

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΕΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

June 6 marked the seventy-eighth anniversary of D day. I paused to remember the terrible sacrifice many of those young men who went onto those beaches all those long years ago made that day. Most of those who survived that brutal, terrible assault on those beaches are gone now but there are still a few old survivors to be honored on June 6.

For this year's Memorial Day I changed the routine somewhat. Memorial Day itself was going to be miserably hot so I decided that I would put the flags out the Saturday before Memorial Day when the weather would be much nicer. I discovered that I did not have enough flags so had to make a trip to Walmart. To my astonished grateful surprise the lady in front of me paid for my items, including personal items unrelated to Memorial Day. Her husband was a soldier. After I put out flags on Saturday I found a few more and put those out on Memorial Day itself.

— Lisa

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The 148th Running of the Kentucky Derby was **May 7, 2022**. In an amazing set of events, Rich Strike qualified for the race after another horse was scratched, half an hour from the deadline. He proceeded to win the race in a blazing stretch run.

The 147th Running of the Preakness Stakes was **May 21, 2022**. Rich Strike did not run. Early Voting won.

The 153rd Running of the Belmont Stakes will be **June 11, 2022**. Early Voting did not run. Rich Strike started slow and came in sixth, while favorite Mo Donegal won.

The 68th Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) will be **July 1, 2022** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 97th Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) will be **July 30, 2022** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The 130th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) will be **October 9, 2022**, at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

The 68th Running of the Messenger Stakes (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **July 1, 2022** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 67th Running of the Cane Pace (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **August 6, 2021** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The 77th Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **September 22, 2022** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio.

Printed on June 27, 2022
Deadline is **August 1, 2022**

Reviewer's Notes

My health continues its ups and downs. I am again getting iron infusions. This may become a regular part of my life. The blood specialist wants me to have a colonoscopy, to determine if I have some injury in my colon that is making me bleed into my abdomen. But the internist says they can't do the colonoscopy until my hemoglobin goes up. And they also demand that I be sedated for the procedure, which I've never needed or wanted before.

In those long-ago and far away days when the teacher pulled the latest issue of *Astounding* out of the fan's hands with a shout of, "Don't read that junk!" we longed for a world where science fiction was accepted. And now that we have it, we are still marginalized. Cons are overrun by people who have seen every Marvel Universe movie and want to discuss the secret meanings of minuscule elements therein. Said movies are the box-office champions of the year.

No company would even look at a production of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Destination Moon*, or anything of like depth. Look at what happened to *John Carter*, dumped by Poopy Panda (they dropped "of Mars" because *Mars Needs Moms* bombed, so Mars was held responsible — aren't we glad they didn't think *The Martian* had the same problem).

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



TRINLAY KHADRO

Buy my books. (All available on Amazon.com for quite reasonable prices, except the Hugo-nominated *Heinlein's Children*, which can be bought from Advent Publishers, or from ReAnimus Press in electronic format.)

<https://www.AdventPub.com/1531>

Advent Publishers
P.O. Box 16143
Golden, CO 80402-6003

<https://reanimus.com/store>

— Advt.

The wreck of the *Endurance* has been declared to be a Historic Site and Monument. This means no diving there to bring up valuable souvenirs for wealthy collectors. (Who buys these things, anyway? Drug barons like to flaunt their loot.)

The Antarctic Treaty parties, which issued the declaration, also specified the location of the wreck, which is at 68° 44' 21" South 52° 19' 47" West.

Nic Farey asks why we don't cover the FAAN Awards. When they started, it was by a clique, and I've never been able to get into a clique. So I never got into the habit.

OBITS

We regret to report the passing of **Abe no Seimei**, beloved cat of Trinlay Khadro, on **May 9, 2022**. Trin reports (through her tears) "We went with Seimei to the vet around 4:30 to see if they could make him more comfortable, he passed away on his own at about 6:30." They take a part of our hearts with us when they go.

This tragedy was followed by the passing of **Megumi-hime**, on **June 6, 2022**. They are now together at Rainbow Bridge.

Our heartfelt condolences to Trinlay.

GOLDEN GLOBE

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
A VOYAGE FOR MADMEN
by Peter Nichols (2002)

A WORLD OF MY OWN:
The First Ever Non-stop Solo Round the World Voyage

by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston (2004)

THE STRANGE LAST VOYAGE OF DONALD CROWHURST

by Nicholas Tomalin and Ron Hall (2001)

**Nine men set out to race each other around the world.
Only one made it back.**

On a beach in the Cayman Islands, on the island of Cayman Brac, there lies a rotted wreck of a fifty-year-old yacht. Once, the man who sailed it had high hopes and grand plans; he would employ advanced technology, modern boat design, and his own astounding skills to become famous and rich. The venue would be an amazing race, an exploit which would test the limits of man and boat alike, a daring attempt to sail around the world, alone, nonstop.

Nowadays there is a regular quadrennial sailing solo around the world nonstop, the Vendée Globe race. Every one has been won by a French yachtsman, and the record is seventy-four days three hours 35 minutes 46 seconds, held by Armel Le Cléach in his yacht *Banque Populaire VIII*, a hydrofoil, in the 2016-2017 race, which began November 6, 2016. There were twenty-nine starters of whom eighteen finished.

But fifty years ago there were personalities and singular people. It began with a sixty-five year old nearsighted aviator named Francis Chichester, whose greatest navigational discovery was that of flying the wrong course. (He would take a course that would almost certainly be to one side of his destination, so when he got within sight he would know which way to turn.) He had cured terminal lung cancer by a vegetarian diet, or so he believed (it may have been only an abcess).

This rather unlikely sort had switched from flying to yachting, and had begun by winning a solo trans-Atlantic race in record time. Seeing the race being infiltrated by Beautiful People with expensive custom-designed boats full of high tech, he decided to take a step up.

In August of 1966, he set out from England in his yacht *Gipsy Moth IV*. He stopped in Sydney for a refit, and on May 28, 1967, he returned to England, to acclaim and honours, becoming Sir Francis.

This started a stir. The only better thing to do would be to sail nonstop. The people who set out to do this were a different sort.

The *Sunday Times* was looking for some way to cash in. Some of the would-be circumnavigators had already sold their stories. So, the editors decided on a way to sweep them all up.

There would be no coordinated start, the preparations of the various competitors being what they were. So, instead, the *Sunday Times* would award a trophy, the Golden Globe, to the first competitor to return, and a prize of £5000 to the fastest competitor. This discouraged one

of them; nevertheless he persisted.

So, who were these nine madmen?

Chay Blyth

Charles Blyth was born May 14, 1940 in Hawick, Roxburghshire. He was a sergeant in the Parachute Regiment, and had rowed across the Atlantic in the dory *English Rose II*. He was sailing in the sloop *Dytiscus III* and had absolutely no sailing experience.

Alex Carozzo

Born in Genoa in 1932, but living in Venice, he was an Italian Navy merchant officer who had in 1965 sailed solo from Tokyo to San Francisco, a first. He was sailing in the ketch *Gancia Americana*.

Donald Crowhurst

Donald Charles Alfred Crowhurst was born in 1932 in India; he had a complicated career including being asked to leave both the Royal Air Force and the British Army after various exploits. He had a habit of wrecking cars. He owned a company that built navigating devices and had minimal experience in sailing, yet was persuasive enough to nearly get Chichester's *Gipsy Moth IV*, and then to proceed with the building of a trimaran, the *Teignmouth Electron*.

Loïck Fougeron

Loïc Yves Ignace Marie Fougeron was born September 26, 1926 in Saint-Nazaire. He was of all things the manager of a motorcycle distributorship in Casablanca. He was sailing the cutter *Captain Brownie*.

Robin Knox-Johnston

William Robert Patrick Knox-Johnston was born in the London suburb of Putney on March 17, 1939. He was a merchant ship captain and a Royal Naval Reserve officer. He was sailing his wooden ketch *Suhaili*, which he had used for some time.

Bill King

William Donald Aelian King was born June 23, 1910. While serving in the Royal Navy submarine service, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order with bar and the Distinguished Service Cross. Retiring to the rural life in a castle in Ireland, he eventually formed the desire to sail around the world and had built the plywood junk-rigged schooner *Galway Blazer II*.

Bernard Moitessier

Born in Hanoi on April 10, 1926, he was an experienced sailor, having had several adventures while escaping the Vietnam War. He wrote about his sailing experiences which gave him the money to have built the steel ketch *Joshua*.

John Ridgway

John Manfield Ridgway was born July 8, 1938. He was a Captain in the Parachute

Regiment. Had rowed across the Atlantic in the dory *English Rose II*. (We've heard this before.) He was sailing in the sloop *English Rose IV*.

Nigel Tetley

Born February 8, 1924, he was a retiring Royal Naval officer (indeed he got a early discharge to take part in the race). He got the idea to sail around the world solo after hearing of the others, and used his trimaran *Victress*, which had been functioning as his home.

These were not the monied elite of world yachting, the participants in the America's Cup race, in other words. A tenth, William "Tahiti Bill" Howell, had been considered to be a lead competitor, but he had reconsidered after a Trans-Atlantic race which had not gone very well for him.

The smallest boat was the *Victress*, 22 feet long; the longest was *Gancia Americano*, 20 meters (66 feet). Besides the unusual rig, the *Galway Blazer II* had a covered cockpit. And the *Teignmouth Electron* . . .

Robin Knox-Johnston had sailed the *Suahili* solo 10,000 nautical miles from South Africa to London. He began the idea, but the *Times* didn't think his boat could make it. He found other sponsorship, while the *Times* set up its proposal.

Others became encouraged and began preparing. Bill King got sponsored by the *Daily Express* and its partner the *Sunday Express*. Ridgway and Blyth both decided to join in, even though Ridgway had very little sailing experience and Blyth had none.

