

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

September will be International month at the library. Each branch draws a country which it will feature in its displays. This year ours is India. And so I have begun studying India and requesting books on it for our displays. I will continue to do so until September 20. Any later than that and the books will not get there in time. Labor Day is Worldfest here and I will seek out the India booth and buy something, perhaps some jewelry, perhaps some pottery, depending on what the budget allows.

— Lisa

Table of Contents

Editorial	1
Reviewer's Notes	1
Dragon Awards Nominees	5
Eclipse News	2
Hugo Short Fiction	5
Sidewise Awards Nominees	5
On Jewelry	5
Vision Report	2
Weight Report	2
Worldcon	6
Book Reviews	
JTM Benson, <i>Space Odyssey</i>	4
JTM van den Boom, <i>Kaiserkrieg 4: Der Aufstand</i>	3
JTM Heller, <i>Decision at Antietam</i>	4
JTM Campbell, <i>Ascendant: The Genesis Fleet</i>	3
JTM Hynes, <i>The Red Führer</i>	4
JTM Larson, <i>To the Edges of the Earth</i>	4
JTM Palter/Rohde, <i>The Fall of Malta</i>	3
JTM Rogan, <i>On to Chicago</i>	4
JTM Turtledove, <i>Hail! Hail!</i>	3
Random Jottings	2
Letters	8
Sue Burke, Robert S. Kennedy, AL du Pisani, George W. Price, Taras Wolansky	
Comments are by JTM or LTM	
Trivia:	12
Art:	
Sheryl Birkhead	8
Paul Gadzikowski	12

Alexis A. Gilliland	8, 9, 10, 11
Trinlay Khadro	2

[Marc Schirmeister sent more art. I put it somewhere where I knew it would be safe until I could scan it. I think you know the next line. I'm still looking, Schirm.]

The 93rd Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 4, 2018** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Atlanta won, the fourteenth filly to do so.

The 64th Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **September 1, 2018** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 126th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 7, 2018** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

The 64th Running of the Cane Pace (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **August 4, 2018** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Stay Hungry won.

The 63rd Running of the Messenger Stakes (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **September 1, 2018** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.

The 73rd Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) is **September 20, 2018** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio.

The Dormition of the Theotokos is **August 15, 2018**.

Printed on September 6, 2018

Deadline is **October 1, 2018**

Reviewer's Notes

I was wondering if something was wrong. We got acknowledgements but then . . . for a whole month . . . no locs. Did people not get the zine?

Alternatehistory.com has some unusual trends. Now they have a separate section on alternate media works. This is dominated by alternate *Game of Thrones* timelines, most *even worse* than the series. And it proliferates. One contributor did a story where Westeros somehow got attached to Middle-earth.

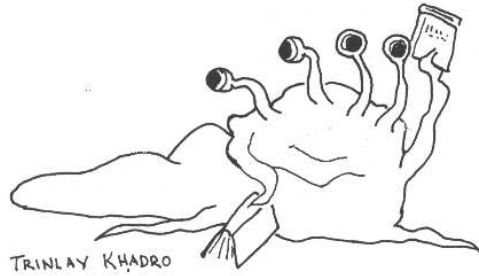
This promptly turned *The Lord of the Rings* into another *Game of Thrones*, with massacres (particularly at every wedding), pointless intrigue, and the natives being shoved well into the background. The show touches on some deeply held feeling in our culture. I don't like the idea of going there. ["Of course I'm out of my mind! It's dark and scary in there!" – Mr. J.]

I am still writing, though as I lack the desire to write of time-traveling Nazi zombies being fought by leather-clad lesbian steampunk vampires no one seems to want to buy my books. My problem with being blocked on one project now seems to be to start yet another. I'm not sure how that's going to work out in the long run.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



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

— Advt.

The guys behind **The Joker Blogs** have announced that the final three episodes will be released soon. They're putting a smile on our face.

<http://thejokerblogs.com>

OBITS

The tumult of Science Fiction has died. **Harlan Ellison** passed away on the morning of **June 28, 1934** at his home in Los Angeles.

Born **May 27, 1934** in Cleveland, Ohio, Ellison began his life of creativity and turmoil at a surprisingly young age, running away from home to do various itinerant jobs.

In fandom, he leaped to notice as most noticeable member of Seventh Fandom — or as some called it, the Phony Seventh. And he continued his career of turmoil, from the door incident at MidWestCon through the dramatic semi-boycott of IguanaCon.

He began writing for publication in 1949, producing a stream of fiction with edges so sharp they made the reader bleed. As well, he edited the famous (or at the last, infamous) *Dangerous Visions* anthologies of trend-breaking science fiction.

He did offend many in personal ways; one

would have but to ask Christopher Priest, Charles Platt, or Connie Willis. And four of his five marriages broke up.

“I hear, I balance, I assess, but judge I do not, who claim no such power. Let the Spirit who sent him forth, to whom he is returned again, pass judgment on his spirit. This dead one has sinned deeply, yet has he been more deeply sinned against. Nor against that man can be reckoned the account of his deeds of madness. Cast him then to his grave feet first that his name may be whitened in the ears of those unborn, and that thence he may return again at the time appointed. It is spoken.”

Now the Accuser lifted the book of his accusations from the ground and, advancing, hurled it into the gulf in token that it was blotted out. Then he turned and vanished from the chamber; while the Advocate, taking up his book, gave it into the keeping of the priest Oros, that it might be preserved in the archives of the temple for ever. This done, the priests began a funeral chant and a solemn invocation to the great Lord of the Under-world that he would receive this spirit and acquit it there as here it had been acquitted by the Hesea, his minister.

— Sir H. Rider Haggard, *Ayesha: The Return of She*

MONARCHICAL NEWS

We regret to report the death of William Speakman-Pitt, known as **Bill Speakman, V.C.** on **June 20, 2018**, at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea in London. Born **September 21, 1927** in Altrincham, Cheshire, Speakman joined the Black Watch when he entered the army. He was attached to the King's Own Scottish Borderers when that battalion was sent to Korea.

On **November 4, 1951**, when the left flank of his company's position north of the Imjin River began to collapse, Private Speakman gathered up all the grenades he could find, took six men, and on his own initiative moved to bolster the position. He conducted ten charges before being severely wounded, but

disregarding them, continued to fight until the company was withdrawn. He held the position during this withdrawal. The commendation says:

His great gallantry and utter contempt for his own personal safety were an inspiration to all his comrades. He was, by his heroic actions, personally responsible for causing enormous losses to the enemy, assisting his Company to maintain their position for some four hours and saving the lives of many of his comrades when they were forced to withdraw from their position.

Private Speakman's heroism under intense fire throughout the operation and when painfully wounded was beyond praise and is deserving of supreme recognition.

— *Supplement to the London Gazette*, 25th December, 1951

Speakman later served with the Special Air Service, rising to the rank of Sergeant before retiring in 1968. In 2015 he became a Chelsea Pensioner.

YOU'RE SO VAIN

by Joe

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

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

NASA Eclipse website:

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

Other useful eclipse websites:

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

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

I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

by Joe

When last we left my eye surgery, the doctors had found out, much to their dismay, that the new lens in my right eye had tipped over a little. Naturally **I** would have to pay to get this fixed.

By now the procedure was getting all too familiar; get on the van, go over to Indiana, dish out \$\$\$, get wrapped up and doped up, and let them do their arcane things.

The adjustment didn't seem to be quite as much an assault on my seeing as before, but then it only required one procedure instead of two; they didn't have to fire the phaser banks into the old lens.

And the next day I went to Dr. L., who observed that things seemed to be going well and I should come back in two weeks. They are getting to know me there.

The swelling of the cornea in my left eye had pretty much gone down by then, which was the other thing he was checking. It wouldn't do to have the yellowish haze (from the lens) replaced by a whitish one (from the cornea). So my eyes seemed to be in good shape. (As for the rest of the afternoon, the less said the better; I had a bad time for a different reason.)

It is interesting seeing colors so brightly and cleanly. My original lenses seemed to have deteriorated, not only in acuity, but in clarity, gaining a yellowish haze. The contrast is quite striking.

