

# ALEXIAD

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I have watched both the latest STAR TREK and *Star Wars* movies. I groaned inside when I heard Disney had acquired *Star Wars* so now I am eating virtual crow. I think Disney actually did a decent job. Roddenberry's heirs, however, have not done as well as Disney. To me, Shatner will always be Kirk. In my opinion, they would have done better to put the actors on a new ship and into the roles of new characters. *Enterprise* was not the only ship in the fleet. Disney did not fall into that trap. They used the original actors and characters as a bridge to introduce the new characters.

— Lisa

Trotting Triple Crown) was **October 9, 2016** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Marion Marauder won by a nose, becoming the ninth horse to win the Trotting Triple Crown.

The 62nd Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **August 6, 2016** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Control the Moment won by a length. The 61st Running of the Messenger Stakes (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 3, 2016** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Racing Hill won going away, while apparently Control the Moment was not entered.

The 71st Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 22, 2016** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio. Betting Line won, tying the world record time, with Racing Hill third.

Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2016**.  
Our Twentieth Anniversary is **November 22, 2016**.

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The 91st Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 6, 2016** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Marion Marauder won by a nose in a tight race.

The 62nd Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **September 3, 2016** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Marion Marauder won by a head.

The 124th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the

## Reviewer's Notes

WorldCon 74 is already kicking up controversy. The committee special Hugo has been announced as "Best Series". This is hard to define. Asimov recounted how he thought the Best Series Hugo at the Tricon in 1966 would go to Doc Smith, and was somewhat surprised when he won it for the *Foundation* Series. (Also inconvenienced, since as Toastmaster he was giving them out.)

What will qualify as a "series"? The Robert Jordan fans tried a work-around by nominating *The Wheel of Time* as a single novel, all fifteen huge volumes of it. It didn't win.

Speaking of "dropping their genes everywhere they went," an inquisitive cousin offered to finance a large number of gene tests from Family Tree DNA for various relatives on her ancestral lines. So far I have found out that my ancestry is 70% British Isles, 17% Southern European (a band stretching from Greece to Portugal), 11% Scandanavian (Southern Norway) — and 2% Southern Asian (a haplogroup associated with the Roma).

More reports when the Y-DNA test comes in.

<https://familytreedna.com>

I have filed for Social Security. This may enable me to afford to live a few years longer.

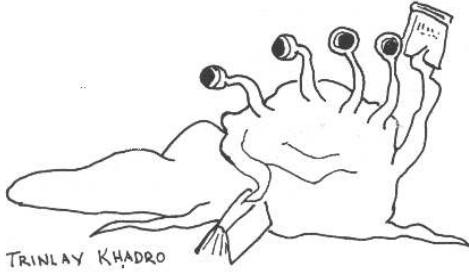
Sorry about that mixup with the headers. The last issue was the August 2016 issue, never mind what the headers said.

As of today, no report from the Court of Appeals. See lastish as to what their reasoning may be — even though the original judge said the dismissal was unfair!

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Buy my books. (All available on Amazon.com for quite reasonable prices, except the Hugo-nominated *Heinlein's Children*, which can be bought from NESFA for a reasonable price.)

— Advt.

**Is This Really Necessary Department:** *Plunder of Gor*, the 34th installment in the adventure saga of Counter-Earth, by "John Norman" [John Frederick Lange] is now available. \$15.99 trade paperback, \$8.99 for Kindle.

Captain Charles Hayden, R.N. gets a step down but a leg up in Sean Russell's (oh, all right. S. Thomas Russell's) latest nautical adventure, *Until the Sea Shall Give Up Her Dead* (2014; Berkley, HB \$27.00, TP \$14.75, Kindle \$12.99). Hayden survived the Glorious First of June, but someone remembered that he is too junior for a ship of the line and sent him back to the ill-luck HMS *Thetis*, but he gets sent to the Caribbean, where there is plenty of prize money, provided you live. And Hayden might wonder if he will, since he promptly gets thrown into a mess of Spanish refugees, French royalists, overenthusiastic commanders, commando action, and the Yellow Jack. Not to mention a French descent on Dominica (not departing from *le bayou de cochons*), privateers with a load of silver, and the return of someone from an earlier volume who for his own sake really shouldn't be there. Oh, and a personal tragedy.

Sir Michael Caine has changed his name. What to? "Michael Caine".

You see, he was tired of getting asked "Why are you travelling with someone else's passport?" His legal name was "Maurice Micklewhite". He was knighted as "Maurice Micklewhite". "Michael Caine" was his professional name, but he was still legally "Maurice Micklewhite".

Another triumph of airport security.

Well, see what looking can get you. Checking the on-line Fancyclopedia 3 I

learned that Bob Madle is considered an eofan (someone who was a fan between 1930 and 1933). Live and learn.

<http://fancyclopedia.org>

So bookmark it already!

## OBITS

**David A. Kyle** died on **September 18, 2016** of complications from an endoscopy. Born in 1919, he joined the famous club, the Futurians, and participated in some of its most notorious exploits, though he was not excluded from the NyCon.

After the war, he continued in Fandom, becoming chairman of the NewYorCon, the second WorldCon there, where he became forever associated with the infamous phrase "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here." [The fire marshals said to clear off people who were sitting on the steps to hear Al Capp speak, and the underling sent to clear them off said it.]

As if that were not enough, he slid into being a Dirty Pro, helping found Gnome Press, one of the first SF small presses, and writing as a labor of love three sequels to the Lensmen Series.

He was the originator of the Big Heart Award, and presented it at WorldCon Hugo Ceremonies for as long as his health permitted. His trademark red jacket was a familiar sight at WorldCons and other conventions.

His Futurian colleague Cyril M. Kornbluth wrote his, and their, obituary:

Hokku in Farewell:

This ash, this burned match,  
Queen of spades left with tight frown,  
Be happy for us.  
We do not come again.  
We do not come. Ever again.

The last of all the Futurians, fare thee well!

## MONARCHIST NEWS

We regret to report the death of **Queen Anne of Romania** on **August 1, 2016** in Morges, Switzerland. Princess Anne Antoinette Françoise Charlotte Zita Marguerite of Bourbon-Parma was born in Paris on **September 18, 1923** to Prince René of Bourbon-Parma and Princess Margaret of Denmark. She married the exiled King Michael (Mihai) on June 10, 1948 in Athens. There were five daughters; **Margareta, Elena, Irinia, Sophie, and Maria**.

The queen was buried **August 13**. King Michael was unable to attend, due to health issues (he has been diagnosed with cancer and in March he transferred his public duties to Margareta) and age (he is 94).

Michael, former Bulgarian prime minister Symeon Saksoburggotski (Tsar Simon II), and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama are the only surviving heads of state from World War II.

Lloyd Daub has reported on a tragic quarrel within the royal house of Bourbon-Orléans. The head of the family, **Henri Comte de Paris**, has named as his heir his eldest son, **François**. But François has mental issues, and therefore Henri has designated his second son, **Jean, Duc de Vendôme**, as regent for his brother. Jean has expressed the opinion that his brother should be passed over in the succession, in spite of the French rules of succession.

The family is descended from King Louis-Philippe, King of the French. The other Bourbon pretender, **Luis-Alfonso, Duc d'Anjou**, who is descended from Louis XIV and from Francisco Franco (who is still dead) apparently has not expressed an opinion.

In doing research for a novel I'm writing I looked up Alexey Leonov and noticed something a bit anomalous about his many awards. He is, naturally, twice a Hero of the Soviet Union.

But Her Imperial Highness **Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna of All the Russias**, Head of the Imperial House of Romanov and Custodian of the Imperial Throne, awarded **Alexey Arkhipovich Leonov** the Commander of the Order of St. Anne, Third Degree, in 2008, and then the Commander of the Order of St. Anne, Second Degree, in 2011.

**Crown Prince Leka Zogu of Albania and Elia Zahara** were married in Tirana on **August 8, 2016**.

## VISITATION

by Joe

We may not be able to go very far but people come to us. And our most devoted and heartfelt thanks to them.

**R-Lauraine Tutihasi** and **Mike Weasner** didn't make WorldCon because he had a high school reunion to go to. But they had a free day, and Louisville was not that far off a drive. At least they thought it was not that far off a drive, but summer is the time when they close the main roads for maintenance and expansion. Nevertheless, we had a nice dinner, and good company, and learned and imparted many things of worth. Thanks and we hope you had a good time too.

Then, **Marc Schirmeister** was going to see some friends in Virginia after WorldCon. But, you see, we are a (long) day's drive from Kansas City. So he stopped off here and we had a nice dinner. But the next day was the Old People Get In Free Day at the Kentucky State Fair, when I had been planning to go.. He was quite glad to come along.

I think the horses impressed him the most. Next time we should be able to get him to the Kentucky Horse Park, an hour's drive from here outside of Lexington.

After we had seen everything we wanted to see I took him on a drive through Louisville, showing him some of the places in my life. He

was impressed by the fact that the city is so green.

Our thanks to them all, our most heartfelt appreciation for their kind generosity, and we hope to see them all again, one way or another.

## AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION

Commentary by Joseph T Major on  
*Cities In Flight* by James Blish



And death shall have no dominion  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west  
moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and  
the clean bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbow and foot  
...

— Dylan Thomas, “And Death Shall Have No Dominion”

In the sixties when I first was able to buy my own science fiction, I felt proud I owned what I considered the three significant series: *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Foundation* Trilogy (it was a trilogy then) — and *Cities In Flight*. Much has changed since then.

James Blish was one of the Futurians, the circle of New York fans who, living all too often in each others’ pockets and scrapping with each other, produced so many of the noteworthy works of the forties and fifties, and many even afterwards. His interests went on beyond that to such works as the wearily cynical and observant works of James Branch Cabell. Yet his career was such that, after doing publicity arguing that cigarettes did not cause lung cancer, in the end, he was writing media adaptations. (And he died of cancer caused by smoking.)

One of those other interests was in a Theory of History; that developed by Oswald Spengler in his *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918, 1922) [*The Decline of the West* (1926)]. By analyzing the origins, growth, decline, and dissipation of several civilizations, Spengler created a model for this process. Now there are some problems with this approach. It has been noted, for example, that Spengler used certain terms — such as “civilization” itself — in specific ways that

did not always accord with more common definitions.

This theory was reflected in these works. Blish did not launch long “as you know Bob” comments, or massive infodumps to do so. (When he did have to impart background, he did so in context of the story.) This puts an additional depth into the work, even if it is one that is not quite what most people will agree with.

### I. I Have Here In My Hand

*They Shall Have Stars* (1956) [Alternative title *Year 2018!*]

“Bridge” (*Astounding*, February 1952)

“At Death’s End” (*Astounding*, May 1954)

Though the story begins in 1913. Not a 2013 that we had to worry about; but one where a surviving and aggressive Soviet Union continues to muddle world politics; in which in response a political trend of the early fifties has somehow persisted.

Senator Bliss Wagoner (D-AK) has somehow become Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Space. Wanting to increase his knowledge in the matter, he meets with Dr. Giuseppe Corsi, the chairman of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and former director of the Bureau of Standards. Covertly.

You see, a previous President — “a stunningly popular Man-on-Horseback who dripped charisma but had no brains worth mentioning” — made the Directorship of the Federal Bureau of Investigation hereditary, and the current Director, Francis X. MacHinery (yeah, “machinery”; John Sladek pulled the same gag in *The Reproductive System* (1968) [alternative title *Mechasm*] with a guy named McCormick “Mac” Hines), is aggressively ferreting out members of a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man, a conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men. Dr. Corsi was one of his more recent targets.

Yes, Blish took the brave stance (shared by everyone he knew) of opposing McCarthyism. Somehow saying that Eisenhower “dripped charisma” seems a little unobservant. How Eisenhower had managed to do something so unconstitutional without its being opposed by the entire rest of the government and how he managed to get J. Edgar Hoover out of the way are matters left to the discretion of the reader.

But Corsi is not discussing the fate of Dr. Oppenheimer, or for that matter Dr. Hall, Dr. Fuchs, Dr. Pontecorvo, Dr. Haldane, and so on (none identified or disgraced by Tailgunner Joe, but that’s another story). Rather, he is talking about the Spenglerian theory of a Civilization’s Winter, or why scientific method doesn’t work any longer. You see, the Great Scientific Issues of the day can only be solved by immense projects. Only the government can afford

immense projects. The government can’t hire any first-rate minds, because they don’t do well in bureaucracy. (So much for Dr. Seaton and Dr. DuQuesne.)

It’s a drab and dismal night, and after delivering this obituary, Dr. Corsi slinks off into the darkness. We now skip forward five years.

The two stories that this novel has been compiled from have their own plots, which come together at the end. The next chapter is from “**At Death’s End**”, and begins with an officer of the U.S. Army Space Force delivering a potential antibiotic sample to a pharmaceutical company. The news agency scenes in Cyril Kornbluth’s “The Silly Season” (*F&SF*, Fall 1950) and “Make Mine Mars” (*Science Fiction Adventures*, November 1952) are so well done because Kornbluth worked at a news agency. Similarly, Blish worked at Pfizer, the makers of Zolof, Lipitor, Chapstick, and Preparation H, and it appears here as “Jno. Pfitzner”. (And also in his polar-exploration story *Frozen Year* (1957) [alternative title *Fallen Star*].)

This officer, Colonel Paige Russell, soon finds himself dragged into a turmoil of secret research and political pressure. FBI Director MacHinery himself is lurking around, evidently not trusting any subordinate to deliver the dirty goods. (Here Blish, perhaps unwittingly, strikes closer to the reality of McCarthy’s motivation; MacHinery is poking around not because he really wants to defend the country against the threat of Communism, but because a successful case will give him a lot of approving newspaper clippings to paste into a scrapbook. McCarthy’s actual knowledge of Communism was minimal and he was very big on publicity.)

It turns out that Jno. Pfitzner is working on drugs to extend the human life span. There is a bit of pharmaceutical research trivia involved. Russell finds this out by romancing Anne Abbott, the secretary who had first received him, who turns out to be the daughter of a Pfitzner executive in charge of the research.

Their dating has problems. Another feature of the Spenglerian Winter of a civilization is the decline of religion and the grotesquerie of the remnant. The principal faith at the time appears to be a sect called the Believers. One of their mottos is “Millions now living will never die.” This is a catch-phrase of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, which may imply the origins of the Believers. Their witnessing isn’t “Pardon me, do you have a moment to hear the Word of Jesus?” any more, and amounts to assault, with touches of kidnapping.

It turns out that there really is a foreign spy (as opposed to a FBI one) at Pfitzner, and Paige investigates. The spy uses a childish cipher (literally, it’s from the Tom Mix radio show and therefore is probably a single-substitution code, breakable by any professional cryptographer while asleep; as opposed to, say, the “Hollow Nickel” cipher which utterly

defeated the NSA and yet could be deciphered by the incompetent and drunken Reino Hayhanen, its recipient, with ease) and broadcasts from a trailer with a Latvian license plate. (Not the Latvian S.S.R., Latvia, and this may be carelessness or may be a subtle sarcasm.) The Pfitzner staff don't care, since, you see, living longer in the Soviet Union doesn't mean one can accumulate any extra power. After seeing Soviet jokes about raising Brezhnev from the dead every morning this attitude seems a bit hard to credit.

The other story, "**Bridge**", put in the alternate chapters of the book, is set in a giant government-funded research project; the building of a gargantuan bridge-to-nowhere on Jupiter. The point of view character is the chief of operations Robert Helmuth, and the story recounts the immense emotional stress he is under. To begin with, the program required planting an asteroid on the planet to provide the base for the initial construction. This succeeded on the seventh attempt. However, a number of the manned ships that lowered and directed the asteroids collapsed under the atmospheric pressure, and Helmuth feels that guilt.