John Ridgway was the first to set out, on June 1, 1968, the first allowable date. His rowing partner Chay Blyth followed a week later, June 8. That Blyth had to have friends show him how to rig the boat might have indicated that he would not have a successful voyage. Knox-Johnston set out from Falmouth harbor on June 14.

Ridgway did not do well. On June 16, he had a meeting with one of his backers, who had come out from Madeira. He gave them letters, and was given some local food and copies of the *Times*. This, he discovered, disqualified him. He was already feeling overwhelmed by it all, and poked along for another month before putting into harbor in Recife, Brazil.

On August 15, Chay Blyth had been having a hard time in the gales, and put in to Tristan da Cunha. There was a merchant ship there, named of all things *Gillian Gaggins*, and Blyth went aboard, had a shower, a good meal, and a quiet night's sleep. This disqualified him, of course.

Ridgway and Blyth had started in a hurry with a lack of experience, and they had settled on similar boats. These boats were not strong enough to endure the sea conditions.

By a peculiar coincidence, the two Frenchmen, Fougeron and Moitessier, set off from

Plymouth on the same day, August 22. Moitessier had wanted to depart from France, but had been persuaded to go to l'Angleterre. He had considerable experience sailing in the Pacific, and had been born in Hanoi in colonial days. He was dubious about the point of the competition. Fougeron had almost no single-handed sailing experience.

Two days later, Bill King set out, also from Plymouth, in the *Galway Blazer II*. His retirement from the Royal Navy had left him at loose ends, and this was a fulfilling way of passing time.

On September 13, Chay Blyth, feeling overwhelmed by the voyage, dropped out, putting into port in East London, Cape Province in South Africa. Not that he was eligible anyhow after that stopover at Tristan da Cunha.

On September 16, Nigel Tetley set sail from Plymouth in the *Victress*. The *Victress* was a trimaran, which was faster, but less stable. One particular concern was that a trimaran could not recover from a capsizing.

The final departure date had been set as October 31. Departing later would mean sailing the southern Pacific and Atlantic during the winter, which would be extraordinarily difficult. Alex Carozzo had a high reputation in sailing circles, having sailed single-handedly across the Pacific. His boat, the *Gancia Americano*, was an unusual design, being solid-molded. She was the longest boat in the race. [Gancia Americano is a brand of Italian liquor. Sponsorship?]

But Carozzo did not feel himself entirely ready. He anchored outside of Plymouth and set about getting things in order.

And that other guy? Donald Crowhurst had shown himself to be remarkably persuasive and innovative. But he had not had a boat, and he fast-talked a builder into building another trimaran. He did find a sponsor, and the boat was the *Teignmouth Electron*, after the town of Teignmouth and his navigational-equipment company, Electron Utilisation. The *Teignmouth Electron* was built after June 1, note.

Gathering equipment and supplies, Crowhurst began to get the *Teignmouth Electron* into some sort of shape. Among the innovative measures he had developed was automatic righting equipment, meant to flip the boat upright if she were knocked over.

And on October 31, to much acclaim, Crowhurst set out from Teignmouth. Only when he had left was it noticed that he had left behind a box of repair materials and tools. He was missing other useful equipment. Not only that, the control device for the righting equipment had never been made, much less installed.

There was a storm in the South Atlantic on October 31. The *Galway Blazer II* was knocked over and dismasted. King decided, reluctantly, to drop out, and with emergency masts, reached Cape Town on November 22. The *Captain Browne* was also knocked down in the same storm, and Fougeron decided to drop out, trying for Cape Town but having to put in at Saint Helena.

Alex Carozzo had not been well. He devel-

oped a bleeding ulcer, and in pain, had to drop out of the race on November 14, reaching Oporto. The *Gancia Americano* had not been sailing well, though part of it may have been Carozzo's illness.

On November 15, Crowhurst sat down and wrote a detailed and thorough analysis of his situation. The lack of repair parts was significant, and the *Teignmouth Electron* was not sailing well. He could drop out but that would leave him heavily indebted. Yet going on would not seem to be possible.

By then, Knox-Johnston had sailed past New Zealand, setting a new record for longest single-handed voyage. Tetley had set a record for a single-handed sail in a trimaran. Moitessier, albeit out of communication (he had refused to bring a radio), was also reported to be doing well.

The *Suahili* was getting battered, and Knox-Johnston was having to do more with less. He considered dropping out, landing in Chile, avoiding the Drake Passage, but decided to plunge on. He considered himself well ahead of the others, but did wonder how well Moitessier was catching up.

Meanwhile, on December 10, Crowhurst sent a message describing his outstanding mileage, including a record-setting day's sail. It made the papers, brought him to notice, and his backers praised him. Except the figures were entirely made up. Crowhurst was beginning his deceptions.

He passed December composing a false course narrative. He seemed to be using a spare logbook to write up a record of this. Meanwhile, *Teignmouth Electron* was being battered and he lacked the material to repair the damage. January he spent sailing slowly off the coast of Brazil, while sending messages implying a faster passage.

On January 18, Knox-Johnston rounded Cape Horn and set off on the next to last leg of his voyage, which would take him to the equator, from where he would strike for home. The *Suahili* kept on having small breakdowns, and his radio transmitter was giving trouble.

On January 19 Crowhurst sent a message saying that his generator was giving trouble, which it was, and that he would have to cease transmitting for a time. He continued to sail slowly south along the Brazilian coast. Then on March 6, he put in to the harbor of San Clemente de Tuyu. The Argentinian coast guard station there had no one who spoke English; he did not speak Spanish. Fortunately for his plan, they got his name wrong. The coastguardsmen nevertheless managed to provide him with some spare parts. He made repairs and set off on March 8.

Knox-Johnston continued, having gone on in spite of similar if not as severe damage. As if to cap it off, in the middle of March he had some health problems. And for some reason when he signaled to merchant ships they did not acknowledge him. As a merchant officer he found that annoying, if not neglectful. (For what it's worth, that seems to be a custom of

modern castaway narratives, where they signal passing-by ships for aid, and are ignored.)

On March 18, Motessier sailed into Cape Town harbor. He did not land, but passed a message to another ship, saying that he would sail on to the Pacific Islands. "I am continuing nonstop because I am happy at sea, and perhaps because I want to save my soul." And then he sailed on into the Indian Ocean again.

That day, Tetley rounded Cape Horn. The *Victress* was heavily damaged from heavy seas and storms. Nevertheless, he could make the best time and win the £5000 prize, and perhaps even the Golden Globe for getting in first. So he continued.

In April, Knox-Johnson was approaching the Azores, finally in radio contact. He had recovered from his illness (the bully beef had gone off, he thought). The last few miles were wearisome, not because of weather, but of the large number of ships he encountered, some of which were not even greeting him. Finally, on April 22, he sailed into Falmouth Harbor. He dropped anchor and the Customs officers came on board. As per procedure, they asked him, "Where from?"

"Falmouth."

He had won the Golden Globe. But there were two other contestants out there, either capable of winning the £5000 prize for fastest circumnavigation.

They had quite different reactions. Tetley was pressing hard, though *Victress* was coming apart. Crowhurst had sailed down to the Falkland Islands, then headed north again, planning to catch up with his false course. He had a choice between getting in before Tetley, and scooping the £5000, or making a close finish, and modestly praising "the best man winning."

Then on May 21, the choice was taken out of his hands. The starboard side hull of *Victress* broke off and rammed the main hull, holing it. Tetley had enough time to send a distress signal, launch his raft, and fill it with survival gear. He was picked up soon, but it was all over for him.

In response, Crowhurst began to slow down. He had to spend a great deal of effort repairing his radio, and when he got back in contact he issued more bland messages. A great reception was being prepared in Teignmouth.

His records would be intensely scanned. Already some experts, such as Chichester, had questions. There is evidence that he had composed a false log, based on back-calculations, bits of weather reports, and the alike, along with some actual observations. Standing up to scrutiny was a problem.

Motessier reached Tahiti on June 21, setting a record for the longest single-handed sailing voyage. He repeated his statement that such contests were too worldly for him and he was seeing through the fraud of it all.

Two days later, Crowhurst finally detached himself from the mundane world. He quit sailing and taking positions, and spent his

days writing his observations. This was some 25,000 words of commentary, coherent but not attached to anything. Yet he appeared normal to the crew of the Norwegian cargo ship *Cuyahoga*, which sighted the *Teignmouth Electron* on June 25. Crowhurst gave them a cheery wave and sailed on.

For the rest of the month he wrote up his ramblings. Then, on the morning of July 1, he woke up and discovered his chronometer had run down. He tried to reset it. Then he abandoned his philosophy and began to write what seems to be a justification for his suicide. He gave time marks and explained how he had to resign the game. Finally, he wrote:

It has been a good game that
must be ended at the
I will resign this game when
I choose I will resign the game
11 20 40 There is
No reason for harmful

He had reached the end of the page. Hall and Tomalin give a vivid speculation of what he did next. They said he took the chronometer and the false log and went over the side, letting the *Teignmouth Electron* sail away while he drowned.

On July 10, the RMS *Picardy*, Captain Stanley Box commanding, saw a yacht with no one on deck sailing along. No one responded to a signal, so he sent a boarding party. They found the *Teignmouth Electron* abandoned. Box sent messages to Crowhurst's publicity agent, who told Mrs. Crowhurst. He hoisted in the yacht and continued his own voyage.

The story came out. Box had considered suppressing the suicide note pages but decided not to. Knox-Johnston donated the £5000 prize to a fund for the Crowhurst family.

As for the others . . .

Chay Blyth proceeded to sail around the world single-handed, but east to west, completing the voyage in 1971. He was knighted in 1997. He became a manager of a company that monitored and oversaw solo yacht races.