My final appointment with Dr. L. was delayed because we had to go to a funeral. He surveyed the situation and said that recovery seemed to be going well and I didn't need to see him again for a while.

WEIGHT

by Lisa

This morning I stepped on the scales for my weekly weighing. 162.4. I am within thirteen pounds of the goal I somewhat jokingly set for myself seven years ago. This has been a mental journey as much as a physical one. I have gone from being a couch potato to someone who thinks nothing of walking a mile to work. It has been a journey from size 20 down to size 14. It has meant having to replace all my pants. Sometimes I

find myself looking at the new pants and thinking there is no way I can squeeze into them. I have earned this. Size 18 was not that hard to achieve. Size 16 took a bit longer. Size 14 required a lot of miles logged on my shoes. I did not expect my stomach to shrink but it has. I can no longer eat nearly as much as I used to. At a certain point my stomach will refuse to accept any more food.

ZERSTÖRERMÄNNER BAND IV
Review by Joseph T Major of
KAISERKRIEGER 4: DER AUFSTAND

(*The Emperor's Men 4: Uprising*)
by Dirk van den Boom
(2018; Atlantis Verlag Guido Latz;
ISBN 978-3864026102; \$12.00;
Amazon Digital Services; \$5.99)
<http://www.atlantis-verlag.de>

ARIES IAM MURO TETIGAT, the new Emperor and his men might say.

„Das Rammen hat die Mauer berührt,” the new Magister Militum and his fellow crewmen might say.

The rebellion of Magnus Maximus and his *Kaiserliche* collaborator has surged out of Britain, and indeed into the Italian Peninsula. At the beginning of the Empire, some four centuries ago, the Senate and Pompeius Magnus were faced with a like crisis, as Julius Caesar had crossed the Rubicon and was coming to get them.

Faced with this problem, Magister Militum Rheinsburg has at least the ability to evacuate. („*Dunkirk? Vas ist ,Dunkirk'?*”)

Let us hope that there is not a dismal scene similar to the one at Atia's party, where the guests argued over who should kill whom, and who would have to take her own life as last survivor. One would think they were superstitious Judeans, stuck in a breached hilltop fortress.

WE THE UNWILLING

Review by Joseph T Major of
ASCENDANT:

The Genesis Fleet
by “Jack Campbell” [John G. Hemry]
(2018; Ace;
ISBN 978-1101988374; \$27.00;
Penguin Random House (Kindle); \$13.99)
Sequel to *Vanguard*
(2017; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 17 #1)

Rob Geary and Mele Darcy must be used to being discarded. The government of Glenlyon has gotten along just fine without them.

Nevertheless, there is a “Ms. Darcy, we're needed” moment when the planet is threatened, again. Because of threats, the government has resigned itself to recalling Rob, even giving him the rank of Commander and command of a ship, while Mele is made Commandant of the Glenlyon Marine Corps (a whole twenty jarheads).

The result befits the legendary plaint, “We the unwilling, led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible, for the ungrateful. We have done so much, for so long, with so little, we are now qualified to do anything with nothing.” Some things never change.

There are more links. The story never really ends, you know. In his search for crew, Rob finds an engineer qualified enough to be XO. Her name? “Vicki Shen”. A relative of Jen Shen of the Paul Sinclair novels? Or just a coincidence of names? It's nice to think the former even though that way lies Wold Newtonism.

But then, it can be perhaps deliberate. The council member who summoned Rob back to service later goes on a covert mission for aid. To pass through the enemy's surveillance, she uses a pseudonym. They look at this meek little librarian and figure she isn't overdue and doesn't need to be checked out. Even if she is named Alice Mary Norton. (If you still don't get this, write and let us know.)

LAND OF THE BRAVE AND FREE

Review by Joseph T Major of
HAIL! HAIL!
By Harry Turtledove
(2018; Swallow's End Publishing (Kindle); \$2.99)

The soup had a familiar taste. Padway looked down into the bowl after his first spoonful and sighed. “What's the matter, Martinus?” Urias said. “The cook went to a lot of trouble to make good duck soup.”

“It's the memory,” Padway said. He had seen that movie before . . . before the transition, and the memory lingered. Rufus T. Firefly would have been even harder put to resolve the

problems of Gothic Italy, and the thought of throwing fruit at Justinian as he was stuck in an improvised pillory did not give him the reassurance it might have.

— Not by L. Sprague de Camp

Arthur, Julius, Leonard, and sometimes Herbert are on a train to New York when they get diverted into the past, and no British Police call boxes for them to take back home, they are somewhat beyond their bounds. And in Fredonia, not to be confused with Freedonia, though there is hail.

It is 1826, and Levy Schönberg is a boy in Dornum, while Simon Marris is yet to be born. Nacogodoches is full of roaches, and also Norteamericanos.

It would seem that Zeppo (Herbert) would be the most worthwhile, what with his technical skills, but it turns out that Groucho (Julius) takes the lead. Particularly when he gets called out, and somehow manages to shoot dead a notorious *norteamericano*. In our time-line the man had a big part in the failure of the Fredonian revolution. This isn't going to happen now.

Indeed it's “Hail, Hail, Fredonia!” and no Mrs. Teasdale to lend them money. The Marxes realize they don't fit. There's no place like home.

Only . . . timelines can have their own shifts. The unsuited outsiders find themselves in an environment where the response to smart gags won't be laughs, or even boos, but hot lead. Fortunately those clever jokes are backed up by clever thoughts, but still . . .

(Why all the commentary about Yiddish? The Marxes were Yekkes, they spoke German; see “Chico's Bank Account” in *Memoirs of a Mangy Lover* where an Italian crime boss in an unnamed Southern city offers Chico Marx five brothels if he will only stay there, and breaks into Italian to indicate his affection for a *paisano*. Chico almost replied in German. Ach du scheiss.)

“We are investigating other cases similar to the Hartley one,” said Associate Commissioner Kapar Grann. “The initial case appears to have been some fifteen hundred years ago, here, where a man known as ‘Mysterious Martinus’ imported what appeared to be future technology. He died before a

Paratimer found him.”

“And you're saying this time-line split is another such case?” Vall asked.

“Ah, there we had a man on them immediately! But they struck him as too funny to be of any effect. . .”

— Not by H. Beam Piper

IN A FLASH

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE FALL OF MALTA:

The Reich without Hitler: Volume 1
by Scott Palter with Mike Rohde
(2018; Amazon Digital Services; \$0.99)

This is a book by a couple of wargamers. Hitler dies in a plane crash after crushing France, and his Indomitable Will is obeyed, bringing his Comrade of the Struggle Reichsmarshal Göring to the Leadership. Which involves a little bloodshed, as Himmler and most of his circle are found surplus to current needs and disposed of. Except for one.

But the Fat One is more interested in his model trains and planes and such, so he presides, while others lead. Namely Generals Halder (?) and Beck (??), and the new chief of the SS, Heydrich (!!!?). The Hangman did some very quick talking on that day, you see.

The new regime immediately lays off that talk about killing Jews, and indeed enlists them, along with surplus SS, SA, and any other laybys, even Jews, into something called the *Niblelungenlegion*, yet another paramilitary force, which proceeds to clean up.

That done, the Reich decides on the Mediterranean option, and a parachute drop on the Island of Malta is in order. Including a unit of the Nibelungenlegion.

Somehow, using an armed mob doesn't sound like the best idea. And how Zionist groups like Betar (as you know, Bob, the Betar was Revisionist, the ancestors of the Likud, and founded the ZZW [Jewish Military Union] which undertook the Warsaw Rising) suddenly become active German auxiliaries is left as an exercise to the reader.

It makes an interesting wargame. See under “Murphy's Rules” for how interesting (which had other interesting wargame bits like how setting yourself on fire was the best way to fight in a dungeon if you didn't have a torch, why it was impossible to commit suicide by shooting yourself, and other such interesting variations on reality).

