

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

NASA has made the official announcement. The Mars rover Opportunity is officially dead. When it landed on Mars it was supposed to last six months. It stopped transmitting fifteen years later, killed by a dust storm. NASA hoped that when the storm passed it would be able to recharge its solar panels but it never transmitted again. When humans finally make it to Mars perhaps we will find it and either make it work again or put it in a museum if the dust storm did not destroy it.

— Lisa

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## Reviewer's Notes

"My battery is low and it's getting dark."

The YA book *Blood Heir* by Amelie Wen Zhao will not be coming out. It seems that, based on comments by readers of advanced reader copies, the book presented an undesirable image of slavery.

Given trends in YA fiction, it was probably another tale of Actiongirl Unlikelname struggling against a society designed to make teens angst. This need not be the case, but sadly so often it isn't. What is bothersome, though, is that Zhao was intimidated into withdrawing the book before publication because of bitter and vicious criticism on Twitter.

The argument is complex, influenced by such factors as Zhao's cultural background and literary requirements. What is simple is that this is prior restraint censorship. And how easy it has been to whip up a mob!

The YA Hugo Award (or whatever) may soon have nothing to be given to.

They say that SF is now the mainstream, and point to the most popular movies as proof thereof. But the popular movies are superhero comic movies, most of which seem to involve massive destruction that never kills anyone. Now superheroes are connected; from Philip Wylie's *Gladiator* (1930) to Sigel & Schuster (who might or might not have read it). Perhaps there's some inspiration for Captain America in there, too.

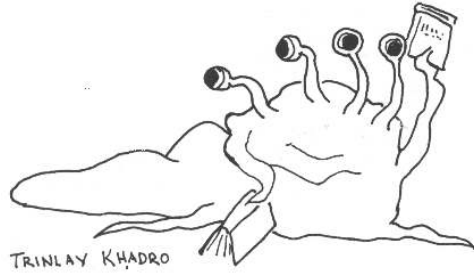
But they seem to be putting out the sizzle and ignoring the steak. Even the films based on Philip K. Dick's works seem more interested in action than in his view of the world as not as it seems. Will they ever do *Ubik* (1966), *Time out of Joint* (1958), or *The World Jones Made* (1954), much less *Solar Lottery* (1954)? But recall, *John Carter* (2012) had all sorts of publicity problems (see *John Carter and the Gods of Hollywood* (2012; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #2) for more), and because it was based on a public-domain work, couldn't get the usual backup of action figures and the like.

Consider why "Joe Bob Briggs" [John Bloom] liked B-movies. They may not be so well-made or well-acted, but they are the product of a single vision. An A-list movie has the producer, the director, the stars, the financiers, the executive producer, the important outside groups . . . and so something intellectually bland and simple results.

What we would like to see and what the film industry does are so often so disjoint.

— 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.

Apparently, **John Smith**, the maker of *Wholock* (the cleverly made meeting of Sherlock and the Doctor; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 13 #1) is now a special effects technician on *Doctor Who*. Well, that's one way to make your demo.

*Wholock*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3bGYIjQ5Uw&t=14s>

On December 6, **Colin O'Brady** finished the crossing of the Antarctic continent, solo, unassisted, and without a sail. This is getting pretty picky (i.e. he stopped at the *beginning* of the Ross Ice Shelf, not the coast) but he had a Tom Crean moment, finishing his journey with a nonstop trek of 80 miles.

Henry Worsley's partner **Louis Rudd** finished the crossing two days later. O'Brady and Rudd had to wait two more days to be picked up. (They had flown in on the same plane and flew out on the same plane.)

If you try to climb Mount Everest without a permit, you can incur a ten-year ban from ALL climbing in Nepal. This includes climbing Everest from the Chinese side, then going down the Nepalese side. The permit costs \$11,000. (For the historically minded, that means Mallory would have to pay £192 and Hillary £412, adjusting for inflation and the exchange rates.) Does this mean we now have to say, "Because it is there and I have a spare two hundred quid.?"

**William Gibson**, the leading figure of cyberpunk, author of the Hugo and Nebula winning novel *Neuromancer* (1984), has been named a Damon Knight Grand Master by SFWA, for "lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy." The presentation will be at the Nebula Awards Ceremony in Woodland Hills, California during the weekend of

May 16-19.

Will he wear mirrorshades to the presentation?

I tried to read a book titled *In The Evil Day: Violence Comes to One Small Town* by Richard Adams Carey (2015; University Press of New England; ISBN 978-1-61168-715-6). I really did. After several chapters of describing what various people in the small New Hampshire town of Colebrook did, I started wondering if "Richard Adams Carey" wasn't a pseudonym for David Weber. The part where he described the operation of an ancient printing press that the local weekly newspaper used, for example, is stylistically suggestive. However, he didn't get into describing in full detail the political opinions of the people involved, so probably not.

There is a tragic and bloody story buried in all this. Carl Drega, a local landowner, had dumped fill into a local river to restore his property or divert the river, depending on who you talked to. On August 19, 1997 he drove into town and shot and killed two police officers, stole the police car of one, drove to the newspaper and shot and killed a judge, then killed the newspaper publisher who was trying to take the gun away from him.

He fled, was run to ground, and was killed in a gunfight. Three other police were wounded in the process.

It doesn't help that Carey describes Drega's actions and mental state during the incident. Either he's going too far making things up or is a powerful telepath and needs to have a talk with the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry's Center for Inquiry (the Randi Million Dollar Prize has been discontinued).

Reports have been issued arguing that the newly discovered planet of Barnard's Star could support life. Oh no! The Medusae are coming, and we haven't done a *thing* to develop AKKA!!! We're doomed!

ἥ ὀ ἄ μὸ ἔ : ὀ ἔ  
ἄ ὀ ἄ μὸ ἔ : ἰ ὀ ἄ μὸ ἔ  
ἔ ἔ ἔ .

[Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.]

Phoenix Pick is publishing the first version of *The Number of the Beast*, with the approval and involvement of the Heinlein Trust. The title used will be *Six-Six-Six* and it will come out in November 2019. This would appear to be the book referred to in the New Heinlein Opus List as G.183, which is also referred to as *The Gallions of God* and *The Panki-Barsoom Number of the Beast*.

<http://www.phoenixpick.com>

(Unfortunately for Heinlein, as you can see, the original Greek of Revelation is ἑξ ἑξ ἑξ [hexakosioi hexkonta hex], "six hundred sixty six" spelled out in words, not put in numerals which could be interpreted as powers of numbers.)

MONARCHICAL NEWS

There is of all things a movement in Russia, the Double-Headed Eagle, which is floating the idea of making Vladimir Putin Tsar Vladimir, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias.

IT'S . . . Michael Palin, now **Sir Michael Palin**, KCMG, CBE, FRGS, in the New Year's Honours. Sir Michael received a Companionship of the Order of the British Empire in 2000 for service to television, and is being made a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George for his work in expanding geographic knowledge with his many documentaries and service as President of the Royal Geographical Society.

Let us hope the ceremony doesn't end with a huge foot stamping down.

Also honoured was Philip Pullman, who was knighted, and Christopher Nolan, scriptwriter, producer, and director of *Dunkirk* and the *Dark Knight* movies, who was made CBE for his filmic work.

Monseigneur Prince **Henri d'Orléans, Comte de Paris** and Orleanist claimant to the French throne, died in Paris on **January 21, 2019**. He had been preparing to go to the memorial Mass for Louis XVI, felt unwell and canceled, and then died. He was born near Brussels on **June 14, 1933** and became claimant upon the death of his father in 1999. He was succeeded in the claim by his oldest surviving son, **Jean, Duc de Vendôme**. His funeral was **February 2** at the royal chapel in Dreux.

The Orleanist claim stems from the descent from King Louis-Philippe, King of the French (1773-1850; r. 1830-1848). It is contested by the Legitimist claim of **Louis Alphonse de Bourbon, Duc d'Anjou**, the descendant of Alfonso XIII of Spain and of Francisco Franco (who is still dead).

NOW HEAR THE WORD  
Commentary by Joseph T Major of  
**THEM BONES**  
by Howard Waldrop  
(1984)

Waldrop is known for alternate history stories that are more amusing than speculative: "Custer's Last Jump" (1976), "Save a Place in the Lifeboat for Me" (1976), "The Ugly Chickens" (1980), and "Ike at the Mike" (1982) for example.

It is therefore a bit surprising that his AH novel would be serious and insightful, not to mention worked out. But so it is.

The narrative runs in three threads, but the

beginning point is an anomaly; a horse's skeleton found buried in a thirteenth-century Mound People mound. As is obvious, this is too late to be an indigenous horse and too soon to be an imported one.

The setting is an excavation site in Louisiana, at a place with the suggestive name of Suckatoncha Bayou. The archaeologists are not going to have any aid like finding a periodic table of the elements; they merely run into problems. Like the horse's head having a bullet wound, complete with cartridge case found in the vicinity.

On top of this, the site is in the Mississippi River flood plain, and has to be excavated before it gets flooded out. Which gets harder when they discover a funerary mound, which has the presumed honoree buried in the upper level, and below him a ring of beheaded corpses, with their heads buried one level down below.

The second thread begins the explanation. There is a time-travel project going on, with the expectation of trying to change history and keep humanity from being destroyed due to plagues and nuclear war. Nobody there read "Aristotle and the Gun" (L. Sprague de Camp, *Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1958) evidently.

Their plan is to send a man back to the thirties to scout out the country, then send a team to introduce the right kind of technology, and bring about a more suitable result to the path of history. The scout finds himself in a pre-Columbian America; he had been afraid he would materialize in a B-25, which would explode to their mutual assured destruction.

The Native Americans are initially hostile, but by being willing to learn, instead of being the Great White God with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men (as far as they know), he becomes accepted. It helps that he doesn't make any social gaffes (cf. "The Man Who Came Early" (Poul Anderson, *F&SF*, June 1956) or "Eutopia" (Poul Anderson, *Dangerous Visions*, 1967)). Fortunately, one of the locals speaks Greek and fortuitously he does too. It's not our time-line and maybe the scout should keep an eye out for the Paratime Police.

Only, it turns out that not all the Native Americans are simple people living in harmony with the environment (something about human sacrifice does not appeal to him), and the scout is forced to use his superior equipment to turn the tide.

The third thread deals with the main party. They are in yet another pre-Columbian America, and the Native Americans gradually turn hostile. While the initial chapters are the diary of an expedition member, the narrative ends up shifting to a mere troop count, with an occasional note on how they are negatively impacting the indigenes.

The final chapter has the diarist explaining their plans. They will be overrun soon, so she

is going to bury her diary and the computer records in a sealed box for future generations. The party will hold out to the last round and then shoot themselves, the alternative being less pleasant. You can guess what happened afterwards from the description of the burial mound.

Oh yes, there was the one officer who was a Latter-Day Saint. He deserted, taking with him not only provisions but a set of maps showing the way to what would become New York state, and several brass plates. Er, right.

The scout ends up communicating with the people who sent him. Not positively, and he informs them he is going to throw grenades back to the future to destroy the equipment. Stargate Command never had such problems.