Alex Carozzo is apparently still alive, working in yachting and teaching would-be yachters.

Loïck Fougeron wrote about his experiences, continued yachting, and died in 2013.

Robin Knox-Johnston continued racing and working in yacht racing and sports, becoming a leading figure. He was knighted in 1995. (He appeared in a BBC program with Sir Ran Fiennes of the Transglobe Expedition, which went over both poles. Confronting flat-earthers?)

Bill King tried twice more to sail around the world, finally succeeding in 1973. He retired to his castle in Ireland and died in 2012, aged 102.

Bernard Moitessier continued his disdain for worldly things, sailing in the Pacific, and writing his memoir of the race *La Longue route; seul entre mers et ciels* (1971; translation *The Long Way* (1973)), and more general memoirs, *Tamata et l'alliance* (1993; translation *Tamata*

and the Alliance (1995)). He protested French nuclear tests in the Pacific. He died in France of prostate cancer in 1994.

John Ridgway established the John Ridgway School of Adventure. He continued to race, setting a record for a non-stop round the world voyage (but not solo). Oh yes, and he had been in the Special Air Service.

Nigel Tetley received a £1000 consolation prize from the race organizers. He began to build a new boat, but could not equip her. On February 2, 1972, he was found dead, hanging from a tree in a wood near Dover. (There were some . . . exotic . . . features of his death, and it was ruled as possible erotic asphyxiation.)

After a period as an exhibit, the *Suahili* was renovated and now is a training boat. The *Joshua* was driven ashore in a storm, but was repaired and is still in use.

As for the *Teignmouth Electron* a buyer tried to use her as a cruise boat. There were ghosts heard walking on deck at night. So the boat was dragged ashore. She has been gutted, even had the name "*Teignmouth Electron*" partially sawed off.

So what was the point of it all? Surely all that money could have been used to feed starving children in Biafra, or something like.

Rod Walker of *Tunnel In the Sky* (1955: NHOL G.126) might well see himself in Blyth, Ridgway, and Knox-Johnson. Ridgway's successors would find themselves training settlement captains and warning them of the strange last voyage of Donald Crowhurst.

Others might be examples of preparedness. Blyth, Fougeron, and Carozzo would be planning that did not overcome the unforeseen. Particularly Carozzo, who had an unexpected health issue.

Or the matter of instability. Crowhurst was the most blatant example, but Tetley was a victim of depression, and Motessier was odd. Personalities under stress, as it were, as opposed to the depressingly normal Knox-Johnson. The parallel between Crowhurst and H. Beam Piper ending it all to restart a better life comes to mind.

What makes us human? To see a mountain and wonder what it looks like from the top. To stand on the beach, watch the ocean waves come in, and wonder what it is like where they came from. To put oneself to a life-threatening trial in order to see it overcome, to win the test of life.

In 2018 the movie *The Mercy*, about Crowhurst, was released, starring Colin Firth as Donald Crowhurst. The producers bought the rights to a competing documentary, *Crowhurst* (2017) to cover their release. The production used a replica of the *Teignmouth Electron*, which is currently drydocked in Malta.

The Mercy

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3319730/>

Crowhurst

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4791984/>

TRIPLE CROWN REPORT

by Lisa

Rich Strike turned in an incredible performance in the Derby as the longest shot in the field and one of the longest ever to win in the Derby. It was a magnificent performance. His owner decided to skip the Preakness in favor of the Belmont. In his absence Early Voting won the Preakness. At the Belmont Rich Strike was unable to repeat his Derby feat. This was not his day. He never fired and the race went to the favorite Mo Donegal but I could not shake the feeling something was wrong with Rich Strike. He was not the colt he had been on Derby Day.

DEATH OF AN ART COLLECTOR

Review by Joseph T Major of
*SHERLOCK HOLMES & DR. CRIPPEN:
The North London Cellar Murder as Re-*
corded by Dr. John H. Watson

by Donald MacLachlan
(2019; Breese Books;

ISBN 978-1901091724; \$11.00;

Lume Books (Kindle); \$3.99) and

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE CHAR-
LIE CHAPLIN AFFAIR

by Val Andrews

(2021; Lume Books (Kindle); \$3.99)

Robert Goldsborough, the current continuer of the Nero Wolfe saga, admitted to using a “real” person in *Death of an Art Collector* (2019), when an acerbic Frank Lloyd Wright drops in at the brownstone on 35th Street. It’s isolated, though it does introduce a critical analysis of Wolfe’s handling of the current case.

These Sherlock Holmes stories have him dealing with “real” persons, and have their interesting points.

In *Sherlock Holmes & Dr. Crippen*, Holmes and Watson are more spectators than actual detectives, though Watson does inform the real investigator of a significant fact about the employment of Harvey Hawley Crippen. Otherwise they observe the dire progression of the case from questions about the whereabouts of Belle Elmore Crippen to the last drop of Crippen.

Reading this will leave the reader well informed on the history of the case. MacLachlan includes an afterword discussing points which have arisen since the end of the case.

Sherlock Holmes and the Charlie Chaplin Affair begins with some fascinating Holmesian deductions about their new client, and ends with his uncovering the whereabouts of Chaplin’s mother in a startling discovery. In between there are interesting descriptions of the music hall scene, including one funny bit where a producer assumes he has people wanting to do a comic “Sherlock Holmes and

Dr. Watson” turn.

The parts set in America include realistic descriptions of Chaplin’s dedication to the filmic art, also known as his taking a shot over and over again until he got it the way he wanted it. For further connections, the other star being directed is Oliver Hardy — and in their investigations in Britain someone mentioned Stan Laurel.

ON BEYOND COALWOOD

Review by Joseph T Major of
*DON’T BLOW YOURSELF UP:
The Further True Adventures and Travails
of the Rocket Boy of October Sky*

by Homer Hickam

(2021; Post Hill Press;

ISBN 978-1642938241; \$27.00;

Post Hill Press (Kindle); \$9.99)

“October Sky” is an anagram of “Rocket Boys”.

When we watched Homer Hickam and fellow rocket boys watching their last rocket ascend above the ridges of West Virginia, we knew that was not the end of the story. But what came between?

Hickam tells of his service in Vietnam, which does not seem to have left him paralyzed or otherwise impaired. That led him to his other avocation, diving. And he made a living diving for several years, until the thrill of spaceflight drew him to NASA. And he worked there for several years.

His working man’s values did him well, and he had some very interesting stories to tell. And to help bring to the screen; he describes the production of *October Sky*. In spite of the retitling, he otherwise seems to have been influential in keeping the story shockingly close to the truth.

He glosses over some matters. (How many times was he married, anyway?) But this is a moving picture of a man who raised himself well above his foundations.

A REFERENCE YOU NEED

Review by Joseph T Major of

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN:

A Reader’s Companion:

*The Complete & Authoritative Guide
to the Works of Science Fiction’s
Grand Master — UPDATED*

by James Gifford

(2021; Nitrosyncretic Press (Kindle);

ISBN 978-1642938241; \$20.00)

Gifford’s invaluable guide is now available for Kindle. He has brought it up to date (at least as far as 2021).

The book contains short summaries of the stories, except for the less available ones (the “stinkers”), which are described in more detail. The connections and associations between stories are described.

One can learn about the misfired proposal to make a limited-run TV series based on the Future History (the more optimistic post-war

stories, not the downer pre-war stories with Nehemiah Scudder). Not to mention “Abbott and Costello Move to the Moon” (NHOL G.089). So in other words he did not give up after “Destination Moon”.

There are naturally some omissions. For example, it does not cover *The Pursuit of the Pankera* (2020; NHOL G.183). And it does not mention a work written from a Heinlein outline by another writer.

Finally, it reprints the New Heinlein Opus List, which ticks off his works from the poem “Atlantis” (<1929; NHOL G.001) to the Message to the Berkeley Sales Staff Concerning *The Cat Who Walks Through Walls* (1986; G.203), with the Future History Chart given pride of place as G.000.

Anyone who wants to write about Heinlein or read him informatively should have this book.

THE KING’S DAUGHTER

Commentary by Darrell Schweitzer

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2328678/>

So we rented *The King’s Daughter* on HBO Max. That’s \$5.99 down the drain, but I am certainly glad we didn’t pay theater prices.

The movie is ... not good. It can’t make up its mind if it is (sort of) an adult film or a live action version of a Disney cartoon. I notice that it had something like a dozen “producers” in the credits. I suspect they couldn’t make up their minds either. The story is simple-minded and unbelievable on so many levels there is no sense even going there. (The basic plot is: Louis XIV captures a mermaid and proposes to “sacrifice” it during a solar eclipse in order to make himself immortal — for the good of France, of course. His illegitimate daughter, brought from a convent, makes friends with the mermaid, falls in love with a dashing sea captain, and screws things up.)

I will mention that this movie has the very worst historical costuming I have ever seen in a film, not excluding a certain cheesy made-for-TV one that put Romans in muscle breastplates and red capes in the age of Attila the Hun. They actually shot many scenes at Versailles, the real thing, but the costumes are a weird mix of Victorian and flapper for the women, and vaguely Punk Napoleonic for the men. Most of the male haircuts look like something out of the 1950s. Certainly nothing of the era of Louis XIV, which should look like Three Musketeers (set in the reign of Louis XIII, about 1640) only more so. (This movie is set in 1684). It was an age of ridiculous extravagance and enormous wigs and everybody at court wearing makeup and silk. The king doesn’t seem very Absolute. People go climbing out of windows and running all over the palace in unauthorized ways. You would think Louis would have spies and security guards everywhere.