RECURSION TO THE MEAN

Review by Joseph T Major of

ON TO CHICAGO:
**Rediscovering Robert F. Kennedy and the
Lost Campaign of 1968**

by James Rogan

(2018; WND Books;

ISBN 978-1944229986; \$29.95;

Amazon Digital Services; \$9.99)

RFK going on to the election has been a common bit of alternate history ever since, oh, Russell Baker's *Our Next President* (1968), when Bobby cleverly outmaneuvered everyone else to become Acting President, thanks to some really inept bargaining by Johnson, Wallace, and John Lindsay. Mitchell Freedman wrote a BobbyWank, *A Disturbance of Fate* (2002, 2003; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 2 #5). Jeff Greenfield had a more nuanced view in the middle story of his collection *Then Everything Changed* (2011; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #3).

After surviving a shooting in the aftermath of his California victory, RFK plunges on to the convention, which turns out to be unsurprising, except for some behind-the-scenes issues, such as the sudden shipment of Johnson For President banners, posters, and signs, which never get used as LBJ has to respond to the winding-up of the Prague Spring. The convention goes on to nominate him, and in response Nixon passes over the alliterative governor of Maryland as his running mate, choosing instead the host of *Death Valley Days*. Kennedy is plagued with migraines throughout the campaign, and manages to lose the election.

And indeed, everything gets reset to our time line. Reagan steps down after one term as Nixon's VP, and Nixon is disgraced at Watergate. RFK dies of a brain aneurysm caused by a fragment of one of Sirhan's bullets. It's not quite as bad as the total reset of *The Plot Against America* (2004; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 3 #6).

(Note: WND Books is associated with WND.com so be warned.)

HOW MANY REMAIN

Review by Joseph T Major of

DECISION AT ANTIETAM:
A Counterfactual History of the Civil War

by Andrew J. Heller

 (2018; Andrew J. Heller;
ISBN 978-1983286995; \$13.27;
Amazon Digital Services; \$4.95)

The author of *Gray Tide in the East* (2012; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 12 #4) and its sequel *Gray Tide 2: Tidal Effects* (2017) this time decides to stand Turtledove (*How Few Remain* (1997)) on his head. More specifically, he has General McClellan not take counsel of Alan Pinkerton, the desire to become the next President, and his fears, and attack the Rebs decisively at Antietam, with their battle dispositions to hand.

The result is catastrophic for the Confederacy, with just about the entire Army of Northern Virginia taken captive. Yet the Young Napoleon does not proceed to burn down Moscow, or Richmond, but pauses to reorganize, demand more troops, and lay in supplies.

The next part of the war is marked by desperate maneuverings by the Confederacy to form up some sort of defense, and desperate maneuverings by the Union high command as it shuffles and reshuffles. The Army of the Potomac runs through commanders while the new Confederate Army of Virginia has to gather up whatever it can in the way of boots (or, given the circumstances, bare feet) on the ground. The campaign is marked by extreme friction in the Clauswitzian sense.

Nevertheless, finally, finally, the Army of the Potomac takes Richmond. The struggling Confederacy doesn't so much surrender as it disintegrates. And then?

Gray Tide in the East was, in spite of things, somewhat better than the OTL war in that it did not develop the agonizing disillusionment at society that was the fertile environment for totalitarianisms, even though it left Germany dominating the continent. Will this sudden victory break the formation of the Klan, and the grand pressure of Reconstruction and its lapse? Like that book this is an interesting provoker of thought.

UNSER KAMPF

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE RED FÜHRER

by Paul Hynes

(2018; Sea Lion Press; \$5.37)

This is one of those things which seems to have been so obvious, and yet never done

before. What if Adolf Hitler were a Communist?

The beginning is plausible enough; the impoverished artist in Vienna encounters a member of an artistic movement more sympathetic to his style. In the discussions, politics creep in, and Adolf becomes devoted to the liberation of the proletariat from the oppression of the bourgeoisie.

From there, his wartime experiences diverge slightly, and he flecks to the Bavarian Soviet, instead of running into the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartie*. From there, he becomes a rising star in the KPD, and when the time comes . . .

There are a few stretchers here. Thus, when Hitler goes to Moscow to meet the people currently running the Soviet Union, they all speak the same language. Stalin didn't speak German, and I would think that Kamenev and Zinoviev would be more likely to speak Yiddish.

Also, the book is a little too full of the little people doing little things. As Part One of a longer series that would be one thing, but at it stands it breaks the focus.

As well, it skims over what one would think would be crucial elements in the triumph of the Revolution. The KPD really wasn't that popular, and a coup by the *Rotfront* would likely lead to a civil war.

Still, it's not your usual German AH, and is worth reading for that reason. In our history, so many lower-level German communists seamlessly transitioned to the Nazi party; why not the *Großkerl*?

JOURNEY BEYOND THE STARS

Review by Joseph T Major of

SPACE ODYSSEY:
**Stanley Kubrick, Arthur C. Clarke, and the
Making of a Masterpiece**

by Michael Benson

(2018; Simon & Schuster;

ISBN 978-1501163937; \$30.00;

Simon & Schuster Digital Sales; \$14.99)

The four years from the conception of *Journey Beyond the Stars* to the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey* were fraught with many hazards. Fifty years later, there is now a certain perspective on them.

One can imagine the jaded fans of today wondering how the CGI was handled. Kiddies . . . there was no CGI then. Stanley Kubrick

wouldn't have known what a green screen was if you had thrown him into one headfirst. When he recovered, he might have used it, though.

Benson brings up to date the story first expounded in Jerome Agel's *The Making of Kubrick's 2001* (1970). Kubrick began his idea with some intense research. Clarke, on the other hand, began the work with a desperate need for money; between taxes, his failed marriage, and Mike Wilson's bottomless money pit of movie making work, not to mention the unwillingness of Sinhalese merchants to take Mogul silver rupees in payment, money was extremely tight for him then. (Incidentally, Mike Wilson's movies are lost; no prints are known to exist.)

The shooting had many unknown features. Kubrick hired a key aide literally off the streets; and the man was useful in that he could get around British union rules. Several astronomical scenes were filmed using a vegetable substance known as "banana oil", which started rotting under the heat and light.

The model making was intricate. There are certain similarities between the models of *2001* and of the *Star Wars* epos, the complexity and the detail. Han Solo would not do as Heywood Floyd's pilot, sorry to say.

The interior sets were equally complex. The rotating set of the *Discovery* crew compartment, well, rotated, and the nearly fatal intersection of a pipe wrench and computer theorist Marvin Minsky, come to admire the setup, had its own problems.

But Kubrick was persuasive. Keir Dullea [David Bowman] does not get along with heights, and yet Kubrick persuaded him to do the air lock escape scene, which required him to be hung by wires over a vertical tube. [Look up the YouTube video "If HAL-9000 were Amazon.com's Alexa" to see how it could have been worse for Dave.]

Amid all the problems, such as Clarke's coming on to Kubrick that he wouldn't be coming on to Kubrick (he was very close to Hector Ekanayake) to the madcap sessions with the Kubrick family, the movie was completed. And then released, to acclaim and incomprehension. After which Kubrick retired to study Napoleon, and when that didn't work out, to do *A Clockwork Orange* (or twenty out of twenty-one chapters thereof).

 WE SHALL NOT CEASE FROM

EXPLORATION

Review by Joseph T Major of
**TO THE EDGES OF THE EARTH:
 1909, the Race for the Three Poles, and the
 Climax of the Age of Exploration**
 by Edward J. Larson
 (2018; William Morrow;
 ISBN 978-0062564474; \$29.99;
 HarperCollins Publishers; \$12.99)

Being a “Three Poler” — Everest and the North and South Poles, is not common even today but there are several people who have that accomplishment, beginning with Sir Ran Fiennes. It may interest you to know that while there are “Seven Summitters”, people who have climbed the highest mountain on each continent, and because of differing definitions there are several variations of climbing the nine mountains that are the highest peaks on the seven continents, some climbers argue that climbing the *second highest* mountain on each continent is more of an accomplishment, since they are usually more difficult to climb. K2 for example is far more difficult to climb than Everest and has a much higher casualty rate. Then there is the True Explorers Grand Slam, which involves reaching both poles and climbing the Seven Summits (Sir Ran Fiennes was first to do this), or perhaps even also all 14 8000-meter peaks ...

In 1909, Chomolungma was out of bounds, so Mount Godwin-Austen, now known as K2, the second highest mountain in the world, had to stand in for it. And in that year people tried for all three of the poles. Three different expeditions, however.