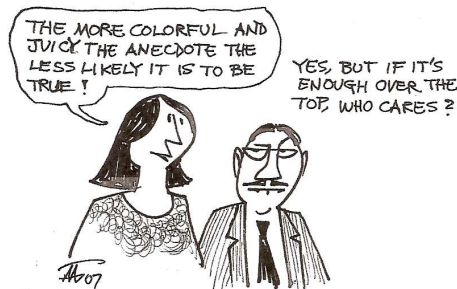
Back at the mounds, as the site floods, at the last moment the archaeologists discover the box. The computer disks (how 1980's) have deteriorated into uselessness, not that they would understand what they were anyway, but the diary has survived, albeit in need of careful restoration.

I have raised the point before about science fiction being more realistic than mundane fiction. The preferred example is the difference between *Neanderthal* by John Darnton (1996) and *Almost Adam* by Petru Popescu (1996) on the one hand and *Ancient of Days* by Michael Bishop (1985) and *Orphan of Creation* (1998, 2000, 2010) by Roger MacBride Allan on the other. In the first books, the "mundane" ones, the discovered prehumans are left alone. It seems to take off from the standards of thriller fiction, where the wonder had to be shut off from further reality, as in *The Moon Pool* (1919) and the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). In the "science fiction" ones, the discovery of the prehumans makes a difference in society.

The "difference" that the reading of the diary will make is not specified, though it is clear that there will be one. Waldrop lets the reader imagine what will happen next.

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FIGURES OF EARTH  
 Commentary by Joseph T Major of  
**MASQUERADE**  
 by Lowell Cauffiel  
 (1988)



"What means this Greek?" Dom Manuel had asked.

"*Mundus decipit*, Count," they told him, "is the old pious motto of Poictesme: it signifies that the affairs of this world are a vain fleeting show, and that terrestrial appearances are nowhere of any particular importance."

"Then your motto is green inexperience," said Manuel, "and for me to bear it would be black ingratitude."

So the writing had been changed in accordance with his instruction, and it now read *Mundus vult decipi*.

— *Figures of Earth*, James Branch Cabell

If any of his marks had put to the test the goose-feather Dom Manuel had modestly used to hint at his importance, he could have undergone an interesting transformation; perhaps cut into pieces and buried in various sites about the city.

In 1983 Dr. W. Alan Canty of Detroit (Grosse Pointe, technically) was a successful and prominent man. He was a devoted, hard-working psychologist. He would see patients at any hour of the day. He was supportive of his wife Jan's desire to have a career of her own, and a loving son to his mother Gladys, who affectionately called him by his childhood nickname of "Buster", for all that he would turn fifty soon.

Perhaps most noteworthy was his work on autism. His theory was that one cause was repressed anger towards parents, and his solution was to lead the patient through violent psychodramas. His Project Indianwood sought to lead the children through this, to work out their pain, and he recounted his successes in his book *Therapeutic Peers: The Story of Project Indianwood* (1976).

John Carl Fry, also of Detroit, was none of these things. He had been in and out of prison several times. He was devoid of any working skills or even desires. He had departed his family rather abruptly the last time they had been together, after his brother had been found shot in the head under questionable circumstances. His nickname of "Lucky" seems to have come from the sort of experiences which lead to a dog with three legs, one eye, half an ear, and mange being called "Lucky".

He did have one asset. Perhaps literally. "Pimp" does not quite describe Fry's status, since he did not have bling, a piece, and fine clothes. He had something else to spend the money on. He had one asset.

Dawn Marie Spens had been a good girl gone bad, to evoke a cliché. She had started going around with dubious compions, and taking drugs. When she got the chance, she fled to Detroit, there to become a sex worker. Which rather dignifies her status as a cheap whore in a bad district. And her money went to Lucky, who had a use for it.

Then Dawn found a customer who was generous. Profoundly generous. He paid \$250 for Dawn's bail of \$200 when she was picked up on a prostitution charge, except she had already got out.

His gifts continued and expanded. He bought Dawn a nice coat, a fancy color TV, and other desirable things, all of which had a rather brief tenure at their residence.

Cauffiel estimates that by 1984 Dawn and Lucky were spending **\$1000** a day on drugs. At one point Lucky had \$1200 stolen from his trousers, having taken them off to get an injection in his buttocks. He laughed it off.

(As an example, when Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo went to Las Vegas (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971)), they spent \$300 on drugs and liquor. That was for the two of them for four days, and they had some left over. That was the equivalent of \$770 in 1984.)

Dawn, meanwhile, was treated for an abscess in her thigh; one that might have spread into a vein, and thence to her heart, killing her. After treatment for the infection, she refused wound treatment. The open wound made it easier to inject drugs.

A minor point might be Lucky's tendency towards defilement. One of his tattoos was of Tweety from the Warner Brother cartoons, and often his explanation for where money had gone was "Tweety wanted a drink."

In 1985 the customer visited both of them. There were words, and Lucky hit him in the back of the head with a baseball bat, killing him. This was inconvenient. They cut up the body and left the parts buried in various places around Michigan. This did not work well, and they were soon arrested.

For the murder of Dr. W. Alan Canty. He had used a pseudonym while soliciting sex.

Then the world of Dr. Canty came apart. He had been borrowing heavily from his mother. He had sold various valuables from his house, including a very good coin collection. At the time of his death he was overdrawn at the bank.

All to give to Dawn, paying their drug habit.

After a brief psychological problem, Canty had begun seeing a counselor himself. He had finally opened up; he realized that the whole relationship was a sham and they were using him to pay for their drug habits. He was going to leave Dawn . . . after one final confrontation.

Then there came the final shock. **Project Indianwood was a total sham.** The book had been published by a vanity press. There were no patients; only monitors who read the violent stories as Dr. Canty listened. (They were all young women; there's something peculiar about this.)

It's surprising that this hadn't come out before; parents of autistic children were desperate for anything that would be of help. This may explain the credulity of antivaccination people, explaining autism as the result of a reaction to immunizations.

Fry was convicted and got a jail term; fortunately for him, Michigan did not and still does not have the death penalty. Dawn got probation.

Jan Canty changed her name, remarried, and remained silent on the matter for thirty years. Lucky Fry died of hepatitis in prison. And incredibly, Dawn Spens gave up prostitution and drugs, got married, and settled down to an ordinary life.

*Mundus vult decipi.* "The world wishes to be deceived." W. Alan Canty deceived himself into believing that he was a great autism counselor and that Dawn Spens was a good girl at heart who just needed one last bit of cash to get away from her pimp. Lucky Fry believed that Dawn's customer would pay for their dope forever. And Dawn . . . it's hard to say.

Reading this leaves one with an ugly perspective about drugs. They seemed to absorb everything about Fry; he would do anything for another fix and anything he got went to it. His addiction took over his life, which admittedly had never been much to begin with.

What would he do if drugs were legalized, and reduced in price? From his behavior, likely take even more, until it killed him.

#### LIEUT. GULLAVAR JONES: HIS VACATION

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**RESCUE MODE**

by Les Johnson and Ben Bova  
(2014; Baen Books;  
ISBN 978-1476736471; \$25.00;  
Baen (Kindle); \$5.38)

*Lieut. Gullavar Jones: His Vacation* (1905) is considered an unacknowledged predecessor to *A Princess of Mars* (1917). A disconsolate American naval officer, stuck behind a backlog of higher-ranks, is walking down a street in New York City when he nearly gets hit by a man falling from the sky. He ends up getting a carpet that was with the fellow, and upon expressing some despair at the prospects of promotion, is engulfed in it, and by the time he gets free, he is on Mars. (He had wished he were "in Mars", which one would think would be fatal.) After various intriguing and romantic encounters, he is returned to Earth (where, presumably, he is investigated for being Absent Without Leave). He did not science the shit out of things while he was there, much less grow potatoes.

In 2035, the somewhat-prosaically named Mars One mission is launched with a multinational crew of eight. Problems arise both on the ship and back on Earth. In accordance with the "No bucks, no Buck Rogers" rule, costcutters in Congress have called the entire concept of the mission into question, and stand ready to terminate the program at the slightest misstep. Such as, for example, the meteoroid that hits the spaceship and cripples it. Add to this a conflict between the commander and his number one, who thinks himself more qualified for the mission, and there's problems in space. (At least the personal relationships work out fairly well and there's no issues with one astronaut having an affair with another one's wife.)

The conflict proceeds on several levels. In space, there is the problem of repairing the ship

sufficiently that it does not break apart entering orbit. One of the astronauts has cancer and his safe return may be impossible. Back on Earth there is the disturbing issue of continuing or not; unpleasant trends, so to speak. And then there was the case of the astronaut's wife and child who were squashed by a truck. The problems aren't just mechanical, so to speak.

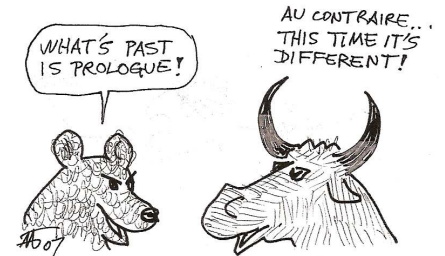
As the Mars One approaches the red planet, the astronauts have to make a crucial decision. The resolution has that certain *Frau im Mond* touch about it.

Johnson and Bova have recounted a beginning, a promise of wonders to come. Two vets of writing about the real space program and doing it speculate about what might happen next. As Clarke said, "The truth, as always, will be far stranger."

#### LIKE BROTHER, LIKE BROTHER

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE HAMMER AND THE ANVIL:  
1944-1963 . . . A Story of What Might Have  
Been . . .**

by David Trower & Jeremy Hubbard  
(2018; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)



The idea was interesting: What if Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. wasn't blown up over the English Channel, but had survived the war and gone on to fulfill his father's political dreams? He was not quite the man his brother would be, having for example gone to Spain to observe on the Nationalist side. There would be a lot of potential in such a career.

Add to this what the authors do have happening, a rather painful experience in a German prisoner of war camp, and there is promise for an interesting additional conflict, though one hopes not as bad as in William Peter Grasso's *Unpunished* (2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 11 #3), with its dirty political story of murder and manipulation.

However, they don't do anything with this. Instead, JPK finds himself in charge during the Cuban Missile Crisis, faced with the sort of problem that was fortunately averted in our time-line. A promising idea, but mishandled.

#### MIRROR, MIRROR

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**HEINLEIN IN REFLECTION:  
Robert A. Heinlein in the 21st Century**

by Christopher G. Nuttall  
(2019; Amazon Digital Services; \$1.00)

This is a brief set of essays on most of Heinlein's books. (There were some he just couldn't bring himself to read.) The comments are a combination of personal reflection and historical study.

Nuttall examines the consistent themes that exist in Heinlein's books, the foremost being his absolute detestation of slavery. This in turn leads to a defense of Heinlein against accusations of racism. He also discusses various other issues, such as his portrayal of women, in which he finds both positives and negatives.

After discussing the books, Nuttall has commentary on the running themes, and the portrayals of various topics. He has a very nuanced discussion of the presentation of these ideas, and points out the conditions under which he had to operate. That is, Nuttall examines Heinlein *in his time*, not by the standards of other eras. Things change as time passes, and today's viewpoints may be seen as being just as bad by future eras.

He is not afraid to label a book as less than perfect. One has but to look at his perspective on *Time Enough for Love* (1973; NHOL G.171), which echoes Jo Walton's comment that if the book had been broken up into its separate stories and they had been published separately, Heinlein would have swept the Hugos. Still, he finds that "The Tale of the Adopted Daughter" is one of the most tragic and most profound of the parts.

I would question his judgment on *Podkayne of Mars* (1962, 1963, 1990; NHOL G.147); for all that Podkayne is the title character and narrator, her brother Clark is the protagonist. He is the one who is changed by the events of the novel. (And he apparently never found an affordable copy of *Heinlein's Children*. Sigh.)