My guess is that they were thinking of this as a Disney cartoon, so no one bothered to think about historical details, or about how

anything works. Clearly they had no idea how a solar eclipse works. We keep seeing a **criscent** moon moving toward the sun. They have no idea how flintlock pistols or gunpowder work either. In the capture scene, a sailor draws a pistol and almost shoots the mermaid, at least, during a raging storm. Even if he happened to have a pistol loaded and primed, as if he were planning in advance to shoot the mermaid, what would be the chances of it actually going off under those conditions? Also, if you light a fuse on a barrel of gunpowder and toss it into the ocean, assuming it actually sank, you would think this would extinguish the fuse. But no, mermaids are stunned by such “depth charges.”

We are treated to some startling anachronism when the heroine and her lover wander through Marie Antoinette’s “Norman village” (where the Queen and her ladies could play at being peasants) which is indeed on the grounds of Versailles but wasn’t built until about a hundred years after the time of the action of this film. If this is a Disney cartoon or imitation thereof, no one would need to ask “What did Versailles look like in the 1680s?”

The musical soundtrack consists of sappy pop songs, exactly what you’d expect in a half-baked Disney cartoon. The emotions of the characters are just as shallow and half-baked, with the possible exception of William Hurt who plays the king’s spiritual advisor, who doesn’t think all this is a good idea. Pierce Brosnan does his best as the king, but the script doesn’t give him much to work with.

I have not read the Vonda McIntyre novel this is based on, *The Moon and the Sun*, but it must be much, much better than this. I’ve read enough of her work to be absolutely certain she could do far better than this.

Half-baked CGI effects, too.

[Editorial note: There were three solar eclipses in 1684, one annular and the other two hybrid. The July 12, 1684 eclipse was partial in France and visible from Versailles in the afternoon.]

2021 NEBULA AWARDS

NOVEL

A Master of Djinn, P. Djèlí Clark
(Tordotcom; Orbit UK)

NOVELLA

And What Can We Offer You Tonight,
Premee Mohamed (Neon Hemlock)

NOVELETTE

“O2 Arena”, Oghenechovwe Donald
Ekpeki (*Galaxy’s Edge* 11/21)

SHORT STORY

“Where Oaken Hearts Do Gather”, Sarah
Pinsker (*Uncanny* 3–4/21)

ANDRE NORTON NEBULA AWARD FOR MIDDLE GRADE AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION

A Snake Falls to Earth, Darcie Little
Badger (Levine Querido)

RAY BRADBURY NEBULA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING DRAMATIC PRESENTA- TION

WandaVision: Season 1, Peter Cameron,
Mackenzie Dohr, Laura Donney, Bobak
Esfarjani, Megan McDonnell, Jac
Schaeffer, Cameron Squires, Gretchen
Enders, Chuck Hayward (Marvel Stu-
dios)

GAME WRITING

Thirsty Sword Lesbians, April Kit Walsh,
Whitney Delagio, Dominique Dickey,
Jonaya Kemper, Alexis Sara, Rae
Nedjadi (Evil Hat Games)

The ceremony also honored the previously
announced winners of the Kate Wilhelm Sol-
stice Awards, Kevin O’Donnell, Jr. Service to
SFWA Award, and SFWA Damon Knight
Grand Master.

KATE WILHELM SOLSTICE AWARD

Arley Sorg
Troy L. Wiggins
Petra Mayer (posthumous)

KEVIN O’DONNELL, JR. SERVICE TO SFWA AWARD

Colin Coyle

38TH DAMON KNIGHT GRAND MASTER

Mercedes Lackey

And the next day, Lackey was removed
from the conference for using a derogatory
racial term.

WORLDCON BIDS

2024
Glasgow
August 8-12, 2024
<http://glasgow2024.org/>

2025
Seattle
Mid-August 2025

2026
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
<https://jeddicon.com/>

Los Angeles

Nice, France
August 12-16, 2026
<http://nice2023.com/en/home/>

2027
Tel Aviv
August 2027

2028
Brisbane, Australia
Mid-August 2028
<https://australia2025.com/>

2029
Dublin
<http://dublin2029.ie>

2031
Texas
<https://alamo-sf.org/>

NASFiC BIDS

2023
Orlando
<https://orlandoin2023.org/>

Winnipeg
<https://main.winnipegin2023.ca/>

2024
Buffalo, NY
<https://buffalonasfic2024.org/>

WORLDCON

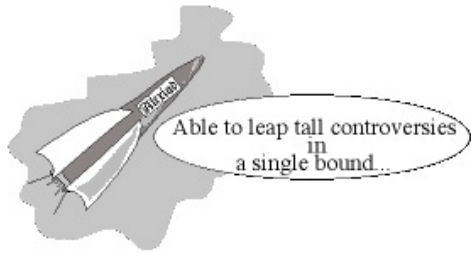
2022
Chicon 8
Chicago
September 1-5, 2022
<http://www.chicon.org>

2023
Chengdu
Year of the Water Rabbit
August 16-20, 2023
<http://www.worldconinchina.com/index-e.html>

The Chengdu committee has introduced an
innovative new hierarchy of memberships.
Lowest is “Online ADMISSION”, which
enables members to view con events over the
internet. Next highest is “In-Person ADMIS-
SION”, which enables a member to attend the
convention in person as well. Then there is
“WSFS MEMBERSHIP” which allows a
member to vote for Hugo Awards and Site
Selection.

All the members with Advance Supporting
Membership have WSFS MEMBERSHIP.
That’s . . . interesting.

Letters, we get letters



From: **Taras Wolansky** April 1, 2022
 Post Office Box 698, Kerhonkson, NY
 12446-0698 USA
twolansky@yahoo.com

Thanks for the February *Alexiad*.

I don't know if this is significant or not. At the big Barnes & Noble in Poughkeepsie that I use the most, new fiction used to be arranged this way: general fiction, four bookcases; mystery and thriller, three bookcases; science fiction and fantasy, three bookcases. Then one day I came in and found that new SF now occupied only two bookcases: one had been transferred to general fiction.

NASFiC 2023 Bids: It might be fun to visit Orlando again after all these years – I was last there in 1992 for Worldcon – but I think I will vote for Winnipeg, in honor of its heroic and honorable effort to hold off the Chinese Fascist Worldcon.

“Patients were having to defer necessary care because hospitals are full of people with Covid and most of them were unvaccinated.” In fact, one of the enormous costs of the COVID lockdowns was people being forced to postpone or cancel medical care, because health care planners had greatly overestimated the number of beds COVID patients would need.

“Chan [Davis] went to jail for six months for refusing to answer questions for HUAC about an organization he was with at Harvard.” Would that “organization” have been the CPUSA? Davis has admitted that he was a Communist Party member at least until 1953; which would necessarily make him a Stalinist.

If Davis were like the typical “resisting” Stalinist witness, he went to jail for refusing to testify even after being given immunity from prosecution. (Also, the real name was the House Committee on Un-American Activities.)

Rodford Edmiston: Great article about the kind of considerations a time traveler has to keep in mind.

Another factor is who the time traveler is. Whenever I read a story about a woman time traveler, I feel very anxious for her. Because of the dependant status of women in so many past cultures, her fate is likely to be miserable.

This, of course, applies to the female Doctor Who as well. In some cultures, it might be necessary for her to pretend that one of her

male sidekicks is the leader.

I didn't find her objectionable, but then I am not in one of those cultural settings. What do you think of the new Doctor?

“The pharaonic era was actually around longer than it's been gone.” Those aliens in the Gregory Benford story who purloin Egypt and reset it back to ancient times may have been onto something.

Lloyd Penney: Just saw an article in *Nature* or *New Scientist* to the effect that Moderna and Pfizer are the more effective COVID vaccines. On the other hand, mixing them up would seem to make sense. (By chance, I ended up straight Moderna.)

Pfizer was the basis for “Jno. Pfitzner” in the *Cities In Flight* stories. Just think, a Covid vaccine with anagathic side-effects!

—JTM

Cathy Palmer-Lister: “China was holding Canadian citizens in jail without charges being laid”. Though I am not surprised, I too would look blank. Maybe you should explain what this is all about.

At the Worldcon bids session in December, I had asked, will people who criticize China be permitted to attend a Chinese worldcon? Maybe the real question should be, will people who have criticized China be permitted to leave ...

June 12, 2022

Thanks for the April *Alexiad*.

Lisa: “When you're told there will be severe thunderstorms you're wise to seek shelter before the storms are scheduled to start.” This passage puzzled me at first. You see, I've always lived in parts of the country where thunderstorms are considered more in the nature of entertainment.

Joe: In the wake of Chengdu, I came up with an alternate worldcon scenario in which the 1939 Nycon is instead held in Berlin. Let's say the son of the German ambassador is a fan ...

Speaking of Worldcons, I had not heard — and can scarcely understand — the story about Allan Steele being blackballed by Chicon. (Similarly, I was surprised not to find Darrell Schweitzer at Balticon.) Does it have anything to do with the fact that, as a liberal Democrat, he is not “woke” enough?

Review of *Serpents Walk* by “Randolph de Calverhall”: Reading between the lines, I take it that this particular “Nazis take over” novel was not intended as a dystopia!

Review of *Igor's Campaign* by Tom Veal: The title is a takeoff on the 12th century Russo-Ukrainian epic poem, *Slovo o Polku Igoreve*, usually rendered in English as *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*.

Joe (Reviewer's Notes): I was re-reading Michael Korda's book on the Battle of Britain.

He describe how in the 1930s the Conservative Party was divided between building bombers, to eventually win the coming war, versus fighters, to avoid losing the war. Offhand, he mentions that the Labour Party did not see the necessity of either: don't we have the League of Nations?

It made me wonder about an alternate history in which Labour is in charge of the UK during the Thirties. Suddenly, a Nazi victory doesn't seem that implausible.