In the frozen North, Robert E. Peary, his loyal servant Matthew Henson, and several other expeditioners and Inuit set out for the Big Nail. It was Peary’s last possible effort, and apparently his will was stronger than his body. Larson agrees with Sir Wally Herbert, not the National Geographic Society, on the accomplishment matter.

In the frigid south, Ernest H. Shackleton set out to outdo his now-disdainful former superior and his own questionable health alike. In spite of his lackadaisical attitude towards finance, the problems with animal transport, and the hazards of the area, he showed what improvisation, leadership, and sheer bloody hard-headedness can do. He did not get there, saying he preferred to be a live donkey instead

of a dead lion, but his efforts in the final stages of the trip prefigured the rescue of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

Finally, the seemingly privileged Prince Luigi Amadeo di Savoia, Duca degli Abruzzi, having been maimed once heading for the North Pole, decided instead to climb the highest accessible mountain. K2 is a surveyor’s name, the way Chomolungma was known as Peak XV. But Chomolungma was called after the former Surveyor-General of India, Sir George Everest. Prince Luigi was following in the footsteps of Aleister Crowley (fortunately in that alone) and his expedition strove mightily, pioneering the most common route up the mountain. Strangely for a climb of K2, the expedition did not have anyone killed.

So. None of our explorers succeeded at his goal, though one claimed to. What have we learned? Sometimes failure is as great an accomplishment as success. Just ask Gene Kranz.

A friend at church gave me a nice little pendant. That little pendant has woken in me a liking for jewelry. I have begun building up a collection. Librarian K has put out a selection of beads and wire for patrons to make wire jewelry with. I have made several such. Other library staff seem to like them though they may just be being polite. At any rate I have fun putting together combinations of beads I think attractive and interesting, whether they really are or not.

— Lisa

SIDEWISE AWARDS 2017

Short Form

Tom Anderson & Bruno Lombardi, “**N’oublions Jamais**,” *Altered Europa*, edited by Martin T. Ingham, Martinus Publishing, 2017

Dave D’Alessio, “**The Twenty Year Reich**,” *Altered Europa*, edited by Martin T. Ingham, Martinus Publishing, 2017

Nisi Shawl, “**Sun River**,” *Clockwork Cairo: Steampunk Tales from Egypt*, edited by Matthew Bright, Twopenny Books, 2017

Harry Turtledove, “**Zigeuner**,” *Asimov’s*, 9-10/17

Long Form

Gregory Benford, *The Berlin Project*, Saga Press, 2017

Brent Harris, *A Time of Need*, Insomnia Publishing, 2017

Elan Mastai, *All Our Wrong Todays*, Dutton, 2017

Alan Smale, *The Clash of Eagles trilogy* (*Clash of Eagles, Eagle in Exile, Eagle and Empire*), Del Rey, 2015-2017

Bryce Zabel, *Once There Was a Way*, Diversion Books, 2017

DRAGON AWARDS 2018

Best Science Fiction Novel

It Takes Death to Reach a Star by Gareth Worthington and Stu Jones

Persepolis Rising by James S.A. Corey

The Mutineer’s Daughter by Chris Kennedy and Thomas A. Mays

Win by Vera Nazarian

Sins of Her Father by Mike Kupari

Artemis by Andy Weir

Best Fantasy Novel (Including Paranormal)

Shoot the Messenger by Pippa DaCosta

War Hammer by Shayne Silvers

Oathbringer by Brandon Sanderson

The Land: Predators by Aleron Kong

The Traitor God by Cameron Johnston

A Tempered Warrior by Jon R. Osborne

Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel

Cold Bath Street by A.J. Hartley

A Court of Frost and Starlight by Sarah J. Maas

When Tinker Met Bell by Alethea Kontis

Brightly Burning by Alexa Donne

Warcross by Marie Lu

Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

Best Military Science Fiction or Fantasy Novel

Communications Failure by Joe Zieja

Points of Impact by Marko Kloos

Ghost Marines: Integration by Jonathan P. Brazee

Price of Freedom by Craig Martelle and

Michael Anderle
Legend by Christopher Woods
A Call to Vengeance by David Weber,
 Timothy Zahn, and Thomas Pope

Best Alternate History Novel

Dark State by Charles Stross

The Sea Peoples by S.M. Stirling

Witchy Winter by D.J. Butler

Uncharted by Kevin J. Anderson and Sarah A. Hoyt

Dream of the Iron Dragon by Robert Kroese

Minds of Men by Kacey Ezell

Best Media Tie-In Novel

Leia: Princess of Alderaan by Claudia Gray

Before the Storm by Christie Golden

Phasma by Delilah S. Dawson

Fear Itself by James Swallow

Legacy of Onyx by Matt Forbeck

Desperate Hours by David Mack

Best Horror Novel

Beneath the Lighthouse by Julieanne Lynch

Meddling Kids by Edgar Cantero

A Time to Run by Mark Wandrey

The Cabin at the End of the World by Paul Tremblay

Sleeping Beauties by Stephen King and Owen King

Glimpse by Jonathan Maberry

Best Comic Book

Mighty Thor by Jason Aaron and James Harren, Marvel Comics

Doomsday Clock by Geoff Johns and Gary Frank, DC Comics

Aliens: Dead Orbit by James Stokoe, Dark Horse Comics

Mister Miracle by Tom King and Mitch Gerads, DC Comics

Saga by Brian K. Vaughn and Fiona Staples, Image Comics

Star Wars: Darth Vader by Charles D. Soule and Giuseppe Camuncoli, Marvel Comics

Best Graphic Novel

Chicago Typewriter: The Red Ribbon by Brandon Fiadino, Djibril Morissette-Phan, and James Greatorex, Dark Legion Comics

Brandon Sanderson's White Sand Volume 1 by Brandon Sanderson, Rik Hoskin, and Julius M. Gopez, Dynamite Entertainment

Be Prepared by Vera Brosgol
Monstress Vol. 2: The Blood by Marjorie M. Liu, Sana Takeda, Image Comics

Vision (The Vision) by Tom King, Gabriel Hernandez Walta, Marvel Comics

Paper Girls Volume 4 by Brian K. Vaughn and Cliff Chiang, Image Comics

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series

The Expanse, Syfy
Game of Thrones, HBO

Lucifer, Fox
Supernatural, CW

Star Trek: Discovery, CBS All Access
Altered Carbon, Netflix
Stranger Things, Netflix

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie

Incredibles 2 directed by Brad Bird
Thor: Ragnarok directed by Taika Waititi
Blade Runner 2049 directed by Denis Villeneuve

Avengers: Infinity War directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo

Black Panther directed by Ryan Coogler
Ready Player One directed by Steven Spielberg

Deadpool 2 directed by Dave Leitch

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy PC / Console Game

Fortnite by Epic Games
Cuphead by Studio MDHR

Middle-earth: Shadow of War by Monolith Productions

Destiny 2 by Bungie
Battletech by Harebrained Schemes
Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus by MachineGames

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Mobile Game

Planescape: Torment by Black Isle

Studios
Nocked! by Andrew Schneider
Lineage 2: Revolution by Netmarble
Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition by Square Enix
Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery by Jam City

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game

Rising Sun by CMON Games
When I Dream by Asmodee
Mysterium: Secrets and Lies Expansion by Asmodee
Azul by Plan B Games
Red Dragon Inn 6: Villains by Slugfest Games
Photosynthesis by Blue Orange

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

Warhammer 40,000 8th Edition by Games Workshop
Force and Destiny Role-playing Game: Knights of Fate by Fantasy Flight Games
Bubblegumshoe – RPG by Evil Hat
Cooking with Dice: The Acid Test by Oddfish Games
D100 Dungeon by Martin Knight
Magic: The Gathering Unstable by Wizards of the Coast

The 2018 Hugo Awards: my thoughts on the short fiction by Sue Burke

In the April issue, I wrote about the Nebula short fiction nominees, and I was reasonably satisfied by the winners when they were announced in May.

There's a lot of overlap between the Nebula and Hugo nominees, which made reading for the Hugos easier. I've ranked all my preferences for the Hugo ballot above "No Award": while I'm a little harsh because I had to make choices, they're all good stories and well worth reading, no matter what else I say. (I've summarized my comments for the stories I wrote about in April.)

