes on a group gangsters that are threatening not just Jean, but the further corruption of the New York City. From here the duo take on bizarre cases: a creeping, green corpse and a dying man who is delivered to Frost's door with no hands, feet, ears, eyes or tongue. There are also intriguing titles such as "The Artist of Death" and "Bride of the Rats", which reflect the panache of these stories.

You should remember when reading these that they are products of the 1930's and might not agree with current sentiments. Frost is lethal and is more likely to exterminate a villain than turn them over to the police. Granted, many of them would fight to the death and Frost never fires the first shot, but he does not make much attempt at live capture, either. And the police in his world agree with this tactic. Jean has fewer notches in her gun, but that might only be because she gets fewer targets. She is not helpless, nor does she often defer to Frost. The relationship between these two is interesting: Frost treats her like a tool and she has a thing for him only because he is the only man who does not fall her feet. Jean's skills and independent nature make her the best foil to Frost's pushy genius.

Wandrei's character has been compared to a cross between The Shadow and Sherlock Holmes, but while Frost has elements of these two heroes, he is his own man with his own style. Whether it be a first time meeting or a re-acquaintance, I recommend you check out Frost.



**James D. Macdonald's The Apocalypse Door (New York: Tor, 2002)**

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

Genre blending is big these days, with mysteries crossing into romances crossing into science fiction. There is so much of this that it does not seem strange anymore, but occasionally a

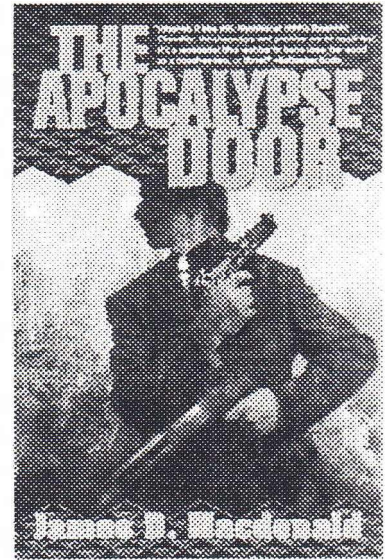


book comes out that makes the whole thing new again. James D. Macdonald's *The Apocalypse Door* brings together elements of noir, science fiction, medieval history and Catholic theology in a way that is unexpected and just delightful.

Peter Crossman is the alias for a member of the inner circle of the Knights Templar. Yes, these warrior monks are still around, but while they have a new look of Armani suits covering shoulder holsters, they still exist to protect holy places, travelers to holy places and certain relics—or as Peter puts it “Guarding, protecting, kicking ass”. This book is set on the mean streets and the language is as tough as a Sam Spade, but with fewer swear words. Peter has taken on a trainee sidekick and together they are searching for a team of missing UN peacekeepers. After a Mission Impossible-like break-in to warehouse in Newark, New Jersey they find, not the peacekeepers, but some mysterious mushrooms that seem afraid of the cross. Our boys then travel to a seedy strip-joint, where they meet up with Sister Mary Magdalene, whose habit is black leather, lace and thigh-high boots. The good Sister has an assassination contract on Peter. After talking the nun out of making the hit, the three team up and face a man even Satanists consider evil, have a run in with the Teutonic Knights (yes, they are also still around), and find something that makes Peter question if he is in the right organization. Interspersed are flashbacks to 1980 when a “company” man named Michael is sent to rescue someone being held in a jail somewhere to the South. While this seems unrelated at first, it is quickly evident that Michael is someone from Peter’s past, someone who is going to be important to this story.

So, you may ask, where is the science fiction in this? How about unholy spores from another dimension bent on Armageddon? Or perhaps a bit of time travel would be more your taste, with a paradox twist, of course. Macdonald has mixed these ingredients well, giving just the right touch of each element without making any one overpowering. This is the kind of book that makes you think and makes you laugh: a subtle mix of thriller and humor. While you may have two knights and a nun for heroes, these are still people you would not bring to a church social.