Korda's book also points out that even without that the Germans were on their way to winning the Battle of Britain — the British couldn't keep up with the damage German raids were doing to Fighter Command — until Hitler rescued them by foolishly ordering the Luftwaffe to shift to attacking cities.

There is a lunatic fringe of anti-vaxxers who talk about “death jabs”, and expected millions of people to be dying from Covid vaccinations, well, right about now! The more typical anti-vaxxers merely cite statistics they don't fully understand. For example, there was that Israeli study that showed that people who had been vaxxed had more Covid problems than people who weren't vaxxed.

Turns out, Israel had done a good job of vaccinating the old, while a lot of young people were still unvaccinated. As a result, an old, vaccinated person might have more serious Covid issues than a young, unvaccinated one. But within each age group, the vaccinations still showed significant benefits.

Admittedly, as vaccinations go, the Covid vaccines are not exactly stellar performers. You shouldn't have to get booster shots so often. Rather than “magic bullets”, they are more like seatbelts: it's not like they're going to make you invulnerable to crashes. But they still help.

Taral Wayne: Be careful. Criticizing the crimes and repression of the Chinese government has been redefined as racism.

Darrell Schweitzer: Same warning to you, too.

What I've read about the coup d'état in Iran in the early Fifties is that the CIA had no idea what was going on, and then after the fact took credit. “Yes, it was all our diabolical cleverness. You should increase our budget, Congressman!”

Trinlay Khadro: If the chaos in Latin America since 1900 is the fault of the United States, then whose fault was the chaos in the centuries before 1900? Not everything in the world is about us.

I've read that a German general was in a position to forcibly prevent Adolf Hitler taking power. The joke is that, if he had done it, he would now figure as one of the great villains of history. And Adolf Hitler, like Mossadegh and Allende, would be called a “Martyr for Democracy”.

Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord?
 Read Joseph Wurtembaugh's *A Prophet Without Honor* (2017) for a story of how he corrected that

lapse in judgment.

A major factor in immigration today is that countries that have not controlled population growth are now overflowing onto countries that did control their growth. It bodes ill for the future.

In the US, native-born Americans have been trending Republican for generations. The Dems fight back by opening the border, especially to the poor and illiterate, who will immediately go on government support, and eventually firm up big-city political machines.

"Banks and realtors were restricting home loans to minority families, despite credit ratings and stable incomes." That businesses would sacrifice opportunities to make money does not ring true. On the other hand, vendors may have found that, even with the same paperwork, some groups are more likely to repay loans than others. For example, a middle-class white borrower likely has middle-class relatives who can bail him out of financial difficulties; while a middle-class black borrower is less likely to.

David M. Shea: People who remember they were lied to, like we were told not to wear masks because they're useless and dangerous, will tend to distrust the people who lied to them. Obvious hypocrisy also engenders distrust: the same people who primly assert that the government mustn't interfere between a woman and her doctor, then turn around and ban ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine.

Lloyd Penney: A lot of fans have weirdly naïve ideas about China. Yes, those pretty young women promoting the Chinese worldcon bid were very nice, but they were very nice government property, for all practical purposes. Of course it's hard to distinguish honest stupidity from corrupt venality: I suspect the Chinese government spread money around.

At the Dublin Worldcon, I brought up to the con chair the need to protect the site selection vote from Chinese government influence; but his attitude was, cross your fingers and hope for the best.

John Hertz: The idea that the fan community could stand up against a political machine with unlimited funds is not well thought out.

Prior to Chengdu, what is the highest number of site selection votes any city ever received?

John Purcell: "Dare I say 'good luck' to the Chengdu Worldcon committee? Yes, I do dare to say that here. No matter what happens, this is already an historic transformation for the science-fiction world community..."

When I spoke of fans with weirdly naïve ideas about China, I wasn't thinking of you, but perhaps I should have been. The Chengdu Worldcon committee may be very nice people, but they are property of the Chinese government and will do whatever they are told to do.

Yes, America is an imperfect society too. For example, when a woman accuses a politician the media likes of sexual misconduct, like Juanita Broaddrick accusing Bill Clinton of rape, or that woman who says Joe Biden mo-

lest her when she worked for the Senate in the 90s, then the media will ignore them. But they won't be arrested and forced to recant, as recently happened to that woman tennis star in China who accused a high Party official of having raped her. To paraphrase Mel Brooks, it's good to be a high Chinese Communist Party official!

George W. Price: Putting "the" in front of "Ukraine", annoys a lot of Ukrainians. But I just point to "the Netherlands".

Richard Dengrove: "You liked Mary Robinson [sic] Kowal's *The Relentless Moon* as a Hugo winner. Isn't she a leftist, though?" Can't say she ever struck me that way. If I had to guess, I would say middlebrow liberal. By "woke" standards, she would probably count as a conservative today.

In any case, I greatly enjoyed some of John Brunner's books, like *Stand on Zanzibar*, and he was pretty much a commie. He actually supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

So did Ayn Rand.

—JTM



From: **Dale Speirs** April 22, 2022
opuntia57@hotmail.com

I'm very active in organized philately (stamp collecting) and find the differences between philatelic and science fiction fandoms interesting. In general, I find that SF fans are less gifted, less able to deal with change, and are less tolerant of others.

I was in charge of organizing the centennial party of the Calgary Philatelic Society, held on April 6, one hundred years to the month after it was formed in April 1922. (See *Opuntia* #522, available as a free pdf from www.efanzines.com or www.fanac.org) Very few local organizations of any kind survive that long. I wonder if any local SF clubs will last for 100 years.

The paradigm shift militates against it.

—JTM

The Chengdu Worldcon certainly put the wokers and cancellers in their place, since the Chinese don't care about them. Those who fuss

because the Worldcon is becoming an actual world convention might like to look to philately for a solution.

Stamp collectors do not have a single world convention. Rather, the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie, founded in 1926, sanctions three or four international shows each year (non-pandemic, of course). A country can host an international show once a decade, but some may have longer lacunae. Canada is hosting an international in June 2022 in Toronto under the auspices of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada.

Before the pandemic (there's a phrase we'll be using for decades to come) Canadian international shows got about 20,000 paid through the door. American internationals had about 200,000 and Asian countries 200,000 to 500,000. These figures are for ten-day events.

The FIP distributes international shows throughout the world. All have equal status. No one fusses when China gets one, because that same year there will be one in Europe, another elsewhere, and all get a turn. SF fans, being disorganized, do not have the advantage of an international federation, but supposing they did, there could be several Worldcons a year around the globe.

From: **Nic Farey** April 22, 2022
fareynic@gmail.com

Thanks as always Joe, and hoping the health issues get better and not worse (I can certainly empathize). Only mildly startled by the synchronicity of us both getting new vehicles around the same time. Noted a couple of nuggets with which to adorn the capsule review in the upcoming *This Here...* #52 (due out on the 29th). A little disappointed that you didn't mention the FAAn Award results among the more undoubtedly glamorous prizes...

Good arrers!

From: **Tom Feller** April 22, 2022
tomfeller@aol.com

Thanks for e-mailing the zine.

I never met Walter Breen, but I did meet Marion Zimmer Bradley twice at conventions. I found her to be friendly, personable, and quite down to earth.

I am still going to try to read as many of the Hugo finalists as I can before the voting deadline. I have already read *Project Hail Mary*.

Anita and I still haven't decided whether to attend the Chicago Worldcon, but if we do, we would likely fly.

Have a good time. Sorry we can't meet. For us, the wait times going to Chicago mean that it's easier to drive. Alas, I can't afford the stay.

—JTM

From: **Chuck Lipsig** April 23, 2022
chuck.lipsig@gmail.com

Been a long time since I read a Hugo-nominated novel before I even saw the nominations, but there are two this time: Becky Chambers' *The Galaxy, and the Ground Within* and Ryka Aoki's *Light From Uncommon Stars*. I've also already read Chambers' *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* — Chambers is the only author for whom I've ever preordered their books — and seen *Encanto* so chalk those two up as well.

I read *Project Hail Mary*.

I got to see *Hadestown* on Broadway this past March. If a movie version is ever made of it and it turns out to be even vaguely loyal to the Broadway version, I may join WorldCon just to nominate and vote for it in that category.

Count me as one of the diabetics. I was going to say barely, but I am taking two medicines for it, one of which is not at the minimal dose. I'm also someone who gets their energy around midnight — and I have to be up at 5:30 to get to work. I've started attending and performing at an open mic that starts sometime after 10 on Wednesday nights. This week, I didn't get on until after midnight and I hung around until after 1 a.m. Patti has told me to start doing things that I wish I'd done in my late teens, early 20s, but was too inhibited to do and this is the result. However, Patti has gone back to school to get her lab tech credentials up to date after 30+ years, because she wants to go back to work, partially because she wants to and partially because she wants me to retire and take a stab at being a fulltime writer and/or theater person. If & when that happens, I plan to go on a schedule that works with my natural sleep-cycle, where I go to bed at 3 or 4 in the morning and get up shortly before noon.

If I don't watch out I get turned around, sleeping all day and being mentally active at night.

—JTM

From: **Hugh Lupus** April 25, 2022

Six and a half years worth of effort and it's done.

When I described an entire country rising up against an invader under a charismatic leader as I did with the Asturians using a field army and a hostile population I never thought I would see it enacted in real life in the Ukraine.

HMS Hood played a great and honourable part in the war, and after suffering found her long home.

—JTM

From: **David M. Shea** May 2, 2022
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive Unit 506,
Ellicott City, MD 21042-5988

No doubt you are aware that Louisville is in Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, and Ohio. I suppose

there may be another . . . Oh yeah. Right.

Also Hopkinsville, Ohio. And Cadiz, Cádiz.

