

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΕΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

This year marked the 16th anniversary of 9/11. I spent a few minutes remembering that day. The call from Joe telling me to turn the TV on and the horrors broadcast that day.

China is planning a Mars probe for 2020. It promises to be interesting. It is to be hoped they share whatever they learn with the rest of the world. I wish them well because I am glad someone is doing this. I wish this was an American exploration but if the future of space exploration is to be Chinese, it will at least be a future of space exploration.

Coworker N is quite an artist. When I admired her work she told me she was starting an adult coloring group and invited me to join. I accepted the invitation and went to the first session. I made the mistake of bringing crayons instead of the proper coloring pencils and gel pens. Fortunately there were proper supplies available. Until I got involved I did not realize how big this thing was. There were all kinds of supplies for purchase. There were many free pages available to print and work on.

— Lisa

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The 92nd Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 5, 2017** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Perfect Spirit won after the disqualification of What the Hill for interference.

The 63rd Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **September 2, 2017** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Top Flight Angel won, with new Harness Racing Hall of Fame inductee Brian Sears driving.

The 125th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **October 8, 2017** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Snowstorm Hanover won over Devious Man in the rain.

The 63rd Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **August 5, 2017** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Game Huntsville won by a neck.

The 62nd Running of the Messenger Stakes (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 2, 2017** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. DownBytheSeaside won with new Harness Racing Hall of Fame inductee Brian Sears driving.

The 72nd Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 21, 2017** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio. Filibuster Hanover won in 1:50 flat, after finishing a close second to Fear the Dragon in the elimination race. DownBytheSeaside finished well back.

The 2017 **Breeder's Cup World Championships** will be **November 3-4, 2017** at Del Mar Racetrack in San Diego, California.

Lisa's Birthday is **October 30, 2017**.

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Deadline is **December 1, 2017**

## Reviewer's Notes

I have been in the hospital with a blood infection. It was not pleasant. I seem to be recovering, though.

But so many of our sort have been unwell. Or worse, as with Milt Stevens, who will be greatly missed. And none are rising up to replace us. Even in general; conventions are having fewer and fewer book dealers. Never mind that the books they do sell are drifting away from my tastes.

There's a lot out there, but finding it is the problem. I publish my books, but I seem to be a rare and specific taste. I am grateful to those who have enjoyed my writings. I have some more stories in process, but as always there are delays.

— 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.

*The Dreamland Chronicles* (Volume 1 was reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #5) has finished its run. Over the past few years there have been many adventures, some even in the strip itself. For example, the tech who set up the 3-D computer animation fell out of touch and then the system suffered an updating failure, so Scott Sava had to go back to drawing the strip by hand.

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

Rapper BoB has started a GoFundMe page to get funding for his proposal to launch an independently controlled satellite which will provide proof that the Earth is flat.

How absurd. If the Earth were flat, cats would have pushed everything off the edge long ago.

## OBITS

We have lost **Brian Aldiss**, one of the grand masters of the sixties (and before and after), who died on **August 20, 2017**. Brian Wilson Aldiss, OBE was born August 18, 1925. After service in the Royal Signals, he became a bookseller in Oxford, beginning to publish SF in 1954. He was active in a number of venues in the field, being not only a writer (author of *Hothouse* (1961; Best Novel Hugo 1962), the *Helliconia* Trilogy, and "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long"), but an anthologist, and a nonfiction writer (*Trillion Year Spree* (1986, Best Related Work Hugo 1987)).

In a sad afterword to *Dragon\*Con*, far-flung writer **Jerry Pournelle** went home, got a cold and flu, and then died abruptly on **September 8, 2017**. Born August 7, 1933, Pournelle had been a writer on political

events, a mil-SF novelist, and President of what was then the Science Fiction Writers of America. He was best known for *The Mote In God's Eye* (1974), co-authored with Larry Niven. And oh yes, he was a Korean War vet.

Science Fiction publisher **Hugh M. Hefner** died **September 27, 2017** at the remarkable age of 91. His flagship magazine serialized Ray Bradbury's pro-literacy work *Fahrenheit 451*. It ran stories by an outstanding number of famous SF writers, including Clarke, Ballard, Pohl, and too many others to list, though LeGuin must be mentioned.

(What do you mean, people read the magazine for other things?)

Long time contributor **Milt Stevens** died **October 2, 2017**. He was born November 16, 1942. He was co-con-chair of LACON II, the 1984 Worldcon, and a long-time conrunner. He published a number of apazines and contributed to many fanzines, including this one.

by Lisa

The roly polies continue to thrive. Their population has increased to 52. They enjoy moisture but do not like it when water from the spray bottle actually falls on them. They either curl into little balls or run for shelter.

Lately it seems that every Sunday some little critter finds its way into the church. First there was a spider, then a cricket. It was not hard to coax the spider onto a piece of paper and remove it. The cricket was much less cooperative. It insisted on jumping away. I finally forced it out the door. The third critter was easiest of all to deal with. It was a caterpillar. I needed only to pick it up and carry it out.

There is an interesting book at the library titled *Weird Hauntings*. It made me curious as to what exactly a normal haunting was. I asked the reference librarians. They did not know either. I am condemned to remain in ignorance as to what a normal haunting is.

I have read some complaints about *Dunkirk*, most dealing with the fact that Churchill was ignored, except for soldiers reading a speech of his at the very end. My response—suck it up, buttercup. The movie wasn't about Churchill, it was about *Dunkirk*. If someone at least tries to make an actual historical movie they deserve at least some praise for doing so. Given the trivial nature of a lot of movies lately I would even give someone a bit of a break on historical accuracy. After all, it is not that hard to find real history at libraries and perhaps the movie will inspire some to seek out material on the actual history.

Over my shoulder here I can hear the big Canada geese heading south. There are about two hundred fewer this year. A neighboring

community had about two hundred slaughtered after one of them attacked and chased a police officer. I suppose if they were attacking people this community had little real choice. And yet I have regret for the slaughter of these magnificent birds. I understand that it was necessary but I wish it had not been so.

## HELP ROSY

Nita Green, Rose-Marie Lillian's mother, passed away in April 2015. Her intent, as stated in her will, was to have her only daughter inherit a logical percentage of her worldly goods. In person Rose-Marie was promised Nita's collection of original paintings by Frank Kelly Freas, a renowned artist and long-time personal friend of them both. Rose-Marie lived with and cared for her mother and stepfather for the last two years of her mother's life. Since Nita's death, she has been denied her inheritance, despite the stated wishes of her mother and an agreement made at a legal deposition in December, 2016. She has no recourse but to sue. Though her husband is an attorney, he is licensed only in another state and Rosy's cause of action is in Florida. All attorneys rightly require retainers before beginning representation and have every right to be paid. Rose-Marie turns to you for help. The retainer required will fall between \$5000 and \$7500. She also has past legal bills incurred in this matter to cover, and future expenses to bear. Funds are needed as soon as possible to move this long-delayed case forward, and to help bring Nita Green's last wishes for her daughter to reality. Meticulous accounting of all donations will be kept and a strict account of expenditures supplied. CAN YOU HELP? Rose-Marie will be forever in your debt.

<https://www.gofundme.com/save-rosys-inheritance>

## THEN YOU FLEW YOUR LEAR JET UP TO NOVA SCOTIA

Commentary by Joseph T Major

"Great men of the Kukuanas, and thou, Infadoos, listen. We are not fond of showing our powers, since to do so is to interfere with the course of nature, and plunge the world into fear and confusion; but as this matter is a great one, and as we are angered against the king because of the slaughter we have seen, and because of the act of the Isanusi Gagool, who would have put our friend Ignosi to death, we have determined to do so, and to give such a sign as all men may see. Come thither," and I led them to the door of the hut and pointed to the fiery ball of the rising sun; "what see ye there?"

"We see the rising sun," answered the spokesman of the party.

"It is so. Now tell me, can any mortal man put out that sun, so that

night comes down on the land at midday?"

The chief laughed a little. "No, my lord, that no man can do. The sun is stronger than man who looks on him."

"Ye say so. Yet I tell you that this day, one hour after midday, will we put out that sun for a space of an hour, and darkness shall cover the earth, and it shall be for a sign that we are indeed men of honor, and that Ignosi is indeed king of the Kukuanas. If we do this thing will it satisfy ye?"

"Yea, my lords," answered the old chief with a smile, which was reflected on the faces of his companions; "if ye do this thing we will be satisfied indeed."

"It shall be done: we three, Incubu the Elephant, Bougwan the clear-eyed, and Macumazahn, who watches in the night, have said it, and it shall be done. Dost thou hear, Infadoos?"

"I hear, my lord, but it is a wonderful thing that ye promise, to put out the sun, the father of all things, who shines forever."

"Yet shall we do it, Infadoos."

— Sir H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

Somebody told Haggard that the longest totality of a solar eclipse is about seven minutes. Also, it was good luck that Sir Henry, Captain Good, and Hunter Quatermain were in the path of totality. So he changed the eclipse to a lunar one in later editions, which is more realistic but less dramatic.

On **July 20, 1963**, there was a total eclipse. This eclipse was in Saros 145, which began on January 4, 1649 and will end on April 17, 3009. The maximum totality was 100 seconds, visible at 61° 42' N. 119° 42' West, in the Northwest Territory of Canada.

The track passed through Maine. My aunt Mary Katherine was then a clerk with the state government, and she knew of my interests. She sent me the various publications the state government had issued on the eclipse.

Others noted it; Stephen King mentions that eclipse in a couple of his novels, and Charles Schultz had a story arc about it in *Peanuts*, with Linus becoming something of a bore warning everyone about looking at the sun, and ending up standing in the rain with a cardboard pinhole viewer gradually disintegrating.

The last non-partial eclipse seen in Hopkinsville was an annular eclipse on **October 19, 1865** with a duration of 5 minutes 44 seconds, part of Saros 141, which began on May 19, 1613 and will end on June 13, 2857. The last total eclipse seen there was on **July 29, 1478**, with a duration of 2 minutes 17 seconds, part of Saros 127, which began on

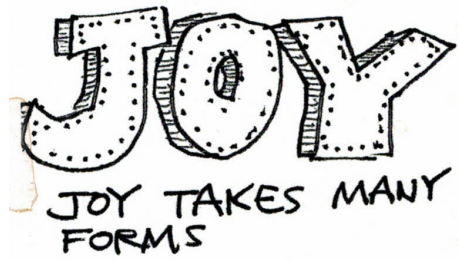
October 10, 991 and will end on March 21, 2452. The Cherokee did not think to record this with pictographs of the sun being eaten by the Great Sky Turtle or whatever.

This eclipse was part of Saros 145, which began January 4, 1649 and will end April 17, 3009. The previous eclipse in this saros was on August 11, 1999 (see "Scenes from an Eclipse" by Alison Scott in *Plokta V. 4 #3 WN 015*, August 1999; available on plokta.com); the next will be September 2, 2035.

I made better preparations than Linus. I got in touch with my cousin John Metcalfe Major, who has a florists' greenhouse complex north of Hopkinsville, very close to the point of maximum totality. He was very agreeable.

I also ordered eclipse glasses from Amazon.com. The ones I got weren't CE and ISO certified, and Amazon said they would give me a refund.

Then, the rest of our problems were solved. Dave Herrington wanted to see the eclipse, driving down from Shelbyville, Indiana. He also had **certified** eclipse glasses. We quickly came to an agreement. I also stocked up on water and soft drinks.



It would have to be a day trip. Every motel room in Hopkinsville had been booked a year ago. They were going for \$399 a night, three nights stay minimum. So it would have to be a drive, and Dave would drive.

He drove down Sunday, August 19. Not without problems, for he was held up by a five-car accident on I-65. And he had to go around to I-64, or pay a \$4 toll. He was very tired by the time he got in, so we ate dinner at the Molly Malone's on Bardstown Road near our house, and I told him about the lives of our associates.

I had set the alarm for 5 a.m. Monday, but slept erratically and got up before that. We cleaned up, organized our electronic gear, packed the water and drinks, and by then Dave called saying he was outside, so we were off very quickly. We ended up having breakfast at the Pilot truck stop north of Elizabethtown, where the gas prices were lower.

In fact, the traffic to Hopkinsville was comparatively light. There had been dire threats of bumper-to-bumper cars driving down to Eclipseville, but those who wanted to watch seemed mostly to have already come. There were mists on the fields along I-65, which looked quite striking.

In fact, we got to Metcalfe Florists about

two hours before first contact was to begin. John was there, he welcomed us, and we tried to help out a little in unloading flowers before being politely dismissed.

That weekend was Little Green Men Day, the celebration of how Kentucky started the First Interstellar War. They had extended the weekend-long con a day, so people could see the eclipse. Mike Glyer had wanted to have a NASFiC in the eclipse path. Imagine, a Little Green Men Con. Maybe he should have talked to them.

For some technical explanation: The lunar shadow first touched the Earth's surface in the Pacific Ocean, at 15:46 Greenwich time. The first place on land where it was seen was at Lincoln City, Oregon, at 9:04 a.m. PDT. The last place where the eclipse was seen was Charleston, South Carolina, at 2:46 p.m. EDT. The eclipse path then passed into the Atlantic, and the lunar shadow ceased contact at 21:14 Greenwich time.

First Contact, when the moon begins to block the sun's light ("I glanced up at the sun, and, to my intense joy and relief, saw that we had made no mistake. On the edge of its brilliant surface was a faint rim of shadow." You'll go blind doing that, Quatermain) was at 11:57. Not having telescopes — Lisa's uncle Lacy had an elaborate telescopic setup, and my cousin Tom was down in the southern part of the county taking pictures — we couldn't at first notice anything. Yet in about ten minutes there was a definite shadow across the sun.

We went in and out. One of the advantages of having a place like that was that we didn't have to stay in the sunlight constantly. Even though the sun was being covered more and more, the air was still hot. The sunlight became visibly dimmer, but the Sun was still too bright to look at.

"The sun grows dark before your eyes; soon there will be night — ay, night in the noon-time. Ye have asked for a sign; it is given to ye. Grow dark, O sun! withdraw thy light, thou bright one; bring the proud heart to the dust, and eat up the world with shadows."