The day I got this was the day of the announcement of the release of *Six-Six-Six* (2019; NHOL G.183). It's a worthwhile lead-in and an introduction to RAH for the lamentably uninformed Millennial fen.

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CSI: ARLINGTON HALL  
Review by Joseph T Major of  
**IN THE ENEMY'S HOUSE:**  
*The Secret Saga of the FBI Agent and the Code Breaker Who Caught the Russian Spies*  
by Howard Blum  
(2018; HarperCollins Publishers;  
ISBN 978-0525538484; \$29.99;  
Harper (Kindle); \$13.49)

A jumble of letters; they are deciphered. A secret trial and sentence of death.

— *The American Black Chamber*, Herbert O. Yardley

As sunset approached on June 19, 1953,

three men waited and trembled. This book is the story of the two Americans who had been responsible for the event that would take place that night, and yet regretted it.

In 1944, at the requisitioned girls' school of Arlington Hall, near Arlington Cemetery and not far from the new Pentagon, an officer began pondering treachery towards an ally. Or, some might say, treachery of an ally.

There had been rumors of a separate peace between the Nazis and the Soviet Union. (To get an idea of what that might be like, read Robert Conroy's *Himmler's War* (2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #6).) By way of preparation, Meredith Gardner began to attack Soviet cryptosystems.

The war ended without Soviet treachery. Nevertheless, he persisted, and soon found an amazing stroke of luck; the duplication of one-time pads that led to the decryption effort that was called BRIDE then and VENONA now.

Code names began to emerge from the jumbles of letters. There was ALES, who after the Potsdam Conference had gone on to Moscow. There was MLAD, who seemed to be a good source in ENORMOZ. Overseas there was STANLEY, who seemed to be getting people into nice messes.

And there was LIBERAL, whose wife ETHEL did not work because of health. But who was LIBERAL?

Enter the Gang Busters, hunting criminals in peace and war. More precisely, William Lamphere, a senior FBI Agent, who unlike his boss presumably would not discount a decrypted message because he didn't like the courier's lifestyle.

The G-Men began to search. LIBERAL had meetings with agents at certain times, including one called KALIBR. The pieces came together. KALIBR was a machinist at the Manhattan Project named David Greenglass. His sister was Ethel — then Greenglass, now Rosenberg.

Now that they had a suspect, the FBI could move in. They made their case, called the Rosenbergs in for a few questions, then arrested them.

Blum does not go into the controversy, then and up to now. (Try *The Rosenberg File* (1984, 1997) by Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton.) It might be interesting to read his opinion of Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* (1977) (or, for that matter, Radosh's).

Instead, he focuses on the crisis of conscience that Gardner and Lamphere suffered. They had seen the VENONA decrypts; they knew that far from the Rosenbergs being the "thieves of the secret of the atom bomb", they were only directors of one effort, and there were many more there. And, Ethel "did not work"; she was the mother of two children. Lamphere recommended this to his boss, and J. Edgar Hoover agreed, passing on a memorandum to the presiding judge, Irving Kaufman. Who nevertheless remained unconvinced. On June 19, 1953, the Rosenbergs were executed.

The third concerned man mentioned above was Aleksandr Feliksov, the Rosenbergs' con-

troller. Later on, he was the back channel to the Soviet government during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and in 2003 brought out *The Man Behind the Rosenbergs*, which one would think would have been a sufficient persuader. (Even the confession of Morton Sobell, the Rosenbergs' co-conspirator, in 2018 doesn't seem to have done that for some people.)

Lamphere was disillusioned by his failure. He left the FBI and went to work at the Veterans Administration. Gardner was dismayed at what he had facilitated, but continued to toil in silence until his retirement.

There are still people who doubt the reliability of the decrypts. Some even think they were forged. But then, there are people who think the world is an elaborate hoax.

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## REPORTS FROM THE CIRCUS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**CHURCHILL'S SPY FILES:**  
*MI5's Top-Secret Wartime Reports*  
by "Nigel West" [Rupert Allason]  
(2018; The History Press;  
ISBN 978-0750985499; \$32.95;  
Amazon Digital Services; \$9.99)

What did Churchill see then?

As an inquisitive, piercing sort he was curious about what the Security Service, also known as MI5, and affectionately nicknamed "The Circus", was doing to foil German agents in the country, and control those they controlled. After long prodding, Sir David Petrie, the Director-General of the Security Service, decided to give the Prime Minister a monthly memorandum with such reports.

This book contains those reports, the depiction of what Churchill was told about spies. Just by itself, it illuminates that part of the war; we can now read what they were doing then, without knowing what would come next.

But beyond that, West gives *context*. He explains who was doing things and what, more than the sparse contents of the reports could do, and with the perspective of time. It helps that he knew personally Dusko Popov (TRICYCLE) and was the man who found Juan Pujol Garcia (GARBO) in Venezuela. (Incidentally, the reports make Popov to be a most effective doublecross agent, even after the FBI fumbled the Tricycle Memorandum.) There are tales of the colorful safeblower turned spy, Eddie Chapman (ZIGZAG).

As well, less famous and less self-promoting doublecross agents feature. There is Wulf Schmidt, alias Harry Williamson (TATE) who was so cooperative he registered to vote, as a Tory. He got disallowed which was a pity, as they needed the votes.

Month by month we see how MI5 foiled the German plots and played them for fools. It makes one think of how their descendants played the KGB station in London, once their agent Oleg Gordievsky got into a high position in the KGB residency there.

Small things like this can lead to a greater understanding of great things. The British did

not need to dispatch a misinformed staff officer to be taken prisoner of war and be interrogated by the Gestapo in order to mislead the Germans about the landings in Europe (cf. "The Quaker Cannon" by Cyril Kornbluth (*Analog*, August 1961).) They controlled the German sources of information in Britain. This book tells us what they were doing.

#### THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE WOMAN WHO SMASHED CODES:  
A True Story of Love, Spies, and the  
Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted  
America's Enemies**

by Jason Fagone  
(2017; Dey Street Books;  
ISBN 978-0062430489; \$27.99;  
HarperCollins (Kindle); \$11.49)

Let me not to the marriage of true mindes  
Admit impediments, Loue is not loue  
Which alters when it alteration findes,  
Or bends with the remouer to remoue.  
O no! it is an euer-fixed marke  
That looks on tempeſts and is neuer -aken;  
It is the ſtar to euery wand'ring barke,  
Whofe worths unknown, although his hight be  
taken.

Loue's not Times fool, though rofie lips and cheeks  
Within his bending fickle's compaſs come;  
Loue alters not with his breefe houres and weekes,  
But bears it out euen to the edge of doome.  
If this be error and upon me proued,  
I neuer writ, nor no man euer loued.

— Francis Bacon, Sonnet 116

Or so "Colonel" George Fabyan, the employer of the subject of this work, would have had us all believe. And it all began when he went to the Newberry Library in Chicago and hired, out of the blue, a meek little librarian who had been trying to find a place for herself. Her name was Elizebeth Smith. (Her parents had wanted her not to be "Eliza".)

Elizebeth went out to the Rivenbank Institute, a place where all sorts of things were researched. It was all paid for out of Fabyan's pocket. And one of the bees in his bonnet was that those plaies were written by the learned and worldly-wise Sir Francis Bacon, not Shakspur the illiterate grain-merchant of Stratford.

And Bacon had left a clue. It seemed that he had devised a way of sending messages "omnia per omnia". One might set up a text, but have letters of two fonts in it. The letters in one font would be 0, the other would be 1; and 00000 would be "a", 00001 would be "b", and so on. The guy had discovered binary and didn't know it. Fabyan decided that the First Folio of Bacon had the secret message proving his authorship in it, and set Elizebeth Smith and others to pick out the two fonts and read the messages.

Even the typesetting of the First Folio has been extensively studied, and theorists identify no fewer than five compositors who set up the type. Since none of them retired to the

countryside and bought a nice house with the money given them by Bacon, it is presumed that there was no effort to provide them with extra money for the extra effort required.

And seriously, Elizebeth found out that there were so many variations in the typeface that there could not have been a consistent A-font and B-font in the typesetting. It doesn't seem there was such a message.

But she was missing human interaction, until she went looking and found a geneticist working for Fabyan's organization, studying plants. This was significant.

Wolfe Friedman was born in Bessarabia. In 1892 his family got tired of being persecuted and relocated to the United States, where Wolfe became William Frederick Friedman. While having a certain interest in codes, thanks to "The Gold-Bug", he studied genetics, and ended up at Fabyan's institute, where he met a fellow decipherer.

There were problems. Fabyan did not want to lose two key personnel. And the elder Friedmans were horrified that their Wolfchik should marry a shiksa!

Then there came the War to End All Wars. There was a shortage of decryption personnel, so William F. Friedman became an officer. There was another guy doing this, and naturally they became rivals.

When peace was declared, William went to work for the War Department, while Elizebeth went to work for the Coast Guard. Her job was decrypting smugglers' messages. A lot of them were monoalphabetic substitutions, which means that Captain Midnight would have been in trouble if Mrs. Friedman was put on his case. (The Code-o-Graph of the *Captain Midnight* radio show is a monoalphabetic substitution device. We all have to start somewhere.)

Then the other guy got fired; something about not reading other gentlemen's mail. And so William F. Friedman became heir to the archives of the Black Chamber — and angry when the former proprietor spilled the beans!

Nothing amiss, he set about directing the recreation of the Japanese diplomatic cipher machines, first their RED machine and then the PURPLE machine. As a result of this last, when Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared:

I must say that in all my conversations with you during the last nine months I have never uttered one word of untruth. This is borne out absolutely by the record. In all my 50 years of public service I have never seen a document that was more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions — infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined until today that any Government on this planet was capable of uttering them.

... he had had time to work up a stinging response, since he had read the Japanese Fourteen Point Message before the Japanese emissaries had! (They had a lousy typist.)

While his wife decrypted messages for the Navy (which had taken over the Coast Guard) apparently William got into an adventure out of, well, *Captain Midnight*, fighting Nazi infiltration into South America. This shows how efficient the government was, sending a code breaker to do a counterintelligence agent's job.

Elizebeth had had a big, hairy, male man placed over her in the Navy decyphering service. She stepped away from the business. Meanwhile, William had started having feelings about the cherm by Rabbi Gershom ben Judah about reading other people's private mail (who did he think he was, Stimson?). Or something like that; he became depressed, had shock treatment, got worse again, and eventually died.

He is buried in Arlington Cemetery, and his tombstone carries a message in the Baconian cipher, his initials hidden in a phrase done with regular and sans-serif letters:

KNOWL/EDGE I/S POWER  
babaa/aabab/aabab  
W / F / F

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/2631/william-f\\_-friedman](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/2631/william-f_-friedman)

Elizebeth continued to cherish his memory until she herself died. Her ashes are spread on his grave.

KEINE ENGLANDSPIEL  
Review by Joseph T Major of  
**CHURCHILL'S MINISTRY OF  
UNGENTLEMANLY WARFARE:  
The Mavericks who Plotted Hitler's Defeat**

by Giles Milton  
(2017; Pivador;  
ISBN 978-1250119025; \$28.00;  
Macmillan (Kindle); \$9.95)

This is a vividly-told story of the operations of the Special Operations Executive, the British secret agency which waged asymmetric warfare against the Axis powers. It focuses on the often eccentric personalities who were drawn into this effort, telling a story of organizing the unorganizable for a systematic effort.