The Bridge, as it is called, is a remarkable achievement. It is built by remote-control telepresence. (The current reader will find it funny that Helmuth complains that they can't use electronics because it's impossible to sustain a vacuum at that depth. As you know, Bob, in the Elder Days, electronic devices worked using structures of metal enclosed in a vacuum, hence the concept "vacuum tubes".) It is built of Ice IV, which is a form of water ice existing under high pressure (500 - 600 megapascals [72,000 - 87,000 psi]) and low temperature (amazingly, up to  $-6^{\circ}$  C). The listing of ices runs from Ice I, the ice we are familiar with, all the way up to Ice XVI. (For an example taken entirely at random Ice IX only exists at low temperatures and high pressure, being stable at 140 Kelvins [ $-208^{\circ}$  F.] and 200 to 400 megapascals [29,000 to 58,000 psi]. It could not exist at, say, the air pressure and temperature of a tropical island.)

The Bridge is in a constant state of flux, regularly sustaining damage caused by contamination of trace compounds. It is also being extended, so construction work is a constant.

Nobody there seems to have any idea what it is for. A number of scientists conduct chemical experiments under the unique circumstances, and there are even reports of observations of possibly living creatures, but the Bridge seems to exist in order to exist.

Helmuth's particular stress manifests itself in nightmares that he is somehow being sent down to the Bridge in person, in a pressure-resistant suit, which gradually fails. Others have their own derangements, such as Eva Chavez, the one woman Helmuth is close to, who inexplicably wants to have their child then and there.

In the end it all comes together. The real

purpose of the Bridge is to test a scientific theory which will lead to an interstellar drive. In spite of said drive being faster-than-light, the trips will take several years, and so it is desirable to have the lives and youths of the crew extended. (Arriving at the destination with a crew of Struldbrugs is not an optimal situation.) These tasks have now been accomplished.

Senator Wagoner takes Russell and Anne out to Jupiter in a spaceship driven by a device using the theorems proven on the bridge, a device called a "spindizzy". It makes the journey to Jupiter in astoundingly quick time. There, Wagoner explains his cunning plan to them and to Helmuth and Eva. Since MacHinery is going to wind up the remnants of American liberty any day now, what they must do is colonize the nearby stars using these methods devised.

Of course, he's going to stay behind and take the fall. The two couples agree on his plan, and in the final scene, Wagoner is writing his farewell comments before being executed for treason.

GOD AND I PLOTTED  
OUR FOREIGN POLICY,  
BUT IF GOD HAD TOLD  
ME WHAT HE HAD IN  
MIND FOR THE COUNTRY,  
I WOULD HAVE DONE SOME-  
THING ELSE!



A lot of the interesting stuff happens between the books. Blish wrote a sort of fill-in-the-gaps essay, similar to Heinlein's "Concerning Stories Never Written", explaining what happened afterwards. A large number of small spindizzy-powered ships fled the Solar System, colonizing nearby stars. MacHinery made himself President, signed an agreement

with the Soviet premier (Pournelle's Co-Domnium, anyone?), and then was assassinated. The new government banned spaceflight, then rediscovered it sometime later. Blish calls the government the Bureaucratic State; later terminology in our world would style it *Nomenklatura*. (See *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class* by Michael Voslensky (1984(!)) for how that worked.) Somehow "The West" = the U.S. and "The Soviets" = the U.S.S.R. No mention of China or Europe, for example, much less the Islamic states, or Africa, or South Asia . . .

The expanding human community came into conflict with another interstellar community, referred to as the Vegan Tyranny. In the subsequent war, which involved a number of cities, not all from Earth itself (the first one was a steel-working city from Mars, for example), turned into giant spacegoing communities, as well as more ordinary space warships, the Vegan Tyranny was pretty thoroughly destroyed. The commander of the victorious fleet was dismissed, except he kept control, proclaimed himself Emperor of Space, and fought back. Eventually a new government formed on Earth, which somehow in spite of all the cities there ripping themselves up from the ground and going off into space had enough resources to create and control a galaxy-wide space patrol.

Science fiction is so much of its time. A similar work of the thirties might have a "MacHinery" based on Samuel Dickstein, the ardent pursuer of fascist and nativist movements in the U.S. in his leadership of the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities. (Yes, McCarthy's techniques and tactics were created by an anti-Fascist, who was only out for the publicity and money.) Except he would probably be the good guy.

Blish's interpretation of Spengler was that opposing systems grew to be like each other. This seems to be one of those right no matter what doctrines, in that it could equally explain the Sovietized world of this story and the collapse of the Soviet Union in our world.

## II. Riding the Rods

*A Life for the Stars* (1962)

(*Analog*, September-October 1962)

But the post-Sovietized world has become an "economy of abundance" one, except there's no abundance. The spread of computerized systems (vacuum-tube powered, remember?) has created both almost universal unemployment and shortages. Evidently nothing needs to be maintained or repaired, there's no infrastructure construction, and no one needs any personal services.

One of these impoverished people is the young Crispin DeFord. Somehow, in spite of everything, his father, an unemployed teacher, has taught him a few things, including something about astronomy. He spends most of his time, though, scavenging around the city of



Scranton, Pennsylvania. Being picked up by two interpenetrating Paratime shuttles and dragged into another time-line . . . oops, no, you would have to be near Bellefonte, never mind.

No, he gets picked up by a press-gang from Scranton. You see, Scranton is about to become an Okie city and under the regulations for doing so they have to take along a quota of local unemployables. (And they shoot his dog too, just like contemporary police.)

The description of Scranton's lifting off is quite striking. (Less so is the consideration that they've just left a large crater in the ground, which will probably turn into a lake.) The city slips the surly bonds of Earth, well no it doesn't, since it's still under the occasional and unpleasant authority of the Earth cops, and heads out for the stars.

Not that Chris finds life among the stellar travelers all that pleasant. He has to earn his keep, and that requires being amenable to the corrupt and brutal city government. (There seems to be a decided lack of city governments in SF & fantasy that aren't corrupt and brutal.) His scant knowledge of astronomy isn't enough to earn him much. About the only help he gets is from a city employee who seems to have suffered from an uncorrectable typo in his birth record, because his name is Fradley O. Haskins. That's "Fradley" with an "F".

When they run into another city, Chris finds himself allowed to get off. There is a custom of personnel exchange among the Okie cities, where technicians looking for a change are swapped for large numbers of working stiffs. Now Chris is on New York City — actually, apparently about half of Manhattan, including the Empire State Building ("World Trade Center"? What's that?).

They appreciate him, and he starts getting an education. Instead of wasting his nighttime sleeping, he gets his education stuffed into him by hypnopedia. Mustapha Mond and Bernard Marx of *Brave New World* would be amazed that they can actually learn facts instead of attitudes that way. The learning suffices for an infodump about the history of the human universe.

For the other things there is Chris's classmate "Piggy" Kingston-Throop. Okie New York's answer to Dudley Dursley has a lot of rumor and scuttlebutt, like the story about the city that dropped off the net, so to speak, having found a planet where anagathic drugs are natural. Alas, it turns out to be one of the myths of the Okie culture. In fact, if Chris and Piggy don't show any promise, they'll be downgraded from citizen to passenger. Passengers don't get anagathic drugs and die in sixty or seventy years.

It's a small Galaxy, because their next stop is a planet that made the mistake of hiring Scranton for a job and discovered that the contract seems to have forgotten to include a termination date. This, you see, is the model

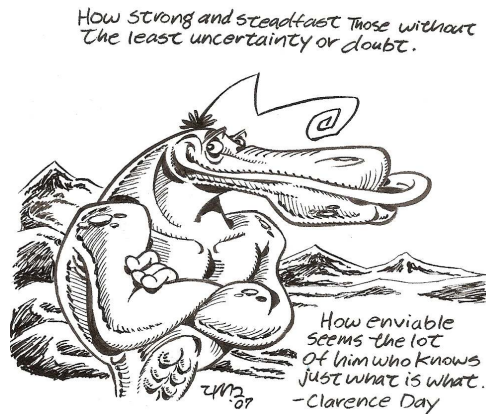
of galactic commerce here; the Okies fly from planet to planet and do contract jobs to upgrade the technology or infrastructure of the place before having to leave.

The mayor of New York, a colorful character named John Amalfi, doesn't want to get the Earth cops involved, and gets hired by this planetary government to disencumber them of their overlords. Unfortunately for some, Piggy Kingston-Throop decided to help out, and after persuading a couple of young women he knows that it's fun being concubines of tyrants, slips off into Scranton. Lots of luck.

Chris, actually knowing some things about the place, gets sent there. Infiltrating by pretending to be a dimwitted steel worker, he gets in touch with Frad Haskins and lays out the situation, then goes to ground while Frad organizes a successful uprising against the brutal and corrupt Mayor.

Back in New York, Amalfi sums up the situation. Piggy is too dumb to be a citizen, so he's not long for this city. Chris, on the other hand, is being offered the chance to do something important; he's going to be City Manager, because the job needs someone with mental flexibility, decisiveness, and courage.

But it should be noted that the city is really run by its City Fathers, an assembly of artificial intelligences (with vacuum tubes, remember? No, wait a minute, now they use germanium transistors) which make all the real decisions. Be fun if they run into the Butlerian Jihad.



Blish's model here is that of homeless migratory laborers — oh, all right, "hoboes". To rub the point in, the New York City Hall has "MOW YOUR LAWN, LADY?" inscribed on it. The Okie cities get cited, bullied, and battered by the Earth police. In spite of being technologically more advanced than the planetary governments, they have to be subordinate. As Damon Knight pointed out, this dependency is deliberately fostered; the planets, not the Okies, run their repair and service facilities. The Okies need to drill for oil to provide nutrients for the algae that form their

primary food supply and for some reason they can only do it on inhabited planets. They need to make anagathic drugs and again seem unable to do them themselves.

### III. The Day After Tomorrow

*Earthman, Come Home* (1955)

"Okie" (*Astounding*, April 1950)

"Bindlestiff" (*Astounding*, December 1950)

"Sargasso of Lost Cities" (*Two Complete Science-Adventure Books*, 1953)

"Earthman, Come Home" (*Astounding*, November 1953)

Knight has a sharp precis of the four stories that make up this book. Amalfi and New York find themselves in a conflict and manage to make it bloodier in the course of resolving it.

"Okie" begins with a piece of spectacular bad luck. A planetary system has two habitable planets. Naturally, they are occupied by two implacably hostile governments. One is a "Hamiltonian" planet settled by some of the original refugees from the Sovietization of Earth. It is described as a "timocracy", which Blish doesn't point out means a government of the wealthy. The other is a remnant of the Galactic Empire that had been set up by the former fleet commander. They don't like their neighbors and are busy bombarding them on a regular basis.

Amalfi explains all this to his assistant, City Manager Mark Hazelton. What happened to Crispin DeFord? Well, Chris made a commercial slip-up, and was sentenced to death and executed. (Given the publication dates it would seem likely that some of the readers of *A Life for the Stars* would have felt just a little bit queasy.) The City Fathers can't tolerate incompetence. HAL 9000, anyone?

Amalfi's cunning plan is to get involved with first one planet, then the other, escape with a lot of oil, and go on to the next job right under the eyes of the Earth cops. Naturally things start going wrong. Hazelton falls for the emissary of the Hamiltonian planet Utopia, a personable young woman. Then, when Amalfi takes the city to the imperial planet, the local ruling class turns out to be filthy, conceited, and greedy. Fortunately, when Amalfi is summoned to a meeting and informed he has to surrender or else, he uses a new scientific development to mess up the problem with friction.

While the locals are watching themselves die unpleasantly, Amalfi slides down the side of the building, building up an enormous blister on his forehead along the way, and staggers off to New York. Why he couldn't send an underling is another matter.

And so, not quite well off financially, but the better by a wife for the city manager, New York spins off into the interstellar depths.

"Bindlestiff" shows how enamored Blish is of his hobo paradigm. Amalfi is going to really escape, taking the city on a long long

long voyage through a void between galactic arms. Naturally they soon run into two cities, one of which is being zapped by the other. The victims announce desperately before their demise that they have a fuelless drive. This is what the other and its sort would like to have because with it they wouldn't have to go in for nuclear fuel (what, no fusion?) and can be jolly Jack Sparrow forever.

There is also a planet nearby. The planet He turns out to have human inhabitants who have a profoundly misogynistic religion. Somehow they adjust to the concept of other humans (it's never explained how they are human, since they couldn't have been settled by the Hamiltonian exodus) speedily enough and offer to hire New York to get rid of the planetwide jungle. The chief who signs the contract happens to be named "Miramon", which is probably Blish's obligatory James Branch Cabell reference. (Blish was as previously noted a Cabell fan and edited *Kalki*, a journal of Cabell experts; Miramon Lluagor was the wizard in dom Manuel's Fellowship of the Silver Stallion in *Figures of Earth* (1921) and *The Silver Stallion* (1926).) Said jungle happens to be rich in the materials for anagathics.

The solution involves building enough spindizzies to make the planet move. All Amalfi wants to do is tip the planet's axis of inclination. Some of the locals seem to take objection to the project. Amalfi has a Piggy Kingston-Throop moment (remember him?) and leaves a bunch of women where they can be acquired. He believes that the pirate city is hiding there, and they would like women. Too bad for the women.

The day comes, the spindizzies start, the bindlestiff city blows up, and the planet He takes off across the intergalactic void. Having fulfilled its contract, New York leaves. Somehow Amalfi didn't bother to build a replacement spindizzy for the one they have that is breaking down, or brew up a big batch of anagathic drugs from the abundant supply of materials there.

Instead Amalfi decides to get his spindizzy professionally repaired. "**Sargasso of Lost Cities**" starts out with a few disappointments, beginning with the unpleasant discovery that all New York's money is no good any more. Somehow, Earth declared the germanium-backed currency to be worthless and replaced it with an anagathic drug backed currency. Fiat currency seems out of the question. And Amalfi had bribed a local Earth police officer with some of their now-worthless money.

Continuing his hobo-based parallel, Amalfi takes flight and gets New York over to a community of several hundred Okie cities, all cutting each others' throats underbidding for jobs. After a bit of bullying the local leader makes a proposal; the cities there should form a fleet of sorts and head for Earth, to petition for a redress of grievances.

Meanwhile Amalfi listens around and notes that there is a city nearby with its crew

struck by a plague. He sends people over there and after some unpleasantness with the last survivor gets control. Then, using a feature not heretofore mentioned, likely to be of great use, and inexplicably restricted to one-time-only use, he zaps that city and New York to a nearby abandoned planet.

While the mob of cities head off for Earth, Amalfi sets about planting the city's spindizzies over the planet and building new ones (and again not replacing the malfunctioning one). When he has things ready, the planet takes off in chase of the mob.

There was one city that was . . . different. Namely it wasn't a city in the normal sense, but an enclosed sphere. Nobody noticed anything wrong with it ("Lincoln, Nevada"? Really?), attempted to go on board, or otherwise communicate. As the mob approaches Earth, the Earth police mass the fleet in the Sol system and prepare for war. (At one point we hear the President speaking, issuing commands to the fleet, and for the head of state of a galaxy he seems to fail to approach the level of personality and competence of Zaphod Beetebrox.)

In the fighting, the Okie cities seem to be winning, thanks to this closed-in city. It begins to fire up its planet-busting kyber-crystal laser . . . er, that is, begins broadcasting in what comes across as a cheap thriller version of a Russian attempting to speak English, which is interesting since it seems that the common language of the galaxy is Russian. Fortunately a daring pilot is able to fly down the trench targeting the two-meter wide exhaust port . . . that is, Amalfi hits the Death Star-style city with his free planet and smashes it, then goes flying off for the Lesser Magellanic Cloud.