— Sir H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

There were people coming by; a bunch of them in a field next to the greenhouses, and a couple who sensibly lay down. After straining my neck looking straight up that seemed a good idea.

Even when there was only a tiny sliver of sunlight the Sun seemed as bright as ever. And then —

Darkness fell. There was a dark moon in the sky, a moon in the night sky with a golden crown of flames encompassing it. The temperature ceased to be a stifling Kentucky summer and suddenly became cool. The world

had turned upside down in one moment.

"Now, chiefs," I said, "we have given you the sign. If ye are satisfied, let us fly swiftly to the place ye spoke of. The charm cannot now be stopped. It will work for an hour. Let us take advantage of the darkness." . . . Before we reached the gate of the kraal the sun went out altogether.

— Sir H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

I did not see Bailly's Beads (the Sun shining between mountains on the terminator of the Moon) or shadow bands (darker areas caused by differing diffusion of sunlight through the atmosphere). The perfectly natural and incredibly different scene persisted — for two minutes and forty seconds.

Then third contact passed and I saw the diamond ring — on the trailing side of the Moon. Darkness in the daytime was over.

After a few minutes Dave said that perhaps we should leave. He had another appointment, to help his mother.

We found out where the traffic had gone. *Everyone* had the same idea, and all the streets and road were packed. We ended up going up US-41, which runs through Kelly (see above about Little Green Men) before finally getting on the parkway.

There were several traffic jams along the way. We finally got off at Beaver Dam to eat, and the Wendy's was the only place that did not have an abominable wait. We were eating late as it was.

It was unexpected that I-65, which is a byword for traffic jams, had no more than normal traffic. Then we got home, but poor Dave had to go on further into Kentucky.

I later found out that R-Larraine Tutihasi and Mike Weasner weren't that far away, watching the eclipse from the grounds of Hopkinsville Community College. That was separated from us by US-41, which as I said was bumper to bumper.

The official estimate of visitors has been issued: 116,500. This was not as large as had been speculated but it is about four times the local population.

Would I do it again?

The next total eclipse visible in the United States will be on **April 8, 2024**. The path of totality runs through Texas [John Purcell, take note], Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The maximum totality will be in Nazas, Durango, México, and will be 4 minutes 28 seconds. This eclipse is part of Saros 139, which began May 17, 1501 and will end July 3, 2763. The track crosses the track of this eclipse in Makanda Township, Illinois.

The next total eclipse visible from Hopkinsville will be on **July 22, 2772**. The

length of totality will be 2 minutes 14 seconds. The maximum totality for this eclipse will be 2 minutes 27 seconds, at 32° 24' N, 76° 42' W, off the coast of South Carolina. The eclipse path will pass through California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. This eclipse is part of Saros 158, which will begin May 20, 2069 and end June 16, 3313.

The guys at Jno. Pfitzner had better get cracking on that anti-agathic research.

Time out: 6:02 a.m.

Time in: 2.49 a.m.

Weather: Hot, some clouds.

Books read: *The Lesser of Two Evils*, by John H. Minter  
*The Fireflies of Port Stanley*, by Marc H. Jones  
*The Roman Empire and the Indian Ocean*, by Raoul McLaughlin

The Jones was good AH, the Minter less so. As for *The Roman Empire and the Indian Ocean*, the book was actually a history of Roman trade, focusing on the East, but describing Roman contacts with the cultures of India, East Africa, Serendip, the Malay Peninsula, and even China.

### YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

There will be **three** solar eclipses in 2018. The first will be **February 15**, a partial eclipse visible over most of Antarctica, and in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the Falkland Islands. The greatest extent will be at 71° S, 0° 36' E, in Dronning Maud Land. The eclipse is part of Saros 150, which began August 24, 1729 and will end September 29, 2991.

The next eclipse will be **July 13**, a partial eclipse visible on the coast of Wilkes Land in Antarctica, in the Australian states of South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania, and the Southland Region of New Zealand. The greatest extent will be at 67° 51' S, 127° 24' E in Wilkes Land. The eclipse is part of Saros 117, which began June 24, 792 and will end August 3, 2054.

Finally, there will be an eclipse on **August 11**, a partial eclipse visible in Newfoundland, Greenland, and Siberia. The greatest extent will be at 70° 24' N, 174° 30' E, off the coast of Russia near Wrangel Island. The eclipse is part of Saros 155, which began June 17, 1928 and will end July 24, 3190.

The next total solar eclipse will be on **June 2, 2019**, visible across the South Pacific and in Chile and Argentina. The longest totality will be 4 minutes 33 seconds, at sea at 17° 24' S, 109° W. The eclipse is part of Saros 127, which began on October 10, 991 and will end on March 21, 2452.

NASA Eclipse website:

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

Other useful eclipse websites:

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

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

### DOWNFALL

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR:**  
*A Novel of Alternative History*

by Joseph Wurtenbaugh  
 (2017; Amazon Digital Services; \$7.99)



YouTube editors of various types have had a great success in distributing what is called "Hitler Rants", adding different humorous subtitles to a particular movie scene. The movie *Downfall* [*Der Untergang*] (2004) has a scene where Hitler (Bruno Ganz) is informed that SS General Steiner's army will be unable to relieve Berlin. Hitler's response to this news is to launch into an epic tantrum, throwing things, cursing his subordinates, and screaming that he had been betrayed.

This was not the first time he had done so.

The book is a collection of messages and selections from (entirely fictional) memoirs and histories. One can tell that there is a big difference on the second page, where there is a quote from *My Name Is Ike — Reflections on Fifty Years of Service as Soldier and Statesman* (1986) by Senator Dwight D. Eisenhower. Not to mention the aggressively pro-Hitler memoir of one Harald Quandt (Magda Goebbels's son by her first marriage). But the principal focus of the narrative is a diary kept by a young Bavarian *Adelmann* named Karl von Haydenreich.

The young life of von Haydenreich was particularly tragic. His mother died when he was an infant. His uncle was killed in the trenches. And his father (who was hated by his grandfather for the temerity of having *dared* to restore the family's finances) also died young. Not to mention his stepmother, who was, horror of horrors, Jewish.

Once he became able to get around, von Haydenreich did something that sounds incredibly out of context and of class; he became an ardent Nazi, at the age of twelve.

Just in time to see the Beer Hall Putsch, and see Hitler fleeing.

His subsequent life was exotic; going to an English boarding school, somehow coming out not homosexual, meeting a young British activist of a rather outré political attitude — no not Communist, Imperialist! — and developing his musical talent.

Then he had to go back home. He had connections, and managed to get into the *Reichswehr*. Much to Robert Heinlein's disappointment, von Haydenreich describes his career in the ranks as an officer candidate. (I refer, of course, to the claim in *Starship Troopers* (1959; NHOL G.149) that uniquely for a military "every [officer] candidate must be a trained trooper, blooded under fire, a veteran of combat drops". Unless there will be a constant state of war, the Mobile Infantry is going to run out of officers and have to lower its standards.)

Meanwhile, Germany continues its slow downfall. Hitler gets into power. By some ill omen, von Haydenreich gets to see the arrest of Ernst Röhm and his commanders, and is torn between disgust for their personal lives and disgust at the illegality of their trials.

He has been approached by the former chief of the *Truppenamt*, *Generaloberst* Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord. The general is getting information on the Führer's military buildup and things some other people would be interested to know. As it happens, von Haydenreich has a potentially helpful foreign contact.

It seems that Major Eisenhower had met von Haydenreich's father, and having a mind to the shortness of life and abruptness of death, *Vati* asked the friendly *Ami* to be his son Kurt's godfather, overseeing his estate. (His own father and in-laws weren't the most suited.) Ike has done this well, and continued an interest in the young man.

But he fell afoul of Douglas MacArthur during the Bonus Army march, and with little enough hope for an army career, got himself posted as US Army Military Attaché to Berlin. This enables him to meet Kurt every now and then — and pass on information. (The SIS officer in the British Embassy seems a little torpid; C [Sir Hugh "Quex" Sinclair] was probably Not Happy at this.)

Meanwhile the German military preparation begins. Part of this is the Reoccupation of the Rhineland — the Germans had been forbidden to station troops in the areas west of the Rhine river or fifty kilometers to the east of it. This was not to be endured.

But the reoccupation force was a joke. It was mostly police, and soldiers without heavy arms. **And they had orders to withdraw if they met any resistance.**

This is one of the things that gets passed on to the British. Here we have relevant comments from the memoirs of higher officials; those of Stanley Baldwin and of various French officials — along with A. A.

Milne, who was a member of something called the Peace Ballot, utterly opposed to any sort of aggressive moves. Oh Pooh.

The British can back it up. But the French have to send in the troops. And with many trepidations and outright dislikes on both sides they send in a armored column under the command of France's armored expert — yes, Charles de Gaulle.

Sure enough, the Germans withdraw. Except the Führer vacillates, and one German officer is wounded. In the spirit of conciliation de Gaulle has the man tended to. This causes problems.

Pause for a Hitler Rant.

Fortunately the Gestapo is not asleep and quickly pins the leak on von Haydenreich, who is brought down for some aggressive questioning. But the Gestapo is so focused on this that they don't even seem to notice that von Hammerstein-Equord is mobilizing for a coup.

And it happens, with a dramatic ending — too late for von Haydenreich. Though his comment to Heydrich is particularly wounding.

There are a lot of editing errors in this. For example, von Hammerstein-Equord and his unwilling collaborator the *Reichswehrminister* Werner von Blomberg (the „*Rubberlöwe*“ [“Rubber Lion”]) were not *Generalmajor*, they were *Generaloberst*. Karl von Haydenrich's stepmother was from a German-Jewish family (actually it's even more complicated that that, and how they didn't know is a wonder) and would be unlikely to speak Yiddish. Worst of all, Hitler's first name is given throughout the book as „Adolph“. *Nein! Nein! Nein!* „*Adolf!*“

There were so many times when Hitler could have been stopped, so many times when the world could have been changed for the better, that we have the proof that Leibnitz was wrong, that the hideous misfortunes that Dr. Pangloss endures, cheerfully burbling all the while that “this is the best of all possible worlds”, are more realistic, and could be better.

## ZURÜCK IN DIE ZUKUNFT

Review by Joseph T Major of  
„Erkennt Gefahren, bevor sie entstehen.“

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI4Kr1PSwtQ>

There is still mist rising over the fields. People are out gathering crops. An old woman is peeling potatoes. Some workmen are building a house.

They all look up. Others as well stare; a man with a horse, a child peeping through a hole in a wooden fence. A Mercedes-Benz comes rolling into town.

But it stops; a red warning light flashes on the dashboard. Two bemused girls were standing in the road; Mother, looking somewhat startled, shoos them away and the car starts off again.

A little dark-haired boy comes running

along, flying a kite. An older woman, presumably his mother, looks up from her laundry and smiles indulgently.

The boy stops in the road. The car roars up — there is a dreadful *thunk!*, a brief flash of another evilly familiar face, and then we see a bird flying away.

The mother sees, too. She drops her laundry basket and comes running, saying painfully, „*Adolf?*“

The car roars away, past a sign that says:

## Branau am Inn

The screen fades to black and other words appear:

Erkennt Gefahren, bevor sie entstehen.

In English:

Detects dangers before they come up.

Mother screams „*ADOLF!*“ again, and we see the boy lying on the ground, his arms and legs in the shape of a swastika.

This was submitted as an art project, and the makers repeat time and again that there is no connection to Mercedes or its manufacturer, Daimler-Benz AG.

(I guess Doc Brown stripped the flux generator and the Mr. Fusion out of the DeLorean and sold it for enough money to get a Mercedes-Benz.)

## HOUSE OF CARDS

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

**WINSTON'S WAR:**

*A Novel of Conspiracy*

by Michael Dobbs

(2002; HarperCollins;

ISBN 9780002254144; 2009;

Sourcebooks Landmark (Kindle); \$9.99)

Lord Dobbs of Wylde knows the political system from the inside. He was an advisor to Margaret Thatcher (C - Finchley) and was the Conservative Party Chief of Staff, then Deputy Chairman of the party under Prime Minister John Ball (C - Huntingdon).

This is why his trio of books on the career of Francis Urquhart (C - New Forest), the man who knows every secret in politics, and isn't afraid to use them, the “House of Cards” Trilogy *House of Cards* (1989), *To Play the King* (1992), and *The Final Cut* (1994), the basis of the BBC series (1990-1995) and the Netflix series (2013-present), was so plausible. He knew the score.

After F.U. met his finale, Dobbs decided to go into the real thing. Hence this book. He is not to be confused with Michael Dobbs, the American reporter who wrote *Down With Big Brother: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (1997).

To those who have read Lynne Olson's



*Troublesome Young Men* (2007; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 6 #4) the brutal struggle of the Tory bosses to deny reality and remain in power will be familiar. Dobbs lays out the double-dealing, cheating, and viciousness with which this process is accomplished.

But there are the “little people”, such as the poor crippled barber who sees powerful men at their most vulnerable. His story is gripping, and tragic.

And one man who was not a Tory leader and not so little. This is our favourite sottish sodomitic Soviet slob, Guy Francis de Monecy “MADCHEN” Burgess, busy passing secret information to the State Security when not pursuing available young men. And yet, urging Churchill to speak out against the Munich pact. We all know how that could have come out: *The Oster Conspiracy of 1938: The Unknown Story of the Military Plot to Kill Hitler and Avert World War II* by Terry Parssinen (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #4).

Ably defended by his loyal subordinates Sir Horace Wilson and Sir Joseph Ball of the Home Civil Service, Neville Chamberlain (C - Birmingham Edgbaston) struggles to overcome the inordinate fear of Naziism. If that involves getting Winston winkled out of his parliamentary seat (C - Epping), well he was such a bother.

In spite of all Neville and his acolytes can do, war breaks out. And he does as little as possible, until the Norway Campaign. Which as you will remember was an unmitigated disaster for the British, unless you happened to be in the *Kriegsmarine*, in which case it was an unmitigated disaster for the fleet.

