

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Seven years ago I set a joking goal of eventually stepping on the scales and seeing them show a weight of 150 pounds. The last time I stepped on them they showed a weight of 161.8. I am within twelve pounds of that then farfetched goal. It now seems within reach, even given that the weight loss every week is only a few ounces, not pounds as it initially was. It has not been an easy, quick thing. It has taken me seven years to get this far. That 150 pound weight is still far off. But now it seems like a real possibility that I might eventually someday reach it, something I did not really believe possible seven years ago. I did not believe then that I would be able to pull on a pair of size 14 pants but that is what I put on this morning.

— Lisa

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Reviewer's Notes.....	1
Dragon Awards.....	9
Hugo Awards.....	7
<i>Robots Have No Tails</i>	2
Worldcon News.....	9
Book Reviews	
JTM van den Boom, <i>Kaiserkrieg 5: Die Flucht</i>	4
JTM Carr, <i>Paratime Trouble</i>	2
JTM Carr, ed., <i>Rise of the Terran Federation</i>	3
JTM Duns, <i>Codename: HERO</i>	5
JTM Mastai, <i>All Our Wrong Todays</i>	4
JTM Macintyre, <i>The Spy and the Traitor</i>	5
SB Tchaikovsky, <i>Children of Time</i>	6
JTM Zabel, <i>Once There Was a Way</i>	3
Movie Reviews	
JTM <i>Son of Batman</i>	5
Con Reports	
SB Worldcon 76.....	7
Random Jottings.....	2
Letters.....	10
Sue Burke, John Hertz, Robert S. Kennedy, Timothy Lane, Lloyd Penney, AL du Pisani, George W. Price, Taras Wolansky	
Comments are by JTM or LTM	
Trivia:.....	15
Art:	
Sheryl Birkhead.....	9, 10
Paul Gadzikowski.....	16
Alexis A. Gilliland.....	2, 3, 4, 8
Trinlay Khadro.....	2
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. Six Pack won.
 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. Six Pack won, setting a speed record for trotters of 1:49.1.
 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. Stay Hungry won this, too.
 The 73rd Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **September 20, 2018** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio. Stay Hungry was disqualified due to interference after coming in first in the second elimination, and Courtly Choice won.
 The 2018 Breeders' Cup is **November 2-3, 2018** at Churchill Downs.
<http://www.breederscup.com/>
 Printed on November 12, 2018
 Deadline is **December 1, 2018**

Reviewer's Notes

Everything seems to be breaking down, including me. The new furnace is not working up to request. The car's water pump had to be replaced. And I had fluid accumulate in my feet and legs. All which cost.

I'm beginning to wonder if the disconnect between most readers and the publishers doesn't stem from the current business setup. A publisher is now a subsidiary of another firm. The firm hires editors who know literature or at least have literature degrees. They buy books that appeal to their tastes — and evidently enough people to keep them selling. There are smaller publishers who are run by people who came out of SF, but their tastes are, well, individual.

And now you have virtual self-publishing, thanks to the spread of electronic readers. Which inflicted upon us Castalia House and its unpleasant circle. At least, after repeated fiascos, they have withdrawn, claiming victory.

The seasons are shifting. Winter held on with its grip into April. (When I went to get my eyes examined by the cataract surgery people, there was a snowstorm, and that was in April.) Now summer has held on until the beginning of October.

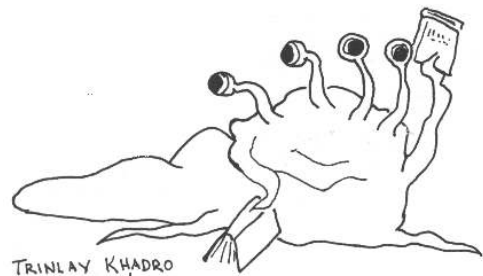
I hope winter is a little less urgent. Last year, when we tried to go to the Southern Lights at the Kentucky Horse Park, a snowstorm closed the park. Then we had a nerve-wracking experience on a ramp which was iced up. We ended up broadside on the road and if anyone had come after us we would have been wrecked. As it was, the car wasn't even damaged.

See you in December.

— 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.

(Footnote. **Bob Roehm** found a copy of *Heinlein's Children* in a Half-Price Bookstore in California. **It was going for \$75.** And I don't get a penny of it.)