At the end he explains his cunning plan. He had deduced that there was one planet remaining of the Vegan Tyranny, and evidently they had built a secret orbital fort and sent it off to Earth amid all these Okie cities. And they can't tell anyone that they wiped it out, because the secret Vegan Tyranny planet might figure out and build another one. Who's running the show there, Chancellor Palpatine?

In "**Earthman, Come Home**", leaving the Milky Way behind, New York arrives in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud. Behind them, the Earth government has somehow found the strength to force the Okie cities to settle down. New York's landing is naturally on the only other planet occupied by an Okie city. (It couldn't be the headquarters of the Three Galaxies, but then the Mother Thing would have been on the losing side of the previous war and might have New York rotated.)

They don't seem particularly to have bothered with the locals, or perhaps the locals are descendants of the itinerants taken when that city left. Amalfi finds himself speaking to an archetypal medieval peasant, who when they found him was pulling a plow in team with his wife. Nevertheless the man proves capable of learning, and they speedily learn the situation.

The other Okie city Has a Secret. It seems they are the infamous Interstellar Master

Traders, a city which committed planetary genocide, then vanished. Naturally Amalfi, having learned the score, goes there.

The crew of the IMT seem to have gone full medieval too. Including among other things forgetting how to fix their system. So Amalfi offers to be hired to do it. Along the way he learns the reason the city is broken; it seems that they dealt with a rebellious gang of locals by flying the city over their home and landing there, squashing the rebellion. Amalfi draws the parallel with the flying city of Laputa, but Laputa didn't land, just shadowed its target until they starved or gave up.

They turn out to be just as oppressive and dishonest. However, Amalfi had gone there to be last man on the job (how many technicians do they have, anyway?) and he produces a surprise. He claims to just happen to have with him two eggs that contain a lethal plague, and plops them down in front of the irate locals. The IMT gang shy off, he sabotages their controls, and leaves at the last possible moment, but unmolested. (Or, it could just have been his lunch.)

IMT takes off, helplessly goes straight up (they hadn't been able to do anything about Amalfi's reprogramming), and gets zapped by the Earth cops who had been pursuing New York. The cops leave, not bothering to make sure they had the right place, and Amalfi turns to building a new government there in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud.

Not only does he have a habit of exacerbating wars, it seems that Amalfi is careless. Never repairing that defective spindizzy, for example. It makes for a recurring plot point, "The Ninth Street spindizzy has broken down again, we can't take off until we fix it." Or not taking the chance to make all the anagathic drugs they could while on He. Even if they couldn't predict that would become the new basis of money, those drugs would be valuable and it seems improbable that a commercial venture would miss them.

Every story seems to feature a one-off technology that is important to the plot of the story and is never mentioned again. It is as inconsistent as the first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* where in all those "the Enterprise lands on a planet where some trivial act is a capital crime and they have to use a special technology to save the condemned" the technologies used were inconsistent and never mentioned again. Apparently, they had commissioned a story on that line, got several writers to write manuscripts, intending to shoot one and pay kill fees for the others, and the writers' strike hit and they had to go with what they had. It was just as well that New York didn't have all the winning technologies being the science projects of a young man on board named "Ben" (Gene Roddenberry's middle name was "Wesley", James Blish's was "Benjamin". "Benjamin's Science Project"?).

Blish may have thought that humanoids are

pangalactic. The same similarities appeared in his *And All the Stars a Stage* (1971), where the fleeing refugees find human types everywhere. They end up on Earth and indeed interbreed with us folks. It isn't said whether they flung the ship into the Sun and destroyed all their technology to avoid being zapped by the genocidal computer they encountered along the way, but probably not, as they survived long enough to breed with the locals. And, for additional fun, the original planet orbited a blue-white supergiant; not Vega, but the original star of the Crab Nebula. (The Cabell reference there is that one of the characters is named Jurg while his synthetic pet is named Koth; Koth of the Rocks was Jurgen's father, see *The Silver Stallion*.)

The portrayal of the galactic civilization is interesting, with the many hints of myths, folkways, events, and developments that are thrown out casually. The Okie society and the many worlds touched on seem to have fascinating backgrounds. There might be a few stories in that.

#### IV. The End of the World Is Nigh

*The Triumph of Time* (1958) [Alternative title *A Clash of Cymbals*]

The Earthmannist culture is spiraling downward into its Spenglerian Winter. The Lesser Magellanic Cloud is now beset with a new religion, not particularly defined, but promulgated by a charismatic leader leading a gang of ignorant farm rubes. Really.

They seize control, kidnap Dee Hazleton, the refugee from the Hamiltonian planet of "Okie" and wife of City Manager Mark Hazleton, Hazleton himself, and their grandchild Webster Hazleton and his girlfriend Estelle. (There is another hark-back to "Okie" with a reference to a Great List of children to be born. Again, the Okie culture seems to be more interesting than the stories.)

Amalfi outmaneuvers the rebels, tricking them into disarming their army, and all is well again. Maybe not.

In the happenstance part (it is a small universe), the now-free planet He arrives. During their journey to the Andromeda Galaxy, they managed to develop a modern technological civilization, including the production of anagathic drugs. Indeed, the chief of state of the planet is Miramon, the original chief who negotiated with Amalfi back in "Bindlestiff". At least they don't have to do introductions.

Miramon has some very bad news. At one point they had spindizzy problems and had to turn them all off to do maintenance and repairs. Before the planet froze, they managed to notice something; there were hydrogen atoms spontaneously appearing in intergalactic space. Then they noticed something else; there was a parallel universe out there with anti-hydrogen atoms, which were disintegrating at the same rate. When the planet got going again Miramon decided to

go somewhere where he could get help.

He won't be getting it from Earth. There is a new civilization in the Milky Way, not the Vegan Tyranny, but something called the Web of Hercules, which has conquered Earth and its subordinate planets. They're not human and they don't communicate.

Instead of destroying all their technology and hunkering down as a medieval state with a powerful anti-technology church, in the David Weber fashion, Amalfi decides they have to investigate the situation. They build a probe to go into the other universe.

It finds out a couple of unpleasant things; the universe is going to come to an end in a few years, and the Web of Hercules is also investigating. Once they've all recovered from the bout of radiation sickness the disintegrating probe irradiated them with upon its return, Amalfi decides to fly to the center of the universe and make some changes. For some reason, no one on He objects.

The journey to the center of the universe is told in quite a stirring, grand cosmic style. And when they get there, they find that the Web of Hercules has sent a fleet after them. The fleet masses around He and begins to fry the planet with death rays, that is, stripped accelerated atomic nuclei. However, He has some weapons of their own and they obliterate the fleet.

In the process they have all received a lethal dose of radiation and are going to die in three weeks. However, the end of the universe will come in ten days, so it doesn't really matter. Not that Mark Hazleton doesn't find it hysterically funny.

Amalfi explains his final cunning plan to the few people who want to do it. They are going to use all the power of the spindizzies on He to send each of the people participating into his, or her, own pocket universe in potential. Once there, they will let themselves go, forming the nucleus for a new universe.

Surrounded by images of finality, the chosen few begin their final preparations. And it happens.

The description of what happens next is quite evocative and moving, and the reader won't notice at the time that it's a man, uniquely alone, making preparations to commit suicide. But he does and, in the last words, "Creation began."



Having a cosmic story based on an elaborate historical structure lends the work a certain depth. Blish is not averse to killing off lead characters, which is a realistic counterpoint to the prolonged lives of the principal ones.

The culture and civilization (Spengler had his own meanings for those terms) of the Earthmannist, or "Okie", dominion is also intriguing, even though it has its problems stemming from the nature of its model, the Galaxy as a Depression-era America, with romantic hoboes riding the rods from planet to planet doing odd bits of work.

In fact, the depth often seems to outdo the story. Imagine, for example, the story of a former Okie crewman who wearied of never touching down, demanded to leave his city, and now, stuck for the rest of a short life on a planet, looks into the stars and dreams of what he had given up.

Or the struggles of the Hamiltonian Exodus, as the refugees, forced to make do with what they could acquire from the Soviet Bureaucratic State, try to establish themselves on new and marginal planets. Or the first encounter with the Vegan Tyranny and its exotic ways.

The Vegans, in spite of originating from a planet orbiting a Type A hypergiant star, seem to be remarkably Earth human-like. [Just like in *And All the Stars a Stage*.] The Okie leader in "Sargasso of Lost Cities" accuses Amalfi of being a Vegan, simply because he is short, stocky, and bald. How it was that Vega didn't overwhelm a planet a mere 25 light years away, or whatever the equivalent would be in Vegan measurements, early on in its course of empire, is a problem left for the reader. The Vegan Tyranny may not have been so large after all. On the other hand, they did build a Death Star. (I knew a guy once who had a theory that the "Vegan Tyranny" was the Federation of the Hub of James Schmitz's stories; imagine Telzey & Trigger facing off with Amalfi.)

Blish reuses some background elements in otherwise unconnected stories. For example, the instantaneous communication method used here is the Dirac communicator, also found in his "Beep" (*Galaxy Science Fiction*, February 1954), which was expanded into *The Quincunx of Time* (1973). The stories are not otherwise related. (The future of that is the melancholy "A Style In Treason" (*Galaxy*, May 1970)). In particular, the Dirac here doesn't have the additional feature it has in the other stories.

Similarly, Jno. Pfitzner is a subsidiary of Consolidated Warfare Service, the think tank of *Black Easter* (1968; originally published as *Faust Aleph-Null* (*Worlds of If*, August-October 1967)). Again, the stories are not otherwise related. At least I don't think Amalfi is in Hell.

[Consolidated Warfare Service seems to function by studying improbable war scenarios and designing bizarre, over-engineered devices to handle them. There were some real attempts



to do this sort of thing. According to Arthur T. Hadley, author of *The Joy Wagon* (1960), the troops who had to handle this unworkable equipment gave it the derisory epithet of “blip krieg” (*The Straw Giant*, 1986.)

There are introductory notes from a work titled *The Milky Way: Five Cultural Portraits* by someone referred to only as “Acreff-Monales”. Apparently in spite of having their fleet annihilated the Web of Hercules figured out how to send information through to the next version(s) of the universe. It’s a history of the losers written from information provided by the winners.

The Okies refer to the end of the universe as the Ginnunga-Gap. This is the Norse term for the primordial void, which in history was identified as being between Greenland and Vinland. That’s the Davis Strait, for what it’s worth (probably about 2 øre).

According to Google Translate, “Interstellar Master Traders” is

(*Mezhzvezdnogo Master Torgovtsy*) in Russian. And in spite of the city having been Gravitogorsk, Mars ( ), nobody there seems very Russian. You don’t hear them telling Amalfi what he can do with his mother, for example.

And death shall have no dominion  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the seashores;  
Where blew a flower may a flower no  
more

Lift its head to the blows of the rain;  
Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer  
through daisies;

Break in the sun till the sun breaks  
down,

And death shall have no dominion.

— Dylan Thomas, “And Death Shall Have No Dominion”

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## STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER

Review by Joseph T Major of

### **MANIFEST DESTINY:**

*Lincoln Sneezed*

by Brian Boyington

(2016; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)

The idea is intriguing; at just the right, or wrong moment, Lincoln sneezes, and Booth’s bullet fails to lodge itself in his brain. It’s a reminder of how happenstance so often determines the course of events.

It’s the subsequent events that are the problem. Lincoln decides to go large on the Reconstruction thing, and invites Davis and Lee over to the White House for a little chat, which creates an idea for a bond issue to rebuild the Confederacy and compensate the now ex slave owners.

We’re already getting into territory which makes *The Impeachment of Abraham Lincoln* (by Stephen L. Carter (2012; reviewed in

*Alexiad* V. 11 #4)) seem plausible, and it only gets more so. Lincoln urges the freed slaves to get their forty acres and a mule in Liberia, and they go there in masses, somehow overcoming their prior lack of desire to go back to Africa.

There, the newly enlarged Liberian Army gets into a border dispute with British colonial troops around the border of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Attitudes harden, and before long the countries are at war.

The American fleet seems amazingly resilient. Never mind decks-awash monitors booming seagoing, the dramatic battle where USS (ex-CSS) *Stonewall* destroys a British squadron due to her 20" Dahlgren guns and impenetrable armor is very striking. Considering that we’re talking about putting 600 tons of topweight on a 1400 ton ship, including guns that take half an hour to load, the result seems somewhat fantastical. At least they don’t have steam-powered tanks deployed in the army of liberation of Ireland.

I’ll add to this that the book is poorly proofread and often lacks quotation marks. Having gone to some effort to make sure mine got them right (WordPerfect Smart Quotes look nice in documents like this fanzine, but in the route of conversion through Rich Text File to Kindle format, they become very strange) I am somewhat sensitive to this.

It’s a pity, because the original idea was good, simple, and intriguing.




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## THE AMERICAN GREEN-AND-BROWN CHAMBER

Review by Joseph T Major of

### **CODE WARRIORS:**

*NSA’s Codebreakers and the Secret Intelligence War Against the Soviet Union*

by Stephen Budansky

(2016; Alfred A. Knopf;

ISBN 978-0-385-35266-6; \$30.00;

Random House (Kindle); \$14.99)

Reading this exhaustive, technically-laden history of No Such Agency, by the author of *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II* (2002), is somewhat disappointing, in that it shows a

bureaucracy that if the stories were true and it was listening in on every telephone conversation made in the country, would misfile the results under “miscellaneous pizza delivery instructions”. One of the ways one new director impressed himself on the staff was to require that all files be put in cabinets with a green and brown decorative motif.

The picture of the society of the NSA is laden with incongruities. The NSA people were a midwestern-valued lot, as opposed to (say) the Ivy League style of the CIA. The institutional journal contained recipes, descriptions of Friday-night dances, and such other homey stuff straight out of *Leave It to Beaver* (or, perhaps, the beginning of *Have Space Suit — Will Travel*). And at the same time it employed an impressive number of black people, which for example torpedoed a relocation to Fort Knox, due to local discrimination issues.

In spite of this, there was a pervasive overlay of bureaucratic rigidity, with strict adherence to categories, classifications, forms, and other such methods of management. The picture Budansky paints of the NSA culture is one that impeded the curious quirkiness found in many of the more important decipherers. William F. Friedman the master codebreaker had such arguments, not helping by baiting security people in such fashions as replacing the picture of himself on his identity badge with a picture of Shakespeare. (Well, they were both “William”.)

This often led to other problems. The notorious defectors Martin and Mitchell were accused of being homosexual; this seems to have emphatically not been the case (Martin’s best girlfriend was a stripper who undressed as “Lady Zorro”) and what seems to have been their problem was naivete about the Soviet Union formed by reading only *Soviet Life* and other such publicity pieces.

Indeed, the historically minded reader will find many familiar names, including Philby, Burgess, and Maclean, not to mention the Rosenbergs, Harry Gold, and Klaus Fuchs, amid the people mentioned here. But most of these were unearthed by the VENONA decrypts, which are the topic of one of those cryptological infodumps. One problem Budansky constantly cites was that NSA was never able to repeat that success against any subsequent Soviet cryptosystem.

Another problem that was encountered was the classification culture. To take an example from another field of endeavor; Herman Oberth, one of the three original theorists of space travel, was brought to the U.S. after the war to work on it. He gave up soon and returned to Germany. He could not get clearance (being a German from Romania) and so was in the grotesque position of writing material that was too secret for him to read.

A similar problem assailed, for example, William F. Shakespeare — Friedman! His house was raided and a vast quantity of cipher related material was removed, including essays



on hand ciphers, which had been obsolete for several years. If they had found a Captain Midnight Key-o-Matic Code-o-Graph, they probably would have confiscated that, too. They would have revoked his security clearance but he didn't have one.