What ensues is a scene of terrifyingly high drama, which has as its only excuse that it was real. The Norway Debate was one of the greatest events in Parliamentary history, producing some of the most striking public speeches ever. Opening the debate, Chamberlain defended what they had done, to criticism from the other party leaders Clement Attlee (Lab - Limehouse) and Sir Archibald Sinclair (L - Caithness and Sutherland).

Then the first Conservative critic spoke up. If you thought Ollie North in uniform testifying before the Iran-Contra Committee looked striking, Sir Roger Keyes, Admiral of the Fleet, Hero of Zeebrugge (C - Portsmouth North) could have blown North away with one tiny puff. Yes he was in full uniform, with stripes up to his elbow, medal ribbons to the shoulder, and he let the government have it. Referring to two heroes of the campaign, and one of history, he ended by saying:

There are hundreds of young officers who are waiting eagerly to seize Warburton-Lee's torch, or emulate the deeds of Vian of the *Cossack*. One hundred and forty years ago, Nelson said, 'I am of the opinion that the boldest measures are the safest,' and that still holds good to-day.

This was followed by Churchill's associate Leo Amery (C - Birmingham Sparkbrook), who was even more critical of all the missteps and lack of planning, the errors and the indolences. His climax was the first wound on Chamberlain's calm:

Somehow or other we must get into the Government men who can match our enemies in fighting spirit, in daring, in resolution and in thirst for victory. Some 300 years ago, when this House found that its troops were being beaten again and again by the dash and daring of the Cavaliers, by Prince Rupert's Cavalry, Oliver Cromwell spoke to John Hampden. In one of his speeches he recounted what he said. It was this: 'I said to him, "Your troops are most of them old, decayed, serving men and tapsters and such kind of fellows ... You must get men of a spirit that are likely to go as far as they will go, or you will be beaten still."' It may not be easy to find these men. They can be found only by trial and by ruthlessly discarding all who fail and have their failings discovered. We are fighting to-day for our life, for our liberty, for our all; we cannot go on being led as we are. I have quoted certain words of Oliver Cromwell. I will quote certain other words. I do it with great reluctance, because I am speaking of those who are old friends and associates of mine, but they are words which, I think, are applicable to the present situation. This is what Cromwell said to the Long Parliament when he thought it was no longer fit to conduct the affairs of the nation: '*You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you! In the name of God — go!*'

This was not *done*. Chamberlain made it clear that the resulting vote would be by party orders. '... I have friends in the House. ... I call on my friends to support us in the Lobby to-night.'

There was in the House a man who had been there and done that. He had been known as being not particularly keen on the war, but for some reason that particular turn of phrase set him off, and after a Labourite response, David Lloyd George (L - Caernarvon Boroughs), former Prime Minister, rose (had to be helped to stand) to reply. His words were both immortal and mortal:

Is there anyone in this House who will say that he is satisfied with the speed and efficiency of the preparations in any respect for air, for Army or for Navy? Everybody is disappointed. Everybody knows that whatever was done was done half-heartedly, ineffectively, without drive and

unintelligently. For three to four years I thought to myself that the facts with regard to Germany were exaggerated by the First Lord, because the then Prime Minister — not this Prime Minister — said that they were not true. The First Lord, Mr Churchill, was right about it. Then came the war. The tempo was hardly speeded up. There was the same leisureliness and inefficiency. Will anybody tell me that he is satisfied with what we have done about aeroplanes, tanks, guns, especially anti-aircraft guns? Is *anybody* satisfied with the steps we took to train an Army to use them? Nobody is satisfied. The whole world knows that. And here we are in the worst strategic position in which this country has ever been placed. . .

I was not here when the right hon. Gentleman made the observation, but he definitely appealed on a question which is a great national, Imperial and world issue. He said, 'I have got my friends.' It is not a question of who are the Prime Minister's *friends*. It is a far bigger issue. The Prime Minister must remember that he has met this formidable foe of ours in peace and in war. He has always been worsted. He is not in a position to put it on the ground of *friendship*. He has appealed for sacrifice. The nation is prepared for every sacrifice so long as it has *leadership*, as long as the Government show clearly what they are aiming at and so long as the nation is confident that those who are leading it are doing their best. I say solemnly that the Prime Minister should give an example of sacrifice, because there is nothing which can contribute more to victory in this war than that he should sacrifice his seals of office.

Dobbs had some very striking collaborators. Yes, every word in these speeches was said in the House of Commons in that debate.

In spite of everything Chamberlain thinks he can still hold on. He did not lose the motion, even though far too many members of the coalition sat the vote out, and Sir Roger Keyes led almost every serving soldier to vote against him. It seems to be the end. The choice is between the Holy Fox, Edward Wood, Viscount Halifax (who compared Hitler to Gandhi, as Hitler had once said to him, "Shoot Gandhi."), and if you've ever read Gandhi's letter to Hitler you might feel some sympathy; so much for "The Last Article" [*F&SF*, January, 1988]), and *him*. Halifax demurs, which doesn't leave much choice. Nevertheless, Chamberlain persisted.

The beginning of the book recounts the incident where Guy Burgess asked Churchill for a copy of one of his books. Now Burgess has returned it, with some additions. Churchill

might be in trouble, having attempted to buy guns for the rifle-short British Army from the Germans via the Netherlands, before the invasion (see above the comment about “leisureliness and inefficiency”). What Burgess found out . . .

It seems simple enough. There were two papers stuck in the book. One is a listing of a holding company’s holdings in various German arms manufacturers. The other lists who owns the company — Horace Wilson and Joseph Ball.

Churchill passes these to Chamberlain and begins an effusive speech about how they all appreciated him and admired his judgement about when to step down.

Ruined, Chamberlain left the Prime Ministership, and soon died of the cancer that had been plaguing him. Wilson and Ball were unceremoniously fired. Burgess, of course, went on to more drink and such, and ended up discovering the Soviet Union wasn’t such a gay paradise after all.

### A MORAL PROBLEM

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**DEATH ON DELOS**

by Gary Corby  
“An Athenian Mystery”  
(2017; Soho Crime;

ISBN 978-1616958213; \$26.95;  
Penguin Random House Publisher Services;  
(Kindle); \$14.99)

Pericles the Strategos of Athens has had an idea. The treasury of the Delian League is on the island of Delos (doh!). Anybody, like say the Spartans or Persians, could bring up a few ships and steal it. Therefore, he thinks that the treasury should be someplace safer, like say Athens. So when he brings the annual tribute, he also brings a large escort, like fifty triremes, enough to remove the gold.

And there is opposition. However, it seems that the assistant to the High Priest knows everyone and can do anything, so Pericles sends out his reliable assistant, Nicolaos son of Sophroniscus [whose annoying kid brother is now doing his army service], to bribe the man. Bribe taken.

Except, in the morning, it turns out that the fixer has been murdered.

To investigate this dire crime, the Delians fix on the priestess of Artemis who was selected by the Athenian temple of Artemis to escort their gift, Diotima (who just happens to be Nicolaos’s wife). Except that she is so pregnant she could deliver at any moment.

Oh, and there are two things that are absolutely forbidden on Delos. That a life should begin, and that a life should end. Oops.

In this latest tale of Nicolaos and Diotima, they delve into religious matters, the support structure for religious matters (like why was only one gate on the entire island oiled, and with extra-virgin olive oil at that), strange history (these days Swedish tourists visit

Delos, which seems to be history repeating itself), how to store money safely (which requires that bizarre new innovation the *key*), and other trivial yet important items of Hellenic society and mores. It’s quite an accomplishment.

There are all sorts of sneaky, covert, and inadmissible events on the sacred island, and the matter has to be resolved quickly for two reasons, the other being that since there was a murder there *everything* has to be ritually purified. Not to mention a rather annoying interruption where one of Pericles’s concerns is realized. And when Diotima gives the Compulsory Revelation to All the Suspects, she has a little extra problem . . .

The past is a different world, and yet this different world did so much to make ours. Corby has again limned it in informative and insightful detail for our pleasure and instruction. XAIPE!

### SCHOOL DAYS

Commentary on

JL8

Drawn by Yale Stewart

<http://jl8comic.tumblr.com/post/13372482444/jl8-1-by-yale-stewart-based-on-characters-in-dc>

<http://limbero.org/jl8/1>

It’s morning. Gentleman’s gentleman Alfred Pennyworth deals with his employer’s refusal to disembark the limo. “I can’t go in there wearing these clothes!” Bruce Wayne says, concerned about fashion. Finally he exits the vehicle — in his Batman outfit.

Oh, did I mention that he is eight years old?

Walking slowly to school, he encounters his best friend, Clark Kent — somewhat separated from the Smallville farm, and oh yes in his Superman outfit. And yes, eight.

They’re in Mr. Schwartz’s second-grade class at school. With Barry Allen [Flash], Hal Jordan [Green Lantern], Diana Prince [Wonder Woman], and Karen Starr [Power Girl], all appropriately clad. Mr. Schwartz introduces a new visiting exchange student, a shy boy in suit and tie — bald, entirely green, with great orange patches for eyes. J’onn J’onzz, from Mars, that is. “That is SO COOL!” Hal bellows.

As you can see, this is mainly Silver Age. There are some exceptions (i.e., Power Girl) and adaptations, but for those of us who are somewhat middle-aged, these are the DC characters we grew up with.

They have funny adventures, and serious ones. And Stewart is respectful to the history. For example, Clark has been down in the sewers with a girl who has been investigating. She gets angry with him when he won’t break down a door there. It’s not his property. Out of the sewer, they walk along the street, arguing. A driver driving by has a catastrophic accident; his front axle breaks, and in a final panel we see the girl looking at doom.

And in the next strip, we see a smiling Clark

holding up the car, his cape waving. If this seems familiar, it’s based on the cover of *Action Comics* #1, the comic that introduced Superman. (And yes, the girl is Lois Lane.)

Not to mention his takeoffs. For example, one strip shows Alfred cooking dinner. When it’s ready he steps over to a light switch and flicks it. Outside, Bruce is playing with the other kids. He looks up, and says that he has to go because his dinner is ready.

This was because, of course, the Bat-Signal had lit up the night.

And as for the current matter . . . Stewart wants to encourage reading. Thus one poster showing the class reading various books. And watching Clark float just above the ground, book in lap. Or another poster, where Bruce is reading a Calvin and Hobbes book, and laughs at that crazy cat. He is sitting at the top of a slide, and a girl in a cat outfit is sneaking up on him — yep, Selena Kyle [Catwoman] from the other class, the one with the little supervillains. And he’s done other Bruce-and-Selina posters.



### THE WORLD ICE

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**HITLER’S MONSTERS:**

*A Supernatural History of the Third Reich*

by Eric Kurlander

(2017; Yale University Press;  
ISBN 978-0300189452; \$35.00;  
Amazon Digital Services; \$16.99)

„Wenn Abenteurer ein Namen hat, muß es Indiana Jones sein! . . .“

Major Jones of the OSS sighed. Those had been the days of adventure and terror. Now, with the war done, he was sitting here in the archives of the *Ahnenerbe* reviewing the other perspective of his days and deeds. The file on René Belloq, for example, which ended, „Starb auf einer geheimen Mission für das Vaterland.“ If he had only let them take the Ark to Berlin, and destroy them all . . .

There are a large number of books on *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, 1985). They are usually issued by fringe publishers and are as much the author's imagination as anything else.

Now, we have a reputable work by a recognized scholar that was looked over by someone else before that was published. The results are strange and interesting.

Kurlander begins with a long discussion of occultism in pre-Nazi Germany. Any culture will have the mystics, the people who invent majestic cosmologies on the basis of tiny fragments of misunderstood events. One could argue that judging German culture by the weird little people who published books with sales figures in the high two digits hardly seems fair; as if one were to judge British culture on the basis that Gerald Gardner and Aleister Crowley were significant figures in society and thought.

These ideas flourished in a most toxic environment. After the catastrophic defeat in the World War, it was impossible to believe that German arms could not have been victorious. Therefore, for this inconceivable event to happen, there must have been some intervention.

Such a narrative ends up focusing on Hitler. He was not particularly or consistently pro- or anti-occultism; he would encourage some occult ideas, then turn on them with ridicule. One finding that Kurlander makes will be extremely disappointing; far from being Christian, Hitler was resolutely and thoroughly anti-Christian.

His subordinates followed, in their own ways. At different times Goebbels permitted and banned astrological magazines, for example.

But the big guy was Himmler. His occult beliefs were sustained by *organization*; or an organization, the *Ahnenerbe* ("Ancestral Ideas"). The Ahnenerbe sent expeditions to such key Aryan homelands as Tibet; see Christopher Hale's *Himmler's Crusade: The Nazi Expedition to Find the Origins of the Aryan Race* (2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 4 #4) and Heather Pringle's *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (2006; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 5 #5) for how that worked. Even when the bosses of the Ahnenerbe got into trouble they still were consulted for the latest developments.

Another research project, with a different organization and different ambit, was the *Hexen-Sonderauftrages*, "Special Task Force on Witches". There was a pervasive idea that the witchhunts had been provoked by Jews who wished to obliterate the Aryan race by destroying Aryan maidens. This is not the sort of blessed-be witch community of, say, *Lamas Night* (by Katherine Kurtz (1983, 1986)).

This eccentricity lapped over into formerly more sane organizations. The *Kriegsmarine*, for example, set up a staff to determine the locations of Allied convoys using pendulums.

They lacked the skills of Herr Professor Bienlein [French: «Tryphon Tournesol», English: «Cuthbert Calculus»] from the Adventures of Tintin. At least they gave up when it didn't seem to work.

One idea in particular seems to have been extremely pervasive. Hitler said, "I'm quite well inclined to accept the cosmic theories of Hörbiger," (*Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944*, Page 129) and indeed the *Welteislehre* was widespread, if not quite mandatory. Hermann Hörbiger's theory was a romantic, dramatic epic of moons of ice crashing down on Earth and sweeping away existing civilizations. It wasn't something Brad Linaweaver (*Moon of Ice* (1982, 1988)) or Cyril Kornbluth ("Two Dooms" (*Venture Science Fiction*, July 1958)) had invented.