The Knights Templar has been a popular topic in literature for the last few years, with everyone from Katherine Kurtz to Umberto Eco giving their versions. But none is quite like *The Apocalypse Door*. If you are a Templar fan, like noir or every took catechism, check out this work of saints, sinners and science fiction.



### Kiln People, by David Brin

Review by Marilyn Mix

"I can't do all this, I'm ONLY one person". "I wish I can clone myself so I can see the GoH speech, the panel on Future Archeology, and eat dinner." If you have ever wished you could be in two places as once, you will appreciate the premise of *Kiln People*. David Brin proposes a future "Earth" in which the technology has been developed to create humanoid simulacra that can carry a copy of a person's memories and abilities. The duplicates are made of a type of clay with electronics in it and are baked in kilns to be activated. The duplicate, also called dittoes, can be sent to to daily chores or have hazard-free sex. It only exists for one day and returns at the end of the day to download its experiences (or not, if they were unpleasant) to the original.

I am a fan of David Brin's work, but I had not planned to read *Kiln People* because I was not interested in the premise. However, it was nominated for this year's Hugos and I'm attending Torcon so I felt compelled to read several of the nominees so I could at least vote for best novel. Well, I should know to trust Brin to write an entertaining book that thoroughly explores this premise and to throw in issues I hadn't thought of.

One of Brin's themes that occurs in this book, as well as in *Earth and Others*, is that of the Transparent Society. <http://www.kithrup.com/brin/tschp1.html>. Privacy and secrecy are not expected or accepted. In such a society, we follow the protagonist Albert Morris, a private detective specializing in copyright theft. Just as a person's creative expressions are copyrighted, so also is a person's image and personality. Unauthorized dittos of his client are being made and sold. We follow him and each of his duplicates du jour as they attempt to break up an illegal copying ring. It can be a little tasking to keep track of who's who since effectively, they are all Albert. This story is action-packed as Albert attempts to solve his case and, as in many detective stories, stumbles into a larger crime. Brin's optimism in humanity's ability to do the right thing eventually permeates the book. However, the reader rarely feels preached at. Brin's philosophy is sprinkled though out in "sound bites" or off-hand remarks from the characters.

As far as the premise, Brin offers enough of a "scientific" explanation that I could suspend disbelief enough to accept that it might be possible. The story explores the implications of having duplicates. Should they have the same rights as natural humans? What if they lived longer than a day? What if you could make a copy of a copy? It was interesting to experience the thoughts of a being that has all of a human's memories and abilities, but who knows he has only 24 hours to live. The reality of the soul, or what makes me uniquely me, is explored in a unique way. Brin does go off on tangents with references the golem legends and creation myths involving the origins of humans in clay. The book climaxes in a mind-stretching development which I can't describe without spoiling it. This story would have been excellent without that development, but I've come to expect this sort of over-the-top, mind-bending conclusion from Brin.

This whole story has a light-heartedness about it reminiscent of "The Practice Effect". Although, I did get a little weary of the neologisms that developed from the need to differentiate between the human and the dittos. Some of them were clever such as the abbreviation of original to "rig" and referring to the copy as a "rox" (from Xerox). The duplicate of a person was reference by their name with "dit" prefixed, as in ditAlbert. However, when the protagonist is referred to as a detective, I had to say "Enough!".

I plan to vote for *Kiln People* as Best Novel. Any fan of David Brin should not skip this book even if you still don't care for the premise.

If you're not particularly a Brin fan, all you have to do is read the first chapter and it'll pull you in.

### 30<sup>th</sup> and Final

Minutes of the Third Friday in August meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association; President Judy Kindell presiding; meeting called to order at 9:19. Minutes taken by Erica V.D. Ginter in the absence of the secretary. Treasurer Bob MacIntosh reported \$1386.20 in the treasury.

The Entertainment Committee brought us a fabulous power outage, as well as the less happy information that Worldcon artist guest of honor Kelly Freas broke his hip, so his attendance at Torcon is in doubt.