Novella

6. Binti: Home, by Nnedi Okorafor (Tor.com) This is #2 in the *Binti* series. A young woman named Binti, who in novella #1 had gone off to study at a university and in the process ended a war and became a hero, must now return home. As in the first novella, there are complications with her family, with her culture, and with the larger galaxy – and she must also find out more about her identity. It's a coming-of-age story with interesting details, but the narration rambles and the plot twists are few and not always surprising. The novella is also clearly part of a series and doesn't quite stand alone. Although Binti is charming, the storytelling about her is a bit less so. *Binti* #1 won the Hugo and Nebula Awards.

5. The Black Tides of Heaven, by JY Yang (Tor.com) In an Asian-like culture with two moons and fluid genders, twins are driven apart by their tyrannical mother, the country's dictator, who rules with a bloodstained iron hand.

4. River of Teeth, by Sarah Gailey (Tor.com) *The Wild, Wild West* with hippos. A fun farce of an old-fashioned Western, but I was hoping for something more solid and original.

3. Down Among the Sticks and Bones, by Seanan McGuire (Tor.com) At age 12, twin sisters, Jacqueline and Jillian, or Jack and Jill, find a portal in the attic that leads to a fantasyland. They're glad to go. Their parents aren't abusive, just self-centered and clueless in a way that makes both girls miserable and emotionally stunted, one a tomboy and the other a princess. In fantasyland, their roles are reversed, and they change. After a few years, they have to escape back to reality, which is where the story ends. I wish it had gone on just a bit longer. I would have loved to see how the parents reacted to their now older, wiser, and different daughters, one of them blood-spattered upon her arrival (not her own blood, either). Although the story was in some ways predictable, the plot twists sometimes felt more like knife twists and kept the story surprising. A worthy contender for a Hugo, and it's already won the 2018 ALA Alex Award.

2. "And Then There Were (N-One)," by Sarah Pinsker (Uncanny 3-4/17) Sarah Pinsker (not the author) gets an invitation to a Sarah Pinsker convention in an alternate reality; the story captures that weirdness. This novella was also nominated for the Locus and

Sturgeon Awards.

1. All Systems Red, by Martha Wells (Tor.com) A robot has killed in the past, is sure everyone hates it because of that, and hates itself, too. This story won the ALA Alex Award and the Nebula, and it was also my vote for the Nebula.

Novellette

6. "Extracurricular Activities," by Yoon Ha Lee (Tor.com, 2/15/17) A special ops agent gets sent on a secret mission to rescue a fellow agent. The rescuing agent is supremely confident, and the story tries to be both tense and humorous. It felt like a caper, and obviously some people liked it more than I did. Apparently it's part of a larger series, and it might have helped to know that setting. Still, to me the jokes seemed tired and the violence was not funny. I also don't see what's entertaining about sexual harassment just because it's between two men. #MeToo

5. "Small Changes Over Long Periods of Time," by K.M. Szpara (Uncanny 5-6/17) A man in the process of transitioning from female to male gets turned into a vampire.

4. "The Secret Life of Bots," by Suzanne Palmer (Clarkesworld, 9/17) A brave little robot, Bot 9, must exterminate a sort of rat through the bowels of a spaceship. As it happens, the future of humanity depends on the success of Bot 9, which in turn needs the help of other robots to catch the ratbug, and a few protocols are broken in the making of that improvised rescue. This story is very cute. I'm not a big fan of cute, but I will give recognition to a job well done. If you like cute, read this story. You'll be glad you did.

3. "Children of Thorns," by Alette de Bodard (Uncanny 7-8/17) In disguise, a pair of spies from the dragon kingdom located under the Seine try to infiltrate the House of the Fallen Angels. The setting is a magically dystopic Paris, and the House is about to have its own magical crisis. It meets Bodard's usual standards of tight writing, characterization, and plotting, with wonderful details slipped in. My only problem is that it feels like an opening chapter to a novel – a fine opening chapter, but there should be more. For me, that diminishes what is in every other way an excellent work.

2. "Wind Will Rove," by Sarah Pinsker (Asimov's 9-10/17) On a multi-generational ship, the older generations cling to what they

recall from Earth or have learned about it. For the narrator, this means music.

1. “A Series of Steaks,” by **Vina Jie-Min Prasad** (*Clarkesworld* 1/17) A woman in China agrees to make counterfeit beefsteaks for a client, then the deal starts to go sour. This also won the Clarkesworld Reader’s Poll and got my vote for the Nebula.

Short story

6. “Clearly Lettered in a Mostly Steady Hand,” by **Fran Wilde** (*Uncanny* 9-10/17) A visitor is led through an exhibition of what might have once cruelly been called a freak show, and the visitor is tortured.

5. “Carnival Nine,” **Caroline M. Yoachim** (*Beneath Ceaseless Skies* 5/11/17) A wind-up toy robot mother makes great sacrifices to care for her robot son who has mechanical problems. Also a Locus Award nominee.

4. “Moon, Sun, Dust,” by **Ursula Vernon** (*Uncanny* 5-6/17) A farmer is bequeathed a magic sword by his grandmother on her deathbed. He has no use for a sword, magic or otherwise, however, and is quite content to go on growing potatoes. His humble candor carries the story, which is gently and delightfully charming. I rank it fourth only due to stiff competition. It’s well worth reading.

3. “The Martian Obelisk,” by **Linda Nagata** (*Tor.com* 7/19/17) As Earth is dying from a long series of natural and human-made disasters, an old woman is directing robots on Mars to create a monument to outlast humanity. It may be a futile gesture, but there’s not much else to do – then something seems to be stirring on Mars. This quiet story depends on largely unstated emotions to carry it, and those emotions lurk like leviathans: sorrow, defeat, anger, pain, despair ... and defiance. Despite its brevity, it made a long journey across my heart to do battle with dystopia. It won the 2018 Locus Award for Short Story.

2. “Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience™,” by **Rebecca Roanhorse** (*Apex* 8/17) An Indian guide for cyberspace tourists offers Native American “Vision Quests.” It’s already won an Apex Reader’s Choice Award, Nebula Award, and a Locus Award nomination. Well deserved.

1. “Fandom for Robots,” by **Vina Jie-Min Prasad** (*Uncanny* 9-10/17) A

sentient robot discovers an anime series about another sentient robot, *Hyperwarp*, and becomes a “hyper-big fan.” It was a Locus Award nominee and got my vote for the Nebula Award.

WORLDCON BIDS

2020

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

2021

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

2022

Chicago

2023

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

New Orleans

2024

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

2025

Pacific Northwest
Perth, Australia

NASFiC BIDS

2019

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

The programming problem of WorldCon has got even weirder. Mike Resnick got his program schedule. Which he thought was a little odd since he wasn’t even a member.

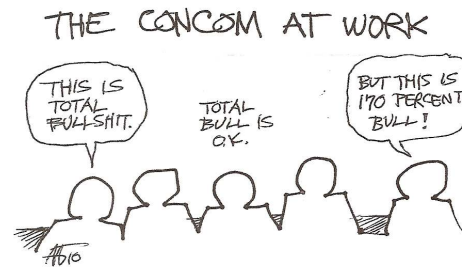
As you know, Bob, there was an initial protest because some of the Hugo nominees (who *were* members) weren’t even on the program. This got very bad.

Meanwhile, the Rabid Puppies are gloating over the whole mess. Damon Knight knew them, even if he was before their time: “[The] test of the Organizer and Wrecker in fandom is that when power wanes and wrecking palls, he drops out.” [*In Search of Wonder*, Chapter 14 “Microcosmic Moskowitz”]

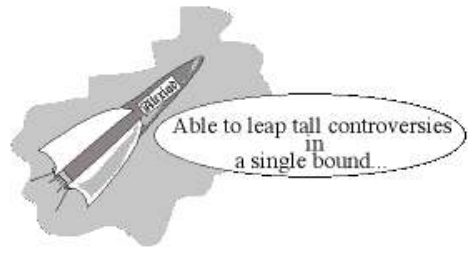
Which is happening with that group, as

they retreat into their own circle. The Castalia House blog has almost stopped updating. Vox Day is no longer so vocal. The current loud—spokesbeing seems to be Jon Del Arroz, who is more infantile than persuasive.