As the structure tottered to its doom, the occults doubled down. Kurlander discusses the historical perspective on werewolves. The Nazis, not surprisingly, chose the positive, pro-Aryan one, a legend of supreme heroes who changed themselves to defend the defenseless. Particularly against vampires. The perspective they took on vampires was to identify them with their mortal enemy, World Jewry; bloodsuckers, perverts, exploiters. (That is, they were on Team Jacob, not Team Edward.)

Thus the Nazi guerilla organization, the *Wehrwolf*, was supposed to be the secret force that would strike back against the Judeovampiric occupiers. How they reconciled this with Hitler's final opinion that the Germans had proven themselves unworthy of his greatness and deserved to perish is a question left to the reader.

Kurlander may be overstating the effectiveness of the *Wehrwolf*. Given the pathetic efforts of Artur Axmann, last leader of the *Hitlerjugend*, to organize a resistance (see Scott Andrew Selby's *The Axmann Conspiracy: The Nazi Plan for a Fourth Reich and How the U.S. Army Defeated It* (2012; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #6) their effectiveness doesn't seem to have been very much.

To say that this work is very deeply researched doesn't half express it. The book is half footnotes! We can assume that Kurlander isn't just making things up.

## THE JOY OF HIGH TECH

by Rodford Edmiston

Being the occasionally interesting ramblings of a major-league technophile.

### Two For One

The idea of having a sidearm and longarm in the same caliber goes back centuries. During muzzleloading days, simply having a pistol in your belt with the same bore size as your rifle greatly simplified your ammunition supply, since you only needed to carry one size bullet. Just remember to use less black powder in your pistol. While most people through most of history wanted a larger diameter bullet for their

handguns — which would increase effectiveness at the lower velocities produced by the shorter barrels — some military units were, indeed, equipped with rifles and handguns using the same bullet. So were some exploration expeditions. (Did you know that Lewis and Clark decided not to carry black powder, and instead used pneumatic rifles? But I digress...)

Come the age of cartridges and things were a bit different. These had factory-measured powder charges already inside, so a rifle and revolver combo both chambered for the same cartridge left you with either a revolver shooting a rifle load or a rifle shooting a handgun load. Most such combos used unusually potent (for the time and even today) revolver cartridges, such as .44-40 or .45 Colt. Besides ammunition commonality, the longer barrel of the rifle extracted more from the powder charge, resulting in a higher muzzle velocity for the same bullet weight. For most such combinations the rifle was also a carbine; or short, light, handy rifle. Lever action rifles were especially popular for such combinations. Full-sized rifles, with their longer barrels and heavier weights simply were not needed or appropriate for this application.

Even today there are advantages to such an arrangement. While not quite the same situation, the US military uses both the M16 assault rifle and the M4 carbine, the latter being a compact firearm even shorter than the carbine-size M16. It has basically replaced the submachine gun for troops fighting in tight quarters or doing house clearing. The shorter barrel of the M4 (14.5 inches) does not get as much performance from the 5.56 NATO cartridge as the M16 (with a standard barrel length of 20 inches), though it still produces significantly greater muzzle energy than typical submachine guns. A huge amount of work has been done to create loadings for the 5.56 cartridge which work adequately in both weapons. Even with the relatively small difference in barrel length between the two weapons this has not been easy. Note that the barrel of the M4 is so short it would be considered a short-barreled (or "sawed off") rifle by the BATFE and not legal in the US, even in a semi-auto civilian version. Though a semi-auto version with a longer barrel (16" is the legal limit for rifles by federal law) would be. This sort of thing has been done before.

The M4 is not the first time a shorter firearm chambering the 5.56 round has been tried. During the Vietnam war there was a semi-experimental, cut-down M16. Unfortunately, part of the advantage of the shorter barrel was lost due to needing a much longer flash hider than the standard rifle. (More on why this was needed below.)

Many companies still make both handguns and rifles — usually lever-action carbines — which feed the same cartridge. Sometimes these are manufactured in matched sets. Sometimes the companies are just making the same handguns and rifles in multiple calibers,



with some overlap, without them being specifically matched. Given modern bullet designs and powder formulations these are actually much more successful than such combinations were in the black powder days. As was true back then, these usually involve the more powerful handgun cartridges, though many such pairings are also made in .22 rimfire.

I have long had a Ruger revolver and a Marlin lever-action carbine both in .357 Magnum. While the primary goal is to be able to have them shoot the same loads, I also worked up a handload for the carbine to get the most out of that longer barrel. It uses a heavy bullet for the caliber in front of a near-maximum charge of slow-burning pistol powder. This can be fired in my Ruger Blackhawk (they're extraordinarily strong) but won't come anywhere near the potency the same load has from the Marlin. To illustrate why, I give an extreme example from personal experience.

I took some of these dedicated carbine-loaded cartridges — with the rifle — to a party on a farm which included some informal shooting. One of the other participants had brought a full-frame size but short-barreled .357 revolver. Even though I cautioned folks that these were my handloads and not factory ammunition, there was soon a line to shoot those cartridges in that gun as the sun went down, just to see the two-foot wide ball of fire come out the muzzle in the gathering twilight. That sizable flame occurring because the slow-burning pistol powder was not being completely consumed before the bullet left the muzzle.

Why do I have such a rifle/revolver combination? Pure nostalgia. This gives me a handgun and carbine in the same (though not historically valid until 1935) loading, as with my predecessors. I also have a traditional-style cartridge belt and holster for .357 Magnum, to go with these two guns. Though this rig is more for collector value than practical use I do sometimes bring the combo to the range. It always elicits favorable comments. The leather work on these is remarkable.

Overall, the revolver/lever-action carbine combination in .357 Magnum works quite well. Magnum cartridges typically have more powder than can be completely burned in most handgun barrel lengths, to get the high velocities such rounds are known for. The longer barrel of the carbine makes good use of this extra powder. (Shooting a pistol cartridge in a very long rifle barrel can actually result in a *reduced* muzzle velocity, at least over a carbine-length barrel. The pistol charge of powder just doesn't burn long enough to overcome the added drag of the longer bore. This is particularly true with the very popular .22 Long Rifle. Even though — as the name implies — it was designed for use in rifles.)

With similar bullet weights, a .357 Magnum cartridge at full factory pressure shot

from a carbine has ballistics very close to those of the .30 Carbine cartridge/rifle combination. While that is not by any definition a full-powered classic military rifle cartridge — looking puny even beside such medium-powered modern military cartridges as the 5.56 NATO — it is still potentially lethal out to 300 yards, as demonstrated in several wars. Note that it achieved these results with a full metal jacket bullet. With a jacketed hollowpoint or jacketed softpoint of modern design both the .357 and the .30 Carbine do far better. Though not for much further than that, due to both cartridges being designed for bullets which are not streamlined for long range use.

A more modern cartridge well suited for the combination of handgun and rifle is the .327 Federal. This is a relatively new cartridge which was developed in 2007. It is an ultra-high pressure cartridge meant strictly for modern, high strength handguns. Several revolvers have been chambered for it, but until this year no rifles. That has changed with the Henry Big Boy lever-action rifle in .327 Federal, which just came on the market as this is written.

From very early in its history, fans of the .327 noted that it would greatly benefit from a longer barrel than you can reasonably get with a revolver. There was precedent for making such a firearm, since the ballistics of the .327 are close to those of the .32-20 Winchester cartridge, which has been around since 1882. That was designed from the start as a light rifle cartridge for small to medium game; however, there were also handguns made for it. As there were for the .30 Carbine. Both rounds — being intended for rifles — made poor handgun ammunition. The slower-burning powder meant that — as with my .357 Magnum carbine load — much of the powder burned past the muzzle in a handgun. This produced a very unpleasant flash and bang. However, several handguns for both the .32-20 and .30 Carbine were made with thousands sold.

The .327 Federal started as a revolver cartridge, a lengthened and strengthened version of the .32 H&R Magnum, itself a round only developed in 1982. The main complaint about the .32 H&R was that it wasn't powerful enough. With the .327 that flaw is corrected. Also, as with the .357 Magnum, while it is meant for handgun use it benefits from a carbine-length barrel.

The Henry Big Boy is meant for cartridges of up to .44 Magnum, another modern cartridge popular for handgun/carbine combos. All variations of the rifle are very sturdy... and very heavy. Actually too heavy for the .327. However, for now it is the only factory rifle chambering that cartridge. That may change if it proves popular enough.

There has been talk for decades about finding a way to make a cartridge of variable "output" for the military to use in both assault rifles and handguns. There are theoretical ways to produce one cartridge which will get full use of a carbine-length barrel but not produce the flash and bang which normally results from

shooting a rifle cartridge in a handgun. So far there has been little practical result.

If someone does manage this very difficult task it would likely be eagerly adopted by at least some branches of the armed forces. At least, once the "I only trust stuff that's been used for decades" mindset is overcome. If that happens, it will greatly simplify ammunition supply for units so equipped.

### NorthAmeriCon

San Juan, July 6-9, 2017

Con Report by Taras Wolansky



The other day, I was looking at my program book from the 2017 NASFiC, NorthAmeriCon, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico last July. I found that I had taken a lot more notes than I thought I had, some of them even legible, and enough for something resembling a con report, at least.

The convention was held at a rather bedraggled and poorly run Sheraton, far from the restaurant district but right next to the (empty) convention center, which blocked the boasted view, such as it was, of the harbor. Speaking of "views", I stayed in rooms on both sides of the building, so I got an eyeful of what was on offer in that respect: construction, dozens of cars parked on grass; an expanse of dirt; some kind of industrial area with a gas storage sphere and large cranes.

In spite of the bedraggled and soggy surroundings, the hotel still charged a pretty penny. If I had looked into the matter at all, in advance of my trip, I would have stayed at some other hotel near the restaurant district and taken a cab in every day.

No dealers room; presumably, potential dealers found it too expensive to transport books by sea or air. (Another reason the convention should not have been held in Puerto Rico!) The con suite was well-stocked with chocolates and sweets but few salty snacks.

Paid memberships to the convention numbered around 260, of which just over 200 showed up. No doubt many tallied up the expenses and decided against. Erwin Strauss and I agreed that the convention reminded us of Albacon, a small convention in northern New York state that is always on the brink of insolvency.

Then again, Albacon never charged hotel rates like this, and has always included a

dealers room!

Thursday afternoon, my convention began with “The Future of Education”, with Guest of Honor Brother Guy Consolmagno and other educators. The panel had been talking, pro and con, about home schooling as an alternative to public schools, and whether the latter promoted socialization. One of the panelists, Sandra Manning, told us she, as a teacher in Alaska, was routinely engaged in remote education of children, which may combine some of the advantages of both approaches.

Bullying is a major reason parents pull their kids out of public school. Half-rhetorically, as some people really do believe it builds character, I asked the panel, “Is bullying good for children or bad for children?” A fellow sitting next to me immediately turned to me and emphatically stated, “Bad!” I reminded the panel that the current front-runner for the Hugo award (though it lost by a nose), Charlie Jane Anders’ *All the Birds in the Sky*, features really vicious abuse taking place at a public school.

A little later, Thursday evening, I attended “Social Justice and SFF: It’s Been There From the Beginning”. As the title implies, the panelists — Marie Guthrie, Isabel Schechter, and Javier Grillo-Marxuach — were all certain they know what social justice is! I later suggested that this was a narrow-minded attitude.

For example, Guthrie and Schechter had been talking about JK Rowling’s “house elves” as an example of slavery. But house elves are not human beings, I pointed out. Like Douglas Adams’ creature that wants to be eaten, at the “Restaurant at the End of the Universe”, they may have been created for a particular purpose. (Nobody in the room could remember where house elves came from!)

Early Friday afternoon, Brother Guy Consolmagno, Vatican Astronomer, explained “Life and Work in a Real (Benevolent) Monarchy”. As Vatican Astronomer, he explained, he reports directly to the Pope, because his office antedates the Vatican bureaucracy that would otherwise be in charge.

He contrasted the reality with the version presented in *The DaVinci Code* — where the Vatican Astronomer is called “Father Mangano”. In general, Dan Brown got things right if he could find out about them on Wikipedia, but some of the grandiose descriptions are way off; for example, an ornate marble staircase is really dingy concrete.

He noted that fantasy novels generally miss the reality of old buildings: thick walls, echoes, tapestries; not to mention details like who prepares the food, who are the guards, how does the economy work.

Among medievalistic fantasies that get it right, he commended Sarah Monette’s *The*

*Goblin Emperor*: the importance of middle management and informal connections; and unwritten rules for getting things done. He also recommended P.C. Hodgell’s “God Stalk” series.

Perhaps tactlessly, I asked Brother Guy, “Why does the Vatican have an astronomical Observatory?” “Because they couldn’t afford a particle accelerator”, he smoothly rejoindered. More seriously, he explained that the Vatican wants to show support for science.

At one point, he had shown a panoramic picture of a great conclave, including the Pope, the College of Cardinals, the Vatican bureaucracy and, in the corner, the distinctive figure of Brother Guy. I asked him, how does he get away with being the only bearded guy in the entire place? He said he never really thought about it before, but tended to agree that it was probably because, as a scientist, he was in a class by himself and the normal rules didn’t apply.

Also Friday afternoon, Arecibo astronomer Abel Mendez presented a vast amount of information on “Habitable Worlds”. I am able to decipher only part of my notes, but I will do the best I can.

Mendez noted that some of the solar system’s outer moons contain several times the amount of liquid water as the Earth. (Thereby rendering an old alien invasion TV series even more ridiculous than it seemed on first airing, he didn’t say.)

Exoplanet hunters have encountered many surprises, he said: planets around pulsars, binary star worlds, “Hot Jupiters”, rogue planets abandoned by the systems that created them, drastically inclined planets, worlds in the process of being absorbed, puffy Earths, mega-earths, etc.

Perhaps the most intriguing idea was that tidal-locked worlds which always present the same face to their sun (like Jack Vance’s “The Narrow Land”—TW) may be habitable — in spots — well outside what is considered that particular star’s habitable zone.