As such, it is lively, readable, and entertaining. It would serve as a good introduction to the history and means of such irregular warfare.

There is much lacking in the book. For example, although much is made of the many men and women trained in all sorts of irregular, asymmetric, and ungentlemanly (unladylike) warfare, there are comparatively few stories of action, and much detail given to organization.

Even when an action is described, the focus is often off. For example, from reading the description here of Operation CHARIOT, the raid on St. Nazaire, one would think it was an entirely SOE operation, when in fact only three SOE operatives participated.

More tellingly, the book focuses on success. There is nothing whatsoever about the

*Englandspiel*, Operation NORTH POLE [*Fall NORDPOL*], the German turning of the entire SOE network in the Netherlands. There is substantial material on this, not only the main operator's memoirs (*London ruft Nordpol ; das erfolgreiche Funkspiel der deutschen militärischen Abwehr* (1951) [*London Calling North Pole* (1953)] by Hermann J. Giskes) but the voice crying in the wilderness of the cipher expert who determined that Something Was Wrong (*Between Silk and Cyanide* (1998) by Leo Marks).

So, read it with caution.



## EX ANTARCTICA SCIENTIFICA

Review by Joseph T Major of

### *AN EMPIRE OF ICE:*

*Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of*

### *Antarctic Science*

by Edward J. Larson

(2011; Yale University Press;

ISBN 978-0300154085; \$40.00;

Amazon Digital Services; \$11.99)

"I'm gonna have to science the shit out of this."

— Mark Watney

One thing that Larson demonstrates here may surprise people. For all his harum-scarum ways, Ernest Shackleton had more scientific research done than Robert Scott did.

Larson describes the often-glossed-over scientific research programs of the Scott and Shackleton expeditions. It was a great white void and there were all sorts of questions to be answered. (Running into the buried city "At the Mountains of Madness" was not on the agenda.)

The scientific researches were conducted in a variety of fields. Naturally meteorology was a prime one, but there was also geography, zoology, cartography, geology, and vulcanology (the bases being at the foot of Mount Erebus was a particular inspiration for this). Each topic is covered in its own chapter, which makes the book not exactly linear.

One of my New Year's resolutions was not to buy anything I did not need. I kept it perhaps two days before being tempted beyond my ability to resist by a piece of Oriental pottery in a thrift store. About all I have been able to do is resist the temptation to buy washcloths from the Dollar Tree, a store where

everything is sold for a dollar. The cheap price is a great help in running a household but also leads to buying things I should not. Perhaps I am being too hard on myself. Minimalism is new to me and perhaps it is something I will have to ease into a little bit at a time. Right now, though, I'm a complete failure at this.

— Lisa

## InConJunction XXXVIII

Con report by Leigh Kimmel

InConJunction is an old-school science fiction convention that's held every year in Indianapolis, and is one of the Midwest's longest-running science fiction conventions. This year it was held over the weekend of July 6-8, 2018 at the Indianapolis Marriott East, which is just down the road from us. We're so close we could actually walk to it, if only the neighborhood were walkable.

Because of the extreme heat, and because we wanted to have the van in a good position to load in, we went over to the hotel right after lunch on Thursday. We sat around waiting, and I did a little more writing.

Then we got word that the dealers' room was open for load-in, so we hurried in to find our booths and start hauling everything in. As would be our luck, it started raining right about time we were loading stuff in, which meant having to wrestle with tarps to protect our merchandise, especially the books. We did get everything in reasonably quickly, and then we started setting up our structures. However, with the larger setup we were doing, we had more to put together, so we weren't anywhere near ready when they shooed us out for the night.

Then we headed over to the con suite to see what might be available. After munching a little, we headed back home, where I did a couple of writing challenges on LiveJournal before turning in for the night.

On Friday we had to get up early to get back to the hotel and finish setting up as soon as the dealers' room doors opened. At least this year we didn't forget a whole bunch of stuff, but we managed to have some other problems because we were hurrying so hard. However, we did manage to get everything set up in time, although we didn't have any time left over to look around the dealers' room.

When the doors opened and the general membership started flowing in, we did get some sales. However, traffic was relatively slow, enough that I had some time to get some reading done on my phone while I was waiting between customers. Still, Fridays are always slow.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed over to the con suite to get some munchies. Then we headed back home for a real supper. We had a scary moment when a slip and fall accident came very close to being a "call 911" accident.

However, the family member was able to get back up on his feet with some assistance and didn't seem to have done himself any serious harm, so we decided not to worry overmuch

about it. All the same, we rearranged some stuff in the front room to reduce the risk of similar falls in the future.

On Saturday we headed back to the hotel and dropped in at the con suite to grab some breakfast. Then we headed over to the dealers' room and got our tables opened for business. Once we were ready to go, I did some walking around and met an old dealers' room neighbor from MidAmericon II, the 2015 Worldcon. We visited for a few minutes, but the doors were about to open, so I had to cut it short and hurry back to our shop.

Sales continued to be slow, although this is a small convention, so we have to adjust our expectations accordingly. However, I was beginning to have some serious second thoughts about whether to continue to buy the 10x30 setup, as opposed to the 10x20 space we'd been using in previous years. We simply weren't seeing the increased level of sales to justify the additional space.

On the other hand, our emoji masks were selling quite well for us. In fact, we were running low enough that I decided we really needed to buy a lot more of them if we were going to have enough for our August conventions.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we went over to sit at the Royal Manticorian Navy table for two hours. Since it was so late in the evening, we didn't get much traffic, so I spent a good bit of the time working on my writing.

Afterward we headed home and I made our actual supper. Then I went up to the storage unit to retrieve some merchandise, and I put in an order for those emoji masks.

On Sunday we headed back to the hotel for our last day of the convention, wanting to make it a strong finish. Since the dealers' room didn't open until an hour later, we were able to take a little more time having breakfast in the con suite, and could actually enjoy the food and visit with friends.

Then we got our tables uncovered and ready for sales. I did a little looking around before we actually opened, visiting with the other dealers and comparing notes on sales. When the doors did open, sales remained obstinately slow, cementing my decision to go back to the smaller space for the next year and be more selective in what merchandise to bring.

In the afternoon we started packing the figurines so we'd be ready to haul things out as soon as the big rollup door opened. However, with the extreme heat and so much unsold merchandise, I ended up having a lot of trouble keeping up the pace of load out, and it seemed like we were taking forever. We finally managed to get some help, which did speed up the process enough that we were able to get done in time to catch a little of the dead dog party in the con suite.

Then we drove the van back home, knowing I was going to have a bunch of stuff to unload into the storage unit. Because we hadn't

sold all that much, we decided not to celebrate by going out to eat. Instead, I fixed a supper for us, and then sat down with the ledger to do the bookwork for the con.

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### ICON 43

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

ICON is a long-running old-school science fiction convention based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. For the past several years it's been the same weekend as Archon, which is a much larger show, so it wasn't possible to do both of them. However, this year Archon had to move a week later, which made it possible to do both.

This year's ICON was held over the weekend of October 5-7, 2018 at the Marriott in Cedar Rapids. This is a larger hotel several exits north of Zazza's, the hotel where it was held both times we went previously, over a decade ago.

Because of the distance, we'd been planning to stay at my dad's place on the way over to Cedar Rapids. However, we'd forgotten that we weren't going to go over to the con on Wednesday, mostly because it had a relatively late load-in time on Thursday, and it isn't that far from the Bloomington-Normal area to Cedar Rapids. So we ended up going over on Tuesday (in some pretty heavy rain), then staying at my dad's place on Wednesday, just visiting. It did mean I had more time for doing laundry, and I could go with Dad to do errands in Bloomington on Wednesday afternoon, not to mention having some time to spend with my dad, who's still adjusting to being a widower after fifty-two years of marriage.

On Thursday morning we carried our personal stuff back out to the van and hit the road. We made pretty good time to Cedar Rapids and checked into our hotel with time to spare. I even did a little writing on a novella while we were waiting to go over to the main hotel and load in.

We'd expected to have to wait before we could load, but we got right into the dealers' room. We were even able to switch to a location that gave us greater flexibility.

On the other hand, the logistics of load-in were somewhat difficult, with some doors that had to be struggled with. As a result, it took us a fair amount of time to get everything in, in spite of having much less merchandise than we take to the big anime and comics conventions. It didn't help that I had to work around some crates of merchandise that would only be taken to Archon the following week.

Even so, we did manage to set up a fair amount of our sales structures before we were chased out for the night. We drove back over to our hotel and relaxed for a little while before turning in for the night.

On Friday we got up in time to have the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we headed back to the main hotel and finished setting up. I even had time to take a bunch of empty boxes back out to the van, since space

was at a premium in such a small setup. We even got finished before the dealers' room opened for business and had a little time to look around, a welcome change from the frantic scramble we have at so many conventions.

However, business was pretty slow, not surprising at a relatively small convention. In fact, it seemed that the convention was smaller than I'd been lead to believe by some people I'd talked to previously. Either it had shrunk since that year, or they'd grossly misjudged the number of people in attendance.

There wasn't much in the way of parties, so we just headed back to our hotel room to have supper. Then I tried to do some writing, but I literally fell asleep sitting up. So we decided to go ahead and turn in for the night.

On Saturday we got up and had the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we headed back over to the main hotel and got second breakfast in the con suite before heading down to the dealers' room to open our tables. We had a little time to look around before the doors opened.

However, sales remained stubbornly slow all day long. I had to take a break in the middle of it to go upstairs to the con suite and set up my computer in order to buy into two conventions for the first part of 2019. It was a good thing I did, because one convention's dealers' room filled in twenty minutes, and the other in a matter of hours. If we'd tried to wait until after the Icon dealers' room closed, we would've ended up shut out of them.

When the dealers' room did close, we headed upstairs to the con suite, where we had supper and did some munching while waiting for the parties to start. I pulled out my novella and tried to get a little writing done, since I wasn't sure we'd have any writing time when we got back to our hotel.

The parties were fairly decent. I got to talk to some people at the Anime Iowa party, and to get an idea of when they'd be opening their vendor application form. We also went to some personal parties and got to meet some of the local fans and talk about Iowa fannish history. By the time we'd visited all the parties, we were ready to just go back to our hotel and turn in for the night.

On Sunday we got up and had the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we headed over to the main hotel to get the pancakes in the con suite. After we'd had a few, we headed down to the dealers' room to get our tables open.

We did get some sales, but business remained painfully slow. After lunch I started packing the fairies, and we still weren't ready to load out at closing. It seemed to take forever to get everything out and into the van. However, it didn't help that we were getting rain — not anything heavy, but just enough to need to keep everything trapped. I also had to work around some significant problems related to merchandise for Archon that was in our way.

After we got done, we headed back up to the con suite for the dead dog party and did a little munching. Then we returned to our hotel room, where I got a little writing done as we had our

real supper with nourishing food. Then we turned in for the night, knowing we needed to be alert and rested for the drive back to Dad's place.

On Monday we carried our belongings back out to the van and got checked out of the hotel. We'd acquired some empty boxes from another t-shirt vendor, and they were proving difficult to get to fit. However, we squeezed all of them in, although one of them was a persistent nuisance all the way home, wanting to tip forward into our laps.

We also had a frightening moment when we first put in a CD and got an error message. Evidently the CD player had condensation in it and the lens was fogged up, because as we drove and warmed up everything, it finally decided to play properly again.