Budansky portrays cryptological intelligence as being *the* decisive form of intelligence-gathering, citing by way of contrast the absurdly failing attempts to penetrate the Soviet Union in the late forties. As if people had never heard of the Trust, the Venlo Incident, or Scherhorn (three notorious examples of spurious behind-the-lines groups which should have been considered in that context). This attitude that HUMINT ("human intelligence", or spies on the ground) is outdated is also found in, for example, the works of David Kahn, author of *The Codebreakers — The Story of Secret Writing* (1967, 1996), the definitive history of the topic. (Who for his pains was investigated as a security risk by NSA.)

He also criticizes Douglas MacArthur's use of intelligence. Or non-use. (By way of contrast, in his *Marching Orders* (1995), Bruce Lee [the other Bruce Lee] praises MacArthur for his coordinated use of intelligence data.)

Another problem Budansky cites was that of social mores. The Navy had had a cryptographic unit, too (thus the grotesque arrangement in 1941 by which the two services had the responsibility for decrypting Japanese messages on alternating days) and merging them had a certain problem. Apparently there were a lot of anti-Semites in the Navy and they didn't care for the heavily Jewish codebreakers. But the Army had the same problem; see *The "Jewish Threat"; Anti-Semitic Policies of the U.S. Army* by Joseph W Bendersky (2000; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #4) for more on this.

One of the new ways pioneered of decrypting messages was with computer technology. The British GC&CS led the way with an early computer called COLOSSUS. (D. F. Jones, author of *Colossus* (1966) and its sequels, worked there.)

The NSA followed, deploying a vast array of computer technology and promoting aggressively improvements in it. Some of the technology used at first comes across as bizarre by modern standards. The largest memory storage available at first used two meter long glass tubes full of mercury with the information being pulsed down them and sent back to the beginning once the end had been reached. Towards the end of the period covered by this book, the NSA had bought Seymour Cray's Cray-1 supercomputer, right when it came out.

The complexity of cipher machines seems to outrun the complexity of computer technology. This was why, even as Budansky decries HUMINT, he shows why HUMINT was so powerful a tool. The surrender of USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2) gave the Soviets a haul of

Naval cryptography equipment. (The description of the conflict, both within the ship's crew and with the NSA monitoring team, is a mournful example of how somehow they still hadn't got it right.) But they needed the wherewithal to use that equipment. Enter John Anthony Walker.

An example not cited by Budansky, but which he ought to have done, was what happened when Walker's accomplice Jerry Whitworth left one ship. A Rolls-Royce pulled up. Two rather ornamental young women got out to welcome someone departing the ship. Seabag over shoulder, Whitworth went down the gangplank, tossed his bag into the boot of the Royce, was energetically welcomed, and they all drove off. No one thought anything was wrong. No, Naval pay then wasn't really that good. Budansky does cite a number of occasions when spies flagrantly revealed themselves, through overspending, overreaching, or general carelessness, and internal security didn't notice or didn't care.

Walker provided the materials the Soviets needed to make their captured Naval cipher machines work. And for years after the capture of the *Pueblo*, it seemed like an American carrier task force couldn't go anywhere without running into a Soviet "fishing trawler", usually sailing in an inconvenient spot. They had no idea why that was happening.

But then, remember they couldn't break the "Hollow Nickel" cipher. Budansky doesn't seem to want to mention that.

It is well to remember that enciphering technology is often more advanced than its users' comprehension of its use. The ENIGMA cipher machine was unbreakable — *when properly used*. The Germans, however, often did not use it properly. The case of the German listening post in the Qattara Depression in Egypt that daily sent in the report, "Nothing to report", which gave away that day's Enigma key, for example. German generals wishing each other „*Alles Gute zum Geburtstag*" ("Happy Birthday") were another useful key-finder. A break in the transmissions from the *Bismarck* came when a message sent in the Luftwaffe key (which had been broken) was repeated using the Naval key (which had not been broken).

Similarly, VENONA was possible because of an elementary error. The messages were sent using one-time pads, the ultimate unbreakable cipher method. But, because of the forced relocation of the NKVD cryptographic bureau from Moscow to Kuibyshev [Samara], it was necessary to economize, and so two copies of several runs of pads were made and distributed. It was possible for the NSA cryptographers to strip off the superencipherment of the messages that used the duplicated pads, and thus work on the messages themselves. (See *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* by John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr (1999) for more on this.) Which is why we know that Soviet agent ALES went from Yalta to Moscow after the conference there, and have a suspicion who

ALES really was.

The failure to repeat VENONA with subsequent Soviet codes was predicted, according to himself, by the man who broke secrecy and was shunned for it:

"Aren't any codes indecipherable?"

"No. Not as the Department understands a code or cipher. But there is one indecipherable means of communication. To adopt such a system, however, the Department would be obliged to discard all its antiquated ideas. The means I refer to revolutionizes communications. You could discharge ninety per cent of your code clerks; and your telegrams would be absolutely indecipherable . . . There is no way as long as the attempt is made to avoid repetitions. *The only indecipherable cipher is one in which there are no repetitions to conceal.* Therefore no need to attempt to escape them . . . Sooner or later all governments, all wireless companies, will adopt some such system. And when they do, cryptography, as a profession, will die."

— Herbert O. Yardley, *The American Black Chamber* (1931)



#### UNDER THE SCALPEL

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### PUSSYCATS:

*Why the Rest Keeps Beating the West*

by Martin van Creveld

(2016; CreateSpace;

ISBN 978-1533-23-2007; \$11.95;

Amazon Digital Services; \$6.99)

Pussycat, Pussycat, where have you been?

Under the scalpel of Dr. McQueen.

Pussycat, Pussycat, what did he do?

I've grown fat and lazy, that'll give you a clue!

— Mad

The Mobile Infantry, Hammer's Slammers, the Imperial Marines, the Royal Manticorean Marine Corps, and so on always have no problem efficiently and thoroughly disposing

of the mooks. Yet in our world the militaries of civilized countries seem utterly baffled by ragged, rugged irregulars.

Martin van Creveld quite literally arose from the grave; he was born in the Netherlands in 1946 to a couple who managed to hide from the deportations. (Approximately 75% of the Jewish population of the Netherlands died in the Holocaust.) Perhaps not surprisingly, his family moved to Israel. He grew up there, was rejected for service in the IDF because of a cleft palate, and perhaps in response to that became a distinguished historian and theorist of the military and of war. Some of his political opinions might be considered exotic for the time and place; he does not find Iranian nuclear weapons particularly objectionable and thinks the West Bank could be evacuated without risking Israeli security.

His most significant book is *The Transformation of War* (1991), in which he makes the observation that there has been a paradigm shift from nations at war to wars by non-state entities, a change which militaries have not adapted to.

This is a further discussion of that thesis. Creveld notes how conflicts in the period since the end of WWII have been at best indecisive and at worst outright defeats for Western nations. This work presents his observations on the causes of these defeats.

Childhood, he begins, has been redefined. The child is intensely controlled and kept in a state of being controlled, of having large-scale restrictions on choices and activities. The education the child receives is highly abstracted. Thus we have the student who can analyze the meaning of a poem in four languages but cannot pay a bill.

Such observations are often made, and often dismissed by such facile comments as the quote of the ancient Hellene who disdained the uselessness of the youths he saw. It is as if helicopter parents, students with a profound CV and no resemblance to it, pajama boys living in Mommy's basement because of unemployment and college debt, Ritalin-dependent elementary schoolers, and so on do not exist.

For the guys who are fit to get in, they face a defanged armed force. They are constrained not to do anything offensive to anyone surrounding them, even going so far as being forbidden to go about in uniform. Sexual transgressions are a career death sentence. The number of lawyers in the ranks is growing and they are willing to sue at the drop of a spent round. (*JAG*, anyone?) Whenever a local was killed during the Afghan war, the soldier had to fill in a five-page form describing the incident and the associated events, including the ambient temperature. This assumes they could; the Rules of Engagement laid down for the troops seemed to require that a soldier would have to be killed before he could shoot back.

Or she. The next chapter discusses in

painful detail the problems of women in the military. After discussing the historical background of Amazon legends, van Creveld goes on to their contemporary realization. For example, Linda Bray, the "heroine of Panama", is so badly disabled she cannot carry her own groceries. And in general the introduction of women into combat units has required a degradation of physical standards, along with a pretense that nothing of the sort is going on. (One wonders what van Creveld would make of S. M. Stirling's proof that women are physically fit for combat; when young, he saw Kenyan woman carrying 200 pound loads, which was good enough for him.) Never mind the problems of sexual fraternization and its results. (Oddly enough, the Dahomeyan Amazons and contemporary women in the military both have approximately 10% per annum pregnancy rates.) He seems to have it in for Xena.

The next chapter discusses PTSD. And van Creveld doesn't even mention that it is possible to buy guides on how to fake it. What with the proliferation of psychologists, there is a demand that creates its own supply. Being a historian, van Creveld discusses the evolution of this problem, noting that it didn't seem to happen when warfare was a lot more up front and personal. This may be connected with the increased psychological fragility of the youngsters discussed in his Chapter One.

Finally, he traces the cultural shift that has made even thinking of war unacceptable and unspeakable. This is a grand shift in perception, and he records it in detail. (One wonders if the de-legitimation of war was because of fear of nuclear annihilation.)

Pointing out as he does that there is no concern for being invaded by marauding third world armies is no reassurance. The spread of refugees of dubious nature, facing a graying and shrinking population, should be noted in this context.

Cyril Kornbluth saw it coming:

"The rise of the so-called 'political general' means a decline in the efficiency of the army. Other things being equal, an undistracted professional beats an officer who is half soldier and half politician. A general who makes it his sole job to win a war will infallibly defeat an opponent who, by choice or constraint, must offend no voters of enemy ancestry, destroy no cultural or religious shrines highly regarded by the press, show leniency when leniency is fashionable at home, display condign firmness when voters demand it (though it may cause a zone of communications to blaze up into a fury of guerilla clashes), choose his invasion routes to please a state department apprehensive of potential future ententes."

— "The Engineer", Frederik Pohl & C. M. Kornbluth, *Infinity Science Fiction*, February 1956

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## YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

There was an annular eclipse on **September 1, 2016**, visible in Africa along a path through Gabon, Congo, Zaire, Tanzania, and Mozambique, and Madagascar. The maximum eclipse was 3' 6", at 10° 42' S. 37° 48' E., in Tanzania. It was part of Saros 135, which began on July 2, 1331 and will end on August 7, 2593. The next eclipse in this saros will be on **September 12, 2034** and will be an annular eclipse.

The next solar eclipse will be an annular eclipse on **February 26, 2017**, visible in Chile, Argentina, Angola, and Zaire. The maximum eclipse will be 44 seconds at 34° 72' S., 31° 12' W. in the mid-Atlantic. The eclipse is part of Saros 140, which began April 16, 1512 and will end June 1, 2774.

The next solar eclipse after that will be a total eclipse on **August 21, 2017**, visible along a track that runs through Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The maximum totality will be two minutes forty seconds and will be visible from Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The eclipse is part of Saros 145, which began January 4, 1649 and will end April 17, 3009.

<http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse>

<http://www.eclipse.org.uk/>

<http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html>

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## BIRTHDAY THOUGHTS

by Lisa Major

My birthday is coming soon. I have reached the age where young cashiers automatically give me the senior discount without asking my age. I like the discount but I am also aware that I am not really eligible for it. I knew I couldn't stay young forever. In terms of actual physical endurance I think I'm not in bad shape for nearly 54. I walked all over the fair without putting much strain on my legs. That much the three fourths of a mile walk to work has done for me. I am considering the novel writing month challenge. For that I will either need to master the library computer or set up my own small office in either living room or middle room. Either room will have to be decluttered.

I have been trying to live with fewer clothes as an experiment for the past month. It works somewhat but requires that I do more laundry than I really want to do. I think the less stuff I can live with the better off I will be. Minimalism does not come easy to me. It is something that it is going to take a lot of work to achieve. The readers make it a bit easier. When I bought my first one I never expected they would become such an integral part of my life.

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Hot off the presses...  
and the Hugo winners are....



1941 Retro Hugo Winners

**BEST NOVEL**

*Slan* by A.E. Van Vogt (*Astounding Science Fiction*, Dec 1940)

**BEST NOVELLA**

“If This Goes On...” by Robert A. Heinlein (*Astounding Science Fiction*, Feb 1940)

**BEST NOVELETTE**

“The Roads Must Roll” by Robert A. Heinlein (*Astounding Science Fiction*, June 1940)

**BEST SHORT STORY**

“Robbie” by Isaac Asimov (*Super Science Stories*, Sept 1940)

**BEST GRAPHIC STORY**

*Batman* #1 (*Detective Comics*, Spring 1940)

**BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (LONG FORM)**

*Fantasia* written by Joe Grant and Dick Huemer, directed by Samuel Armstrong et al. (Walt Disney Productions, RKO Radio Pictures)

**BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (SHORT FORM)**

*Pinocchio* written by Ted Sears et al., directed by Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske (Walt Disney Productions, RKO Radio Pictures)

**BEST EDITOR — SHORT FORM**

John W. Campbell

**BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST**

Virgil Finlay

**BEST FANZINE**

*Futura Fantasia* by Ray Bradbury

**BEST FAN WRITER**

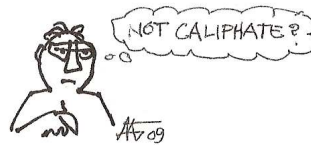
**Ray Bradbury**

Campbell continued his sweep of the Retro Best Editor – Short Form Hugos. Heinlein now has more Retro Hugoes than he did ordinary ones.

A. E. van Vogt’s granddaughter accepted the Retro Hugo for *Slan*.

A. E. VAN VOGT  
REVISION 213.75

“THIS THE RACE THAT WILL  
CALIBRATE THE SEVAGRAM!”



Best Fan Writer nominee H. P. Lovecraft [well, really, Lovecraft scholar Leeman Kessler] congratulated Bradbury on his victory:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrNdXDd7khA>

2016 Hugo Winners

**BEST NOVEL**

*The Fifth Season* by N.K. Jemisin (Orbit)

**BEST NOVELLA**

*Binti* by Nnedi Okorafor (Tor.com)

**BEST NOVELETTE**

“Folding Beijing” by Hao Jingfang, translated Ken Liu (*Uncanny Magazine*, Jan-Feb 2015)

**BEST SHORT STORY**

“Cat Pictures Please” by Naomi Kritzer (*Clarkesworld*, January 2015)

**BEST RELATED WORK**

No Award

**BEST GRAPHIC STORY**

*The Sandman: Overture* written by Neil Gaiman, art by J.H. Williams III (Vertigo)

**BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (LONG FORM)**

*The Martian* screenplay by Drew Goddard, directed by Ridley Scott (Scott Free Productions; Kinberg Genre; TSG

Entertainment; 20th Century Fox)

**BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (SHORT FORM)**

*Jessica Jones: “AKA Smile”* written by Scott Reynolds, Melissa Rosenberg, and Jamie King, directed by Michael Rymer (Marvel Television; ABC Studios; Tall Girls Productions; Netflix)

**BEST EDITOR — SHORT FORM**

Ellen Datlow

**BEST EDITOR — LONG FORM**

Sheila E. Gilbert

**BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST**

Abigail Larson

**BEST SEMIPROZINE**

*Uncanny Magazine* edited by Lynne M. Thomas & Michael Damian Thomas, Michi Trota, and Erika Ensign & Steven Schapansky

**BEST FANZINE**

*File 770* edited by Mike Glyer

**BEST FANCAST**

No Award

**BEST FAN WRITER**

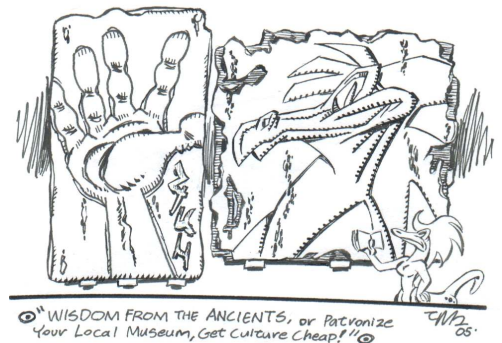
Mike Glyer

**BEST FAN ARTIST**

Steve Stiles

**JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD**

Andy Weir



I noticed something in the final results:

**Best Related Work**

*SJW Always Lie*, Theodore “Vox Day” Beale  
442 nominations  
68 first-place votes  
Final standing, 6th Place

**Best Editor (Long Form)**

Vox Day  
427 nominations  
165 first-place votes  
Final standing, 6th Place

**Best Fanzine**

Castalia House Blog (Jeffro Johnson ed.)  
398 nominations  
90 first-place votes  
Final standing, 6th Place

**Best Fan Writer**

Jeffro Johnson  
427 nominations  
212 first-place votes  
Final standing, 3rd Place

All behind No Award.