Not that their opponents are all that good, either.



Letters, we get letters



From: **George W. Price** July 27, 2018
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June Alexiad:

Joe recounts his recent eye operation at some length (in "I Can See Clearly Now"). He says, "They wrapped me in sterile gown, hair-covering, and booties."

That's very much how my cataract operation went last November. When I asked why I had to strip even though they wouldn't be working on my body, I was told that it was because my clothing was not sterile — all those precautions were not to protect me. No sir! They were to protect the operating staff against my germs. Now that induces a proper humility.

Well, I didn't have to take off my clothes.

Robert Kennedy says his cataract surgery several years ago was highly successful. Richard Dengrove says he expects to need the operation fairly soon. I hope his turns out better than mine.

Well, strictly speaking, my cataract operations (both eyes, separately) were successful, but my vision continues to deteriorate because I also have glaucoma. The upshot is that my reading speed has slowed drastically, and three weeks ago I gave up my driver's license. When I flunked the annual license renewal test, the DMV people said I could take the test twice more, but I decided to hang it up. I really have become a dangerous driver — among other things, it's now very

hard for me to see the yellow line — so it is better to quit now before I cause an accident. Fortunately, Chicago has a good transit system, and I live half a block from a bus stop. And my stepchildren are happy to chauffeur me when needed.

* * * * *

Lloyd Daub makes some observations on conspiracy theories, notably that the theorists assume that scientists lie, so "the scientific facts used to refute the conspiracy are not believed, either." Richard Dengrove also mentions some of the traditional targets of conspiracy theorizing, such as Jewish bankers. (Hey, what about gentile bankers? Don't they ever conspire?)

When someone asks me to believe in some vast conspiracy, I like to pose two questions:

First: If this is such a secret, how did you find out about it? Do you have some special source of information?

Second: For the conspiracy to work, how many people would have to be in on it, and is this a small enough number to keep the secret? When I am asked to believe in conspiracies involving thousands of hidden operators, none of whom ever get pissed off and rat out the others — well, I just smile politely and dismiss the whole notion.

To be sure, most conspiraphiles don't really depend on evidence. They deduce the existence of a conspiracy to explain particular events, simply because to them no other explanation "makes sense." No evidence is needed.

You could always add, "How come they haven't taken care of you yet?"

—JTM

* * * * *

In this issue nobody said anything political to boil my bile, so all shall escape unscathed. And I will manfully refrain from commenting on the president's recent summit meetings with the North Korean and Russian leaders. Instead, I will assert that summit meetings in general are a bad idea.

An unspoken assumption for the value of face-to-face meetings between national leaders is that our man can get concessions out of the

other that the regular diplomats could not. That is, our leader's intelligence, personal magnetism, and charisma are so overwhelming that the other guy's normal judgment will be suspended and he will make spur-of-the-moment decisions favorable to us that he wouldn't have made if everything had been mediated through diplomats and advisers. (And of course, the other guy is making the same insulting assumptions about overwhelming our man's better judgment.) In short, the parties to a summit meeting are both flattering themselves that they can play the other guy for a sucker. One of them may be right, and I don't want to take the chance that it is our man who will turn out to be the sucker.

I will stick with the traditional style of negotiations, where each point is passed through negotiators who are continually getting analysis and feedback from experts, and instructions from their principals. This precisely aims to prevent those spur-of-the-moment decisions that will come back to bite us.

This also has the virtue of not humiliating the leaders by forcing them to backtrack on proposals when hidden pitfalls are discovered. Anything like that can be blamed on the low-level negotiators, not the leaders. The leaders stay above the fray until everything is solidly nailed down.

The leaders should never meet until all the messy details are settled and the treaty is ready for signing. Then they can have a big public celebration with handshakes, hugs, and parades as appropriate.

But there should never be actual substantive negotiations between the leaders in person. There's too much chance of something going wrong, of fateful decisions being made without adequate thought and analysis.

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** July 28, 2018
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Thank you for Vol. 17, No. 3 (Whole Number 99).

When I previously commented on my medical problems I should have mentioned my niece, her husband, their son, my nephew, and his son. When I was about to be released from the care facility my niece, Sheila, and her husband, Brad, showed up, took me home, and took care of me. Brad had to go back to work. But Sheila (who is a teacher) stayed for several weeks. I was then on my own for a week at which point their son, Jacob, took time off from work and was here for some weeks. Then I was on my own for a week when Sheila showed up again and was here for about six weeks. My nephew, David, and his son Arron then arrived and there were four of us here in my house. Oh, and Scott Kennedy, who is a surviving son of my brother's son Larry, came up from Hemet for a visit for an afternoon and evening. Even though I've lived by myself for 30+ years, it did not seem crowded. Now I'm on my own and seem to be doing ok. Sheila and David's father (my brother John) died in 2006 at the young age of 68. I still miss him. I am truly blessed that his children and their families think so much of me.

So, the last person born in the 19th century has died. Thank you for reporting it.

You have my very sincere condolences on the loss of Slim. The photo of Slim and Lisa is incredibly depressing.

They take a piece of our hearts with them when they go. We can't afford the pain of having any more.

Your cataract surgery and recovery seems to be exceedingly lengthy. I do not need glasses to work on my computer. I have trifocals that are used for watching TV and driving at night when it is harder to see. I also have a pair of reading glasses that are almost always used even though I can read most things without them. They just make it easier. Good luck on your full recovery. Being able to see clearly is wonderful.



They did one eye, then the other, then they had to fix the first one. I remember what happened to my cousin U L and took care.

—JTM

Dale Speirs: Thanks for the mention of the new *Factsheet Five*.

Richard A. Dengrove: I am a fanatic concerning what you call the Oxford Comma and I call the Serial Comma. Joe's response clearly indicates why it should be used. Here are a couple of books that I have found interesting and useful even if I don't always get it right. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves – The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynne Truss (Gotham Books, 2003/2004). Incredibly, it was a best seller in Great Britain and I think that it did just as well here. The other is *The Well-Tempered Sentence – A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed* by Karen Elizabeth Gordon (A Mariner Book – Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993).

Well, that's enough of that.

From: **Sue Burke** July 30, 2018
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Congratulations, Lisa and Joe, for *Alexiad* Whole Number 100.

Additional congratulations, Joe, for your successful cataract surgery. I have cataracts, too, the cloudy kind. Lights have a haze around them, especially at night, and everything is a touch yellowish, but I'm a long way from needing surgery. It's good to know it worked out well for you.

Yes, I am astounded by the brightness and clarity of colors in the world.

And my condolences for the loss of your cats.

Nic Farey asks why some of us contributors didn't vote for the FAAn awards. I didn't because I don't read enough fanzines to cast an informed vote.

Thank you, Taras Wolansky, for getting my book. You also said you objected to anachronistic elements in "River of Teeth." Had you continued, you would have found a lot more of them – it is a very alternative alternate history. Personally, I was more troubled by the extreme violence. As for the real possibility of hippopotami in the New World, I recently learned that Pablo Escobar, the Columbian drug lord and narcoterrorist, had his own little zoo, and after his death in 1993, some hippos escaped to a nearby river. They are thriving, and Columbia now has a wild hippo problem.

Yes, Lloyd Daub, there will be a sequel to *Semiosis* – the manuscript has been delivered and accepted, and the book should come out in fall 2019. The novel even has a name, selected by my editor since I didn't have any good ideas: *Interference*. To explain why would involve spoilers. I can say that we will learn more about the Glassmakers.

I've been preparing for Worldcon 76 and volunteered for the Publications Division. You can see some of my work in the Souvenir Book, and I'll be helping to edit the daily newsletter. Before anyone asks, yes, programming plans went seriously wrong, and a lot of us are perplexed and troubled.



Hugo Award voting has closed, and in this issue, editors willing, I have an article about my votes for the short fiction. I haven't had time to read, watch, or listen to much of the avalanche of other works on the ballot, although many seem outstanding.

Meanwhile, it's been an unseasonably warm and damp summer here in Chicago. I've attended a few neighborhood events and church festivals; my church picnic was driven indoors by rain.