For the World Fantasy Convention, chair Michael J. Walsh reported that approximately 500 memberships have been sold. \$9-10,000 income will be received from the dealers. The last progress report mailing will be assembled at the Third Friday meeting in September. The judges are currently deciding the awards. (The chair was too humble to mention his own nomination in the special award category for his small press [nonprofessional] work; when the matter was brought to the attention of the club, there was general approbation and an expression of great humility from the chair.)

Volunteers are being sought to take rooms on the party floors to act as noise and complaint buffers. Judy Bemis is looking for a roommate.

Capclave Present informs us that to get the room rate and give Capclave credit for your room nights, please specify the "WSF" rate—note the missing "a." Capclave Future is negotiating with hotels. Capclave Far Future is waiting to see how this year's con turns out.





Publications committee member Keith Lynch reported that we have all of the Lee Strong WSFA Journal issues online, and one of the Rachel Russell issues. He hopes to get four more Rachel Russell issues up before leaving for the Worldcon late on the night of Sunday the 24th. [Wade and I have added two more since the meeting, so now the past thirteen and a half years are online.] He is looking for the February, May, and June 1989 Issues. Anyone who has copies should bring them to a meeting or contact him. The web page is up, as it's hosted in Boston, but the email list was down, as it's hosted in New York. No email should be lost, only delayed. [It came up later that night.]

There will be a Fifth Friday Not-At-Worldcon Pity Party at the home of Elizabeth Celest; see her for details.

No old or new business. Announcements: The 30<sup>th</sup> and final Mimosa is out; see Rich and Nicki Lynch for copies. Keith Lynch had three announcements: Rebecca Prather had asked me to inform everyone that she had given up on asking for a ride to Torcon, and was now offering one. Early WSFA member David Halterman died. Three former WSFA members were in attendance. I invited them to introduce themselves; Tom Haughey, Jack Chalker, and Eva Whitley then did so. Steve Chalker was also present, but was elsewhere in the house at the time.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:40 (I think).

Attendance: Attendance: Erica Ginter, Eva Whitley, Wade Lynch, Ivy Yap, Colleen Cahill, Alexis Gilliland, Lee Gilliland, Tom Haughey, Jack Chalker, Rich Lynch, Nicki Lynch, Keith Lynch, George Shaner, Scott Hofman, Steve Smith, Walter Miles, Lydia Ginter, Steven Chalker, Eric Jablow, Paul Parsons, Allie Parsons, Bob MacIntosh, Judy Kindell, Mike Taylor, Judy Newton, Barry Newton, Meridel Newton, Preeti Singh, Adrienne Ertman, Elspeth Kovar, Michael J. Walsh.

### *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*

Walt Disney Productions, 2003

Movie Review by Lee Strong

I admit that my view of piracy is colored by a family tradition that we're related to the stalwart who killed Blackbeard. O.K., Lieutenant Robert Maynard didn't actually execute Edward Teach himself. He merely suckered the vaunted pirate captain into a trap, led the boarding party aboard Teach's ship personally, and stuck the pirate's head on his bowsprit before sailing home. I keep this precedent in mind when I'm dealing with annoying people.



Our story starts promisingly with a rescue of an orphan boy and his magic talisman from a pirated ship and jumps forward to show the orphan and rescuer as young man and woman. Their obvious love seems doomed because of the differences in social station when pirate captain Jack Sparrow minces ashore to steal... er, ah, commandeer a new ship. Sparrow's former crew shows up to loot the town, steal the heroine and talisman, and reveal that they're under an Aztec curse that turns them into immortal zombies. The rest of the movie is routine daring do chasing the bad guys, trying to unravel that awkward social situation, and figure out who Sparrow is really working for.

This is a curiously flat film that takes more than 90 of its 135 minutes to get moving. The special effects and scenery are wonderful but they can't carry the effort by themselves. The characters are heavily cliched, the acting is stilted, the plotting is highly predictable, the dialog obviously 21st Century, and the best music is reserved for the end credits. The big supernatural curse comes across as mildly annoying rather than truly scary. Walt Disney here attempts a PG rated supernatural blood and guts epic, and fails to deliver much bang for the doubloon. Send these pirates back to Disneyland for refresher training!