I have pretty much given up on "favorite alien species"; having settled on Sharon Lee & Steve Miller's "Liadens". They are human, though from another universe, i.e. interfertile with Terran humans. Whatever that says about Terran paleoanthropology. Most of the seem pretty nice, but with some shitheads. If anyone cares to pursue the subject I can pass on my notes.

Robert Jennings in Massachusetts has a different take on Heinlein's *The Day After Tomorrow*. I sent him your address in case he wishes to discuss it with you.

He gets it. Robert, did you read the Astounding Unperson's All?

If it were up to me (of course it's not) I would suggest that all existing Worldcons, and all legitimate future bid committees, jointly declare the Chinese bid void, on grounds of unfair bloc voting motivated by politics with no regard for or interest in fandom.

Sorry to hear about your bad weather. My mother was always afraid of thunderstorms. She would shut off the television, etc. and also hide in the bathroom. I was never bothered by them much.

SF about WWII: Andre Norton, *The Crossroads of Time*, 1956. There are a plethora of alternate worlds; a system of moving among them, and a cross-level police force, the Wardsmen. Central character Blake Walker gets caught up in this and finds himself in a New York decimated by Nazi bombing and bio-weapons. It is said that Hitler successfully invaded England and broadcast from London. A task force of Americans, Canadians, and refugee British took off in any aircraft that could get off the ground; with the plan to bomb London and kill Hitler. (Whether they refueled at Gander, or Belfast, was not specified. After that no broadcasts were heard.

Piper had done his first Paratime story ("He Walked Around the Horses") in 1948 and had done "Time Crime" in 1955. *The Crossroads of Time* sounds like generic Paratime.

I bought my present car in October 2016 (new). It just turned over 23,000 miles. I still have not figured out how to change the clock, set to daylight time. In winter I just have to recall it reads one hour ahead.

The last convention I attended was a Balticon, 2016. I met the people in charge of programming and offered them some panel ideas for the next year's event. They thanked me and said they'd get back to me. Never heard another word. I speculate this may have been an early

example of what Lloyd Penney speaks of in his loc.

\$1 coins are not used because there are only so many spaces in cash registers. That's also a large part of the reason why 50-cent coins and \$2 bills, both technically still legal currency, fell out of use.

Marc Schirmeister's art on page 10 makes me wonder what sea serpents and mermaids drink. If it's beer, was would seem to be indicated by the foaming mug, where did they get it? Making beer underwater would appear to involve difficulties.

Q: Why did the girl pig break up with the boy pig?

A: Because he was such a boar.

Not my joke; heard it, of all places, on the Food Network.

And the last refuge of Feghoots seems to be Steven Pastis's "Pearls Before Swine".

—JTM

AND OUT OF THE MIST, THE DREADED PUNCTUATION PIRATES APPEARED!



#604

From: **Lloyd Penney** May 10, 2022
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2
penneys@bell.net

Thank you for *Alexiad* 122. I am not far from the deadline, but I've gotten myself caught up after another long book edit, so my conscience is finally clear. Back to the zines again.

I wonder about the appeal of the 'Nazis win' alt-history books. Could this be a sign to say 'others had it worse?', especially in this time of retreating democracy and a return to the 50s for the rights of women, especially reproductive rights, and a return to being forced to wear burqas? I does make me wonder about evil empires.

We are fully vaxxed and masked, and the anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers continue to look like petulant six-year-olds in adult bodies. The pandemic is ebbing, but it will be a long time before it's gone. In language, even they can understand, they can bite me. (We will be getting our 4th dose May 21.)

I do like the idea of the ship, the RRS *Sir David Attenborough*. He deserves that kind of recognition and honours, and much more. His

voice is probably the most imitated voice around.

It's better than RRS Boaty McBoatface.

The Kentucky Derby has come and gone again. Longshot winner Rich Strike, at 80-to-1, won the race, and its Canadian connection is that Rich Strike's mother, Gold Strike, was raised in Manitoba.

It's beginning to look like you read and review unpleasant books so we don't have to. The Greyland and "Calverhall" books honestly sound like books I'd refuse if offered. I knew a little of the hidden life of MZB and Walter Breen, and I think that book contains more than I'd really like to know.

It makes Asimov's bra-strap snapping seem almost ordinary. (Not acceptable, just ordinary.)



The "Bullard of the Space Patrol" stories remind me of the series I am working on right now. D.J. Holmes is a British author whose Empire Rising series of e-books seems quite popular. In its initial e-books, Captain James Somerville of the Royal Space Navy rises through the ranks to become Emperor of the Human Star Empire. The story does continue through Book 13, *Empire's Gambit*, and soon to appear, Book 14, *The Burden of Command*. Those two e-books are the ones I have edited over the past few months, and I suspect I may soon receive notification of a 15th book.

You do know that Sir James Fownes "Twice a knight and at your age" Somerville was the man who nearly avenged Pearl Harbour.

We are aging at the rate of one second per second, though some may say it feels much faster. All of our parents are gone, and my family is scattered to the four winds. I have two aunts on Facebook, plus a brother I can reach through a niece. Much of local fandom seems dispersed, too. There are times when Yvonne and I are all we have.

Taral's letter is a cautionary tale, and I must agree with him. Many years ago, Yvonne started a local convention, which started off in

a very successful fashion. Others wanted to learn how to run the convention, and friends asked if they could take a turn at it, and we made the verbal agreement that they could run it the next year, and Yvonne would take it back the year after. As soon as they had control of it, they immediately took it, write in to their club constitution, and basically stole it without shame or regret. "Conventions have a life of their own. It used to be yours, and now, it's ours." That's is a direct quote. (I referred to this convention in my previous letter.) Don't let this happen to Worldcon. Darrel Schweitzer's section of letter on Worldcon is spot on, too. Perhaps we have lived beyond fandom's usefulness, and the pandemic sped up the process.

I have seen a list, probably on *File 770*, of prominent Worldcon runners who have been added to the Chengdu committee, so my hope for that Worldcon have risen a bit. Still, there may be other countries who might like a piece of the Worldcon pie.

There seems to have been an attitude of, "Well now we've got it. How do we do it!?"

Indeed the Taliban are doing something with Afghanistan, and that is reinstalling Sharia Law, and peeling back the decades, if not the centuries. They've brought back the burqa, and made it mandatory for Afghan women to wear it, with severe penalties for those who resist. Add in the proposed overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, and I sure hope this isn't our bright and shiny future.

Rich Dengrove's loc...he said we can no longer keep the diverse interests under one tent, but yet, I think a general convention could gather those diverse interests together, and gather the remnants of the general community. Our local SF and filk cons may soon be gone. Right now, we have the pro-run cons, and fan-run cons for anime and comics.

The much-missed Henry Welch (of *The Knarley Knews*) wanted to have a pro-run worldcon. I guess he hadn't thought about the WSFS, Inc. debacle.

— JTM

As I wrote above, I have edited a second book, so I guess I could call myself a pro SF editor, but there is still so much to learn. One thing I have already learned is that I don't really have a novel in me, and local friends who write extensively and try, sometimes in vain, to sell their self-published books at conventions, and fewer conventions, too. I understand their need to write, and I also understand their frustrations. I have been an editor/copyeditor/proofreader most of my professional life, so I will carry on with that.

To Al du Pisani: My contacts with SA fandom have been limited to SFFSA and *Probe*. I don't understand why you'd be excluded. Workwise, I see unable to find a full-time job, so I have built up a few occasional gigs that

does get me some work and money. Add in the editorial work and my meagre pension, and I at least have some money in the bank, barely.

I have visits to the dentist and the optician coming up, so that aforementioned money may not last long, but I have to invest in myself to keep those other jobs. Many thanks for this issue, Joseph. This letter is longer than most I've written to you, so this must have had more comment hooks. See you with the next one.

From: **Heath Row** May 20, 2022
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Last night, I read *Alexiad* Vol. 21 #2 — which I received through the National Fantasy Fan Federation's franking service—and wanted to drop you a brief note to wish you well. It's overcast and cool in southern California today, downright gray, and my neighbors are doing some construction work, so my home office is full of the sounds of hammers, power tools, and Mexican radio. I don't mind the radio. And I'm thankful it's Friday.

I remember seeing an issue of *Alexiad* previously. I'm not sure if I printed it out at work to read or if you mailed it to me, but it was definitely a hard copy, so if I've been remiss on responding to a mailing, I apologize. I am also sorry that you have been not entirely well and harassed by other issues. Things have been slightly heavy here, too, with family concerns, work challenges, and world affairs over the last few weeks.

My wife and I enjoyed the recent lunar eclipse and plan on traveling to see the 2024 solar eclipse somewhere in the Midwest. Our son went on a camping road trip with the Scouts in 2017. I was unable to join the troop because of work commitments and regret not being able to participate. He had a grand adventure by all accounts.

Talk to R-Laurraine Tutihasi. She was in Hopkinsville in 2017 — across the road from where we were!

Your review of Moira Greyland's memoir *The Last Closet* interested me. I, too, read it not that long ago — and I'd been unaware of the scandal when it came to light in 2014. (My review is in the March 2022 edition of *The N3F Review of Books* and is also available on my blog at <https://tinyurl.com/last-closet>.) Your commentary focused more on issues I didn't address, and I found your point of view thought provoking. Vox Day's involvement in the publication of the book definitely lends a political purpose to the book, and I was disappointed by Greyland's conflation of child sexual abuse with homosexuality — though I have never experienced anything like what Greyland survived and I can only empathize. It was, after all, her traumatic experience.