Mendez was immediately on another panel that was something like a sequel to the one that I had just seen: “Earth-like” exoplanets: What Do They Mean for Alien Life”, with W.A. “Bill” Thomasson, and moderated by Ctein.

The panel noted an interesting paradox: it’s hard to evolve cells — yet cellular life started early on Earth. This hints at panspermia, the idea that it did indeed take a long time to evolve cells, but that it happened somewhere else.

There was a question from the floor on just how important is a magnetic field to a planet’s habitability. It protects the atmosphere from being blown away, said Mendez. As for protecting life from radioactive particles, Ctein said that “radiation is overrated as a problem” for life: the fossil record shows that during magnetic reversals the cancer rate went up only 3%.

Early Saturday afternoon, it was time for a topic dear to the heart of Brother Guy: “How to Make Religions in Fantasy/SF Stories Real”.

Not surprisingly, Walter M. Miller, Jr.’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1960), in which monasteries once again act as preservers of knowledge after a nuclear holocaust, was praised by the panel for its believable religious elements.

The Leibowitz of Miller’s novel is, of course, a secular Jewish scientist who converts to Christianity before he is martyred. Brother Guy pointed out that there are more scientists who are believers than people think. When he came out of the closet as a believer, other scientists revealed themselves to him. From the floor, I noted that there is a long tradition in SF of simply assuming religion will just wither away. Demographic studies suggest otherwise, as at least in the West the more religious people are, the more children they tend to have. Similarly, SF writers like George RR Martin simply take for granted ethical ideas that grew out of religion; for example, pre-Christian philosophers would have laughed at the idea that slavery is wrong.

In general, Brother Guy said, SF writers don’t always think through the implications of their ideas. For example, in Anne McCaffrey’s “Dragon Rider” stories, the Harpers have a monopoly on many activities — but “what if you had a bad Master Harper?”

Saturday afternoon, on “World Building as More Than Background”, a bunch of writers were grousing about how non-writers were constantly bringing them great ideas and, once the writer did all the work, generously proposing to share the profits. To handle such annoyances, I modestly proposed, “Would it be possible to establish a rate card?” This gave the panelists a good laugh, and they came up with their own riffs on the idea.

Also Saturday afternoon, “Translation in Space”, with Chris Rose, Jonathan Brazee, and Lawrence M. Schoen, was a bit more superficial than I expected, given the panelists. For example, when I rather tentatively (because it was so obvious) brought up H. Beam Piper’s classic translation story, “Omnilingual” (1957), nobody on the panel had ever even heard of it!

(On rereading Piper’s story in 2012, Jo Walton called it “the classic SF short story, the one everyone ought to read if they’re only going to read one”.)

At the end of the panel, Schoen glumly said, “If this was a traditional convention, we would now tell you to go next door to the dealers room [to buy our books]!” The point being, there was no dealers room, of course.

Late Saturday afternoon, “The Singularity: Mechs or Shapers”, with Tobias S. Buckell, Paula Smith, Mel White, and moderated by W.A. “Bill” Thomasson, was intended as a sort of mashup of Vernon Vinge’s Singularity and Bruce Sterlings “Mechs and Shapers” universe though, as far as I can recall, it didn’t really go that way.

White said he didn’t believe in a Singularity, that we as a people had “been here before”. I understood his comment mean that this is not the first time we were told that some

particular kind of technological progress will change everything, and it often didn't. Buckell suggested that what looks like exponential growth could merely be part of an S-curve.

Buckell praised SF writer Karl Schroeder's concept of "thalience". As Buckell explained it, an example might be to scatter "smart dust" on a forest — and then it could agitate for its rights! I thought that was kind of a cheat. The nanodust wouldn't represent what the trees actually think or desire, but what the human programmer of the dust thinks the trees should want. Trees didn't evolve to have desires because they don't need desires to survive. They don't have a lot of choices to make.

While I was making my point, Buckell kept interjecting, "Doesn't matter . . . doesn't matter . . . doesn't matter . . ." I was a bit taken aback by this, and some of the other panelists looked a little disconcerted, too.

One more odd moment, right after the panel: I was still sitting in the audience, reading something on my iPhone, and Buckell came over, leaned over me and said "Thank you for your comments. Heh-heh-heh-heh!" (Apologetic? Sarcastic? Both at the same time? Your guess is as good as mine.)

Sunday morning, we gathered to remember "Forgotten Books", with panelists Lee Billings, Dana Chaviano, and moderator Evelyn Chimelis Leeper. Leeper joked that she was a "forgotten" fan writer, in spite of 12 Hugo nominations. She was using her middle name just in case any of her Puerto Rican relatives showed up. (I was relieved to hear it wasn't a sign of, er, trouble in paradise!)

The consensus was, there is nothing like movie adaptations to keep an author's name alive. From the floor, Ben Yalow noted that the editors who used to try to keep authors' work in print have all retired, except for Baen Books. Leeper also gave a nod to NESFA for its big author collections.

I commended George RR Martin's original story anthology in honor of Jack Vance, *Songs of the Dying Earth*; and Harlan Ellison providing an introduction to a collection of classic stories by A.E. van Vogt.

Late Sunday morning, we discovered that "YA is Not Just for Kids Anymore", with Helen Gbala, Brother Guy, and Douglas Drummond. Gbala said that YA SF is actually 90% fantasy and 10% SF, and that more adults than kids are buying it. (Whether adults are buying it for kids I forgot to ask.)

Brother Guy said that one of the things he likes about YA SF is that "when things get boring . . . you can't introduce a sex scene!" The feasting scenes in C.S. Lewis' "Narnia" books may have a similar function, he joked.

He recommended Lee and Miller's *Fledgling and Saltation*; as well as Diana Wynne Jones' *Howl's Moving Castle*, which he said is very different from the movie; and later Steven Baxter's *The H-bomb Girl*.

I put in a word for Richelle Mead's

"Vampire Academy" books, with their clever plotting and their highly civilized and curiously attractive society of Eastern Orthodox vampires.

There were 425 voters for NASFiC Site Selection. 233 voted for San Juan. I think that says something about the difference between wanting to go and being able to go. There is an unfortunate habit of supporting "cool" but impracticable venues. The worst case was the "Bermuda Triangle" or "Boat" bid for the 1988 Worldcon. In spite of being a hoax bid, it came in second in the voting.

— JTM

### Archon 41

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

Archon is the St. Louis area's old-school science fiction convention, generally held in the early fall. This year's convention was held over the weekend of September 29 to October 1, 2017 at the Gateway Convention Center and the Doubletree Hotel.

Because I wanted to visit my dad, we drove over to his place on Wednesday, I'd had a little trouble off and on with my laptop not wanting to start and needing two or three presses of the power button to boot up. This time I had to reset the SMC (a low-level controller that manages the battery and startup systems) before I could get it to start up. I texted my brother the computer engineer, who agreed the SMC could cause weirdness, because his current machine had given him some trouble that required an SMC reset.

On Thursday we drove the rest of the way down to Collinsville. We made pretty good time, so much that we decided to wait for a while at the last rest area rather than arrive at our hotel before our room was ready to check in. It got a little warm, and I was glad when we could get on the road again.

Once we got checked in and all our stuff into the room, I got my computer set up and tried to start it up. This time I had to reset the SMC twice before I could get it to start. After a few texts back and forth with my brother, we decided it would be best to avoid shutting down the laptop as much as possible, and to let it sleep on battery while we were in the dealers' room.

After supper we headed over to the convention center to get our badges. While I was waiting for Registration to get things together, I started working on a new scene on a novella that had become stuck. I was hoping that moving to a later scene might get the creative juices flowing again and enable me to get enough written that I'd be able to see how to join the two pieces together.

When we went back to our room, I was going to do some more writing. However, our friends had arrived, and we ended up spending

the rest of the evening talking about our lives since we'd last seen each other.

On Friday we had to get up and get moving quickly, since we needed to be over at the convention center and ready the minute the doors opened to load in. As it turned out, this year they'd actually opened the doors early and we were able to snag one of the convention center's big flatbed carts. With the help of our friends, we were able to get everything loaded in and set up with a little time to spare. We even had the signs up, and I got to do a quick trip around the floor to see who else was there.

Then the doors opened and the crowd started trickling in. We knew that we were at a much smaller convention than the big comic cons and anime cons, and we were going to have to adjust our expectations downward. However, even when we were getting spurts of heavy traffic, it seemed like a lot of people were using this visit to scope out the territory and plan their buying strategy. A few people did buy some things they simply couldn't live without, but sales were pretty slow.

We did grab a little food at the artists' reception by taking turns running over there and bringing the plate of food back to the dealers' room to eat while we did business. However, this year they'd gone to a cash bar, even for the soft drinks and bottled waters, so we felt little inclination to make a second trip after the dealers' room closed. We just headed back to the hotel to have supper and try to unclog the drain in the bathroom sink. I did a little more work on my novella and made some posts online.

On Saturday we had the hotel's complimentary breakfast, then headed back over to the convention center to get our tables open for business. I had to re-sort some boxes of books that had been put out in the wrong order in the haste of setup, but I still had plenty of time to look around before the doors opened and I had to hurry back to our tables.

Sales did pick up, so I was feeling a lot better than I had when I counted our money Friday evening. We sold a fair number of the smaller dragon figurines, especially the cute little baby dragons. However, none of the really big figurines were going, and our book sales remained stubbornly small.

Once the dealers' room closed for the night, we headed back to the hotel to have supper. I did some more work on the novella, although I began to feel steadily more and more dissatisfied with the scene. I figured that maybe it was time to jump to yet another scene.

On Sunday we had to get our personal belongings packed back up and out to the van so we could get checked out before opening our tables for business. However, our friends were having a lot more trouble getting moving because they had been up very late dealing with a problem. Apparently someone they knew had caused problems, and con security wanted help in tracking this person down. I later heard several stories about what exactly happened, but they all agreed that the problem

person had been permanently banned from Archon and that the civil authorities also became involved, taking the person out in handcuffs.

Because our friends were running way behind, I ended up walking over to the convention center while my husband settled up with the hotel and drove the van over. As a result, I spent a good chunk of the time before the dealers' room opened working on the booth by myself, getting the secondary books consolidated so that we could see just how much we had sold. We actually ended up emptying an entire box and beginning on another.

My husband got in a little before the dealers' room actually opened, so we had time to get our table covers folded and things arranged in our backspace. Then people came in, and this time they were finally spending in earnest. We had several people make substantial book purchases, and for the most part I just had time to grab second copies and stuff in a little overflow to close up the gaps. There was no way I could further consolidate the back stock to see if we'd emptied a second box.

The worst part was the last couple of hours, when I was supposed to be packing the unsold figurines and getting them ready to load out, but we also had people buying piles of books. It was good to sell so many books, especially now that we no longer sell online and those huge stacks of books are just sitting around in our storage unit. Because of all the last-minute business, I wasn't able to get all the figurines packed and start carrying merchandise out until almost an hour after we actually closed.

As a result, we were one of the last dealers to get out of there, and we would've been even later if we hadn't had excellent help getting everything carried out. Somehow I actually managed to pack things in even tighter, to the point that I kept asking one of our friends if he'd gotten everything. I was sure that we must've missed a box somewhere, to have such a large empty area in the rear cargo hold.

Finally we bade our friends good-bye and safe journey home, then made our last checks of the area before hitting the road north to return to my dad's place. The drive was pretty good, and we didn't have to make too many stops on the way, so we got there in good time and I was able to get some laundry done before bedtime. I also had a little time to visit with Dad and see how things had been going while we were in Collinsville.

On Monday I got one final load of laundry through, and I took out most of our stuff before having lunch. Then we said good-bye to Dad and hit the road for home. We made pretty good time and were able to get our cash deposit made in good time, which was a relief given how tight our money was running. However, it was less pleasant after we got home and I ran the numbers to find out just how much we'd have to take out of savings. If

only sales had been better at Metacon the previous month, we probably could've gotten by. But they weren't, so we had to make do as best we can to ensure the bills would get paid until the next shot of money came in.

## DRAGON AWARDS

(Courtesy of Dragon\*Con and File770.com)

### Best Science Fiction Novel

*Babylon's Ashes* by James S.A. Corey

### Best Fantasy Novel (Including Paranormal)

*Monster Hunter Memoirs: Grunge* by Larry Correia and John Ringo

### Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel

*The Hammer of Thor* by Rick Riordan

### Best Military Science Fiction or Fantasy Novel

*Iron Dragoons* by Richard Fox

### Best Alternate History Novel

*Fallout: The Hot War* by Harry Turtledove

### Best Apocalyptic Novel

*Walkaway* by Cory Doctorow

### Best Horror Novel

*The Changeling* by Victor LaValle

### Best Comic Book

*The Dresden Files: Dog Men* by Jim Butcher, Mark Powers, Diego Galindo

### Best Graphic Novel

*Jim Butcher's The Dresden Files: Wild Card* by Jim Butcher, Carlos Gomez

### Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series

*Stranger Things*, Netflix

### Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie

*Wonder Woman* directed by Patty Jenkins

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

*The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* by Nintendo

### Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Mobile Game

*Pokemon GO* by Niantic

### Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game

*Betrayal at House on the Hill: Widow's Walk* by Avalon Hill

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

*Magic the Gathering: Eldritch Moon* by Wizards of the Coast

## WORLDCON BIDS

2020

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

2021

Washington, D.C.  
<http://dcin2021.org/>

2022

Chicago

2023

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

New Orleans

2024

United Kingdom  
<http://www.ukin2024.org/>

2025

Pacific Northwest  
Perth, Australia

### NASFiC BIDS

2019

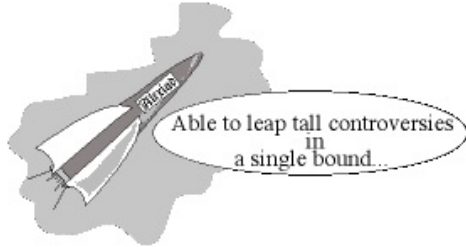
Utah  
<http://www.utahfor2019.com/>

**SUPERMAN  
ESCAPES THE  
LA BREA TAR PITS!**





## Letters, we get letters



From: **Milt Stevens** August 23, 2017  
6325 Keystone Street, Simi Valley, CA  
93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* #94, Joseph talks about the curse of telemarketing. Back in the old days, things got so bad that I was receiving about three or four telemarketing calls per evening. I took to answering the phone with "Hi, what are you selling?" I did that once to my father. My ex-wife would take perverse pleasure in "messing" with telemarketers. On one occasion, she explained to a carpet salesman that we didn't need carpeting because we had planted dichondra in the living room.