In July, my South Milwaukee (Wis.) High

School class organized a 45th reunion dinner. Out of a class of 453 (we were baby boomers), about 50 came. I've heard you can only really know 100 people. If that's true, many of my 100 closest acquaintances didn't attend, but everyone was friendly anyway.

Also in July, the descendants of my maternal grandmother's parents, Frank and Elizabeth Fabry, organized a Cousins Reunion picnic in Milwaukee. More than 80 people came, from babies to nonagenarians, and I knew pretty many of them. The ones who had been talkative children are now talkative adults. I enjoyed hearing the long story of how my punctual great-Aunt Blanche was late to her own funeral, which would have mortified her.

More importantly, I learned that the Fabry family was not French, as I had always believed. They did indeed speak French and came from the village of Saint-Denis, which I presumed was the one near Paris. No, they came from the village in what is now southern Belgium. At times it belonged, successively, to the Spanish Empire, Austrian Empire, Holy Roman Empire, Napoleonic Empire – then there was that dust-up in Waterloo in 1815, the retreat from which included a battle in Saint-Denis – and subsequently it belonged to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and – after another dust-up – eventually to the Kingdom of Belgium.

A cousin working on our genealogy showed me a copy of a birth certificate for our great-great-great-grandfather as a newborn citizen of the French First Republic. (We briefly were French.) During that whole time, however, the region has been Wallonia. I am a Walloon-American! I must explore my newly discovered heritage. Get ready for some waffles.

Will this mean you give up reading I an Fleming?

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** August 1, 2018
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So sorry you lost your pal, Slim.

Alexiad June 2018:

It's an interesting experience to read retro-Hugo nominees from 1942 while, more

or less coincidentally, listening to an audio recording of Paul Malmont's *The Astounding, the Amazing, and the Unknown*. It's fun to be a sort of fly on the wall as John W. Campbell tries to persuade his star, Robert Heinlein, to write some stories.

Nic Farey: "Of the 20 or so contributors and correspondents to this, a mere three voted in this year's FAAn awards, and I wonder whether those that didn't would be willing to say why." My answer is, I wouldn't know how to vote for those awards, and if I did I don't think I should. I simply don't read enough fanzines (except at Hugo and retro-Hugo nomination time). I intend to broaden my horizons, but so far haven't gotten around to it.

Sue Burke: Another excellent con report. I think, in the long run, you'll be glad you wrote these reports. Because, as I have found, otherwise you'll find it difficult to remember what happened at which convention.

I've never been to Wiscon. Generally speaking, I will travel that far only for a Worldcon or NASFic. It also gives off a narrow-minded vibe, even by the narrow-minded standards of today's science fiction fandom.

I have to admit, though, there's one panel I think I would have liked to see: "You Are (Probably) Not As Progressive As You Think" discouraged would-be allies from getting angry or confrontational on behalf of marginalized groups because that makes the marginalized group members seem angry and confrontational, even if they aren't." *Virtue Signaling Gone Wild!* I do feel a bit sorry for those "allies", who have internalized false narratives that make them hate themselves.

There was a pretty funny example of this, not long ago. This white guy who was leading a campaign to force the Cleveland Indians baseball team to change its name discovered that actual Native Americans had no problem with the name, and don't mind being called Indians. (This may be because they don't have the inferiority complex that some other groups have.)

Just a couple days ago, *The Nation* magazine was put to groveling apologies for publishing a poem defending the homeless. Why? The white poet was accused of writing in an African American dialect.

Lloyd Penney: "All of our history is now in doubt, especially if that history conflicts

with someone's political agenda. It is a terrible disgrace that we may re-write our history to suit some old white man who wants millions in funds off his taxes." What am I missing here? It's white men who are the butts of our rewritten history.

A funny example of this I ran into recently is the attempt by certain historians to blame the Indian caste system on the British. (Similarly, a recent Anglo-Indian movie blamed the partition of India between Hindus and Muslims on Winston Churchill.) But DNA studies done in the last couple of years have proved that caste divisions go back thousands of years.

The obvious conclusion is, DNA studies must be banned!

The latest news on my DNA study is that I am in the same DNA subclade as Duke Rollo of Normandy. A point in favor of an old family story (about the Archbishop and his mistress).

John Purcell: A conspiracy theory is how people deal with a reality that is unpalatable. I see I've given two examples relating to India, above. In the case of the JFK assassination, to this day a lot of people don't want to admit that he (as befits one who accused Eisenhower and Nixon of being soft on the Reds) was murdered by a devout Communist.

Sue Burke: "Corporations can act in ways fully equal to the most oppressive government." Naïve American! When the Communists took over Cambodia, they ordered all educated people to come to stadiums to begin rebuilding the country; then they locked the doors and killed them all (because, like the Sorbonne-educated Marxists they were, they believed that's what it would take to fulfill Marx's promise of a magical change in human nature under socialism). 1960s China: millions die. 1950s China: millions die. 1940s Germany: millions die. 1930s USSR: millions die.



You must have picked up that Adam Smith quote about businessmen oppressing the public somewhere out of context, so you couldn't tell what it was actually about. Here's the missing first half of the quotation: "The proposal of any new law or regulation which comes from [businessmen], ought always to be listened to with great precaution, and ought never to be adopted till after having been long and carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous, but with the most suspicious attention. It comes from an order of men ..." (Emphasis mine.) In other words, businessman may oppress the public through government coercion, not business activity.

A classic example is how CBS, heavily invested in AM radio technology, bamboozled or bribed the FCC into strangling FM radio in the cradle.

George W. Price: You may want to check out the 1972 film, *Ulzana's Raid*. This is a film that couldn't have been made earlier, because of its explicit depiction of Apache atrocities; and it couldn't have been made later, because of, well, its explicit depiction of Apache atrocities. Torture is presented as simply part of their culture, rather than as any kind of retaliation or revenge. A particularly realistic touch: an Apache scout helps the U.S. cavalry hunt the Apaches that left the reservation to go on their murder raid. The dirty little secret of the Indian Wars is that there were Indians on both sides of nearly every battle.

Crazy Horse was trying to join the Indian Scouts when he was killed (that due to a malicious translator).

— JTM

Robert S. Kennedy: I've learned that, when you input a range of dates into a hotel website, it checks the availability of all the dates. It doesn't tell you if, say, six of the seven nights are available. So I shorten my request, either to arrive a day later or depart a day earlier, and get most of my reservation in. In theory I might have to stay in another hotel nearby for one night; in practice, I'm always able to add the missing night, eventually.

From: **AL du Pisani** August 2, 2018
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I did not plan to fall off the face of the Earth, it just happened.

Mostly caused by sleep apnea, resulting in a me with no energy left for anything. It is a terrible thing to drive to work and wonder if today will be the day where you finally lose focus long enough to have a crash. And unfortunately I have a Medical Aid that in an effort to protect me have managed to prevent me from getting the treatment I need. Hopefully I can get this sorted out soon.

I had a holiday at the beginning of July, and went down to the family beach house. It was in the middle of Winter, and we had a couple of very cold days. And some days that could have been in Summer. (My experience have been of a milder Winter than normal, especially at night, where it did not get as cold as last year, which was also a mild Winter.)

I managed to have the interesting experience of buying shoes by phoning the salesman and describing what I want, and him driving up the next day with the shoes. Finishing up with me paying him via my cellphone.

The rest of the holiday was restful. I had an interesting experience listening to my mother and her youngest sister gossip about people they know, while making a set of curtains for my kitchen window. As I crocheted together hexagons into a blanket.

Locally we are suffering from the graying of fandom. I have been reflecting a bit, and think that the turning point in our club's life was 1994. After that year more and more people went overseas, and we our supply of younger people dried up. Not immediately, but slowly we had less and less young people

joining. And health issues with a couple of club stalwarts have already caused disruption this year. Just as we have stabilized at a new venue. That was our other disruptor – Losing venues after a long time of stability. Each time we lost a venue, and had a period of instability as to where we will meet this month, and people stopped coming.