We got to Dad's place in good time and I carried stuff in. Since we were going to stay with him until time to head off for Archon, I could take my time about getting laundry done, as well as spending some time just visiting.

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### Archon 42

Con Report by Leigh Kimmel

Archon is the long-running science fiction convention in the St. Louis area. Over the years it has adapted to the changing times by adding more media and gaming tracks to its programming, such that it has been able to thrive and even grow as many old-school science fiction conventions are shrinking and closing their doors for good.

This year Archon was held over the weekend of October 12-14, 2018 at the Gateway Convention Center and the Doubletree Hotel in Collinsville, Illinois, which is one of the metro east suburbs of St. Louis. You can still see the Gateway Arch from the bluff line, looking across the Mississippi River.

This year we were doing Archon as the second weekend of a double-header, after Icon in Cedar Rapids. Because it didn't make sense for us to drive all the way back to Indianapolis, only to turn around and come back the next day, we'd stayed Tuesday and Wednesday at my dad's place in the Bloomington-Normal area.

On Thursday we put our personal belongings back in the van and headed down to Collinsville. We actually made pretty good time, even with an extended stop in Litchfield to shop at Walmart and then eat in their parking lot rather than on the road.

This year we'd been able to get a room with a jetted tub at the Day's Inn. We'd hoped that it might help my husband's legs, since that hotel doesn't have a hot tub. However, that room was on the second floor, so we had to deal with going up and down an elevator, but the room was nice enough overall that it did make up for the hassle.

Then we went over to the convention center to pick up our badges. While we were waiting, I was reading a book and suddenly got a whole scene for one of my novels. I had to frantically



search for some suitable paper in my purse, but I got it scribbled out on a little scrap of what looked like list paper.

When we got back to the room, we took turns using the jetted tub. Then I tried to do some work on images with GIMP. I was able to crop out a decent publicity photo from one of the pictures my brother had taken of me at Twin Lakes Park, but when I moved to trying to fix a cover, the whole program went haywire. Apparently I need to download an updated version, something I'd prefer to do at home, on a network I trust. So I gave up and we turned in for the evening.

On Friday we got up early and ate the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we headed over to the convention center to get ready to load in. I got a bunch of merchandise out, trying to gain access to our cart, but my husband secured a flatbed cart first. I used it to carry everything in. I had a little hassle when I took some of our mats in, discovered that we didn't need them because there were enough of the convention's mats, and then had someone think we were trying to make off with the convention's mats.

Because of the rain and the lack of help, we were way behind on setting up. Usually Archon is one of the cons where we set up with time to spare, but this year we were scrambling to get ready when the doors opened. It probably didn't help that we were also covering an additional table, agenting for a friend who discovered he needed to attend a family get-together in New Hampshire that weekend, *after* he'd already bought his tables for the convention.

However, we did get some decent sales once we got to a reasonably settled point. We even were able to go over to the art show and get some food at the artists' reception. This year they were doing a cash bar, so even the pop cost money, but the food was still decent.

After the reception, we headed back to our hotel and had supper. Then I did a little writing before we turned in for the night.

On Saturday we got up early for the hotel's complimentary breakfast. Then we headed over to the convention center to get our tables open for business. We put up signs and replenished our displays from back stock. I also started tightening the secondary paperbacks to see how many we'd sold, and took some boxes out to the van.

Then we settled in to sell. I was at the books and t-shirts, and was happily surprised to get several large book purchases. As a result, I got two trays of back stock empty, and part of a third. This was one of the most substantial book sales events we'd had in ages, even if it wasn't quite like the old days when we'd empty four or five trays of paperbacks at Archon.

After the dealers' room closed for the evening, we headed back to our room to get supper. Then I did some work on my writing while my husband played games. Although Archon has a fair number of parties, they

usually aren't really to our taste, being too late for someone who needs to do business the next day, and really more focused on alcohol than either of us are comfortable with.

On Sunday we got up early to eat breakfast, then gathered our things and get them out to the van so we could check out. Because all our local helpers were commuting from their homes, we didn't have to wake anybody up or make sure they had all their possessions out, which did simplify matters.

Then we went to the convention center and got our tables open in hope of a strong finish. We also had some time to walk around and look at the various other vendors' tables. There were several that had remained empty throughout the weekend. In one case a long-time dealer had passed away suddenly, and it was too soon to disturb the family with questions of how to dispose of his tables, so they were left to stand empty. However, I never did hear why the other dealer did not claim their tables.

Then the doors opened and we started selling in earnest. We were pretty busy the whole time, although a lot of the merchandise was the stuff we were agenting for a friend. However, I did get several substantial book orders, which probably helped pull our back stock down further.

After lunch I started packing the fairies, since we'd seen little or no interest in them. However, we were still getting book sales, so I'd periodically have to stop and mark stuff off the booklist, then dig out second copies or overflow to keep our front stock looking nice. Because I never had time to consolidate from the beginning, I had no idea how much we had emptied, only that we had some substantial gaps.

Finally the dealers' room closed and it was time to start hauling stuff out. I took the first load of books out while everyone was still packing, but after that I had them just haul stuff out and pile it up beside the van, where I could sort through it. As a result, we were able to get on the road surprisingly early.

The trip was tiring, but we arrived safely at my dad's place. I carried stuff in and fixed supper. Then I went through our ledger and added things up, discovering that we were going to be writing a Very Large Check to our friend, and our own sales were rather thin. I don't know if taking care of his sales meant we scanted our own, or if sales actually were down, but we figured we could give it at least one more year.

On Monday we carried our personal belongings back out and said good-bye to Dad. Then we hit the road home. The drive wasn't that hard, but it was very tiring. By the time we stopped at the Brownsburg branch of our bank to make the deposit, I was fighting off drowsiness.

We went straight to the free community meal before going home. I was still very glad to pull into the driveway and shut down. I carried in our personal belongings, then did some book-work.

## WORLDCON BIDS

- 2021  
Washington, D.C.  
<http://dcin2021.org/>
- 2022  
Chicago  
<https://chicagoworldconbid.org/>
- 2023  
Chengdu
- Nice, France  
<http://worldconinfrance.org/en/>
- New Orleans
- 2024  
United Kingdom  
<http://www.ukin2024.org/>
- 2025  
Seattle  
Perth, Australia

## NASFiC BIDS

- 2020  
Columbus, Ohio

## WORLDCON

- 2020  
ConNZealand  
Wellington, New Zealand  
July 29-August 2, 2020  
<http://ConNZealand.nz/>

## NASFiC

- 2019  
Layton, Utah  
July 4-7, 2019  
<https://www.spikecon.org/>



Ah...  
it's Hugo nominating  
time in fandom!!

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 Letters, we get letters

From: **Joy V. Smith** December 9, 2018  
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I enjoyed the reviews, including Taral Wayne's review of the movie *Early Man*. (Amazing that he persevered.) The only book I had read among the reviews was *The Sister Paradox*, which I really enjoyed. Still lots of alternate histories and real histories, I see.

But the fact remains that for the first time in twenty-two years we are without an animal. It would be easy enough to get another one. I don't want another cat. I want Mr. Chunk and I can't have him back.

— Lisa

Lisa, I know. After I had to put Xena to sleep, my sister began sending me photos of dogs at the local SPCA, and I said: I don't want another dog. I want Xena! And then I saw a photo — still not interested, but Blizzard — the name — popped into my mind. Anyway, I ended up going to look at her and vacillated — we didn't bond up front — and I ended up taking her home...

I am burned out. I just can't face the thought of having to put another one down in a few years. Too, I am selfishly enjoying traveling without worrying about how an animal is faring. Funny, isn't it, that the animal I took to oblige friends should have been one of my favorites? It was not the passionate bond I had with my first cat, Elfling, but Mr. Chunk was a good friend and the one who reminded me most of the Doberman I shared my life with when I was a young woman and who spoiled me for lesser dogs. So Mr. Chunk has now spoiled me for lesser cats. Both he and the Doberman had a quick intelligence. Having Mr. Chunk was a bit like having the Doberman back, except that it did not fall to me to have to end the Doberman's life.

— LTM

Thanks again to Sue Burke for her con review. I haven't been to one lately so I enjoyed the feel of being there. Re: LOCs: I liked the reference to Red Green; I'd forgotten him and the show. Fun. And congrats to Sue Burke on the publishing of a sequel to *Semis*. (I saw that on Facebook too.)

December 14, 2018

I enjoyed the reviews, especially the review of *Astounding* and THE four writers and the background; and I want to read Dave Barry's review of *Fifty Shades of Gray*, aka *Fifty Shade\$ of Gray*. \* Thanks to Rodford Smith for his impressive article on physics and rockets; and I loved the UFO tech support cartoon. Thanks to Sue Burke for her Windycon review

I always enjoy the LOCs too, with more information, including learning about The Hollow Earth and more info on the caste system. And there's a lot of cultural appropriation that we can't even remember 'cause it's ours now...

And Happy Birthday, Joe!

\* Okaay, I took the time to track it down and read it. Good review. Badly written book, which, btw, I haven't read 'cause I was never tempted after reading other reviews.

I tremble, to think, of what, might happen, were Barry, to read, and review, the Gor books.

— JTM

From: **Dale Speirs** December 16, 2018  
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You started off lamenting the changes in SF conventions. As you surmised, it is possible to have specialized sub-genres. Calgary has its Comic Expo (60,000 attending) and Otafest (anime festival, 8,000 paid), but it also has a successful readercon When Words Collide (capped at 750 plus fan volunteers).

I don't agree that big-tent conventions are or were particularly good at cross-fertilizing sub-genres. Back in the 1970s, few Trekkies bothered with small conventions such as the SF Worldcon, which today often isn't even the biggest convention in town that weekend. When Calgary still had its general SF convention Con-Version, the Trekkies went to their panel tracks and those of us that had read a book went to ours.

The modern cosplayers that go to the big comic cons aren't SF readers who defected. They never were and never will be interested in Asimov or what Forry Ackerman did in 1939. The Calgary Stampede rodeo has 1.2 million paid attendance over ten days, but I feel safe in saying that genuine cowhands such as myself are outnumbered by townies more interested in the midway or the funny dog show.

When Words Collide always sells out two months before the convention. Reading for fun isn't declining, just not as colourful as wearing costumes, hence the lack of media attention. The WWC dealer bourse is strictly books and very successful.

Antarctica journeys seem rather dated. I'd like to see those brave explorers walk across the flatlands of the Canadian prairies along the Trans-Canada Highway from Winnipeg to Calgary in late January. And specifically in that

direction, so they would always be facing into the prevailing winds. 1,500 km of treeless exposure could match anything the southern continent could provide.

Do you have the 300 Club in Calgary?

— JTM

I liked the reference to "How David Weber Orders A Pizza", and downloaded a copy. Laugh, I thought I'd die. Too true, and should be required reading for wanna-be military SF or cyberpunk writers. Infodumps have always been a problem in SF, but there is a difference between explaining the background of new worlds and just padding out the word count.

Calgary had its version of a yellow-vest protest a few days ago. No rioting or burning. The movement is quite popular here because we are the petroleum capital of Canada. The protestors are not ragbag layabouts or students but well-dressed petro-executives and construction trades who really do wear yellow vests in their jobs. They are against the carbon tax, for the pipelines, and against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's failure to withstand the new trade deal with Trump. He's been a lousy PM because he doesn't know how to negotiate with tough people. He's another Neville Chamberlain, waving a document in the air and declaring we have peace in our time.