While I agree with the idea of not kicking someone when they're down — or dead — I'm not sure how compelling I find the argument that Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen can no longer defend themselves. Do they need to? Breen's penchant for abuse — and his fate — were determined before his death. And while Bradley wasn't found guilty of a crime, necessarily, her and Elisabeth Waters's depositions make for concerning, if not alarming, reading. If we can accept their depositions at face value, if any of the claimants involved are reliable narrators — Greyland included — Bradley didn't really actually counter any of her daughter's claims; instead, she merely claimed that she didn't know any of it had happened until well after the fact. And Waters's deposition seems to bolster and confirm Greyland's claims.

In any event, it is definitely a series of unfortunate events, and my heart goes out to Greyland — even if I think it's incorrect to place the blame on her parents' sexual identity or orientation. This is just one study, but C. Jenny, T.A. Roesler, and K.L. Poyer's "Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals?" (*Pediatrics*. 1994 Jul;94[1]:41-4) suggests that the risk of children being abused by homosexual adults ranges between 0% to 3.1%. Meanwhile, in 82% of the cases in that study, the alleged offender was a heterosexual partner of a close relative of the child. Given the changing makeup of families over time, more recent studies might need to be done to better assess the likelihood of a parent or partner abusing a child, regardless of their sexual orientation. But the case doesn't seem strong enough to suggest that all (or even most or much) gay parents are likely to abuse, much less that all parents are.

I believe her point was that Breen used his sexual alignment as a justification for molesting her, in the classical Greek fashion.

The earlier Breendoggle was paired with the Great Exclusion of 1939 for consideration in Hannah Mueller's *The Politics of Fandom* (McFarland, 2022), which I also recently read and reviewed for the *N3F Review*. So I was momentarily thrown by your subsequent comments on Tom Veal's *Igor's Campaign: A Tale of Ambition*. I had to laugh out loud when I realized it was an alternate history! The ebook might make a fun parallel read with Andy Hooper and Carrie Root's "Read and Enjoyed, but No Content" play script reprints in *Captain Flashback*. I've ordered it and will let you know what I think.

Your comments on the Worldcon bids are poignant: "Some argued that old writers who weren't being read any more had no appeal to the contemporary crowd. Others regretted the end of an era where one could mix with those who had made the field." Makes me wonder, though: Who makes up the contemporary crowd? Yes, there's a generational shift in

fandom underway. It's been going on for some time, at least since the advent of *Star Trek* and the resultant media fandom, exacerbated by so much of communication's move online and the shift away from fanzines and more traditional correspondence culture. Then there's the more recent shift to mainstream pop culture cons rather than fannish cons. (I would love to read the model railroading and rail fanning story you remember — I do not know what it is, either. Perhaps Dale Speirs of *Opuntia* knows? Sounds like something he'd come across.)



But there's got to be room for everyone, regardless of whether you're a literary fan or a media fan, an offline fan or an online fan, or a fandom studies academic's vision of an affirmational fan or transformative fan. Do we need to jettison the past to move into the future?

Or can we bring our history with us and leave room for the old and the new, contemporaneously? Ghods, I hope so.

I wish you and your wife well, in happiness and in health. The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society recently lost member Karl Lembke to cancer, so the mortality of fan is foremost in mind. Hopefully we can avoid the mortality of fandom itself.

And so on back to when Johnny Michel went out to get some more to drink, fell off the log into the freezing creek, and drowned.

—JTM

From: **George W. Price** May 25, 2022
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April Alexiad (#122):

In "Random Jottings" Joe reports on the discovery of the *Endurance* on the bottom of the Weddell Sea. He quotes a reporter saying the wreck "is sitting upright, well proud of the seabed . . ." Now that's a use of "proud" that I have never seen before. I will guess that it means the ship has only a little sand heaped up against it, leaving most of the hull visible. It's

"on" the bottom, not deeply embedded "in" the bottom. Am I right?

* * * * *

Joe's "A New Car" describes replacing his old Ford Taurus, which had 200,000 miles on it. That invoked memories: Nine years ago I inherited a Taurus.

In 1997 my girlfriend Virginia Needy bought a new dark green Taurus. I had no car, and had not owned one since I left the Army in 1953. City buses and subway trains served me well enough. For occasional long-distance travel I rented cars.

We married in 1999 and her car became our car on the registration, though she did most of the driving. As her health worsened with age I did more and more of the driving. And I did all of it after she began suffering spells of numbness in her feet and could not always feel the pedals.

Virginia passed away in 2013, and that Taurus became my car, though I still mostly thought of it as "our" car. Old age eventually caught up with me too, and in 2017 deteriorating vision made me give up driving altogether. I gave the car to my stepdaughter Nora, but she rarely used it since she already had a car of her own. Quite recently she sold the Taurus to an acquaintance, so it is finally leaving the family.

In contrast to Joe's car, this Taurus has only about 45,000 miles on it, because Virginia and I used it only for short trips around the Chicago area. She disliked long-distance driving — when we visited her two sons in Indianapolis or her sister in Phoenix we always flew and rented a car. Despite its very low mileage the Taurus still needed repairs now and then — apparently some parts gave out just from age.

* * * * *

"Go Set a Watchman," Joe's review of *The Last Closet: The Dark Side of Avalon*, by Moira Grayland, made me realize just how totally unplugged I have always been from the social gossip side of fandom.

The book is about Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen (the author's parents) and the suspicions and accusations — some apparently true — of pedophilia, lesbianism, and sexual misconduct that swirled around them for years.

During those years I read Bradley's novels as they came out, and I vaguely remember hearing about Breen as a fan whose politics I disagreed with. But I never knew they were married, and I never heard even a hint about the sexual matters.

Or maybe I did hear hints but was totally oblivious to them. My principal interest in science fiction has always been in reading the stories. I went to conventions mainly to hear the authors, not to socialize with other fans. I attended lots of author and editor panels, but hardly any room parties. And I can't say I regret the choice.

You mean no one ever brought up the Boondoggle?

At the end of my own letter Joe congratulates me for being nominated to the First Fandom Hall of Fame. Joe's note was the first I knew of it. My nomination had been reported in the First Fandom newsletter – which I had not yet gotten around to reading.

I presume the nomination is primarily to honor my many years as master of Advent Publishers. I never thought of it before, but my Advent career shows the same pattern described above – all but one of the books I chose for Advent were about science fiction stories and writing, not about fandom. The one exception was *All Our Yesterdays*, by Harry Warner, Jr. (Advent also published *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*, by Robert Bloch, and the Proceedings of ChiCon III and Discon I, but those were done by Earl Kemp before I took over.)

By the way, I was nominated for the Hall of Fame by Curt Phillips. He runs Pulp Era Book-sellers in Abingdon, Virginia, which now handles the sale of Advent's print editions. If you buy Joe Major's *Heinlein's Children* in hardcover, Curt is the guy who will send it to you.

In the last issue I made a tongue-in-cheek suggestion that lecturing illegal immigrants on critical race theory should discourage them from trying to get into the U.S.A. with its "endemic racism."

Trinlay Khadro takes me seriously enough to say that many migrants from Central and South America are trying to escape the results of U.S. interventions in their homelands, such as "disrupting democratically elected governments for the benefit of US business interests."

Yes, there was quite a bit of that, especially before World War II – sometimes justified and sometimes not. For obvious example, one would have a very hard time showing that the dreadful mess in Venezuela is due to U.S. policies.

Neither have I heard that U.S. businesses had much of anything to do with the less egregious messes in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

What I do see is that it is almost always the leftist governments (whether democratically elected or not) that run their economies into the ground. And they often start by expropriating or expelling those greedy Norteamericano businesses. I will even suggest that those countries were usually more prosperous in the bad old days when expropriation would attract battalions of U.S. Marines.

In any case, it seems ironic that migrants risk their lives to come to the very country which is supposedly the author of their homelands' miseries. Or could it be that they just want to be on the winning side?

Lloyd Penney chews over the apparent purchase of the Worldcon for Chengdu, presumably by the Chinese government.

Alas, there seems to be nothing we can do about this fait accompli, beyond just staying away and ignoring it.

For the future, perhaps it is time to abandon the whole idea of a "worldcon" and instead set up an annual convention which would be international but frankly and explicitly intended for English-speaking fans. An obvious name would be "AngloCon."

(But definitely not "AngliCon" – that is too similar to "Anglican" and would likely tick off members of the Church of England and the Episcopalian Church.)

"AngloCon" would be held only in English-speaking countries. No other bids would be considered. Fans from other lands – such as Japan and Germany – would be most welcome to attend, of course, but all or nearly all of the proceedings would be in English.

I doubt if the Chinese government would bother to monkey with a con like that.

Richard Dengrove responds to my comments on gold and silver as money, saying: "I think if gold and silver costs more on the market than it does as money, they can't really be used as money anymore."

That is perfectly true. It's why, under the full gold standard that I favor, the value of money is defined entirely in terms of gold. A dollar (or whatever currency unit is used) is legally defined as a precise weight of gold, and the associated paper currency can always be turned in for actual gold. So when market prices are stated in dollars, that is exactly the same as stating them in weights of gold. Thus gold cannot cost more on the market than it does as money, because the two values are really the same thing said in different words. It's an identity.

The trouble comes when irresponsible politicians manage to sever that tight legal link between gold as money and gold as a commodity, and insist that the value of gold as money can be arbitrarily set independently of its value in the market. No sir, it can't be, just as Mr. Dengrove says. But they try anyway, usually with disastrous results.

Such politicians hate the gold standard because it prevents them from inflating the currency, which they want to do to conceal how much their spending crushes down on the economy.

I don't think the Kindly Editor wants me to go into the complex and disgusting details of how this works, so I will instead refer you all to Henry Hazlitt's *Economics in One Lesson* (1946), and also Hazlitt's more detailed *The Inflation Crisis, and How to Resolve It* (1978).