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 2015 SIDEWISE AWARDS
 

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**Long Form**

Julie Mayhew's *The Big Lie*

**Short Form**

Bill Crider's "It Doesn't Matter Anymore"

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 DRAGON AWARDS
 

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Given by Dragon\*Con.

**Best Science Fiction Novel**

*Somewhither: A Tale of the Unwithering Realm*, John C. Wright (Castalia House)

**Best Fantasy Novel**

*Son of the Black Sword*, Larry Correia (Baen)

**Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel**

*The Shepherd's Crown*, Terry Pratchett (Harper)

**Best Military Science Fiction or Fantasy Novel**

*Hell's Foundations Quiver*, David Weber (Tor)

**Best Alternate History Novel**

*League of Dragons*, Naomi Novik (Del Rey)

**Best Apocalyptic Novel**

*Ctrl Alt Revolt!*, Nick Cole (Castalia House)

**Best Horror Novel**

*Souldancer*, Brian Niemeier (Self-published)

**Best Comic Book**

*Ms. Marvel*

**Best Graphic Novel**

*The Sandman: Overture*, Neil Gaiman & J.H. Williams III (Vertigo)

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series**

*Game of Thrones*

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie**

*The Martian*

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy PC / Console Game**

*Fallout 4* by Bethesda Softworks

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Mobile Game**

*Fallout Shelter* by Bethesda Softworks

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game**

*Pandemic: Legacy* by ZMan Games

**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Miniatures / Collectible Card / Role-Playing Game**

*Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game (7th Edition)* by Chaosium Inc.

Seven of the nine book awards were endorsed by Vox Day. And he published two of them. So much for the rebuke.




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 WORLDCONS
 

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2017 NASFiC

San Juan, Puerto Rico  
<http://www.northamericon17.com/>  
July 6-9, 2017

2018

San José  
<http://worldcon76.org/>  
Proposed Dates: August 16-20

I expect the NASFiC will be the smallest ever.

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 WORLDCON BIDS
 

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2019

Dublin  
<http://dublin2019.com/>

2020

New Zealand  
<http://nzin2020.org/>

2021

Boston  
Dallas/Fort Worth

2022

Chicago  
Doha, Qatar

2023

Paris  
<https://sites.google.com/site/parisin2019/>

2024

District of Columbia  
<http://dcin2024.org/>

2025

Perth, Australia

It's amazing what you find in fanzines. For example, there was a Philip José Farmer fanzine *Farmerphile* that had excerpts from his unfinished works. Now if you ever read *Tarzan Alive* (1972) you would remember that Farmer said he planned to write a number of biographies of the famous pulp figures in his extended Tarzan family.

One was published, *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* (1973). Were there more, or was this just a part of the game?

It turned out that he was working on one, at least. It would be a biography of Allan Quatermain.

Now as it happens Sir H. Rider Haggard wrote quite a number of books about Hunter Quatermain: fourteen, in fact. Some are past lives, and one, *She and Allan* (1921) features an encounter with Ayesha, one she (or She) didn't happen to ever mention to Horace Holly.

One other book would have been a biography of a Farmer-created relative of Tarzan who just happened to be the father of Phileas Fogg and ancestor of Kickaha.

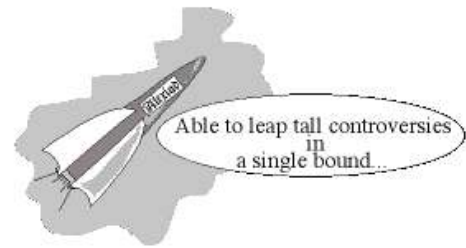
Thanks to Haggard fan Christopher Paul Carey for pointing this out.



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 Letters, we get letters
 

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From: **Joy V. Smith** August 4, 2016  
 8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL  
 33810-0341 USA  
[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)

I enjoyed the reviews, and I really liked the high tech article by Rodford Edmiston. It's amazing how long it took to find out that there isn't an average size; and that was interesting about the cockpits! Speaking of sizes, I read a blog by a woman who served in Desert Storm, and, of course, some clothing and equipment doesn't fit some women either.

Have you heard the story about the issue of boots to WACs in WWII?

— JTM

I appreciated Sue Burke's reviews of the Hugo short fiction finalists — and the update on her move from Madrid.

Speaking of moves, our house is for sale — we're downsizing — and our move, which will be local, should be a lot easier than hers! Oh, and we recently got a kitten, Pemberley, from the SPCA; she's a tortoiseshell, and I've learned a lot about torties and their colors.

From: **Milt Stevens** August 10, 2016  
 6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley,  
 CA 93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* #88, Rodford Edmiston's article on one size fitting all led to all sorts of thoughts on my part. Fortunately, I am blessed with being exactly the right size. Taller than me would be tall, and shorter than me would be short. If I were heavier, there would be too much of me, and if there were less, there wouldn't be enough. I am exactly in the middle of my own universe.

During one of the Baltimore worldcons, I went on board the sailing ship *Constellation*. I found that I had to crab walk below decks. The bunks off the wardroom looked like they were designed for men who were less than 5-6. In order to use one of those bunks, I would have had to sleep in a fetal position all the time.

When we were in Philadelphia I went to visit the *Olympia* (C-6). I found out I had to stoop to get through the hatches. And going belowdecks on the *Cassin Young* (DD-793), in Boston, took some interesting contortions.

In the Navy of my era, there were some height requirements. If you were over 6-2, you couldn't be assigned to sea duty. That would probably mean you couldn't join the Navy in the first place. There were a few cases where an 18 year old had joined the Navy when he was 6-1, but then he kept on growing for a couple more years. I don't recall whether there was a hard and fast rule for the size of submariners. I think they preferred men under 5-10, but that may just have been a preference. Personally, I never fancied the idea of submarine duty. One of my virtues as a naval officer was that I had a strong preference for staying on top of the ocean.

When I was in college I discovered an advantage of having an average build. Like most males, I don't keep track of male clothing styles from one year to the next. Executive types do keep track of such things and buy new suits every year. They then donate their cast-offs to thrift shops for a tax credit. The trick is to find thrift shops near affluent areas. I spent far less on clothes than most of the other college students.

We have a shop like that in the shopping mall where Lisa's library is. I got a Land's End coat for \$30. Lisa got an even better one.

— JTM

In fandom, I seem to be less massive than most other male fans. Since I am the perfect size, I don't feel small. However, the observation that XL is fannish medium has some merit. I'm heavier now than I was in my younger days, but I still wear a medium t-shirt. Oh well.

From: **Rod E. Smith** August 11, 2016  
 730 Cline Street, Frankfort, KY 40601-1034 USA  
[stickmaker@usa.net](mailto:stickmaker@usa.net)

Joe: Your comments on early air warfare and the Franco-Prussian war reminded of an interesting bit of weapon trivia. When Paris was besieged messages and even people were sent out of the city in balloons. In response, Gustav Krupp mounted a modified 1-pounder (37 mm) gun — the *Ballonabwehrkanone* — on top of a horse-drawn carriage to shoot down these balloons.

So that's where Professor Schultze, later of the University of Jena, still later of Stahlstadt, Oregon, got his start!

— JTM

From: **Tom Feller** August 11, 2016  
[TomFeller@aol.com](mailto:TomFeller@aol.com)

Thanks for sending the zine.

I just voted in the Dragon Awards for *Aurora* by Kim Stanley Robinson in the science fiction category, *Uprooted* by Naomi Novik in the fantasy, *The Martian* for best movie, and *Game of Thrones* in the TV series category. Another difference with the Hugo Awards is that there are no short fiction categories.

I saw the list. It didn't seem to have any signs of vote-rigging. The final results, however, had their own special je-ne-sais-quoi.

— JTM

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** August 12, 2016  
 6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA  
 19149-2128  
[darrells@comcast.net](mailto:darrells@comcast.net)

I am left wondering if Milt Stevens has ever read *The Ill-Made Knight*. It is definitely a fantasy. Magic, miracles, the Holy Grail. A fantasy writer is one who writes fantasy, when he is writing fantasy. That White wrote other kinds of books doesn't matter. When he was writing fantasy he was arguably the greatest fantasy writer of all time. Certainly in the top ranks. Pseudo-historical Arthurian novels, like *Sword at Sunset* by Rosemary Sutcliff, have always been published in the mainstream (or more precisely as historical novels), but fantasy ones are still fantasy. What Milt is doing is rather like arguing that J. R. R. Tolkien is a mainstream writer and *The Lord of the Rings* is a mainstream work because he didn't write for the pulps.

In any case, while there were no doubt some fans in 1940 who were provincial enough to not know anything about SF or fantasy published outside the pulp magazines, there were others who knew better. One of the big science fiction novels of 1940 was *The Twenty-fifth Hour* by Herbert Best, published as mainstream by a major house. It only became "genre" with an abridged reprint in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* in 1946, but an SF reader without blinders on would have discovered it in 1940. There were also SF fans in 1940 who were familiar with the work of Olaf Stapledon (never a pulp writer) or even knew that Lord Dunsany was still writing. (His third Jorkens book came out that year.) If, particularly in the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, we restrict "science fiction" to what is in the genre pulps, we get ridiculous results. *Brave New World* is the major novel of 1932, whether fans understood it or not. (Indeed there was an acutely embarrassing review of it in *Amazing* in which the reviewer said, in effect, that this crude attempt by an outsider may have the effect of showing the benighted public that science fiction exists, and it may lead them to the real stuff, such as is published in *Amazing*,

but otherwise this is pretty bad.) John Collier's *Full Circle* a.k.a. *Tom's A-Cold* is certainly better than any pulp SF novel of 1933. (1933 was a particularly weak year for SF pulps.) And the idea that anything in the pulps can remotely approach William Sloane's *To Walk the Night* (1937) is, again, absurd. What? *Galactic Patrol* by Doc Smith? Maybe some SF fans of the period would not have known what to make of a real, grown-up, literate science fiction novel like the Sloane, but one hopes that some of them would. Did anything in the pulps have the same importance or staying power as Karel Capek's *The War with the Newts?* (1936 in Czech. In English, 1937.)

Let me suggest it is the other way around. David Pringle once published in *Interzone* a long list of SF novels that would still have been published if the SF magazines had never existed. It was quite long and impressive. The SF and fantasy pulps were the backwater, in which some very interesting creative ferment was going on, but it took a while for it to manifest itself. If you look at the history of early 20th century SF and fantasy, you see that most of the major works were published as books, quite outside of the genre magazines, until sometime in the 1940s. Only then did the genre magazines begin to become consistently important. The first writer from the genre pulps to really prove to be a world-class figure was Lovecraft. (I exclude Edgar Rice Burroughs because he mostly wrote for non-genre pulps.) There were not more of them until the generation of Heinlein, Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke etc.

So, yes, if we try to imagine that the SF fans of 1940 actually knew something about the field they professed to love, *The Ill-Made Knight* does deserve consideration for a retro-Hugo.

Some people think that Gernsback's "ghettoization" of scientifiction, by publishing a magazine meant solely for it, contributed to the low esteem it was held in. British writers of scientific romance aren't so excluded, e.g. the author of *A World of Difference* (1955), historian and SF anthologist Robert Conquest.

— JTM

As for the Hugos this year, of course the ballot is still infected by the Puppies. I hope that the fans will react as they did last year, and just dismiss the incomprehensibly awful stuff. The Puppies have however been more clever this year, taking hostages by nominating real works, whether the authors want to be part of their slate or not. This way if something good wins, like the Bujold, the Puppies can still claim it is one of theirs, despite Ms. Bujold having disowned them. In the long run, though, I think the Puppy

influence will diminish, and Vox Day will eventually become the Harold Stassen of SF, someone who runs every time but is seen as a joke. His momentum will no doubt be broken by the Helsinki worldcon. I am sure the Finnish fans will have no interest in this American nonsense.

From: **Brad W. Foster** August 18, 2016  
Post Office Box 165246, Irving, TX  
75016-5246 USA  
[jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com](mailto:jabberwocky2000@hotmail.com)  
<http://www.jabberwockygraphix.com>

Yeah, moving upon 50 years since landing on the moon. Had hoped for more — but did see a news item the other day that the government has granted the first permit to a private corporation to land on the moon. So, maybe there are new things to come!

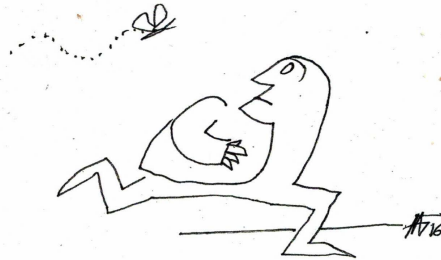
And yes, I agree the whole idea of what a "Fan" is, as evidenced by the Hugo awards, has definitely changed in recent years. Time and media move on. At this point, I'm starting to wonder when the move to remove the Fan categories will start up.

It's been a long time since we were able to go to a Worldcon, only got to Sasquan because they foolishly made me a guest. Your note here about "...an attending membership is worth the free books in the Hugo Voter's Packet". First I ever heard of that — you get free copies of all the Hugo nominee books? I've been robbed!!!

Electronic versions. Some people might not be able to access them. Come to think of it, can anyone spare a copy of the Hugo Packet, now that it's all over?

— JTM

Keeping all my fingers and toes crossed from now until Saturday that Steve gets his long deserved Hugo this year. Did you see the photo he put up on Facebook? He got a Mohawk haircut for the weekend — now that will be a photo op on the Hugo stage!



From: **John Purcell** August 21, 2016  
3744 Marilene Circle, College Station,  
TX 77845-3926 USA  
[askance73@gmail.com](mailto:askance73@gmail.com)

Good evening, Joe and Lisa. I hope this

missive finds you well. Here in Southeastern Texas we are finally getting a nice soaking rain — a week's worth, off and on, so far — making our lawn and garden go "Wheee!" so that the tomato, pea, strawberry, and other plants can green up and push out more buds. The next week looks good for more light rain as well, along with lower temperatures (as in mid-80s to low 90s). A break from the blistering Texas summer heat is always appreciated.

I think I shall refrain from making any snide comments about Joe's job update paragraph. His sarcasm seeps through enough as it is. I continue to wish the best for you two. With my wife now re-entering the job market (looking for a part-time position with flexible hours) in this area, that's going to be tough for her, we shall see, I find myself empathizing with Joe's position. I truly do wish anyone in the job hunt these days — hello, Lloyd Penney! — all the best luck in the world. Beyond that, there just isn't much else to do, is there? As too many of us know, finding a job is a full-time job all by itself.