In recent years, I've turned off the ringer and had an answering machine on the line 24/7. If you start to leave a message, I will pick up the phone if I want to talk to you. With my name on the Don't Call List, an unlisted number and a recording device, telemarketers should get the hint that I really, really don't want to talk to them. However, I still get calls from robot telemarketers. I understand robot calling is illegal, but being illegal seldom stops anybody from doing anything.

If the little green men returned during the eclipse, they didn't seem to stop in Simi Valley. Locally, we were supposed to have a 62% eclipse which would peak at about 10:30 am. I wasn't actually interested in the eclipse. I know what they look like from pictures. However, I was interested in seeing my hometown under an alien sky. So I left the house at 10 with the intention of going over the gym which is about two miles away. The first thing I noticed was quiet. There weren't many people out or about, and there were few vehicles on the street. Next, I noticed cold. This is Southern California in August. It should be in the eighties at least. It felt like it was in the high sixties. There was another thing I noticed in retrospect. Cats. I saw several of them out roaming around. It's not unusual to see one cat out and about, but you don't usually see several of them. It was as if they were looking for "something", but they weren't sure what the "something" was. Then there was the darkness. There wasn't any. The quality of the light became what I would

describe as "watery." That was all. After I worked out at the gym, the eclipse was over, and things had warmed up.

**The little green men would go back to Kelly. There were issues to resolve from the last time.**

— JTM

In the letter column, Robert Kennedy comments that he has given up on *Asimov's* and *Analog*. I did that in 2012. I hated to do it, since I'd been reading *Astounding/Analog* since I was in high school. Unfortunately, times change.

### Farewell.

From: **Joy V. Smith** August 25, 2017  
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[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)  
<http://www.joyvsmith.com/>

I missed the solar eclipse; my timing was off, but I watched parts of it on the Weather Channel, which was interesting; and I learned that a welder's helmet works — saw that in the eclipse coverage — and a cousin posted on Facebook that his father let him use his welder's helmet when he was a kid for another eclipse. Then someone said that it depends on the thickness or something of the helmet. I would have thought that they were all the same.

**Dave Herrington had a piece of the glass that goes in a welder's helmet. Aside from the bother of holding it up, it was a little more convenient for looking at the Sun.**

— JTM

Thanks for the reviews and con reports and the Hugo winners list. And thanks, Sue, for the Hugo reviews. The LOCs were interesting and fun too, including the Cthulhu limerick.

From: **Richard A. Dengrove** Sept. 1, 2017  
2651 Arlington Drive, #302,  
Alexandria, VA 22306-3626 USA  
[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

I am glad to be back. This is my LOC for *Alexiad*, June 2017. I said I wouldn't send a letter because I had an article in the most recent *Alexiad*. Now, I think I'll skip some other issue.

Anyway, have no fear, my letters are far from any death knell. Not like the publishing industry for hard copy books, which is dying. Of course, it doesn't seem to look that way to them. It looks like they can get a ride on best selling authors for the foreseeable future. No new blood is needed.

The problem is a lot of books are being published as e-books. The hard copy people may think they are making money by setting their star with big names, but they are losing ground. At some point, they're going to need

new blood.

That that is coming is not a problem for me, though. There is a problem with Hersey's *The Child Buyer*? While everything that transpires is voluntary, it's appalling. Even the high IQ child for sale wants to have his mind filled up and spilled out, although he would be useless afterward — even to himself.

**That's not the point. The point is that the transaction is illegal. But then, the novel is a fable.**

In reality, 100% approval of some outrage doesn't happen only because no two people can agree. However, unfortunately other things like it happen. Most people let big tobacco, during the '50s, convince them tobacco was great. Also, support for the Afghani War, which turned out to be a no-win war, was, at the beginning, nearly unanimous. These are just two examples.

That comment elicited a long comment. This will elicit a short comment. The shorter the better. In fact, if it is over ten words, on this particular topic, it is too much. In the "Dialogue Concerning Fast Foods," Darryl Schweitzer has a theory about eyes. I will summarize it in two words: oy eyes.

While you might say I didn't agree with Darryl's repost, I do agree with Sue Burke's comment in her *Wiscon 41* report, Sunday, May 28, that Europeans aren't aware of many details of the US that an American would immediately spot.

In fact, Americans in California aren't aware of details that a person living in the DC area would be. For instance, one TV series made in Los Angeles had skyscrapers in DC. There aren't any here because Congress has passed laws limiting the height of buildings.

From DC now, we go all the way to Hawaii in 1941. Of course, that gets us to Pearl Harbor. About it, Timothy Lane doesn't believe that General Kimmel, General Short or F.D.R. knew the Japanese would attack at Pearl Harbor.

I agree. As you Joe and someone else point out elsewhere in *Alexiad*, the military didn't believe there would be an aerial attack on Pearl Harbor which it would be vulnerable to. In short, I am sure that is what attracted the Japanese military to making the attack: it would have the element of surprise.

We go from world history to genealogy and from Timothy Lane to Robert Kennedy. He disagrees with me that a genealogist was right in not telling a customer that an ancestor of his ran a whorehouse. He believes the client might have found that interesting.

For most people, I think the genealogist was right. A few people might be interested in their ancestor the madame, but most clients would shy away from that. Have you ever heard of anyone bragging about their ancestor the whore?

**Charles Beauclerk. (See his *Nell Gwyn: Mistress to a King* (2004, 2005; reviewed in *Alexiad*)**



V. 5 #6))

— JTM

I think someone's ancestor the whose presents a good opportunity to end this short letter. We have weighed the limits of voluntary behavior, the ramifications of the man with the three blue eyes, a glimpse at the DC building code, an analysis of Pearl Harbor and a dissertation on genealogical etiquette. Things we do everyday.

From: **John Purcell** September 3, 2017  
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[askance73@gmail.com](mailto:askance73@gmail.com)

I realize that you have probably produced a more recent issue (the August one, is my guess) since this one back in June, but since it is printed out and in front of me right now, it gets locked. I'm sure you won't mind; if I see the 94th issue on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com), I shall give that a quick read and get another letter of comment off to you.

Returning home from abroad after such a lengthy trip required about a week to recover and get my land legs under me. Now the fall semester is back in session, and doing some letter writing as I catch up on fanzines and other correspondence feels good, even somewhat normal. And yes, I do agree with you, Joe, that my reading tastes don't mesh well with what gets nominated for awards these days, but that's to be expected as the genre continues to grow like an unchecked plague. At least I voted for the eventual Hugo winning novel (N. K. Jemisin's *The Obelisk Gate*), so that's good. The fan categories continue to reflect the online/social media aspect of sf fans these days. Again, I expect this to happen, so I don't feel bad about this trend, but a bit saddened that what I knew so well is fading into the distance. Fortunately there are still enough of us old pharts around publishing traditional style fanzines, and that makes me happy, and reminds me to maybe spend more time — whatever time I can spare, that is — perusing blogs, podcasts, and such. This frigging sci-fi genre is just too honking big these days, and it seems to me that any literary-oriented genre awards are going to suffer as a result. The sf audience is too diffuse to get a consensus agreement on what is considered "outstanding" work in the genre. Oh, well. Like I have been saying for a few years now, I have expected this, so all I can do is try to roll with the changes. There's a song in there somewhere . . .

Texas was well south of the solar eclipse path of August 21st, which was the date of our return from Europe. I wish that I could have seen it, too. Only twice in my life have I seen a partial eclipse of the sun, and they were a long time ago: probably my childhood and early teen years. My brother and I used the old shoebox and pin-hole trick to observe them, too. Pretty nifty that something so simple to do

can have a really cool result. You and Lisa — and many other sf fans we know — were very fortunate to be able to see this year's event in full.

The eclipse track of the April 8, 2024 total eclipse runs through Texas. So all you have to do is wait. R-Lorraine Tutihasi and Mike Weasner were at Hopkinsville Community College, not far from where we were.

Sue Burke's account of Wiscon made me a bit wistful for the early days of that convention. I only attended a couple of them way back at the tail end of the Seventies. The earliest one I went to was Wiscon III, and to be honest, I really don't remember much of the programming at all anymore. But I do recall that it was populous. I will take that as a sign of its popularity and glad that Wiscon is still relevant. Wasn't this the convention that a couple years ago had an issue with Elizabeth Moon as a Guest of Honor? I will have to research that a bit to refresh my memory.

They invited her as GoH, then uninvited her.

—JTM

Okay. Good enough for now. Back to doing some school work over this three-day weekend. Might as well take advantage of having the time.

I AM INTOLERANT OF  
CRITICISM...EVEN OF  
PRAISE IF IT IS NOT  
CLOSELY REASONED!

AND DON'T TALK  
TO ME ABOUT  
TRUTH!



From: **Timothy Lane** September 6, 2017  
[timothylane51@gmail.com](mailto:timothylane51@gmail.com)

I can see what you mean about Black America. Its likelihood as a concept is far less likely than the Confederacy winning its independence (which was unlikely itself). A black nation elsewhere (e.g., Liberia) would be plausible, but not taking over a significant chunk of America. Maybe they would have been willing to let them have South Carolina, which was majority black. It would also be nice to see their explanation for how a heavily illiterate group became so advanced compared to white America. I suspect it's just a wish fulfillment fantasy.

For comparison, read Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron* (1969), with its description of the state of Mississippi.

I've seen the concept of a US sortie from Pearl Harbor going awry, but it seems that Ralph Brandt is weak on details. And with all the ships the US was already building, it's hard to imagine them just stopping.

Not surprisingly, I read Joe's *A Man and a Plane* in original manuscript as he wrote it. No doubt there are changes, though nothing I can recognize in Richard Dengrove's review (except the end notes and bibliography).

DeepSouthCon has been held in Kentucky in the past. Of course, the famous Confederate battle flag has stars for both Kentucky and Missouri, so I guess they qualify. Oklahoma probably does too, given that all the 5 civilized tribes initially supported the South (and some held on to the end; the Confederate Indians surrendered nearly a month after the rest of "Kirby-Smithdom").

It would have been nice if Richard Dengrove had at least described what was on that very Byzantine t-shirt.

I'm afraid Rod E. Smith's idea of a school for young superhumans has been anticipated by cartoonist Aaron Williams's PS238 series, now only available on-line unfortunately.

Then there's Yale Stewart's "JL8" series, which has the Justice League as second-graders in Mr. Schwartz's class.

—JTM

George W. Price's comments on the Nazi nuclear program are a good reminder that German arrogance kept them from pushing as hard as they could and should have. In a way, it was the failure of the will.

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** September 4, 2017  
4030 8th Street S., Arlington, VA  
22204- USA

Labor Day is upon us, and thanks for *Alexiad* 16.4 and 16.3. Lee had her right knee

replaced on August 2nd, and has been making a good recovery, currently walking without a walker or even a cane. She did have to skip a *Titanic* convention, though, as the doctor was worried about blood clots. Another stuff is that the AC went out in mid-August, and took the "new" furnace with it — new being 20 years old. Both were replaced on the 27th, and so far seem to be working fine.

Walking and diet are good for you, and reduces the risk of heart attacks. Keep it up, Joe. I haven't read much new SF in awhile — maybe because the current futures are less attractive than the future seen from 50 years ago. Lee got the complete set of *Babylon 5* on DVD's, and we have been watching it, me for the first time. Interesting if not totally plausible. The same might be said of Hurricane Harvey, which caused major flooding.

First Lloyd Penney, now you.

— JTM



From: **Darrell Schweitzer** Sept. 14, 2017  
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I am afraid I must play the pedant and insist that a "limerick" that is not in limerick meter is not a limerick. The late George Scithers taught me that. (It took years, but he also taught me to write a proper limerick.) Therefore, while John Hertz's eldritch rhymes are indeed clever, and suitably capable of driving one mad, as any Cthulhuvian limerick should do, I am afraid his meter begins to falter in the 4th line ("the" is unnecessary) but collapses entirely in the 5th. So this is not a limerick. As we limericists say, "It's a pest but it's gotta be an anapest."

To quote the famous line of the immortal M.M. Moamrath:

a THING of priMORDial OOZE

A pattern of one stressed syllable followed by two non-stressed ones. I just can't get John's last line into that pattern. But I can suggest the following repair:

our NEXT one will SURE be a Lulu.

Thus:

"Hey, Abbott I think it's Cthulhu!"  
"Such blubbering never will do, Lou.  
When we met Frankenstein  
Box office was fine;  
Our next one will sure be a lulu."

By the way, none of these limericks would work according to H.P. Lovecraft, who said that the "correct" pronunciation began with something like a bark or a cough, with a heavy emphasis on the first syllable and came out roughly as "Khlu-lhoo." But he also explained that this was a totally non-human word, not designed for human speech organs, and therefore no human attempt at it could be accurate. That being so, I would argue that John's or my faltering efforts are equally valid, for limerick purposes at least, even if we possess only human speech organs. Verily it is written in the dread *Necronomicon*, on page 751 (the missing page Wilbur Whateley so desperately and vainly sought) that if the Unrecited Limerick written thereon were read aloud in the CORRECT PRONUNCIATION, the universe as we know it would end. Alhazred actually did provide a key to this pronunciation, but fortunately was devoured by invisible monsters before he could speak it aloud. How he could have spoken it aloud, or what hideous changes had been worked upon him to make this possible, remains a subject of shuddersome speculation.

We must be grateful to John,  
therefore, from saving us from  
going totally and incurably insane,  
chanting "Tekel-li, Tekel-li, Tekel-  
li..."

Congratulations on being on Ask  
Lovecraft.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzIN2RI6\\_DY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzIN2RI6_DY)

— JTM

From: **Tom Feller** September 14, 2017  
[TomFeller@aol.com](mailto:TomFeller@aol.com)

Thanks for e-mailing the zines.