From: **Timothy Lane** December 22, 2018  
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I haven't seen Forsyth's *The Fox*, but it sounds good, and he certainly has written a lot of very interesting stories. But I did see *After the Fox*, which has many interesting scenes. Perhaps the best is near the end, when they show what little camera footage they have for their fake film — and a movie critic rushes forward in the courtroom to praise it most extravagantly.

Do you have a feeling it was a commentary about the state of film criticism?

Rod Edmiston has a nice discussion of a space beanstalk. I wonder what he thinks of Forstchen's *Pillar to the Sky*. He faces a problem Clarke didn't need (or maybe didn't want) to face, terrorism. But it remains a major engineering effort.

Windycon certainly had a most impressive guest list, though that was also the case the one time we went, when Elizabeth and I were Fan Guests of Honor 20 years ago. They've moved since then. But they obviously still deliver a good experience, which is what counts.

It's nice that Advent's books will be available. I had a nearly complete collection, but most of those were left behind in the house when it was sold (along with so much else I wish we could have kept, if we could find a place to keep them in a hotel room). Joseph's

book is one of the few I brought out, of course.

I don't think my mother ever taught, but her sister and mother both were teachers, the latter an English teacher.

I would agree with George Price that suitable hyphenation would help the appearance of a document, especially one with as many (and thus narrower) columns as *Alexiad*. Back when we did *FOSFAX*, our program (WordStar) handled it fairly well, but sometimes it placed soft hyphens inconveniently.

Cultural appropriation is one of the biggest inanities of the politically correct left. How many people even know the cultural origin of every item or concept they use? Under Saul Alinsky's precept in *Rules for Radicals* that one should force one's opponents to live up to their own rules, multiculturalists should have to avoid cultural appropriation of any aspect of European science — including synthetic fabrics and even cotton if it's been ginned, modern antibiotics and vaccination (except for smallpox if one uses variolation), modern transportation and communication . . .

I usually see this in context with all the things that BDS supporters would have to do without if they were consistent.

— JTM

A little over a year ago, I was prescribed opioids for the pain from bandaging my leg wounds. I was hesitant to take them, but the nurse assured me that if I only used them for actual pain control. I actually had to use larger doses, but in the end I had no trouble dropping them when I no longer had the pain (the legs still need bandaging, but are a lot better than they were last year). They're still available if I need them, but I haven't used them in months.

From: **Lloyd Penney** January 11, 2019  
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I have finally gotten to *Alexiad* 102. It's Friday, and it's very cold outside, and I have decided to write all day, and get caught up a little. I always say that.

Your Reviewer's Notes say a lot to me today. The SF market is bigger than ever, as you say, for just about anyone can get an e-book printed, and the paper publishers are losing their relevance. With that, it's another reason why I don't recognize most of the authors. Add the fact lack of money, and for me, time, and I have largely left SF behind. I have some unread books on the shelf, but with changes in interest, they remain unread. The main reason? I can't keep up with the genre, and I have let it go as it barrels on without me.

I hate the big, pro-run conventions. Costs have risen to the point where fan-run conven-

tions are dying through not being able to afford to operate without demanding huge membership prices. Everyone wants it all, and only the big pro cons can afford to bring in hordes of actors and cosplayers. I could tell you so much about Torcon 3... The people who ran it had no conventions-running experience, and got rid of those few who did, like me and Yvonne. They also had no experience with fandom as you and I know it, most of them being wannabe pros. Our bidding process was so positive, and the result so negative. It is the main reason there will (probably) never be a Worldcon bid from Canada again.

The programming was a mess. I ran into Darrell Schweitzer when I was going to a panel he was on. I was walking to the hotel, where the program I had said his panel was, and he was going to the convention center, where the information he had said his panel was. His was right. Mike Resnick's con report described the confused time he had on programming and had as a refrain, "I just love the Torcon 3 Program Committee."

I think what we've enjoyed, conventions with lots to see and do, and friends to meet with, is had their time in the sun, as have we. And now that we have reached that age we have, we miss these cons. Our interests change, too. After our 30 years each on the con committee, we shifted our efforts to Harry Potter, steampunk and steampunk vending, and to be honest, no regrets there. It's allowed us to be busy like we were before, for a different audience. We value our friends, and our newer interests have allowed us to make new friends with some newer fans, including the steampunks, plus the assorted fellow dealers we meet at conventions and other events.

I am on Facebook, as it is the social media platform that offers text and visual communications that is closest to my own experiences as a journalist. I find Twitter good only if you have a regular message to get out to the masses, and extremely ephemeral. I knew very little of the San Juan convention, and the fact that Puerto Rico is still in tatters made this convention a poor choice for the times. It doesn't affect you, hm? I suspect it does, and you probably miss it as much as I do. I already feel a little old and forgotten, and I think I have found a new arena where I can feel at least somewhat useful and appreciated.

Nowadays it seems you have to have a Twitter account and a LinkedIn account in order to get a job.

I have never met Jo Walton, but I gather she was busy with a small invite-only con called The Farthing Party, and is now trying to get a Kickstarter going to start a new con called

Scintillation. Let's hope that it isn't invite-only as well.

When the big STAR TREK problem was afflicting Worldcon, back in the seventies, MidAmeriCon [I] ran a little story in its progress report titled "How the GRINCH Stole Worldcon". It seemed bids by *Lost In Space* [Right!!!] oriented committees were winning alternate years. When a fannish Worldcon won, the "Spacies" held a countercon the same weekend. Then one of their con publications printed something libelous, the fannish Worldcon sued and won — and since the con wasn't incorporated, the entire membership was financially responsible, including the production company (which had bought a con membership). With the settlement, the committee for the fannish Worldcon (Grand Island, Nebraska CHonvention, hence "GRINCH") switched to invitation-only Worldcons.

Rod Edmiston's essay on the Joy of High Tech sounds a little hollow...I admire high tech as well, but I'd like to think that it has been hijacked by big business as a means to increase profits. It looks like soon, I might not be able to get on the bus or do my banking unless I have a \$1k smartphone and a Twitter account, and I have neither. We all have too many plastic cards with magstrips, but there is an effort to ditch the cards for the expensive phone. More and more such tech, for all the good it can do, is more exclusive than inclusive.

My loc... It's not rainy today, but the temperatures are Arctic in nature, around -13C, or about 9F. I am going out later on my rarely-worn heavy winter coat. As soon as I turn 60, I start getting a financial supplement from the federal government to make up for Yvonne retiring and getting less money on her pension. I could have used that for the past year, but 60 is an arbitrary age, I guess. Yvonne's assignment at the racetrack to the north of us expires at the end of this month, and she is looking for something else. She has agencies looking for her, and they are confident, but they are also quite silent right now. I was indeed one of the proofreaders/copy editors on issue 2 of the new *Amazing Stories*, and on issue 3 as well. I hope to continue this with issue 4 and any other issues Ira Nayman would like me to work on.

John Purcell's letter...I know of at least a few fanzine fans who do not see anything electronic as a real fanzine, and therefore, will not read them, let alone respond to them. I see this as hurting, not helping, so I respond to (nearly) all the zines I get.

I miss Murray Moore.

— JTM

Halfway through this, I started to get a dull headache, so I will say I enjoyed the rest of the local, but will offer no comments. I don't care to start any arguments, anyway. Anyway, time to go, and see if I can solve problems I am starting to have with this computer. Take care, and see you next issue.

From: **George W. Price** January 24, 2019  
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December *Alexiad*:

My letter in this issue complained at length about the lack of hyphenation in *Alexiad*. So I was both surprised and delighted to see that this issue is hyphenated. Now that's wish fulfillment to the max! I hope that future issues will continue the practice.

I am curious to know, did you get a new word-processing program, or did you find a way to make the old one hyphenate?

The latter.

I did notice one place where the hyphenation apparently failed, in "The Joy of High Tech":

"Buckminsterfullerene" presumably did not get hyphenated because the word is not in the program's dictionary and you did not choose to insert the five discretionary hyphens needed.

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Since my desire for hyphenation has been so gratifyingly granted, I will press my luck and ask for another change in *Alexiad*'s typography: Please, please, please, find a more readable font for Lisa's inserted comments. I find those teeny weeny lower-case characters painful to read, even with strong reading glasses and a magnifying glass. I assume you want a font distinctive from Joe's. How about Arial, or even Arial Bold?

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Joe's review of works by John Lennard discusses books of excessive length. He cites David Weber's new *Uncompromising Honor*, at 961 pages. This may be conflated with some other book, as my copy of Weber's opus has only 773 pages (which is still quite long enough). Or was Joe's copy a Large Print edition? (I'm pretty sure the paperback won't be out for another year.)

That's the equivalent page-count for the Kindle edition.

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Taras Wolansky comments on my brief history of the caste system in India, and adds some detail about color distinctions within black American society. He says that Anne Worham had to retake an exam at Howard University because the light-skinned administrators didn't believe that a dark-skinned student could have aced it the first time without cheating.

When I was a small child my mother taught piano at a social settlement house on the edge of Chicago's black ghetto. Most of her students were black children from poor families. She also had some white students. On occasion she visited the parents of her pupils, sometimes with me in tow. I noticed that both black and white women had curling irons — the blacks took the curl out of their hair and the whites put curl into their hair. This struck me as pointless — why couldn't they both be satisfied with what they had? As I grew older, of course, I learned the social significance of race and color, and that woolly ("nappy") hair was a mark of social inferiority even among blacks.

The adoption of the "afro" hair style was a long overdue rejection of this social stigma. Like many defiant reactions, it was overdone — blacks in Africa rarely wear afros, preferring to trim their woolly hair short. But on the whole, it was a healthy reaction.

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In reply to a query from James Nicoll, Joe says, "ReAnimus Press has acquired Advent Publishers and is issuing its entire output in electronic format. In chronological order of publication, which means that *Heinlein's Children* is at the bottom of the list. Keep watching."

Let me expand on that. Two years ago Advent gave up its status as a Subchapter S corporation and became a sole proprietorship, with myself as the sole proprietor. I bought out the other owners, including founder Earl Kemp.

ReAnimus hasn't actually acquired Advent; what I gave them was the right to call Advent an "imprint" of ReAnimus and to issue Advent's titles as e-books. In return, ReAnimus set up and maintains the website ([adventpub.com](http://adventpub.com)) advertising both e-books and print books, with payment via PayPal. The e-book orders go to ReAnimus, and the print book orders come to me for fulfillment.

I get all the money from print orders, and ReAnimus gets all the e-book payments. Importantly, it is up to ReAnimus to pay the authors for e-book sales. ReAnimus is obliged to cut its own deals with authors, because Advent's contracts do not cover e-books, having been drawn up before e-books were invented.

As to the order of e-book publication, I am a bit puzzled. ReAnimus has never discussed that with me, but I note that they have brought out an e-book of the Third Edition of Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder*, published in 1996, but have not yet issued earlier works such as *The Universes of E. E. Smith* (1966), *Galaxy Magazine* (1986), and *PITFCS* (1992). So, keep

watching indeed.