That FandomFest in Louisville sounds like a smaller version of San Diego Comic Con and DragonCon in Atlanta. Twenty to thirty-five thousand people for a one to three-day weekend convention does not appeal to me. Forget it. I remember being overwhelmed at my first World Convention (MidAmeriCon in 1976), which had an actual attendance of 3014 out of 4200 registered members ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/34th\\_World\\_Science\\_Fiction\\_Convention](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/34th_World_Science_Fiction_Convention)). Heck, when Minn-stf's Minicon cracked the 1000 mark, eventually topping out over 3000 in the 1980s, that was too much. I find smaller conventions in the 400 to 800 range ideal these days. But then again, I much prefer literary based sf conventions, not these mass media, "big-tent fandom" extravaganzas. It is much more fun to be able to find my friends at cons, otherwise they are just not fun anymore.

There are some rather interesting alternative history books reviewed in this issue; odds are I would enjoy reading both *The Angel of the Revolution* and *1882: Custer in Chains*, and buried within the Robert Conroy book review is mention of Robert Skimin's novel *Custer's Luck* and another AH book that sounds interesting, *The Court-Martial of George Armstrong Custer*. It certainly looks like I have some book-searching to do online ahead of me. And this comes on the heels of a rather productive month or so of reading (six books and numerous fanzines in July and the first week of August. \*sigh\* The more I move ahead the further behind I get.

Rod Edmiston's latest submission "The Joy of High Tech" is very interesting reading full of nifty tidbits of information. For example, I never knew that the Mercury capsule was designed around Gus Grissom's torso length. Also, I guess I had always assumed that aircraft cockpit design wasn't that big of a deal, but reading about how that was a big bugaboo for the air force and its engineer's really was an

eye-opener. Well done, Rod.

Since I am writing this the day after the Hugos were awarded, now we know which ones passed muster. I know that you guys will publish the full listing in the 89th issue, but I'm going to say it now anyway: Congratulations to all the winners, with big shout-outs to Mike Glycer (Best Fanzine, Best Fan Writer) and Steve Stiles (Best Fan Artist), plus Andy Weir (John W. Campbell Best New Writer Award) and *The Martian* (Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form). Very happy for these folks. And also while I'm saddened New Orleans, which I supported, did not win the bid for the 2018 WorldCon, the San Jose bid committee is full of excellent people, so that is good news. It will be fine, I am sure.

Well, I think that brings this loc to a close. Once again, I thank you for the fine issue, and look forward to the next one. Take care, and one of these years I would really like to travel to Louisville and pay you fine people a visit. Definitely something to keep in mind.

Well, as you saw, first R-Laurraine Tutihasi and Mike Weasner, and then Marc Schirmeister, had that idea and acted on it.

— JTM

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Sept. 1, 2016  
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,  
Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA  
[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

I am counting *Alexiad* August 2016 as the 70th issue of *Alexiad* I have responded to. I was going to say I was anxiously awaiting the email version of *Alexiad*. However, you converted to email a number of issues back. Nonetheless, looking at what I have printed out, it doesn't seem to differ from the print version, except in saving money. I hope others have the same experience, and *Alexiad* continues.

That you send the issues by email now shows that you are up to date.. You were not up-to-date in reviewing an arcane novel I read years ago, *The Angel of the Revolution* (1893). It concerns a revolutionary organization that takes over the world for the 'good' of mankind.

Their mightiest weapon was an aircraft with an unspecified fuel, which out-powered all other sources. The book I read had illustrations of it which were an artist's interpretation. As far as I could make out, the artist interpreted the device as totally unairworthy.

The novel seemed unairworthy too. Some of the politics could be explained as nationalism. The political situation reflected the attitude of the British at that particular time. Britain had allied itself against France and Russia. Spurning our later close alliance, the US had aligned itself with France and

Russia. Hence, the Russians, the French and the Americans were considered adversaries.

Another factor was the European attitude toward Russia: many ordinarily moderate people sympathized with the Russian revolutionaries. The opera Feodora was certainly willing to accept the politics of one Russian 'Nihilist' as a peccadillo.

However, that does not explain much of the craziness in the novel. In addition to being nationalist, George Griffith also believed in violent revolution in the rest of Europe and in America, and a restructuring of capitalism. Which somehow *Pearson's Magazine* allowed him to advocate to his heart's content.

Furthermore there was additional craziness. Joe, you noted the name of the head revolutionary, Natas, was obviously Satan spelled backwards. In the story published in *Pearson's*, I remember reading that Natas' relation to Satan was a lot clearer.

Thus, Griffith had peculiar notions. Perhaps that was seen as the job of a writer for *Pearson's Magazine* because it attracted readers. While they may have been gnashing their teeth, they bought it. Others do not see their job that way. They see it as getting the public off peculiar notions so that they can do their job.

Have you read its sequel, *Olga Romanoff, the Syren of the Skies*? Don't anyone tell Maria Vladimirovna, she might get ideas.

I agree with Lisa that the FBI had tired of reinvestigating the D.B. Cooper case, and decided to close his case. Apparently, the Air Force did the same with flying saucers in the Condon Report. They figured chasing flying saucers wasn't their job, and no one else in the government was willing to take it.

Speaking of extraterrestrials gives me a roundabout way to get to Sue Burke's short review of David VanDyke's "What Price Humanity." Enrico Fermi wondered why the aliens aren't here yet; hence his paradox. Sue wonders why the aliens would come here to begin with. Why when they get what they want more easily elsewhere. I think there is great merit in what she says.

I also agree with Robert Kennedy. He says that, in the past two hundred years, the Supreme Court has treated the ninth Amendment as an inkblot. As I said, my belief is that the provision defining the powers of the Feds, the State and the people was placed into the Constitution to look good; and encourage the Constitution's ratification.

Some consider this politics the Founding Fathers would have had nothing to do with. I take the contrary view. I suspect the Founding Fathers succeeded because they were good politicians.

I go from the US Constitution to its opposite, the Nazis. However, specifically, it is the Nazis who had been defeated for some time. In fact, it is the '70s and the Nazis are in

hiding. Perhaps thirty years more after the US Constitution.

Joe, you say, in the movie version of *The Boys from Brazil* (1978), Mengele's clones of Hitler were only innocuous because they were too young to become the rulers of a country. My understanding is Ira Levin's novel (1976) asserted that the clones of Adolf Hitler presented no danger to the world as adults. I admit that I only read snatches, but that was the impression I got.

No matter what, I will still contend the clones of Hitler would present no danger. Hitler's rise depended on being the right person at the right time. That particular time is unlikely to happen again. Of course, this does not mean that monsters in human form will not roam the Earth spreading death and destruction; just other monsters besides Hitler.

That was why Libermann burned the list, to keep the Mossad from going on a killing spree. Then in the book we saw one of the clones Having Dreams.

— JTM

SUPERMAN  
ESCAPES THE  
LA BREA TAR PITS!



From Hitler, we go to a related subject, mass transit. Of course, I don't know what relation it could have. I guess. The Nazis were Earth shaking and mass transit lies, in good part,



under the Earth. However, I urge you to fake a relationship.

About mass transit, I said that with the money used for subways, the bus systems could be run for free. George Price still doesn't believe that the public will give up the ease and romance of the car. Am I going to say that George is 100% wrong? No, he has a good point.

Nonetheless, if you're going to have a mass transit system to alleviate traffic problem, I think a free bus system, rather than an ever more expensive subway system, is the way to go. The subway has the convenience of operating outside of the traffic. On the other hand, everyone could afford the free fare.

From the Chicago or New York transit system, we go to AL du Pisani in South Africa. South Africa being below the equator, god knows what the distance from North America. It is a long way, though.

Appropriately, I just have a short response to AL's letter: good luck on getting a less corrupt government than the African National Congress in South Africa.

My short wish for good luck ends what I would like to say about this *Alexiad*. I started with an analysis of Griffith's *Angel of the Revolution*, which we both admit was mishegoss; and ended with a comment on South African politics.

From: **Lloyd Penney** September 15, 2016  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 2B2 CANADA  
[penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net)  
<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>

Right now, the address above doesn't apply. While others are heading to Kansas City for the Worldcon, Yvonne and I are on a Westjet 767 heading off to London, England for a long-awaited and long-saved-for vacation. We should be flying over Quebec as I type; I suspect that I will be halfway across the Atlantic by the time I finish. It's pretty cramped quarters right now, but if I am going to spend 7 hours on a flight, I might as well tackle a fanzine or two. Here are comments on *Alexiad* 88. (Just had a look at the deadline... I am way early.) (And, the date doesn't apply, either. I was writing this on my tablet but the whole vacation got in the way. Today is September 15, about four weeks after I started.)

If they can put a man on the moon, why can't they put a man on the moon today? Missed opportunities indeed. I read recently of a company who got US government permission to land on the moon (although I thought this was a purview of the UN). We know the fellow behind this venture, and we know his business tactics. All I can say is hide your chequebook, and believe it only when you see it. Investor beware.

I've mentioned the Artemis Project often enough. This sort

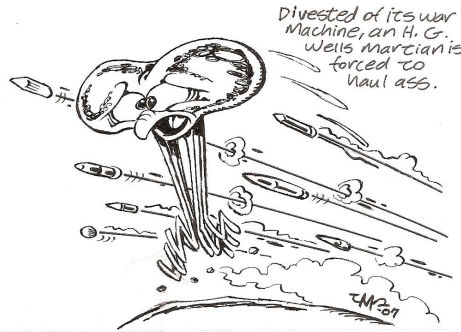
of behavior was predicted by Cyril Kornbluth in "The Rocket of 1955" (*Stirring Science Stories* April 1941).

Employment situation...same as before. When we get back, I really have to get with it. I do have a couple of hot irons in the fire, so I am hopeful that I will be working again soon. My benefits are exhausted, so there's further incentive. (Still working at it. Found some great jobs to apply to.)

The Dragon\*Con Awards and the 20,000-35,000 people at that one-day event in Louisville just shows me that SF is losing its interactivity. Time was fans could actually participate in the genre, and be a part of things, including the awards. Now, while we can vote in the DC awards, for the most part, we are now mere sources of funding. Pay your \$\$\$, and sit down to watch what we do. Lighten your wallet in the expensive dealers' room. Give us your e-mail address so we can spam you, and try to sell you more crap in the off-season. We retired from conrunning some years ago, and now, we are vendors. I hope we're not part of the problem...

As I've said, it's the transition from participant to consumer. The people at such affairs are nice. They put a lot of effort into what they do. They pay the \$\$\$ for admission and the \$\$\$\$ for the accessories and the \$\$ for the official photograph... and have a wonderful time. Things have changed, and the world has gone on and left us behind.

— JTM



My letter...my employment benefits have run out, and now I am living on savings, and on Yvonne's good graces. My skills have become obsolete, but recently, I found a lot of new jobs that require my skills. Resumes went out to each and every one of them, and fingers are crossed again.

England was great. We stayed at a hotel with Harry Potter-style rooms, went to Watford to see the big HP displays up there, stayed at

the Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria Station, took the tube to Kings Cross station to see the Platform 9¾ shop (four times, actually), and the tube again to Paddington station to buy authentic Paddington bears, took tour buses to see lots of London, rode the London Eye, took the train up to Lincoln to spend four days of steampunk fun at The Asylum VIII, and then came home. It cost more than we expected, and more than we had saved for, but we are covered, and the next few years will be tight. This may be all the trip report I can do; I've had several ask for such reports, but right now, I must find work.

All done, made the page. Thanks for this, and see you the next issue.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 18, 2016  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA  
93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

Thank you for Vol. 15, No. 4 (August 2016), Whole Number 88.

I obtained the DVD *MIDNIGHT SPECIAL* from the library. On my scale of 1-5 I do not have any idea how to rate this movie. If any of you have seen it please explain it to me.

The FINALE of *Wayward Pines* was very disappointing.

I read *The Dragons of Dorcastle – Pillars of Reality Book 1* by Jack Campbell/John Henry (2014). I enjoyed it. But, after checking it out at Amazon it looks like I probably will not be reading the subsequent editions.

I watch a number of shows/movies on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries. In one of the movies at one point a character was shot on the right side shoulder area, a bandage was applied, and there was blood on his shirt. Next scene the bandage and blood was on the left side. Next scene it was back on the right side. Very sloppy on the part of the film makers. It reminded me of *Princess of Mars* which is one of the all-time worst movies. It stared Traci Lords as Dejah Thoris and Antonio Sabato, Jr. as John Carter. At one point John Carter has been captured and is in chains. Next scene no chains. Next scene the chains are back.

Asylum works by rushing out cheaply made lookalikes of forthcoming big movies. Thus this, with its continuity error. They didn't seem to anticipate that *John Carter* would suffer from an about total lack of marketing.

— JTM

My thanks for your review of *The Lost Stars: Shattered Spear* by Jack Campbell (John G. Hemry). I have been following this series as well as his *The Lost Fleet* series and very much enjoying them. I do wish he would get back to "Black Jack" Geary.

Good review of *1882: Custer in Chains*. The book was an interesting read.

*Ancestral Journeys: The Peopling of Europe from the First Venturers to the Vikings* by Jean



Manco. I am going to try to obtain a copy of this book as it is a subject of interest to me.

Another fine The Joy of High Tech by Rodford Edmiston.

Worldcon: The only two I really cared about won—The Martian and Andy Weir. In the Retro Hugo Awards all but one that I voted for mas #1 won.

That's about it.

Oh, it would be nice if Lloyd Daub would submit something that you could include in ALEXIAD and not just give him credit for sending items of interest.

From: George W. Price Sept. 25, 2016 4418 N. Monitor Avenue, Chicago, IL 60630-3333 USA price4418@comcast.net

August Alexiad:

Well, I think it's the August Alexiad, though the running heads on all but the first page say "June." Ah well, even Jove nods. This illustrates the pitfalls of computerized typesetting. It is easy to set up templates — and also easy to replicate errors.

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Joe's review of The Angel of the Revolution refers to "The Terror, who himself goes by the palindromic name of Natas." No, that's not a palindrome, which reads the same both forward and backward, such as "radar" or "noon." A classic example is how the first man introduced himself to the first woman: "Madam, I'm Adam" (punctuation and capitalization are ignored). The name "Natas" is an example of a simpler and larger class: a word which spelled backward forms a different word. Is there a special name for

that?

There ought to be but I couldn't find it.

The same review refers to "a giant secluded area in the heart of Africa. . . . Since it's surrounded by mountains of three thousand feet or more, it's inaccessible except by air." Even when that story was published in 1893, three thousand feet was not much of a barrier. Unless it was three thousand feet of sheer cliff even at the lowest spot?

"It rose like some vast precipitous island out of the sea of forest that lay about its base; and above the mighty rock-walls that seemed to rise sheer from the surrounding plain at least a dozen peaks towered into the sky, two of their summits covered with eternal snow, and shining like points of rosy fire in the almost level rays of the sun."

I'd say so. Hmm . . . what would Professor George Edward Challenger have done?

When the chief agent of the Terror in the U.S. opens a letter that condemns him to death, "Natasha shoots him, then confesses to Arnold that if the latter had been otherwise, she would have shot herself." Shouldn't that be "letter," not "latter"? And that's the last nit I will pick in this issue.

It referred to whatever her father's choice was.

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Sue Burke informs us that she and her husband have moved to 5620 N. Winthrop in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood. I expect their back yard is right across the alley from the embankment for the Red Line and Purple Line elevated trains. The Burkes are a bit over a mile and a half south and east of where I lived from 1966 to 1987, on North Shore Avenue at Newgard in the Rogers Park neighborhood.