I understand your feeling about being out of touch with science fiction these days, although I think there is still good stuff out there. I read 23 out of the 24 Hugo finalists this year. I really felt out of touch when I read the short story and novelette finalists. On the other hand, I liked much of what I read in both the novella and novel categories. Like Sue Burke, I thought all the finalists in the novella categories were strong stories, although I felt the author of *A Taste of Honey* screwed up the ending. Like Milt Stevens, I really liked *A Closed and Common Orbit*, although I made it my second choice after *Death's End*.

Although we were invited to several parties,

Anita and I elected to watch the eclipse from the comfort of the patio in our backyard. We had checked the position of the sun at 1:27 PM previously and verified that there were no trees or structures that would obscure our view. After positioning two chairs to maximize the shade and two to maximize the view, we went back and forth between the shady chairs and the viewing chairs. We saw a good portion of the partial pre-totality eclipse using the solar glasses we received from a Vanderbilt astronomy professor at one of our classes this spring. About fifteen minutes before totality, a cloud obscured our view, but it moved out of the way just in the nick in time. We saw both the "Baily's Beads" and "Diamond Ring" phenomena. The first refers to the light going through low-lying valleys on the moon, and the second to a single bright flash of light just seconds before totality, which lasted two minutes from 1:27 to 1:29 PM and seemed shorter. The corona was very bright, but between it and the clouds, we could see no planets and only one star, Sirius. We kept watching the partial post-totality eclipse until a large cloud came over. It was an unforgettable experience.

Now you have to plan ahead for  
2024. Two total eclipses so near  
and so closely together, what an  
opportunity!

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 17, 2017  
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Thank you for *Alexiad* Vol. 16, No. 4  
(August 2017), Whole Number 94.

**MONARCHIST NEWS:** My thanks for clarifying that Queen Elizabeth cannot unilaterally name her heir. A number of years ago I asked a friend who is a former British subject, but now an American citizen, if Elizabeth could name her heir. She didn't know. But, she did say that all the British with whom she was in contact wanted Prince William.

*A Man and a Plane: An Alternate Germany* by someone named Joseph T Major is reviewed by Richard Dengrove (page 5). It is available in paperback from Amazon for \$25.99. I'm going to purchase it. But, why aren't any of your other novels available in paperback and not just Kindle? I don't do Kindle.

Well, I did *Bitter Weeds*, the  
first volume in my alternate  
WWII, for KDP.

— JTM

I was disappointed that there was no response to my request for comment on the movie *Arrival* because I had a number of problems with it. Well, it won the HUGO.

**Richard A. Dengrove:** You mention *All the*

*Way with JFK: An Alternate History of 1964.* It was reviewed by Joe in a previous *Alexiad*. I recently read the novel and had a number of problems with it. It was apparently self-published. It very much needed a good proofreading. I had a very hard time accepting some of the concepts. Another problem was Martin Maddox who until the end has the rank of Lt. Colonel (USMC). He was promised a star for his activities. At the end he is indicated as a Brigadier General. Unless I missed it there is no previous indication that he was promoted to full Colonel. But, I guess it can be assumed that happened during his assignment in Viet Nam. My problem is that in his commentary he indicates that he has two stars. That would make him a Major General, not a Brigadier General. More poor proofreading if that was done at all? I do not generally rate books. But, in this case I used my 1-5 movie rating system and gave the book a 2.5.

**John Hertz:** No, I was not boasting about not nominating for the Hugos or even voting for them. I was just making a comment. In retrospect I am a bit sorry that I did not at least vote for *The Vorkosigan Saga* for Best Series. But, it won anyway so all is right with the World.

From: **George W. Price** September 20, 2017  
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August *Alexiad*:

In **Reviewer's Notes**, Joe comments on how to avoid advertising robocalls. My rule is to not pick up any call whose Caller ID I don't recognize. It goes to the answering machine — and if it's not important enough for the caller to leave a message, it's not important enough for me to bother with. Once in a while the message is from someone of interest and I return the call. Perhaps the most annoying is when a message is left, but it starts in the middle of a spiel, meaning that it began the moment my phone answered, without waiting for my recorded greeting to finish. That's a robocall for sure. To hell with it.

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In **Weight Loss** Lisa gives her weight as 166.8. Apparently she is using a modern digital scale with a readout to a tenth of a pound. I got one about a year ago when my eyesight had deteriorated (due to glaucoma) to where I could no longer read the dial and needle on my old scale. The new one has a digital readout in bright numerals 2 inches high, which I can read without have to bend way over. (Yes, I am using a digital scale. The last time I stepped on it it showed 166.4. The doctor's scale showed 169.)

A button on the bottom switches the readout between pounds and kilograms. It reads to a tenth of a kilogram, but only to

two-tenths of a pound. That is, in pound mode the readout shows only the even tenths (.2, .4, .6, .8, .0), but not the odd tenths (.1, .3, .5, .7, .9). In kilogram mode it shows all the tenths. Why this oddity with the odd tenths? I presume it is to reflect that the scale is accurate to no more than one tenth of a kilogram, which is roughly two tenths of a pound. Still, that's better than the old spring bathroom scales, which can't be read closer than half a pound.



\*\*\*\*\*

Richard Dengrove says, "Timothy Lane comments that, before Pearl Harbor day, General Walter Short was more afraid of sabotage by Japanese than by the prospect of an invasion." This was most likely due to the endemic anti-Japanese prejudice of the time. For example, I've heard that it was widely believed in California that almost every Japanese-American fishing boat skipper was really a reserve officer in the Imperial Navy and kept his uniform in his sea chest under his bunk. That such twaddle was uncritically swallowed was a major reason why the internment of West Coast Japanese-Americans was accepted as an obvious and necessary precaution.

In Britain, before the [First] World War, many prominent people sincerely believed that the country was overrun with German reservists. When war was declared, they would mobilize, report to secret depots, and a fully formed army would appear on English soil.

Taras Wolansky asks me: "Wouldn't an unsuccessful Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor be just as good as — or better than — a successful one, from FDR's point of view?" Well, I suppose it would, if you want to be sane and logical. However, the FDR-haters assume that he feared that if our forces went to full battle alert, instead of just a sabotage alert, Japanese spies on Oahu would notice that and radio the approaching fleet. The fleet might then turn back without attacking, and FDR would not have the war he was seeking. That

was a chance he didn't want to take. This all makes sense if you assume that Roosevelt was an absolutely evil villain determined to get us into the war without caring how many people got killed in the process.

And now I suggest that we have exhausted the subject of conspiracy theories about Pearl Harbor, and should let the matter drop.

\*\*\*\*\*

Taras also observes that "In general, Western depictions of the evils of communism fell far short of the reality."

One aspect of this is the difference in how the Left regards Nazi and Communist atrocities. To the loud applause of the Left, we are still uncovering and prosecuting former Nazi death camp guards, even though they are now in their nineties. It is taken for granted that the Furies should pursue them even unto their death beds.

In stark contrast, during the quarter century since the Soviet Union disappeared, I can't recall ever seeing — not even once — any leftist express regret that (because the Cold War ended without a military defeat and occupation of Russia) it was not possible to hunt down and punish the masters of the Gulag and their minions. Those millions of deaths and enslavements — far more than the Nazis racked up, and spread over seventy years — are simply down the memory hole.

And I will bet that if you ever find any such expressions of regret from hard-core leftists, it will be only because they were directly challenged and prodded by somebody like me. Left to themselves, it just isn't on their radar.

Those people were honored to sacrifice themselves for the achievement of social justice. Right!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

I have mixed feelings about the great Confederate statues flap.

On the one hand, I do feel a certain sympathy with preserving regional history, even when I disapprove of the events commemorated. But it also seems obvious that the message that people of color hear is, "Yes, we had slavery, and we're not ashamed of it. We fought a terrible war to preserve it, and we're only sorry that we lost." If that is not the message one wishes to send, then perhaps it would be better if most of the statues and monuments were moved into special parks or museums where their historical significance can be carefully explained and placed in context.

On the other hand, the leftists are really making far too much of the matter; it seems to be a part of their general strategy to keep conservatives off balance with constant accusations of racism, mostly unjustified.



It enables them to be for free speech and oppose it, at the same time.

— JTM

And on the third hand, I am reminded of a minor passage in George O. Smith's *Pattern for Conquest* (Gnome Press, 1949, p. 97). An alien race has the custom that when a public figure has disgraced himself, a statue of him is erected for passersby to throw excrement at. Now that is a custom we might emulate, and not just for bygone villains like slaveholders. I offer no names, but deserving candidates are plentiful.

From: **Lloyd Daub** September 25, 2017  
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This LOC has been on the back burner long enough for me to need to scrape the char off the bottom of the pot and start over. It's a good thing that the Summer heat up here held off until the official start of Fall. I blame North Korea.

Issue 94 crossed the mail with my retirement from the college I have worked for these past 28 years. Time to get writing that SF novel series I've been promising myself to do. In the meantime, I have had several business and other related issues to deal with that hampered my resolve.

This letter also crosses the sad news about our loss of Dr. Jerry Pournelle. For me, the loss is not so much the fiction as his non-fiction. I am going to miss most the reading of his blog and his commentary on technology issues. He would occasionally get into the essentials of his past adventures in the tech industry, military, and government tech policy and then tie that into current events. All leaving me wanting to know more and have more questions answered.

Concerning Ralph Brandt's alternative WWII history: I would think it unlikely that the USA would respond to the permanent loss of the Pacific Fleet's battle line by ceasing to produce new ships. FDR's Two-Ocean Navy had been under construction for years already, and began joining the fleet in the summer of 1942. Why stop now? OTOH, had Kimmel properly responded to the War Warning, his plan was to sail toward Truk and get sunk there. Or on the way there. Or fleeing back to Pearl. Whichever came first. He wanted to be an aggressive admiral, and merely did not expect the sort of air raid that occurred. His searches for aerial attackers were toward Truk and the other airbases presumed to be there.

On top of this book, all other straight or alternative or conspiratorial version of the December 8 [their time] attack have to take into account that the Philippines, Hong Kong, and British Malaya were all struck that same day. Most accounts fail to pay heed to this, especially the conspiratorial ones. Alternate histories have no excuse. They should at least start with what was happening on the day they

change history.

The late Sue Blom told me that her alternative history of the Incas versus Spain was all as it was except she moved her principal character some thirty miles. Just enough to learn of the danger and not get caught up in it. I never even thought to ask her, 'which way?' All subsequent events might alter, but not the attitudes, intentions and capabilities of either side. At least not until enough events were altered by her alteration to history. Her intent was to give the Incas time to adapt. Then would come the big changes. Alas. I really wanted to read her description of the Inca tercios going into battle.

Now that sounds like good AH.  
 Whatever became of the  
 manuscript?

— JTM



NOTHING AS RELAXING AS "MR. TAMBOURINE MAN" PLAYED ON A TENOR SOUSAPHONE...

Recently added to my Amazon dot com shopping cart. Larry Holmes *Stalin's WWII Evacuations: Triumph and Troubles in Kirov* 978-0700623952 Jerry Pournelle *There Will Be War Volumes I and II* 978-9527065594

From: **Sue Burke** September 30, 2017  
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Hello Lisa! A Facebook group for editors that I belong to discussed regional names for roly-polies. There are a lot of them. My favorites were "tank ant" from Ontario and "caterpillar ant," "twiddle bug," and "basketball bug" from Chicago.

My brother and his family live in Houston and, thankfully, their house was spared by Harvey. But my niece just started high school, and her school mascot is ... the Hurricanes.

As for meteorology here in Chicago, it was overcast for the big eclipse on August 21, although quite a few of us went down to the

lakefront park to experience the unusual gloom and peer up at the clouds, hoping for a glimpse of a crescent sun. With luck, we'll still be alive in 2024 for the next one.

The path of totality runs through southern Illinois, central Indiana, and northwest Ohio. It shouldn't take you twelve hours to get home.

In my ongoing *Amadis of Gaul* project, now that I've finished up the translation blog, I'm selling it at Amazon. The novel comes in four "books," each the size of a modern novel. I'm up to Book II, and I have to say that Kindle is pretty easy to use. Assembling the content took a while, but putting it into Kindle format and uploading it took only a few hours.

Thanks, Joe, for your advice to see *Dunkirk*. It took me a bit to understand how the three time lines fit together, but it all did come together nicely. You also recommended *Amazing Story's* Spanish correspondent Ricardo Manzanaro. I know him and I've read some of his work.

Thanks, also, to Rod E. Smith, Milt Stevens, and Taras Wolansky, for their reading advice. Taras asks which of the Three Stooges was likened to Obama in a discussion held at Wiscon. All I can recall is that it involved his big ears.

John Hertz mentions the late Baron Thomas of Swynnerton. After a while, I figured out who he was talking about: Hugh Thomas, the historian who wrote so much about Spain. He was highly respected there and won major awards and honors, but no one in Spain seemed to think it important to say he was a peer, only that he was thorough, fair, and wrote engaging prose.

¿They don't care about the  
 marqués de Dalí de Púbol?

— José

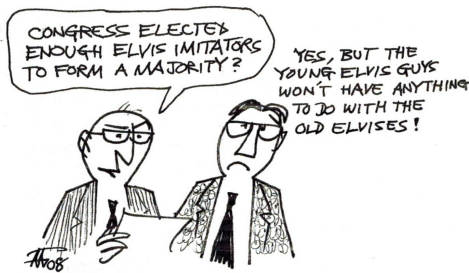
As for Buddha's earlobes, mine are unstretched, for whatever that may say about me.

George W. Price insists that the "church of climate change" was behind the uproar over the US leaving the Paris Accord (maybe; Trump is said to be reconsidering). That church has quite a congregation. Those who opposed leaving the treaty included a number of corporations: Apple, BHP Billiton, BP, DuPont, General Electric, General Mills, Goldman Sachs, Google, Intel, Microsoft, National Grid, Novartis Corporation, PG&E, Rio Tinto, Schneider Electric, Shell, Unilever, and Walmart. They said that climate change presents risks for their companies, and the Paris agreement was a framework within which to address those risks – such as their credo.