While I'm at it, I'll mention a problem with print-book sales: It is no longer practical to mail books to Canada and other foreign countries. The old "bookpost" surface mail rate has vanished. Now it is all airmail, and it costs about \$25 to mail a book to Canada and elsewhere outside the U.S. So Advent now offers "postage included" prices only for U.S. orders. You want a print book sent anywhere else, you will probably do better to order through a local bookstore that may be able to have books from U.S. publishers sent to a U.S. forwarder who can combine books from many publishers into bulk freight shipments. E-books avoid this problem, since they can be downloaded over the Internet in disregard of national borders.

And that's one reason trading for Canadian and overseas fanzines has just about come to an end.

—JTM

From: **John Purcell** January 26, 2019  
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Good afternoon, Joe and Lisa. I hope this missive finds the two of you well and warm. Thanks to growing up in the Upper Midwest, I have always been one to watch the weather, especially during the winter months, because storms of any kind can spring up very quickly. Thus I hope the recent massive winter storm that blanketed the eastern half of the country did not affect you folks. I well remember blizzards from my years living in Minnesota and Iowa. Not fun at all.

Anyway. In response to Joe's comment that "nobody cool answers emails anymore, it's all on Twitter," while I do have a Twitter account, I don't use it that often at all. If anything, maybe once a week. Quite frankly, I don't see the big deal about it, and have seriously considered closing that account. For my needs, Facebook and emails (I do belong to a couple fannish listservs, and even there I don't comment that often) are good enough to stay in contact with my friends in fandom or family.

Your recollections about Forrest J Ackerman at the Worldcons in Philadelphia (2001) and Toronto (2003) are sad commentary not about Forry's aging and physical demise, but also about the fading away of fandom's old guard. If I recall correctly, only Robert Madle is the last remaining member of the first Worldcon of 1939. Yes, it is true that the literary science fiction fandom thee and me are a part of is shrinking, it is offset by the rapid growth of media science fiction fandom. This is not, unfortunately, an even trade-off, but I am not surprised that the central focus of what is now "science fiction fandom" is no longer literary based: it's not even just media — film and television franchises galore based on American comic books, and their offshoots — but social media fandom. There is definitely a major sea-change in the composition of fans

and their conventions, which I see as inevitable. I am grateful, though, that there are still many fanzine and fannish convention fans still rambling about, and a lot of these are friends of mine. This is good, in my book. But I don't want to needlessly worry about nor bemoan the slow heat death of fandom. The way I look at it, fandom is changing, and like I said, it is to be expected.

I don't think Mel Korshak has died, so that would make it two survivors. But you're right, there has been a shift in the types of people who go to cons.

It is interesting that you noted 2001 as the tipping point. I immediately noted that Millenium Philcon ended a couple weeks before 9/11, and that major event changed everybody's viewpoint in many different ways. Perhaps aging fans are simply becoming more jaded and grumpy as they grow older. I know I have, even though I try not to act that way. Even so, this is all something to consider. It will be interesting to see what some of *Alexiad's* devoted readers and loc-writers have to say about your comments.

We went to Washington after the con, and by the Tuesday after I was at work when the news came down. The last traces of a peacetime era; how quickly things changed.

—JTM

Alec Nevala-Lee's book about *Astounding* (which you reviewed on pages 3 and 4) sounds interesting, and I am definitely interested in acquiring a copy. This does appeal to the fan-historian in me. And this fan-historical bent is tweaked some more by Sue Burke's concise report on WindyCon 45. Good heavens, but that makes me feel old! The last WindyCon I attended was still in the single digits: the eighth one, which places it at something like 1981. Dang, but that feels like a lifetime ago. Oh, what am I saying? It WAS a lifetime ago!

That does it. I am stopping now before I get more despondent. Sadly, that's going to happen again in a few hours when today's mail brings more advertisements and come-ons to buy Supplemental Medicare Insurance, or the next issue of AARP magazine. \*sigh\* What can one do?

From: **Sue Burke** January 30, 2019  
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My husband, Jerry Finn, now has a master's degree in computer science from the

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He spent the last two and a half years working on it, remotely via internet (he had to upgrade to a new computer to do his data-crunching homework), with a lot of labor and stress. On the day he turned in his final project, I could tell by the way he walked that he felt happy and relieved.

At age 57 (he's younger than me), when he was lining up for the College of Engineering graduation convocation ceremony in December, he was directed to the faculty line, and he had to insist that he was a mere student. Now, although he's satisfied by his current job, he's looking for work as a computer scientist. And he's finally relaxing.

We celebrated the end of graduate school by seeing an uplifting comic stageplay at a neighborhood theater, *A Klingon Christmas Carol*, in which a cowardly miser named **Squja'** reforms and becomes a generous warrior. The play is delivered in **tlhIngan Hol** (the Klingon language) with supertitles in English, which somehow made it even funnier. The actors earned spontaneous applause for the stage fights: Klingons apparently believe that fighting is a fun way to celebrate holidays. After the curtain call, the cast posed with the audience, everyone cheering, as timHom (Tiny Tim) declared at the end of the play, "**klhIngan maH!**" (We are Klingons!).

I hope your Christmas was as merry. My husband's mother gave us a bottle of her favorite whiskey. She must be planning to visit.

I'll be attending Capricon 39, one of Chicago's big conventions, from February 15 to 17. With his new-found freedom, my husband will also be there. And we're going to Dublin as our summer vacation, and perhaps we'll sample a bit of Ireland's charm before the Worldcon begins.

As for the 2020 Worldcon, there are now nonstop flights to Auckland, New Zealand, from Chicago. They take 16 hours. That alone gives me pause.

Joe mentions that the view through his cataract was yellowish. I notice that too, since the right eye's cataract is more developed, although my left eye is also a little off-color. In addition, I notice a haze around lights at night, as if every night were a little foggy. I still don't need surgery, but it's good to know that it usually goes well.

I used to see sparkles in headlights on cars coming the other way. Now I don't.

George W. Price mentions seeing a lot of Western clothing around the world. There's a reason for that: Western clothing is inexpensive, especially in developing countries, because they get a lot of second-hand and surplus stock. Clothing, new and used, is a big business. What you see at, say, the local Goodwill is only a fraction of the used clothing collected in the United States. Much of it is sent overseas for resale, and the market creates enough value to be tightly regulated. (This is why, if you're

traveling overseas, you can't ship clothing ahead of you by the postal service or UPS.)

Never-worn surplus clothing originates in manufacturer overruns, unsold goods, and unusable items. You may have noticed that champion sports teams don't tee-shirts immediately after the game proclaiming their victory. Those shirts are pre-made, and the loser's shirts get shunted off to the overseas surplus market.

So the next time you see a crowd shot from some far corner of the world, perhaps you'll spot a tee-shirt that says: "Dodgers 2018 World Series Champs!"

Thank you, Lloyd Daub, for your good wishes.

John Hertz, yes, I saw all the displays and exhibits at Worldcon 76, and learned a great deal from them. I also came away wishing we'd kept my father's slide rule.

Bill Breuer used a slide rule as a prop in some of his performances.

"Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels." Lisa, your mom's words may help me lose a little weight, too. I've pretty much given up sugar (the coffee-hour snacks after church are too tempting for total abstinence) and I've noticed how much sweeter fruit tastes, too.

Taras Wolansky asks if Mexican writers would use a form of Spanish that would resemble what Cervantes used. Good question. Yes, they do, the same way that Americans use the same language as Shakespeare, who was a contemporary of Cervantes – except that Spanish has changed less over time than English has. It's true, Spanish varies from country to country, just as English varies between Britain, the United States, India, and Australia. We can still understand each other, despite differences in accents and bits of vocabulary, because the same basic grammar underlies all English varieties.

Taras also asks about the pharmaceutical corporation that created the opioid crisis in the United States. It's Purdue Pharma. More than half the states, among other plaintiffs, are suing it, and many lawsuits should come to trial this year.

You may recall that I've been translating the Spanish medieval novel *Amadis of Gaul* a chapter a week for many years. I've finished! You can see the results here:

<https://amadisofgaul.blogspot.com/>

Joy V. Smith asks about the essay "If I Were a Plant." She can find it here:

<https://semiosispax.com/2017/08/19/if-i-were-a-plant/>

As for how much per hour I'm earning from my first novel, Taras, I'd prefer not to do the math. I'd probably earn more per hour wandering through shopping malls and picking up lost change from the floor.

I got royalties yesterday in the whopping amount of \$7.38.

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** December 1, 2018  
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Thanks for *Alexiad* 12/18.

Review of Alec Nevala Lee's *Astounding*: "At first one thinks that maybe there should have been material on A.E. van Vogt." According to Lee, when I heard him speak at a convention, which authors to concentrate on, and put in the subtitle, was mostly a commercial decision by his publisher. Thus, van Vogt and De Camp were out, and Asimov and Hubbard were in.

Review of Jo Walton's Hugo Award history (1953-2000): I, too, disliked *Neuromancer*, and had stopped reading it halfway through. I think I went back to it and finished it after it won the award, but I can't really remember what it was about.

"Heinlein demanded that he receive the [Hugo] award" for *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Given that the book was a mainstream bestseller, and a Hugo would tend to associate it with the skiffy ghetto, I'm not sure this rings true. A more plausible version of the story would be that Heinlein refused to show up if he didn't know in advance he was the winner.

As I recall, Earl Kemp said that. Earl?

No doubt, Jo Walton's next book will chronicle the decline and fall of the Hugo Award.

But she would have to cover her own book.

Review of two books by John Lennard: As I recall, Dave Barry's point about *Fifty Shades of Grey* was that women will forgive all faults in a man who owns his own helicopter. (Feminist: "That isn't funny!")

"On the other hand, the dragons and fire lizards [in Anne McCaffrey] almost outdo the treecats [in David Weber]." Nothing can outdo the treecats in David Weber. ("The horror. The horror.")

I have been tempted to write a Space Viking story about a raid on a planet defended by Honor Harrington. The Space Viking opening challenge is responded to by an information request for 10,000 words on each political faction on the Space Viking ships.

Review of Michel Houellebecq's novel, *Submission*: I like to make the point to fellow atheists that "you can't beat something with nothing". If they successfully destroy Chris-

tianity, the result will not be some blissful state of enlightened secularism, but merely a more militant and more intolerant religion which will react violently if they try to treat it the way they did Christianity. (If Mormons started engaging in terrorism, liberals would suddenly discover how *bigoted* and *wrong* it is to make fun of *The Book of Mormon*!) In fact, this is already happening, if you remember the story of the fatwa placed on Terrence McNally for writing a play about a gay Jesus.

Something your review does not mention is whether Houellebecq discusses how women react to the Islamization of France. You sometimes hear this yarn about how people "voluntarily" converted from Christianity to Islam in the Middle East or North Africa. Where women are concerned, they are stretching the term "voluntary" well past the breaking point.

François has no emotional engagement with women, for all his sexualized thoughts. The principal female character, one of his one-term mistresses, flees to Israel when the Muslims take over.

Rodford Edmiston: Terrific essay on "Getting High" (altitude, that is).

Charles Sheffield published his space elevator book, *The Web Between the Worlds*, the same year (1979) as Arthur C. Clarke's *The Fountains of Paradise*. I think I preferred Sheffield's book.

The 1983 anime, *Super Dimension Century Orguss*, opens within an aerospace battle around a space elevator. The Japanese media have always been more aware of English-language SF than Hollywood has been. *Orguss*, of course, reminds us that natural hazards are only the beginning of what a space elevator will have to deal with.

Tim Lane: "Maybe I should play my mp3 image of *Fantasia* sometime soon." Censored or uncensored?

"Ellison reportedly got royalty reports showing that the two works [in an Ace Double] had different sales." Possibly legit, if the book was ordered by mail.