When we stayed with my cousin Dana there was a Brown Line station around the corner. We took it to the WorldCon.

During the Eighties and Nineties, a long-time friend lived in the Uptown neighborhood, a mile south of where the Burkes are now. Uptown was then a grungy area, one step above a slum, where few people would live if they could afford anything better. (As far as I know, it still is.) My friend stayed 17 years in the Lorali, an inexpensive residential hotel at Lawrence and Kenmore. She and a number of other tenants were subsidized welfare clients. The rent included meals in a dining room on the ground floor.

Think of it as a boarding house nine stories high.

The Lorali got its moment of fame when it was used as a location for a short sequence in the 1998 movie U.S. Marshals. I saw some of the setup for filming while visiting my friend. The movie shows the outside of the building and then the lobby and lounge inside. An actor rushes through a door into a stairway — and that's the last you see of the actual Lorali. The stairs he runs up are not the stairs that are really behind that door. And when he gets upstairs and looks outside, the view is not really what you see from the Lorali.

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AL du Pisani's remarks on life and politics in South Africa reminded me of the contrast between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of the British Empire.

When the U.S.S.R. fell apart, the Baltic and eastern European countries the Reds had captured instantly shucked off communism and went back to their old systems. Some have been more successful than others — some more liberal, some more authoritarian — but none has shown any sign of pining for the return of communism. Essentially, they rejected everything Russian.

But when the British Empire fell apart after World War II the upshot was very different. As far as I know, every single one of the liberated countries kept the British system of parliamentary democracy — at least in name. There's been a lot of backsliding, and some have become brutal tyrannies in fact, but they all still claim to be (or pretend to be) liberal democracies on the British model. And several, notably India, really are fairly successful as democracies. (I don't know enough to judge how South Africa should be counted.)

What this says to me is that, even with their racism and cultural arrogance, the British imperialists gave their subjects far better governance than they had gotten from the various native regimes preceding the empire. When the time came to dissolve the imperium, the "liberated natives" overwhelmingly preferred to keep the British system. Now that's a real compliment!

All in all, I believe that the British Empire was one of the better things to have happened to this old world.

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Many of us will vote while holding our noses.

I'd like to see a new voting system that tells candidates what we really think of them.

A "none of the above" option isn't specific enough. Instead, the ballot should have both a "yes" box and a "no" box for each candidate. You may vote either "yes" or "no" for all the candidates for a given office.

You can vote "yes" for one or more, and likewise "no" for one or more, or even "yes" for

all or “no” for all, to show how you feel about each individual.

We then add up each candidate’s “yes” votes and subtract his (or her) “no” votes, and the one with the highest net total wins.

But if all the candidates for an office get more “no” than “yes” votes, then the least-negative total wins. And he (or she) will know that he doesn’t have a “mandate” — he won only because we think he is the least repulsive. That might induce a proper humility in office.

Alternatively, when all the vote totals are negative, we could simply declare the election void, and hold a new election with new candidates.

Imagine the problems of holding a new Presidential election on such short notice.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** September 27, 2016  
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H,  
Jersey City, NJ 07302-3787 USA  
[twolansky@yahoo.com](mailto:twolansky@yahoo.com)

This is mostly about the August *Alexiad*, with a little bit of June.

Sue Burke: Thanks for your review of all the Hugo short fiction nominees. (Due to technical difficulties, I didn’t get to read all of them.) Did you notice that while most of the nominees were male, all the winners were female?

Similarly, earlier in the year, the Nebula Award fiction nominees were split about evenly by sex but all the winners were female.

Is this one of the things the “Puppies” were complaining about? (BTW, some of the fiction allegedly nominated by the Pups was good. They did make Related Works a disaster area, though, even if the story of pedophilia in the SF world is worth telling.)

A feminist I read online said that women (axiomatically) write science fiction just as well as men; yet, in the early years of the Hugo Award, women won less than 50% of the statuettes. Because of this “historical injustice”, she said, she would always cast her votes for female nominees only. The results suggest there is a group of feminists who vote this way, with no male chauvinist voters to balance them.

At Detcon a couple of years ago I attended a panel about how disgraceful it was that men were still a majority in the STEM fields. I pointed out that women dominate everything else in academia now. And college attendance is now over 60% female; so it’s the boys that are suffering, not the girls. (Many boys turn off to education because they develop mentally more slowly than girls — in my experience, they don’t catch up until the 7th grade — and aren’t as good at sitting still and doing what they’re told.)

Why is it so important that women dominate not just most but all the faculties, I

asked. The answer I was given boils down to: to “right historical wrongs”, today’s men must pay for what happened in previous generations.

Remember, to a collectivist it’s irrelevant that different individuals are involved in the matter today, irrelevant that the people who were wronged (allegedly) and the people who did wrong (allegedly) are all dead now. Regardless of what’s going on now, the four-dimensional blob called Man has a debt to the four-dimensional blob called Woman.

If I’d thought of it at the time I would have asked how the Woman blob going to repay the Man blob for all the dying it’s done for thousands of years, in warfare and in dangerous occupations. Not long ago, I saw Alicia Vikander in the movie, *A Testament of Youth*, based on Vera Brittain’s memoir of the Great War. It’s all about how much she suffers as every young man she knows is killed. Yeah, I can see that, but I think the young men — suffocated, blinded, dismembered, burned, disemboweled, mutilated — may have suffered a bit, too.



Milt Stevens: “Knights looking for the Holy Grail is also fantasy”. No, no, knights finding the Holy Grail is fantasy!

They couldn’t get enough coconuts.

Robert S. Kennedy: “With the failed coup in Turkey the Ataturk revolution is over and the Islamists have won.” According to Claire Berlinski, who lived in Turkey for many years up to very recently, both sides were Islamists.

George W. Price: That Sir Richard Burton’s translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* portrays blacks in a foul manner does not surprise me. He famously admired the “civilized, urbane” Arab slave traders instead. It was because Burton was too contemptuous of the blacks to pay attention to what they said, I suspect, that his partner, John Speke, discovered the source of the Nile instead of him.

Given the attitude of progressives like Margaret Sanger toward black people in 1920, when the Klan was a major force in the Democratic Party, your mother’s story, about being told she could get an abortion if she claimed she was raped by a black man, rang true — at first. But then I realized there was nothing in the story to indicate any white

woman ever actually tried this ploy. The same racism that makes the ploy plausible is also a reason a woman might not have wanted to admit being “sullied” in this way (even if it was true).

Interracial marriage statistics seem to indicate that black men find white women more attractive than white men find black women. (On the rare occasions I see couples of the latter sort it always strikes me as particularly romantic!) As I recall, 70% of black-white marriages are black man-white woman. My guess is, to black men, white women tend to seem ultra-feminine; while to white women, black men tend to seem ultra-masculine. I suspect the sex crime numbers run in similar directions. I recall seeing something in the FBI’s Criminal Victimization Statistics, years ago, to the effect that they had to leave the white-on-black gang rape percentage blank because there were too few cases (unlike the reverse). In other words, if journalists had been paying attention to the statistics, they would have immediately suspected the Tawana Brawley and Duke lacrosse team rape cases were hoaxes, as they eventually proved to be.

AL du Pisani: “The ANC is expected to be hammered in the polls. ... Unfortunately ... most of the alternatives are as bad or worse.” While the ANC held a monopoly of power, it could afford to follow a sensible economic policy. The downward spiral begins when parties start to compete on how much they will loot the “rich” (whites, Asians, etc.).

Taral Wayne: I was baffled by the poor character design in *The Good Dinosaur* — curiously featureless Gumby dinosaurs. Did their focus groups tell them dinosaurs drawn with a little detail are too scary for small children? It’s possible to make a good kids film about talking dinosaurs; see: *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2013) with Justin Long and John Leguizamo. I don’t think many people saw this, possibly because they confused it with the documentary TV series of the same name.

Richard Dengrove: We should be helping the Syrian refugees where they are; i.e., just outside Syria. We can help ten times as many people for the same cost, and avoid importing terrorism as well.

“Of course, I found out later still that my childhood heroes [with feet of clay] had extenuating circumstances. But you can only appreciate that when you get even older.” Very wise. In the later books of “The Forsyte Saga”, written when John Galsworthy was considerably older, Soames Forsyte becomes a more sympathetic figure than the double-dyed villain of the early books. And, late in life, E.E. “Doc” Smith made his villain sort of the hero and even named the book after him: *Skylark DuQuesne*.

“Supporters of the Fermi Paradox are making another assumption, that some planet’s science will progress enough for them to travel faster than light and populate the stars.” Actually the idea is even if you do it the slow way you will still colonize the entire galaxy in what is a blink of an eye in cosmological terms. Imagine that each human planet creates a new

colony every thousand years. After the first thousand years you have two planets. After the second thousand years, four planets. After the third, eight planets; then 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024. That takes us up to 10,000 years. After 20,000 years it's over 1 million worlds (if I got my arithmetic right). Using different numbers (I think), Wikipedia estimates between five and 50 million years to colonize the entire galaxy, the slow way. So somebody should have already done it by now.

Joe (review of Vin Arthey's *Abel*): Sounds like the Democratic administration traded a bishop for a pawn. Reminds me of the five high-level Taliban commanders traded for deserter Bo Bergdahl.

If they'd waited they might have got Penkovsky for "Abel".

Fandom Fest in Louisville had "between twenty and thirty-five thousand [attendees] ... four or more times as large as the largest ever Worldcon". While media cons can get very large indeed, according to published numbers the 1984 Anaheim Worldcon had an attendance of around 8500 to 9000.

The review of George Griffith's *The Angel of the Revolution* made me wonder what people thought of the book at the time of its original publication. Did they consider it plausible in 1893? I'm sure depicting Russia as an irresistible military juggernaut would no longer be believable after the 1905 war with Japan.

"So much for Heinlein's beliefs in the effects of flogging on socialization." Works of fiction have no evidentiary value, though I've noticed people tend to treat them as if they do — if they agree with the points the work makes. Perhaps you meant to say that the book takes a different view of flogging than Heinlein did in some work of his — though I couldn't say which one or what his view was.

Nope. In Volume One of the biography, Bill Patterson discusses RAH's experiences as a court-martial officer counsel and how it led him to believe that imprisonment was an ineffective punishment while flogging worked.

— JTM

*Angel* certainly sounds interesting, in any case.

From: **Sue Burke** September 28, 2016  
5620 N. Winthrop Ave., #1R, Chicago, IL 60660-4422, USA  
[sue@sue.burke.name](mailto:sue@sue.burke.name)  
[mount-oregano.livejournal.com](http://mount-oregano.livejournal.com)  
[amadisofgaul.blogspot.com](http://amadisofgaul.blogspot.com)

I am now a FIB, which is what

Wisconsinites call Illinois drivers: a F\*\*\*\*\*g Illinois B\*\*\*\*\*d. They consider Illinois drivers inconsiderate and rude. As I was preparing for my driving test, I could see why. For example, Illinois drivers are advised to blink their headlights at a driver ahead who is going too slow to ask them to pull over. Wisconsinites find that offensive.

I have uncovered the source to a deep Midwestern subcultural difference.

I did have to study a little for the written part of the driving test, and as with the Spanish test, I found a certain class of question useless. For example, what are the penalties for a second DUI conviction? Well, that driver faces a \*\*\*\*\*load of trouble. Is it necessary to know the exact turdcount? Still, I memorized how many, responded to those kinds of questions on the written test, then instantly forgot the answers.

The on-the-road portion of the test was easier. I didn't even have to parallel park. I had to pay a mere \$30 for the license, unlike the hundreds of euros the process cost in Spain. And I only had to wait for my number to be called long enough to read three chapters of *The Just City* by Jo Walton\*, but I went on a stormy day, and apparently some people don't want to take a driver's test in the rain. Wimps.

(\*The book contains more talk than action and more philosophy than peril, but that's perhaps to be expected in a novel where Socrates is a main character. Greek gods have decided to attempt to recreate Plato's ideal city as described in *The Republic*, knowing from the outset that it will fail; they just want to find out why. Socrates figures it out.)

Does he call for the assistance of his brother Nicolaos and sister-in-law Diotima?

I'm now reading the Hugo-winning novel *The Fifth Season* by N. K. Jemisin. I'll let you know what I think. I have read the Hugo-nominated *Seveneves* by Neal Stephenson with all its glorious infodumps — or at least I read the first part, in which the Earth is destroyed and the survivors destroy each other, which was entertaining. The second part set out seven varieties of humans in the far future, each one defined by the genetic determinism chosen long ago by its Eve, and I could no longer suspend my disbelief.

To follow the Hugo winners, I was watching the awards via internet, and at one point I told my husband, "*The Martian* just won a Hugo!" He answered: "I'm very happy for him."

In the last issue, Joe says in his Page 1 Reviewer's Notes that *The Three-Body Problem* was remarkably like a '50s-era adventure novel. Indeed it was — and that was one reason I liked it. I think it's a worthwhile kind of novel, and there's still a lot that can be done with it.

Thank you, George W. Price, for your advice to move into Chicago's suburbs because

the city is poorly governed. You have a point, but we were living in Madrid, so we're inured to financial mismanagement, corruption, and inefficiency. They can't even trim trees there without turning them into stumps or neglecting problem trees until they fall down and kill people. Besides, in my days as a journalist, I covered Midwestern suburban governments. They're often very poorly governed, too, but since they tend to face fewer challenges, no one notices — until something goes horribly wrong.



I will try to keep Richard A. Dengrove satisfied by trying to make Chicago come alive. It's a lively place.

Look up my cousin Dana, the artist. I can keep you posted about her shows.

In other news, I'll be attending Windycon (thanks for the reminder, Joe). I've also been invited by the Organización Mexicana de Traductores to talk about crowdfunding for translation at its conference, which will be part of the Feria Internacional del Libro in Guadalajara, Mexico, a major international book fair, at the end of November. Since they're paying, I'm going.

I'm also proud to announce that I've won the 2016 Alicia Gordon Award for Word Artistry in Translation, presented by the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, for my work on *Confusion of Confusions* by Joseph de la Vega, a 1688 book that discussed the Amsterdam stock market in dense and delightful Baroque prose.

As for our move, we sent 72 boxes off in Madrid on July 15.

My shipment arrived in Chicago sometime in August. US Customs and Boarder Protection at the Port of Chicago x-rayed it, as they do all shipments, then decided to pull it for an intensive examination — extreme vetting, we might say — opening up the shipping crate and inspecting individual boxes. Perhaps they couldn't believe someone would ship that many boxes of books overseas. Books amounted to half our stuff even after we had ruthlessly culled our collection. Or perhaps we had bad luck, since Customs also selects shipments at random for such tender mercies. Smuggling, after all, is



rampant, and inspections help keep us all safe. I was charged \$110 for the patriotic vetting privilege, and with luck no goods were damaged.

Customs finally released our shipment on September 16. Then Allied Van Lines had to figure out how to get it across town. Apparently the logistics surpass D-Day preparations, but I should get my stuff on October 4. I wish I could get my money back, too. Our apartment is not yet a home, but we have plenty of Ikea Billy-series bookcases ready and waiting.

My sister-in-law suggested one possible small pleasure: after such a long wait, I've forgotten exactly what we packed, so opening the boxes will feel a little like Christmas morning.

And then you'll wonder why  
you brought half the stuff.

— JTM



From: **AL du Pisani**      October 2, 2016  
945 Grand Prix Street,  
Weltevredenpark 1709, REPUBLIC  
OF SOUTH AFRICA  
[du.pisani@telkomsa.net](mailto:du.pisani@telkomsa.net)

When I moved into my house, lo these many years ago, I planted four shrubs. Two of them died after a year to two and a half years, but the remaining two had been the mainstays of my garden. But the years passed and I planted more trees and shrubs, some of which grew fine, and others that died. So it came to pass that as part of getting my garden going this spring, I checked out what had died and needed to be removed – And I found that

while the one shrub is still surviving, the other had died off completely. So my gardener had just finished cutting what remained down. And another gradual change had happened, in my surroundings.