I asked why Bulwer-Lytton's "It was a dark

and stormy night" is in such ill repute. My thanks to AL du Pisani for explaining that it opens an excessively long sentence, going on "for another 50 odd words." Yes, that sounds like a prize-winner in the Annals of Turgidity.



From: **Richard A. Dengrove** May 31, 2022
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Here are my comments on *Alexiad* February 2022.

To Lisa: I am a man and supposed to be brave. However, I don't even want to find myself in the path of a tornado. I remember what happened in Virginia several decades ago. It was scary.

To Joe: you have some pretty difficult problems there. Good luck with keeping yourself afloat and good luck with keeping this zine afloat.

Now for some comments on your comments. First, I have a question about your comment on the 'Nazi takeover skeptic' Adam Tooze. Would a bad economy have stopped Hitler from conquering the World? After a while, the Nazis were just taking from conquered countries to support their war machine. On the other hand, there were other ways Hitler might have been stopped. For one thing, Hitler might be stupid enough to invade Russia and his army got caught in the cold. For another thing, he was stupid enough to declare war on America after Pearl Harbor.

Tooze takes into account the resources extracted from the occupied countries. They were very badly mishandled due to structural deficiencies in their economic planning.

My next comment on your comments concerns newspaper astrology. I think it's been around since the 1920s. An author I remember reading decades ago, a Hungarian, claimed the author of the astrology column in a British newspaper frankly admitted he made all his predictions up because it gave him a comfortable living.

My comment after that concerns your comments on *Heinlein's Children*. I would buy it now if I hadn't bought and read it years ago. At that time, your name rang no bells for me. Sorry.



My subsequent comment concerns the fanzines stolen from Bob Madle: 1932 was near the very beginning of fandom and fanzines.

My additional comment concerns your comments about your car. The situation reminds me of what happened to my 1969 Volvo. It was 1993 and Volvo had long since stopped making parts for it. After some looking, I found a mechanic way the hell in Maryland who had the parts and could fix it. However, I decided I didn't want to make a trip of several hours each time it broke down. Like you, I got a new car instead. As for the old Volvo, I sold it for next to nothing to a fellow whose home was surrounded by old Volvos.

Now we come to your first article "Go Set a Watchman." Moira Greyland wrote a book about her mother Marian Zimmer Bradley and

her lover Walter Breen, *The Last Closet*. Because they must have been real tchotkes, I can only have sympathy for her. My family has never forgotten about a whole bunch of things. And I am talking about people who did not know the meaning of real tragedy. If my family can't forget, with such horror in her childhood, Moira is definitely not going to.

Of course, if it's a bad book, I would avoid it.

Another article is a "Tale of Ambition." With their big population, big industry and big government, WorldCon is a mouse to the Chinese. The problem is WorldCon is our mouse.

Another article yet is "Worldcon," which seems to be disparate comments. One concerns your health. You have to go and have daily infusions. It is good you don't find this a nuisance. I wish I could say more than "Good luck." Another comment is how, with age, our friends and relatives have died. It's the natural way of the world but that doesn't make us feel any better.

Now we start on the letters. The first letter is by Wayne Taral. He too complains about the Chinese WorldCon. As a super fan, I wouldn't worry if they only wanted to have WorldCon once. While it was unfair that the Chinese government drafted 2,000 Chinese to vote for the Chengdu WorldCon, WorldCon once again gets to show itself as international. On the other hand, if the Chinese want to take WorldCon for their own, whoever runs WorldCons should do something about it.

The next letter is from Darrell Schweitzer. Among other things, he moans the end of fandom as we know it. I'm not certain the attitude shouldn't be our fandom was great while it lasted. How many movements have lasted as long as fandom has, 90 years? 100 years? Things don't last.

Next is Tom Feller's letter. He says that he wears masks to prevent other people from getting Covid. He is more public spirited than I am. I wear masks to be sociable. That is when I remember to wear them. I have gotten forgetful in old age.

Next is Trinlay Khadro's letter. She discusses her family. That reminds me of my family. It seems to have left Russia because Jews were accused of starting the failed Revolution of 1905. Both members of my father's family and my mother's family left because of it. Others died from because of it and because of later persecutions and revolutions. I once read a genealogy of my family. The genealogy was not interested in social status, like a lot of genealogies are; no, it only told how members of my family had died. A few, it said, died in the successful Revolution of 1917. A lot more, it said, were killed by Hitler. That is all I know about them.

Next David M. Shea's letter. It's no wonder the firm wanted to do your bidding, or appear to, when you objected to them celebrating your birthday. You were a customer of theirs.

Next, Al du Pisani's letter. I have two things to say. One is the Covid situation in South

Africa sounds like the one in America. A lot of places instituted strict rules to fight Covid. However, now those are going by the board. Some people get vaccinations and wear masks a good deal of the time. Others don't do either at all. It is worse with the social distancing strictures: they have gone by the boards.

My second comment is that it sounds like South Africa has suffered because of government corruption. That many services are monopolies permits that much more pillaging. In American, the local utility is very anxious not to have blackouts. I remember one summer when, an hour each day for a week, the electricity went out due to construction. Otherwise, when there are blackouts, it is obvious that a high wind or a motorist hitting a transmission pole did it.

Next, John Purcell's letter. You told us about the weather in your part of Texas. I should tell you what the weather is like in Northern Virginia during the summer. Usually on the hot and sticky side. However, there are surprises. We had a snow storm this winter which closed the highway between Richmond and DC; and left a lot of motorists stranded – including a Senator.

Finally, John Hertz's letter. He is right. If enough fans had voted to keep the World Con in North America, forget Chengdu. Of course, I am the last one to cast stones. I was only at one World Con, BucConer con in 1998. I never registered for it, but I met fans I knew at the hotel.

But where were we to get 2001 fans to vote for Winnipeg?

The end except for the feature on your back page, Joe, "Confrontation." What can I say: the Joker and James Bond works? We haven't taken either the Joker or Bond seriously in many years.

What about Red Hood?

—JTM

Well, that's it.

WAHF:

Martin Morse Wooster, with various items of interest.

John Hertz, who sent a LoC and five issues of *Vanamonde*, which are . . . somewhere . . . in the house

Trinlay Khadro, Rod Smith, Lacy Thomas with thanks.

FEAR AND LOATHING IN NARNIA

... but that was some other era, burned out and long gone from the brutish realities of this foul year of our Lord 1971. A lot of things had changed in those years. And now I was in a decaying old pile of wood built with the wages of the slave trade on the bones of old Indians in New England. "Check it out. They have connections to the hash markets of Arabia and the heroin fields of Afghanistan..." I had been told.

Indeed. Check it out. But I had been shuffled into a room with furniture that had been made by indentured Irishmen before the Revolution and never repaired since then. Except for the huge box that filled one corner of the room. "My mother brought it over from England when she got married, before the war," the hostess, a decrepit bloated terror, told me before abandoning me for the night.

There was no television or radio and I went searching for some downers so I could get a night's sleep. Then I heard a horn blowing from the box.

Check it out. I took a couple of reds, made sure my .357 was loaded and jerked open the door. The sound was coming out from behind the clothes, so I pushed my way through.

These New England winters are what created these abominably harsh and judgmental fascists who run the country and it seemed they had managed to chill out this box. After two or three minutes walking I realized that this box couldn't be that deep. Or that the drugs were hitting home. "Ignore this terrible drug, pretend it's not happening..."

Then I heard the horn again. I saw the man blowing it and he was wearing a hat like some of those drunken fraternal order men, and furry trousers straight off the bear. So I shot him.

I missed, but I did blow the horn out of his hand. He looked at me and then ran off. After a moment I realized he had been standing by a streetlamp, out here in the middle of nowhere.

About dawn I realized that these were really strong drugs. I was tramping along, cold, and then I came to a road. I heard bells ringing, and then a sleigh drawn by two white deer came down the road. The driver looked like the pale overdressed boss in the back seat was about to whip him instead of the deer.

She flourished her whip and the sledge stopped. "And what, pray, are you?" she said, as imperious as some police officer about to smash in my head.

Speak only when spoken to, "My name is, ah, Raoul Duke..."

She looked like she was about to kill me and I dug for my gun, but all she said was, "Is that how you address a Queen?"

She — He? — was wearing a white dress made by impoverished women being flogged at looms and a fur coat made from innocent animals killed by whiskey-sodden hunters.

"Are you?" I said.

"Not know the Queen of Narnia? Ha! You shall know us better hereafter. But I repeat — what are you?" I still didn't quite know what to say, and she got even angrier. "What are you!? Are you a great overgrown dwarf that has cut off its beard?"

I had shaved that morning, so I said, "I said, my name is Raoul Duke."

"Do you mean you are a son of Adam? Are you human?"

"I was this morning, but things are happening."

"And how, pray, did you come to enter my domains?"

"I was here to score some drugs."

She took a moment to consider some deviltry, but said, "My poor fellow, how cold you look! Come and sit with me here on the sledge and I will put my mantle around you and we will talk."

I got in and the slavey whipped up the deer. She said, "Perhaps something hot to drink? Would you like that?"

I thought a pint of Cuevas would go down right about then but I said, "How about breakfast?"

"What would you like best to eat?"

"Four Bloody Marys, two grapefruits, a pot of coffee, Rangoon crêpes, a half-pound of either sausage, bacon, or corned-beef hash with diced chilies, a Spanish omelette or eggs Benedict, a quart of milk, a chopped lemon for random seasoning, and something like a slice of Key lime pie, two margaritas, and six lines of the best cocaine for dessert."

Her eyes went wide, and she said, "I see that we shall get along very well, Raoul Duke."

— Not by C. S. Lewis (thank God!) or Hunter S. Thompson

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This is issue **Whole Number One Hundred and Twenty-Three (123)**.

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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