"I checked the wikipedia entry on the Indian caste system." Wikipedia cannot be entirely trusted on matters of controversy. Some years ago, I looked up the entry for then-California Senator Barbara Boxer. I knew her colleagues, even in her own party, thought her very difficult to work with; but there was no hint of this in the entry. (In her last election, the hitherto supportive *San Francisco Chronicle* refused to endorse her again because she got so little done.) When I looked at the discussion page, I discovered that a page-sitting troll, either a fan or for pay, removed any negative information posted there.

I later read about a similar troll who page-sits Hillary Clinton's entry. From the samples of his work given, his method is to imbed negative information into very long and convoluted sentences which are almost impossible to decode.

George W. Price: "Nearly everywhere, all those 'quaint native costumes' have vanished in favor of Western dress." As I understand it, much of the clothing we give to charity ends up sold, pretty cheaply, in the Third World.

Lloyd Daub: I've toyed with the notion of an anthology of stories examining the implications of Hitler dying at various points in his career. One particularly amusing notion occurred to me after I read an article about how a particular German general could have stopped Hitler coming to power. In our history, of course, he stayed within the law — but if he had acted, later generations might have considered Uncle Adolf a "martyr for democracy", like Allende or Mossadegh. (Paul de Man: "The term 'Jews' is merely Hitler's metaphor for capitalism ...")

If it was Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, he gets a second bite in Joseph Wurtembaugh's *A Prophet Without Honor* (2017; reviewed in *Alexiad* V 16 #5). Or you could buy my book *A Man and a Plane*.

It's also plausible that, absent the mirage of a German alliance, the Japanese government would have behaved more circumspectly.

"Stalin did not need the spies on the Los Alamos project to get the Bomb". The Soviets would eventually have built an atomic bomb (unless we stopped them), but Stalin would probably have been dead by then. Thus, no Korean War.

Joe (comments to John Hertz): Are recommendations for Best Fanzine published/posted anywhere?

Sue Burke (Windycon 45 review): "I met a 30-year-old woman who had been coming to Windycon her whole life: her parents met there, they brought her as an infant, and she met her husband there." Fandom as space colony: if you can't get new recruits, grow your own.

"My wrinkled, misshapen rocket would have crashed at takeoff." Imagine the remarks a man would have gotten, and consider yourself lucky!

"To my surprise, things took a loud, contentious turn even before the [autonomous cars] panel started." I post a bit at Tor.com, and I am often amazed when comments, on some innocuous topic like "what are the good Robin Hood movies", are censored for violating the terms of use. What did they get heated about, and what did they write?

What did the autonomous car enthusiasts/critics fight about? Was it socialists who see the hand of Big Oil behind everything, versus libertarians who fear Big Traffic Cop?

Sue Burke: "I'd have been happy to sign your book even if it was damaged." You could have got even by misspelling my name, which is what usually happens when I let authors inscribe books to me! These days, I just ask them to put down space-time coordinates,

usually the convention and the year. Anyway, the only justification for autographs I can see is, it makes the survival of the book a little more likely, after I'm gone.

Lisa (comments to Sue Burke): Feet ... Mallomars ... feet ... Mallomars ... I'm thinking, I'm thinking!

Go see Grant (who lost half a lower leg to diabetes) and think about that.

— JTM  
Are these Mallomars worth ending up in a wheelchair?

— LTM

Looking forward to another hundred issues.

From: **AL du Pisani** February 3, 2019  
945 Grand Prix Street, Weltevredenpark 1709, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
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There are some times when I remember that I live in The Future. There are other times when a new capability sneaks up on you, until you suddenly realize that you are making everyday use of this new functionality, which did not exist, really, five years ago.

In the first case, there is the Hopper that SpaceX is building in Texas – A stainless steel prototype for an honest to God Spaceship, that will go to the Moon and Mars. Where the bulk of it is being built by a water tower construction company – If you build a steel water tank capable of holding 100 tons of water, surely you can build a mobile tank for liquid Oxygen and Methane?

And it all blew up during my vacation, when I had significantly less bandwidth available to follow the news. Way back in 1994, when I first got onto the Internet at the office, I hoped to find a one stop news service where I could read all about what was happening. Usenet was not it, although I learned a lot, and there were concepts discussed at the time which have still not been tried. I only found something like what I was looking for in the last couple of years, at NASASpeceFlight.

I had a really good holiday – Took a break from almost everything. Hung about with the rest of my family – For the first time in about four years all of my mother's children and grandchildren were located at the same place for a significant amount of time. I even met some step family I have not had physical contact with in 32 years.

I managed to rest and recuperate, and needed it – See, in the two weeks before the Summer holidays started, at work we implemented a major project in which we replaced one of our major systems. It went very well, considering. Most of it due to our manager, who planned and met and rehearsed it with us two times before going live. Unfortunately, he is not yet back from holiday, since he ended

up in hospital, with among other things a small stroke.

Coming back has been an interesting experience, easing into things slowly at first, but already the next major project is raising it's heads, since there is going to be multiple actions on our side before the implementation.

I ended up reflecting a bit about drone footage, which is one of those things that were a novelty five years ago, and is becoming ubiquitous today. So much so that it is often seen as just another angle, nothing special.

I wonder what the next bit of The Future will be that just slides into normality?

I caught up a bit on my reading over the holidays. And am still finding how much the stuff I can get and read today are unknown to the people that share at least some of my reading tastes. Lots more to read, lots less to talk about.

Get your hands on a copy of *Heinlein In Reflection*, and then show it to the others, so that they may learn.

— JTM

I still hope for some shared SF culture, but think the gate price these days is too high.

From: **John Hertz** January 29, 2019  
236 S. Coronado St., N. 409 Los Angeles, CA 90057 USA

Happy New Year.

This year the TAFF slate is unusually strong. No DUFF. Please donate and vote.

In the Retro-Hugos, I've been recommending Hesse's *Glass Bead Game* for Best Novel. The electronic may see an 800-word note by me via File770.com, right-hand column below "meta".

Shorter (how I miss Elliot) we have a wealth of choices.

For novelette, Gallagher-Galloway robot stories and by the same authors i.e. Moore & Kuttner "Mimsy Were the Borogoves". They each said that after they'd married, everything they published under any name was by both of them. I dunno about "The Little Prince". It was a Classic of S-F we discussed at Detcon (11th NASFiC). There we noticed that as many people appeared as he had days of water. If they're all hallucinations, is it s-f?

Among short-story candidates is Boucher's "Q.U.R."

For Pro Artist, I recommend Alex Raymond. *Flash Gordon* was superb and deserves our applause.

Let's be sure to nominate in the fan categories. Harry Warner's indispensable *All Our Yesterdays* (rev. 2004) treats of the time. The electronic may see scans (and scads) of original material at

[https://fanac.org/fanzines/Retro\\_Hugos1943/html](https://fanac.org/fanzines/Retro_Hugos1943/html)

a good occasion for getting to know the

Fanac.org site.

I cheer the development of Buckminsterfullerenes including the name. Also if his tensegrity engineering helps us get into Space, that would be swell. A new tale, Buck and the Beanstalk.

I have to wonder about that. The first concept for the Dymaxion Home did not have a bathtub. The bathtub that is fitted is only comfortable for someone Fuller's height (or shorter). The Dymaxion Car didn't handle sharp turns very well.

— JTM

Thanks to Sue Burke for quoting "You don't go to a play by Shakespeare to find out how it ends." Nabokov said you never appreciate a good book until you read it at least a second time. Then you get the joy (which as Alexis Gilliland shows us, comes in many forms) of watching the author at work.

Another Nabokov warning is "Minor readers like to recognize their own ideas in a pleasing disguise." We could heed that better.

A tide of passivity has come in. Some, I fear, is from Electronicland. In theory it should empower. In practice, I can't help seeing, its net effect (no pun intended) can evidently be disabling. I haven't been good enough with this warning. Partly *It's dangerous finding fault, to an addict, with his drug*. Partly it's hard getting "That's conceptually flawed" past *I wanna I wanna*. Partly ecology is hard. But one doesn't blame the audience. Anyhow, the fannish thing is to find what's worth doing and find a way to do it.

P.S. Are you the New New Christy Minstrels?

#### WAHF:

**Martin Morse Wooster**, with various items of interest.

**Steve Fahnenstalk, Patrick McCray** with thanks.

**Gary & Cora Flispart, Alexis A. Gilliland & Lee Gilliland, Marc Schirmeister**, with Christmas cards.

**Chris Barkley, Sue Burke, R. Graeme Cameron, Johnny Carruthers, Carol Clarke, Jeff Daiell, Steve Fahnestock, Paul Gadzikowski, Mike Glycer, Tammi Harris, John G. Hemry, Dara Korra'ti, Eric Lindsay, Howie Modell, Andrew C. Murdoch, John Purcell, Mike Resnick, Steven H. Silver, Joy V. Smith, Rod Smith, Garth Spencer, R-Laurraine Tutihasi, Olexander Vasylykivsky, Joel Zakem** with birthday wishes.

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 THE MULE

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7959026/>

*The Mule* (2018) is the latest entry in the popular Foundation movie saga. Producer Peter Jackson, who brought out the two *Foundation* movies (2014, 2016) and the epic of intrigue *Dead Hand* (2017) stepped aside as director for this installment of the franchise.

The movie was directed by Clint Eastwood, who also stars as Magnifico Giganticus, the title character. The beginning is slow-paced, with the Mule enduring his humiliation in his degraded job in the entertainment industry. The scene where he discovers his power to reshape people's minds is shocking, and his decision to see about getting back at his oppressors a terrifying prelude.

Then he fades into the background, as the scene shifts to the Foundation planet of Terminus. Terminus Mayor Indbur III (Lawrence Fishburne), having ridden the defeat of the Empire's Admiral Bel Riose (James Purefoy) to primacy (as recounted in *Dead Hand*), is settled in his authority when the news of the rise of the Mule becomes public.

Agent Lan Pritcher (Michael Pena) [the character's name was presumably changed to avoid *Star Wars* intellectual property clashes] is dispatched to investigate this extraordinary event. Taking as cover a young couple who pose as *Encyclopedia Galactica* salespersons, Toran and Bayta Darell (Bradley Cooper and Dianne Weist), he infiltrates the Mule's empire seeking the whys and wherefores of this unseen yet powerful conqueror.

Eastwood's skillful direction and deep characterization highlights the deep-seated irony of the next section. As Pritcher and his associates travel through the shattered Galactic Empire, they note that this conqueror, the Mule, is omnipresent and never seen. They are thoroughly deceived by Magnifico Giganticus, their new associate, who continues his sham attitude of humility and even subservience as behind the scenes he undertakes the subversion of these realms and managing his new conquests.

The journey follows the spread of the Mule's rule and the derangement of the Seldon Plan. As the reality of the situation becomes apparent, Lan, Bayta, and Toran each struggle with their observations . . . and are finally confronted with the shocking truth.

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Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major  
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This is issue **Whole Number One Hundred and Three (103)**.

**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 LAPTOP THAT I GOT IN REPLACEMENT OF MY TABLET WHEN THE TABLET'S CAMERA BROKE DOWN HAS A TOUCHSCREEN SO I CAN STILL USE THE STYLUS, BUT I'M STILL WORKING OUT HOW'S A COMFORTABLE WAY TO DO THAT WHEN THE KEYBOARD IS ATTACHED



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