I rate *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* as ★★½ on the five star scale. -- LS

Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines  
 Intermedia-IMF-C2-Mostow/Lieberman Productions, 2003  
 Movie Review by Lee Strong 3.0

He's baahck! And life is exciting again.

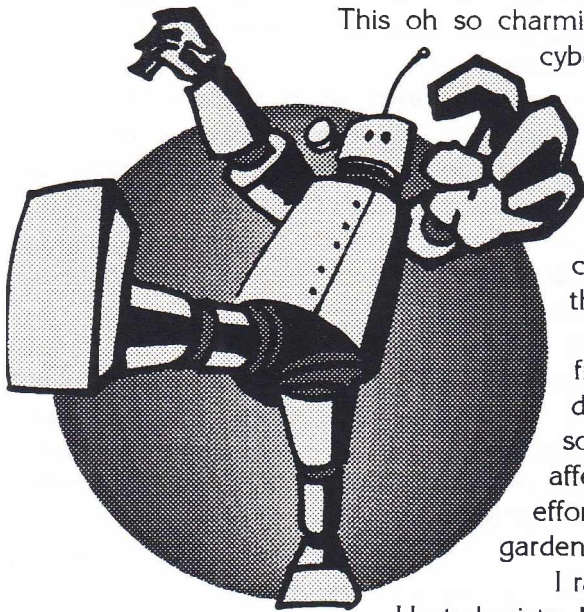
Once again, Terminator cyborgs arrive in the present to kill the future savior of humanity and start a nuclear world war code named Judgment Day. Fortunately, the scriptwriters crank in enough variations on their recurring theme to make this a worthwhile addition to the Terminator canon.

We open with John Conner a young adult living in fear of his own destiny and doing his best to avoid it. His fears materialize when two Terminators show up, the advanced T-X model to kill him, and the obsolete T-101 model (Arnie) to rescue him and a cast of new characters. Much of the film is an extended firefight between the cyborgs and the hapless humans. The film climaxes in two military bases, one a research facility where T-X finds the model T-1 Terminators under development, and the other a Presidential Emergency Site where humanity's hopes may rest.

As an action yarn, this was a pretty good effort. The script cleverly exploits the potentials of robotic opponents and time travel loops, and pokes fun at the earlier episodes in this saga. The acting and characterization are well done, and, of course, the mindless violence is one of the true stars of the film. That said, I thought the film's logic was weak on a number of points. T-X is shown as controlling vehicles in a great car chase/crash scene without any obvious means of "seeing" her target much of the time. Arnie and company waltz into a secret research facility without a firefight. And even robotic women are going to have trouble running across open gridwork catwalks with high heels on! The worst logical lapse, however, is the fatalistic nature of the plot which holds that human courage and robotic determination can only delay bad things rather than stopping them. Given the film's overt message of hope, this is a serious flaw, but, fortunately, not a fatal one. He'll be baahck.

I rate Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (T3) as ★★½ on the five star scale. -- LS 3.0

*Pride and Extreme Prejudice* by Jane Austin (Written by Sea Wasp)  
 Published on the Internet; linked on the WSFA Chat List  
 Reviewed by Lee Strong 3.0



This oh so charming little fanfic is a Terminator spoof casting the formidable cyborg as a character in a Jane Austen style Regency romance. I found Miss Wasp's little tale only mildly amusing.

The plot, such as it is, is simple: Mr. Terminus and Mr. Conner sit around in Miss Patience's garden talking to her about the impending threat of Miss Terminatrix. After a while, the two gentlemalebeings escort the lady inside so they can go off and do Man's Stuff. And there's a silly Star Trek joke thrown in.

This is unspeakably trite stuff, deriving its limited impact from the incongruous situation. There's no character development, scenery, intellectual insight or action. There's some minor emotional appeal as Mr. Terminus expresses his affection for Miss Patience, but that pretty well exhausts this effort's virtues. Once you've giggled over the concept of Arnie at a garden party, you can go home. With luck, you won't be baahck.

I rate *Pride and Extreme Prejudice* as ★½ on the five star scale.  
 Hasta la vista, Miss Wasp. -- LS 3.0