I managed to read some interesting books during the past couple of months. The one I think is definitely fascinating is the "Annotated Old Four Legs", where JLB Smith's 1957 book where he recounts his part in the discovery of the modern *Coelacanth* has been annotated with all sorts of interesting things discovered since.

I also read Christian Davenport's *The Space Barons* and Tim Fernholz's *Rocket Billionaires*, and as a result finally read Ashlee Vance's Elon Musk biography. I found each of the books to be worthwhile reading, with each book complementing the others, even though there were some overlap here and there.

I found the Vance book to be interesting for a view of the early years at SpaceX, even though there were often places where I found that there were jumps in the narrative, where I would have liked to find out more.

For instance, during the events leading up to their first launch, an experienced senior space official criticized the SpaceX launch team as having a lot of characteristics that was going to lead them into failure. Yet I can find no indication of what those characteristics were, nor what SpaceX did to overcome them. (A similar story is mentioned in one of the other two books, once again without any indication that the team or any form of management got involved in changing things around.)

Davenport's book concentrates a lot more on the really big boys in space – Musk, Jeff Bezos, Paul Allen & Richard Branson, with very occasional mentions of some of the smaller niche players. His is also much more of a straight up competition between SpaceX and Blue Origin, and contains some information about Blue Origin I have never heard of before. Also, strangely enough, in his book there are odd connections to South Africa more often than expected. In addition, it was surprising how often the players in commercial space have known each other since their student days.

Fernholz tells a story much more focused

on SpaceX and some of the smaller players around in the early 2000's. I also learned things I never knew before, like that each of the three NASA Administrators appointed by the two Presidents Bush came into NASA as reformers, unfortunately not always able to reform as much of NASA as they desired.

From Vance I got a bit of an idea about Elon Musk – A man who seemed to have invented himself a bit. Maybe not a good man, maybe a Great Man.

I still think there is a couple of books still to be written about the bit players in commercial space – The people who tried and often failed to make a go of it in the mid 1990 to mid 2010 era, usually failing because they themselves were not millionaires. But who managed to prove that some things could be done, albeit on a shoestring budget, that the big boys could use to later. And I wonder how much of commercial space is there because Henry Spencer argued on Usenet for a decade that we do not have to repeat the past, different ways of doing things is possible.

The problem was that a lot of the startups in the early days were things like Rotary Rocket, "cool" ideas that didn't work. See Elizabeth Weil's *They All Laughed at Columbus* (2002; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 1 #6) for that story.

When I read Sue Burke's review of the Nebula Award fiction nominees, I had the unfortunate response on almost all of the stories that I would cross the street to avoid reading them. Which is an indication that either I am way outside the target market for modern SF, that the Nebula Awards are rewarding stories that are outside of the mainstream of SF readers, or any other combination of factors indicating the I and the Nebula Award are not a good match for each other.

Join the club. I told Lloyd Penney that instead of us gafiating from fandom, fandom had gafiated from us – the dominant trends were no longer the sort of thing we did or liked. And it seems that science fiction itself is going on a similar path.

In South Africa the main kerfuffle of the moment is EWC – Expropriation Without Compensation, i.e. stealing land from white owners to give to the People, usually the politically connected. I do not know how much of the noise about it all is because the ANC got driven into a corner by the EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters), and even more radical and economically illiterate bunch than the ANC. How much is because the ANC leader, Cyril Ramaphosa, does not in fact have a good grip on the ANC and it's various factions, i.e. that he is in a very weak leadership position. Or how much of things are just general economic illiteracy of the "Communism will make us all rich" variety.

As part of the process leading to EWC there were a bunch of meetings organized – Most of them devolving into two camps where your own guy's speech is cheered, and the other guy's speech is booed. Except for the one big trap that was sprung – Tribal land. Because some chiefs who are in de facto ownership of very large areas of tribal lands asked if the tribal lands are also going to be expropriated? And that if the constitution was changes to allow for the stealing of white owned land, what will prevent the stealing of tribally owned land?

The immediate ANC response was that tribally owned land is not up for expropriation. Which caused anger from activists who want to break up the power of tribal chiefs, who think that taking the land away from the chiefs' control is a good thing.

Somehow we have muddled through. I have been promised blood and death since I can remember. And somehow it never was quite as bad overall as all that. Terrible for the people who was killed and maimed and their families, but somehow survivable. I just do not know if it will hold.

My problem is that I have Africa in my blood. And that is a terrible thing to have.

"For Africa bites like a tsetse fly, and once the drug is in the blood it can never be wholly exorcised."

— Frederick Forsyth, *The Dogs of War*
Words of Wisdom from *The Outsider*.

—JTM

I hope for better days, more good books to read, and friends to meet.

WAHF:

Martin Morse Wooster, with various items of interest.

Lloyd G. Daub, the same.

Charles Lipsig, Cathy Palmer-Lister, Patrick McCray, James D. Nicoll, Lacy Thomas, with thanks.



There is another passage from *The Immortal Storm* that seems so relevant.

"The second meeting of the reorganized New York chapter was in progress, with Hornig presiding, in a New York school room. Suddenly the clumping of many shoes was heard, and in burst Sykora and Wollheim at the head of eight other youths (not all science fiction fans) recruited from the streets for rough action if necessary. Sykora ... with the aid of his comrades ... chased Hornig from the platform. Producing a gavel of his own ... [he] proceeded to call the meeting to order in the name of the New York branch of the

International Scientific Association."

 FROM A JEDI TO A KILL

... Rey was angry and terrified and disgusted all in one. She had been dragged into this affair by fate or by the Force, and now it looked as if it would end in a First Order "questioning device".

But wait. There was only one storm trooper watching her. She focused these powers that she had felt rising in her . . .

He took off his helmet. A cold-eyed, piercing gaze fell on her. This was no ordinary storm trooper; he was dangerous, a killer. He would hit what he shot at.

"Who are you?" she said, pointlessly. There was his identification number:

FN-1824

One of an endless number, ground up and pushed out by the First Order. But he spoke: "My name is Bond. James Bond."

... Bond took his blaster rifle and stood watch as the masked man came out of the darkness. The captain stepped forward, trusting. Too trusting, perhaps. Bond longed for a smoke.

He targeted the helmet. He could shoot through the viewing slot, perhaps a shot there would penetrate. The man was taking it off! Fool! But a helpful fool! Bond looked down the sights and targeted the man's left eye.

The two of them talked. Bond now recognised the man, Commander Ren. How did they know each other? The other held out a tube, one of those light-sabres as Rey had been carrying. They both took it in their hands.

Then Kylo Ren jerked the light-sabre and Bond pulled the trigger, all in a single motion. The shot suddenly flicked away, but the man was distracted.

Captain Solo stood there for a moment, dazed, about to be killed. Bond fired again, so did that Chewbacca, the big hairy copilot. Now Kylo Ren was trying to bat shots out of the air.

Captain Solo finally awoke to his peril. He ducked, drew his pistol, and began firing at point-blank range. Somehow it didn't seem to affect the First Order leader, but he was distracted fighting them all off.

"Bond, get them out of here!!" Rey shouted.

Bond wasn't used to taking orders from women but he could see the point. He said, "Keep on covering for us, I'll get Solo, and we'll get back to the *Falcon*."

All the way Captain Solo was saying, over and over, "Ben, Ben." He had known the man! Bond had to support him, keep an eye out, and make tracks. The base was supposed to explode, and if Rey and that trooper Finn didn't make it back they would have to be written off.

— Not from Lucasfilms or Goldeneye Productions

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major
 Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major
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This is issue **Whole Number One Hundred (100)**.

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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MY LIFE WOULD
 NOT BE CHANGED
 SUBSTANTIALLY
 IF I WON THE
 LOTTERY OR
 SOMETHING

I'D STILL GET UP IN THE MORNING, GO TO
 AN OFFICE, DRAW THE KIND OF CARTOON
 I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DRAW ALL MY LIFE,
 AND DISTRIBUTE MY CARTOON ALL OVER
 THE WORLD. AND I'D STILL SPEND MY
 EVENING HOBNOBBING WITH OTHER FANS
 OF THE SUBJECTS OF MY CARTOONS

JUST, IT'D BE MY
 OFFICE, AND BREAK
 TIME WOULD BE
 WHEN I WASN'T
 DRAWING



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