I agree with him wholeheartedly, though, that political discussions are too often uncivil these days. All sides seem to revel in being outraged and acting outrageously, at times over

invented or insignificant issues. I think they get pushed there inevitably by closed groups on the internet, where engaging in offensive and even cruel behavior to opponents is encouraged as a way to prove personal merit. Politics becomes theater rather than problem-solving. The ideas of disagreeing without being disagreeable, of compromise as a political and personal virtue, don't fit our times, and we are abysmally poorer for that. Blessed are the peacemakers, who, if they still exist, practice a lost art. Alas. Perhaps we should meet for lunch one day, George, and disagree agreeably.

From: **Taras Wolansky** October 1, 2017  
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Alexiad August 2017:

Note that, since March 2016, my mailing address is: PO Box 698, Kerhonkson, NY 12446.

Joe questions Bob Kennedy about the teenage Martian romance, *The Space Between Us*: **"Is the boy named Smith?"**

My answer: No, just his wooden leg.

Worldcons & Worldcon Bids: Helsinki, San Juan (NASFiC), San José, Dublin, New Zealand, Washington, Chicago, Paris or New Orleans, U.K., Australia — not quite a schedule just for the 1%; but, let's say, 10%.

Joe: **"What about H.G. Wells's review of Metropolis, where he accused Fritz Lang of ripping off *The Sleeper Awakes*?"** Actually, Wells was not the only contemporary reviewer who perceived the influence of that novel.

Wells thought it was "the silliest film": "Possibly I dislike this soupy whirlpool none the less because I find decaying fragments of my own juvenile work of thirty years ago, *The Sleeper Awakes*, floating about in it."

That, and other contemporary reviews, may be found at:

[www.uow.edu.au/~morgan/Metroh.htm](http://www.uow.edu.au/~morgan/Metroh.htm)

I think Wells was right: it is a silly film.

**"Amazon has announced Black America, about a separate Black nation being established in the aftermath of the War of the Rebellion, and how by today it became a technological and economic powerhouse, while the United States decayed into chaos."** No doubt the program takes its inspiration from the experience of Liberia and Haiti. (Or maybe

*Farnham's Freehold*.)

**I don't think their choice of meat would go over well, except perhaps with vegans.**

Review of Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*: **"Then there were political plights; no women, no French, no persons of colour."** An English historian complained that the film makes it appear the French were left behind, when actually 80,000 were rescued.

**Branagh's last line is that he's staying behind to get the French off. A lot of people had an opinion about what they wanted to see in a movie about Dunkirk, and when the movie didn't have that, reviewed their dream.**

— JTM

*Lisa*: Your item about "Adult Coloring" books piqued my interest — until I realized what you were actually talking about.

*Sue Burke* (Hugo nominee reviews): Please watch your Puppies. I think you mean Rabid, not Sad.

*Joe* (Hugo results): Nothing surprising about the R.P. picks coming in last, but (judging from the discussions I saw in various fannish nominees) I would have thought the distaff *Ghostbusters* would have had more support, no matter how bad it was.

From: **AL du Pisani** October 1, 2017  
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The first thunderstorm of Summer has come and rained on us. We need the rain. I hope that we will get enough rain — There is still too large parts of the country with drought.

I will be going in for my third eye operation in a couple of weeks. This time round it will be to fix a cataract — something which should be less serious than the two previous operations, and which should hopefully restore my sight to what it was before all of this blew up in May.

The big news in South Africa has been fallout over the Gupha emails that have leaked out, where some investigative journalists have been doing some digging.

To set the scene I have to go back in time a bit: The first time that the Gupthas appeared as major players on a lot of people's radars, was when a plane carrying guests to a wedding landed at an Air Force base. A junior person was blamed for giving permission for the plane to land and use the facilities. This is part one.

Part two has been the entire Rogue Unit at the South African Receiver of Revenue (SARS), i.e. the tax man. One of the reasons given why Jacob Zuma fired our respected finance minister Pravin Gordan for the second time, was that he was involved with a rogue

unit set up to entrap major tax payers, during his time as the big boss at SARS. Part of the accusations about the rogue unit was that they had set up a brothel and gained access to information illegally. To investigate the accusations, the audit firm of KPMG was paid R23 million to do a forensic audit, and they found that there was wrongdoing, and some people employed by SARS lost their jobs.

Now, there were some questions about the report, since it seemed to some observers to have been a cut and paste job of the Zuma faction's accusations. But most people accepted the report.

Until the journalists started to investigate the emails leaked from the Gupthas, where a bunch of things came to light. For one, they claim that the entire Guptha wedding was paid for by the SA tax payer. For services rendered in a dairy farm scheme, where previously disadvantaged people were given an operational dairy farm. Now, like most schemes where previously disadvantaged people were given a fully functioning farm to run, the farm tend not to run at all, since most of the people who benefit from such schemes are people who want to enjoy the lifestyle of a farmer, without doing the work of a farmer. Quite often they do not understand what the job of farming entails, and are unwilling to learn.

But in the process the Gupthas were paid a large amount of money, which they apparently laundered through a Middle East country, and used to pay for a lavish wedding. And at this wedding were a number of Partners in KPMG. This piece of information coming to light started the investigators into looking at other ways in which the Gupthas and KPMG worked together.

About two weeks ago, an international very senior Partner in KPMG arrived in South Africa. Shortly thereafter seven senior partners in the South African firm announced their resignations, a new managing partner was announced, and KPMG retracted their SARS rogue unit report as "not up to the organization's standards".

Some observers do not believe that KPMG will survive in South Africa, and some others do not believe KPMG will survive internationally. They claim that what KPMG did was worse than what Arthur Anderson did regarding Enron, which caused Arthur Anderson to fail.

And they are not the only organizations with improper ties to the Gupthas: The two main ones that have surfaced are SAP and the McKinsey organization. Where McKinsey have been accused of getting huge management fees for assisting in the plundering of state owned entities like Transnet and Escom.

Business Leadership South Africa has recently purged KPMG, Transnet and Escom from the organization's membership. Almost every single South African bank which had provided banking services to the Gupthas has either terminated their relationship, or is in the process of terminating their relationships.

Unfortunately, the Gupthas are more of a symptom than a cause, and far too many people



are still starry eyed about the history of the ANC. Even as they terminate their relationships with the current ANC. Interesting times are ahead, as the ANC will have their leadership conference in December, where a new leader have to be elected, and we already have at least three major candidates – seeming to cover the dirty, corrupt and communist aspirations.

One other thing – the tax man has been very quick to pay the Gupthas' VAT claims and tax rebates. But to get the money to do that, they had to delay everybody else's claims, and are paying out a lot slower than normal. In previous years I received refunds of over payment of taxes if not within a day, then within a week of electronic submission. This year I was immediately instructed to provide supporting documentation for all of my tax stuff, and have since been waiting for three weeks to hear from the tax man as to what next. A friend of mine had to submit his tax forms and supporting documentation four times in a two month period, before it was accepted, and has also been waiting for weeks for any response.

I don't think that even Steve Stephenson (David Curtiss Stephenson, the Klan boss who ruled Indiana) would have tried to get away with that, much less Huey Long.

— JTM

I just keep on going. This too shall pass, seems to be the message of some of the Science Fiction I like the best. The future is going to be awesome. Especially if some of the players in spaceflight like Blue Origin and SpaceX get to do what they have stated they want to do.

Good luck, and may the future be awesome.

From: **Lloyd Penney**      October 1, 2017  
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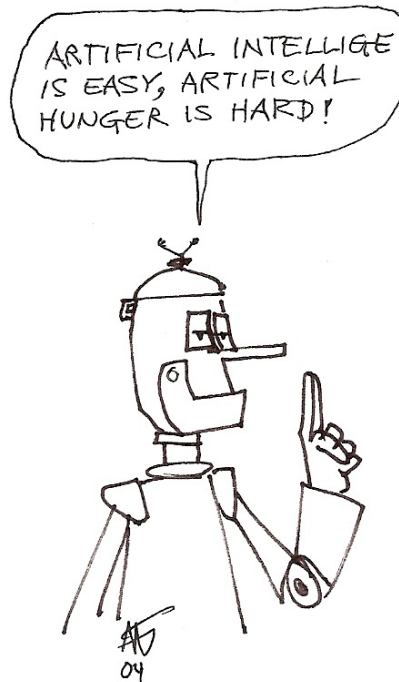
I am cutting the deadline a little fine (well, I did start this on September 29), but yet, here I am with a loc on *Alexiad* 94. I am pleased to report that I have finally been able to find some work, as an English editor/caller for a mystery shopper company. The pay isn't the best, but it is better than what I was making, which was zero. After nearly two years of searching, I can finally pay my own way, and perhaps gain a little more pride and self-respect. I hope you can find something soon, too.

Congratulations and good luck.

I have been able to keep my weight down to 210 or so, better than I was, but I need to get back on the diet, or find something else that can get me below 200 lbs.

I am finding that for many SF awards, even the fan awards are being won not by fans as we know them, but by fans working with pros, or even pros doing things not for pay. Hugos, Auroras, I am not sure about other awards, but it does seem that many of us have lost our franchise to vote or even be considered. Perhaps we're well past our Best Before date? The NASFiC is Puerto Rico might have been the last event of its kind on that island, given what's happened to it. The hurricanes have made sure there won't be tourism there any time soon.

The bloggers have numbers and the numbers of followers vote. That their blogs drift and turn into "Here's a picture of my cat!", or other things, the way one Big Name in the Apparatchik group switched over to posting mosaic pictures of building cranes, is perhaps a result. They are concerned with everything but SF & F, or fandom, it seems.



I am personally out of step with SF as well. It's been so long since I could keep up with it, and then my inability to afford any reading has led me to not really wanting to do any reading. My opinions on literary conventions have soured somewhat, I admit . . . few of the literary conventions I go to have anything for people to do. Like media conventions, attendees have been reduced to passive consumption, as in shut up and watch and

listen. I find there's not much to do, and the steampunk conventions I have gone to have supplied me with lots to do and participate in. As always, I have gone where the creativity is, and at these conventions, I can make jewelry and sell it, or show off my latest costume creation. I am going where I can do, and that seems to be away from the traditional conventions I've gone to in the past.

Something happened around 2001. MilPhilCon had packed fannish events; I remember Forrest J Ackerman giving a talk on the *Frankenstein* movie where he showed that, even if it changed the story, it kept so much of the concept. Two years later, in Toronto, fannish events were on the margins. And 4SJ was burned out, in a wheelchair, barely responding (but Roy Ferry's antics may have had something to do with that).

My loc . . . we are saving now for our return trip to England, and we are looking at a return date of sometime in 2019. We can learn from the mistakes we made in our first trip, and perhaps save some cash. Local friends are planning to go to England next year. . . we have loaned them our binder with all our plans and ways to keep track of tickets and passes, in the hope it will make their own plans that much easier.

After some unseasonably warm weather in September, we are now back to our cool fall. Surprisingly, while some trees have started to turn colours, most of the trees here are still lush and green. Makes me wonder if they will simply drop all their leaves at once, like a certain Whomping Willow. Thank you for this issue, and we will see you again with the next.

It seems to be the same here.

— JTM

**WAHF:**  
**Martin Morse Wooster**, with various items of interest.  
**Nic Farey, Marty Helgesen, Earl Kemp, Pat McCray** who got it.  
**Leigh Kimmel**, who was grateful for the condolences



## "THAT IS THE SOUND OF INEVITABILITY"

On the 9th May, Daesh, also known as ISIS, was conducting a public execution. A British drone was flying overhead. There were too many civilians watching but the drone operator noticed two armed sentries on a rooftop. He passed the word and a Hellfire missile was directed at the sentries.

The execution was postponed indefinitely.

But what would people have said . . .

As an initial move, an attempt to make enquiries at the offices of Universal Export regarding the background of this effort was in vain, as official notice was that the firm was closed for Bank Holiday. The Managing Director was seen visiting his club, Blade's, but club policy forbade the admission of correspondents.

Outside the theatre, BBC correspondents approached the distinguished adventurer Sir Henry Curtis, Bt., who was helping his wife, the fabled beauty Princess Nyleptha, into the Bentley. When asked, Sir Henry said, "I haven't the slightest idea."

The correspondent impudently enquired whether Sir Henry's long-time associate, explorer Allan Quatermain, might be available for an explanation. Sir Henry said, "Hunter Quatermain is about 300 miles out of Nairobi on a nature expedition. And before you ask, he is too traditionalist to carry satellite phones. Now I really must be off."

Another BBC correspondent assigned to Kenya went to see the renowned Africanist John Clayton, Lord Greystoke. When asked, all his Lordship said was "Kreeg-ah!" and went off into the night. Lady Greystoke, who also happened to be available, said he was going to go see the Carters about something and please don't bother us any more.

A BBC television crew traveled to West Kensington to interview the distinguished polymath Professor George Edward Challenger for the technological perspective on this incident. They found him tending his garden and upon enquiry he responded to the chief correspondent, "Did you think you could match cunning with me — you think your walnut of a brain? You think you are omnipotent, you infernal scribbles, don't you? That your praise can make a man and your blame can break him? We must all bow to you, and try to get a favorable word, must we? This man shall have a leg up, and this man shall have a dressing down! Creeping vermin, I know you! You've got out of your station. Time was when your ears were clipped. You've lost your sense of proportion. Swollen gas-bags! I'll keep you in your proper place. Yes, sir, you haven't got over G. E. C. There's one man who is still your master. He warned you off, but if you *will* come, by the Lord you do it at your own risk!" He thereupon wrapped the tripod around our correspondent's neck, drop-kicked the camera over the roof, and finally threw the entire crew an estimated 250 feet down the road.

His press representative, Edward D. Malone, later stated that the Professor was not available for further interviews.

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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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THE NEW CAR HAS THE COLLISION ALERT FEATURE  
IT GENERALLY BEEPS JUST AS I'M SEEING THE ISSUE MYSELF  
IT'S ALMOST LIKE HAVING YOU IN THE CAR  
HA HA.



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