I have been following a lot of discussion these past years about publishing in general and SF publishing in particular. In the discussions around Baen, much have been made about their corporate identity and branding. With some people claiming that Baen is the only SF publisher with a consistent brand and visual identity. Part of the reason I found these discussions interesting, is that I am working for a company that takes it's brand and visual identity very seriously.

But I contended that Baen only have the second strongest visual identity: The winner in my opinion had been Victor Gollancz, with their "Yellowjackets". Books that were available in the 1970s, but still incorporated the design elements of the 1930s. Solid yellow covers, with only the title and author in a contrasting colour, usually black or red. If you look on Wikipedia, you will see an example book cover from their previous incarnation, when they were publishing books for the working class Communist. It is not mentioned how they changed to become a specialist SF house in later years.

I understand that they had a problem in the thirties. Manuscripts would arrive from the Soviet Union with notations that the author's name was to be supplied later. It would have to be someone who wasn't being unmasked as having always been a Trotskyite terrorist wrecker agent of foreign powers.

These books could be found in lots of libraries, and even today, when I see a solid yellow cover I shall walk and investigate the book behind the cover. These were very much the SF I grew up with, even though I did not like or read all of the books with the yellow covers I found.

And then new books stopped appearing in the libraries I frequented. I also did not see them at the bookshops I patronised.

Years later Gollancz published the VGSF line, but they were not my cup of tea. And they had different covers: In line with the times, with an illustration, and the author and title. In later years, I see that they have added a tint of yellow to the cover, harking back to their predecessors.

During the past couple of years, I have been going to bookshops less often. Mostly because I am not able to find much that I want to buy. But also because the second hand bookshop seems to be dying out, with less and less of them around. What I am looking for is also changing, and I am looking for military history or hand-crafts, rather than SF and Fantasy. But I still check out the books, should I find myself

in a bookshop.

Which is what happened about a month ago – I was in a bookshop attached to a nursery, and I looked around. It was the bright yellow covers that called to me. I found an imprint new to me: Gollancz' SF Gateway Omnibus editions. It looks like an attempt to keep seminal SF works printed. I saw a number of books that appealed to me, and bought *The Past through Tomorrow*, by Heinlein.

The cover is in bright yellow, and it is the most prominent element of the cover. The imprint logo and author name are printed in black, with the title in red. The author is more prominent than the title, but both are relatively speaking, small. There is a small illustration, but is also is small. The spine is similar. The overall impression is of bright yellow.

The saleslady saw that I was interested, and claimed that these are the only decent SF they have in the shop. I plan to go back some time to buy some more. Since the books are also very competitively priced, at R99. Books of similar size are usually priced at double that.

Unfortunately, when I showed off my booty to the local SF fan crowd, they were not impressed. And one of them mentioned that he is not fond of books with yellow covers.

But I still think that Victor Gollancz had the strongest visual branding of any SF publisher ever.

We had our local government elections. It did not take as long as I anticipated, as I finished voting within two hours of leaving my house for the polling station. The queue was long but was moving steadily. It turned out that the ID verification check was no longer the hold-up at the front. The problem now seem to be getting voters through the voting booths fast enough.

So you have Voter ID. Kentucky has that too. I can't begin to tell you how controversial that is here.

We still use a paper based ballot system. I received two ballots – one for the people contesting the ward, of about 10 candidates, and one for the parties contesting the election, with about 60 names. Of the candidates for ward councillor, I recognised about half – the half that were advertising. The others I did not recognise. I did not recognise most of the parties involved. I later found out that some parties only contested a single town or region, but had to appear on the full party ballot anyway. The Communist Party did not contest the election directly (they are in an alliance with the ANC, and appear under the latter), but the South African Bolsheviks Party did. (Did pretty badly, as far as I can recall)

Shortly after the election I spoke to a friend, and found out that he is the party agent for the party that won their ward. He mentioned that he was going to be counting the votes, and I asked him later how it went. It turns out that the counting process is much more complicated that



I had supposed, and explained why these days it can take the best part of a week before the election results is final.

As far as I know his only activity during the day of the election, was voting. He went to their local polling station shortly before the polls closed. If a voter was standing in the queue at closing time, the polling station would be kept open until the voters in the queue voted. But the queue was closed for new voters.

Once the polling station closed, the ballot boxes were opened. Between the election officials, the party agents and any vote counters, the two sets of ballots were counted. At the end of counting it was known how many people voted, and how many ballots were cast for each ward council candidate or party. If my friend did not note each of these things down, and sent it on to the Party, he was not doing his job.

In any case, this was now half past two in the morning after election day. My friend was delegated to take the ballot boxes, with the ballots, to local city hall. He told me that he had to drive much faster than he normally does, to keep up with his police escort. At city hall, the ballot boxes was taken to be counted again, and controlled against the results list supplied by the polling station's counters. After delivering the ballot boxes, he went home, and was out of the rest of the counting process.

Since after the area's votes were counted a second time, all of the area's ballot boxes with ballots were sent to central counting, near Auckland Park, where all ballots from all over the country were counted a third time. Only once the votes have been counted and validated, are the results declared. I waited three days to find out the official results from my polling station.

So, you ask, why do we vote for a councillor and a party? We are operating under a proportional representation scheme. The ballots for the councillors are first used to determine the ward councillor. Then added to the Party ballots, and it is worked out which percentage of the total votes went to which party, and it is worked out how many councillors each party have in the local government structure. So, Party A have won 15 wards, and have won the share of votes entitling them to 20 councillors. Above the 15 councillors they have, they are allocated 5 more councillors. (These are picked from a Party list, that have to be supplied ahead of the election. People have bribed to get high on their party's list.) Party E have won 2 wards, but have the share of votes entitling them to 15 councillors. They then are allocated 13 more councillors.

That sounds like the German electoral system. Some of the minor German parties are only represented in the Bundestag through their party votes.

Once all the councillors are known, a local government have to be formed. If a party won an outright majority, forming a government is simple. If a party won a majority, they can form alliances or informal working agreements with other parties to form a majority government that way. Or the party with the most votes, and alliance partners, can form a minority government. The last is particularly unstable, and usually happens when there are at least three parties with a significant amount of votes, but no alliances can be formed which results in a majority. All three of these outcomes happened at various municipalities, and at the large metropolitan areas.

In general, the ANC did poorly. My reading of the results indicate that a lot of voters are fed up with the ANC's leadership, and could not vote for them any more. But they also did not want to vote for anyone else, so stayed home.

The IFP had a resurgence in KwaZulu-Natal. (The IPF is associated with the Zulus, but were in the process of becoming a party with national appeal, in the 1980s. The ANC went into a low intensity civil war against them, and killed an estimated 10,000 low and mid level IFP officials, gutting the party and cutting them back to a Zulu party. They had been written off as a party with no future, in recent years.)

The EFF splintered off from the ANC before the last National elections. Mostly of the ANC's Youth Wing. The Youth Wing were largely responsible for the election of Jacob Zuma as ANC leader, but have fallen out with him in recent years. The EFF is so far the only splinter party which managed to grow their number of votes in the next election, and can be expected to continue to grow. (If they do not merge back with the ANC again.) They got enough councillors to be the king maker in a significant number of local governments. They are straight old left, with economic policies that "had never been tried" yet show a strange similarity to the Soviet Union, and similar policies that have never been tried yet showed up back to the Roman Empire and earlier. They had also never worked out as promised, but this time it will be different!

The DA is the closest thing we have to the centre-left, that are more or less honest, hard working, and not totally into Communism as the only economic policy a country ever needs. They have been the main beneficiary during the election, with them in control of more municipal and metropolitan governments than before. Yet in many ways they did badly: They had a huge get out the vote campaign based on SMS messages. I received messages once a week for the two months before the elections, rising to one a day in the week before the election, and multiple messages the day before and on election day. At the end of this they had

about the same number of votes as at the previous National elections. Only because less people voted this time around than at the National election, caused them to benefit and appear to grow. (It is a familiar pattern – In South Africa National elections always have more voters turning up than in Local government elections. You would expect the opposite to happen.)

Of the eight large metropolitan areas, the ANC used to control seven, with the DA controlling Cape Town. After the election, the ANC controls three, and the DA five. Except for Cape Town, where the DA finally won an outright majority, after years of alliances with smaller parties, all of the DA controlled metropolitan governments are either of a working majority, with alliances and agreements, or of a working minority, with alliances and agreements.

The ones with the most fragile governments, are the ones where the EFF have significant representation. In at least two cases, the EFF hold the power to cause the ANC to be able to take control, should the EFF play ball. And all the EFF want in return for their support is for the ANC to fire Jacob Zuma.

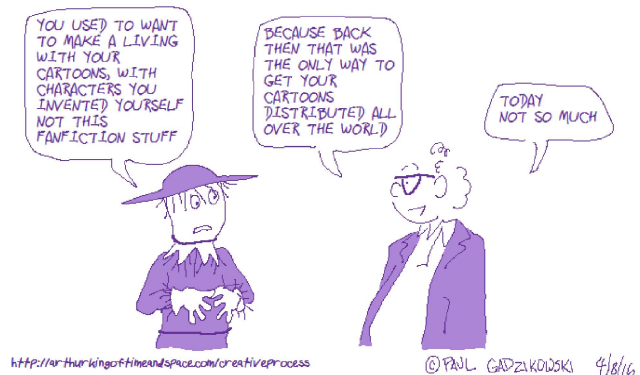
We always want things to end in a nice clean result. Some of this we got in the past election. But I am in an area that are already, and is going to be particularly messy, going forward.

I hope that there will always be good to come, with decent SF to read. And that you will hold on to hope in the bad times that will be there.

Have you been to my cousin Griffin Shea's bookstore, Bridge Books?

—JTM

**WAHF:**  
**Lloyd Daub**, with various items of interest.  
**Martin Morse Wooster**, the same.  
**Marty Cantor, Nic Farey, Earl Kemp, Robin Usher**, who got it.  
**Alexis A. Gilliland** with thanks and art.



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## A REPORT TO THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF ENGLAND

May It Please Your Royal Highness:

Upon the Twelfth Day of September last, at sea in the North Atlantic, I encountered a foundering Vessel. The Shippe had been dismasted and was almost awash. A Boat was lowered and dispatched to the unfortunate Craft, returning with one Survivor.

The Crew reported that the Vessel was of strange formation, being not of Woode, but of somewhat that resembled Metal, much defac'd with Rust. Her Lines were most finely made, though, and they were of the Opinion that the Shippe, were she in Repair, would be most great of Speed.

The sole Survivor was much starv'd and Gravely wound'd. He perished two Dayes thereafter and was duly Buried at sea with proper Rites. Ere his Demise he recount'd a most Grave and Strange Tale.

He claim'd that he had been in the Guarda-Costa of America, assign'd to a Vessel for training. This Shippe was, he declar'd, the one that had founder'd.

A Faction of the Crew had mutni'd, led by an Adventurer who despis'd his Captain, and they determin'd to sail to Greece, there to make themselves Lords of the land. He was not in his right mind entire, I ween, for he said many unbelievable things regarding their Captain.

The Mutineers took the Ship easily and set course into the Atlantick. They became lost, as no man jack of them had the art of Navigation. The Chief of the Mutineers fell into Drink, and betimes slew such men as Affronted him.

This so terroriz'd the remainder that they made cause, and slew him as he lay besott'd. But having free'd themselves of their Tyrant, they could find no Leader, and drifted.

The Shippe was struck by a Hurricano, which dismast'd her and destroy'd a great part of the Provisions. The Mutineers fell to conflict among themselves, and neglect'd the Shippe, which howsoever they had no skill to Repair.

Thus it was that the Shippe founder'd, and we succor'd the last survivor; his Demise spar'd him tryal for Mutiny.

Arm'd with this Intelligence, I made course for the Island of Nantocke, the which the Mutineer had declar'd had been his locus of Origin . . .

. . . Upon my Arrival at the Island of Nantocke, I made investigation of the Shores before making landfall. There were many Houses and other such Buildings, strangely made.

Dispatching a Boat the Party made further notice of the unusual design. The Houses were in no wise like unto any that they had seen, having many Windows, some made of Metal,

others of Stone. There were some few Vehicles of unusual semblance present. The Roads were like unto the Antient Roman roads, being of stone also.

They found no living Man. It was not until the third Daye that an Inhabitant was encounter'd. He was starv'd and seem'd half out of his Wits. When offered Food he reject'd it, asserting that he was a Vegan, and requir'd organick, gluten free, cruelty free, and nongeemo Foods, the which we could not make Head nor Tail of. We now deem'd him utterly bereft of his Wits.

Taking him aboard our Shippe, we steered course for Massachusetts, wherein a House for the Derang'd might be found. Regrettably, he perish'd for want of Sustenance ere we could make Port . . .

. . . Making due Enquiries, I found Intelligence of the recent state of Affairs upon the Island of Nantocke. The fishing smack *Abraham and Sarah* had made Landfall at the Island in the month of June. The crew were most eager to tell their Stories, as every man in every Tavern in Boston had become thoroughly disgust'd at the hearing of them.

The *Abraham and Sarah* had made port on Nantocke with the intent of selling some Fish to get the werewithal to buy strong liquors. They describ'd the Town in the same terms as we had seen it.

The Inhabitants of the Island were undergoing many Privations. They made approach to purchase the Fish, but required that the Captain make affirmation that he had kill'd no Dolfijin in the course of his Endeavours, nor tak'n any Protected Species. In return, they Offer'd only printed papers, which they affirm'd were Money. When the Captain disdain'd them, some of the Inhabitants offer'd to bargain Hasheesh and Opium. They offer'd as well other Chymicals, which they declar'd raised the imber to great heights.

The Inhabitants were much given to long Towne-Meetings, wherein they all foregathered for the course of a Daye. The Topick discuss'd that Daye was that of Approach to the Natives. One Fisherman, who had oft dealt with the Indians, declar'd that the proper approach was with ready Arms, and preparation for bloody violence on their parte, they being renown'd for their Cruelty to all Strangers. He was denounc'd as a Race-ist and expell'd from the Assembly.

The Womenfolk were, the Fishermen said, most immodest of Person. There were no Children to be seen. The Womenfolk who were willing to speak thereof one and all declar'd that they were not ready to be so constrain'd.

The Fishermen noted that there were no fields of Corn of any kind, no Cattle of any sort, and that none of the Boats in Port were rigg'd for Fishing. Their Enquiries were received with notice that they could not devise any means that would spare the Dolfijns.

Sunday, the Fishermen desir'd to attend Divine Service. The Service was presid'd o'er

by a Woman, who was address'd as Priest. There were neither Hymns nor Bible Readings, the Woman-Priest deliver'd a Homily on the need to ban New Clear Weapons, the which none of the Fishermen quite comprehend'd, but which seem'd to be able to burn all down.

The Fishermen were most reliev'd that we did not Scorn their Tales entire, but upon being inform'd that we ourselves had been to Nantocke, were quite pleas'd at the Confirmation.

I do not make any Recommendation, but do Submit that a larger Shippe be dispatch'd to Nantocke forthwith to secure the things to be found there, lest the Dutchmen make landfall first . . .

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Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major  
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major  
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph, Major, Lisa

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

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

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## ALEXIAD

c/o Lisa & Joseph Major  
1409 Christy Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA

[jtmajor@iglou.com](mailto:jtmajor@iglou.com)

<http://efanzines.com/Alexiad/index.htm>