The Swedish icebreaker *Oden* has begun its stay in the Arctic ice pack, which is scheduled to last for over a month while researchers from the Wegener Institute measure ice conditions.

The *Oden* is stuck about four miles from the North Pole. You see, the ice is too thick. And the voyage was hindered by thick ice at about 80° North, though it was thinner north of that, and the pack started at 82° N.

There is available for sale on eBay a copy of *Tarzan on Mars* by "John Bloodstone". If you're not aware of it, this is a Burroughs pastiche written by Stuart Byrne. Ray Palmer tried to get Byrne named as the new official writer of works set in Burroughs's universe, and ERB, Inc. did not want to go with the program. In fact, it is said to be illegal to sell a copy of the book.

Alec Johnson is running for the 11th Texas State House seat (as a Democrat). So? His mother was **Anne McCaffrey**, and his younger brother is **Todd McCaffrey** (né Todd

Johnson). The opportunities dragons offer for influencing an election . . .

MONARCHICAL NEWS

The second place finisher in the 2013 Czech presidential election was a politician of diverse experience known as Karel Schwartzberg. As you can guess, that name isn't quite Czech, and indeed outside of the Czech Republic (and, presumably, the Slovak) he is known as **Karl Johannes Nepomuk Josef Norbert Friedrich Antonius Wratislav Mena Fürst zu Schwarzenberg, Graf von Sulz, Fürstliche Landgraf in Klettgau, Herzog von Krumlov**.

The family owns the Palais Schwartzberg in Vienna (Bond's hotel in *The Living Daylights*) and other properties in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

Schwartzberg has a reputation as a human-rights activist going back to the Prague Spring. He was thrown out of Cuba for attempting to talk to anti-Castro activists.

He was considered a candidate for Foreign Minister of Austria in the eighties, and has been Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic twice. He has three children by his wife, ex-wife, and wife Therese Gräfin zu Hardegg (they got married in 1967, divorced in 1988, and remarried in 2008).

On the other hand, he's a member of the Trilateral Commission.

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>

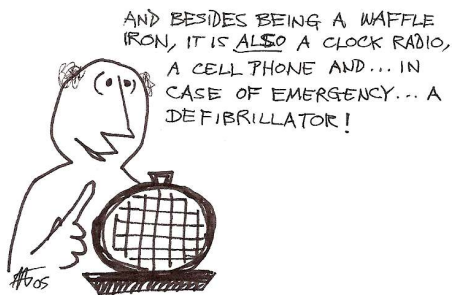
Other useful eclipse websites:

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

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

NO, NOT GALLAGHER
Commentary by Joseph T Major on
ROBOTS HAVE NO TAILS

By Henry Kuttner
(1952, 2014; Diversion Books (Kindle);
ISBN 978-1-62681-401-1; \$1.99)



These stories are classics of humorous science fiction. Galloway Gallagher is a freelance inventor. He likes to drink. When he gets completely drunk, he becomes a scientific genius with a certain lack of concern for other considerations. Then Gallagher sobers up and has to figure out what he had done, before the various entities his drunken personality had met with get him.

The first story was sort of a trial run. "Time Locker" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, January 1943) is an interesting storage unit. Gallagher's client has something he wants stored, and is annoyed when something within the locker tries to make off with it. This comes back to bite him . . .

The entities are a diverse and exasperating lot. Such as the Lybbblas of "The World Is Mine" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, June 1943), little bunnies from Mars who seem to have seen too much "Pinky and the Brain", and will conquer Earth as soon as Gallagher makes it possible for them. That is, if he can figure out why he keeps finding his own corpse in the back yard . . .

The stories stand up well. For example, "The Proud Robot" (*Astounding Science*

Fiction, October 1943), which is about stealing HD cable television and showing it in theaters. Really. It also explains Gallagher's beer-can opener. Really.

You can't say he isn't economical. In "Gallegher Plus" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, November 1943) he sobers up to find a machine digging up his back yard, turning the soil and earth into transparent fiber cable, and singing "St. James Infirmary". Strangely enough, this solves four problems with one device.

Gallegher has a different sort of drinking problem in "Ex Machina" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, April 1948); something keeps on stealing his drinks before he can drink them. And his latest client has mysteriously disappeared. And there is a piece of equipment in his house he doesn't remember getting, which is odd from a guy whose furnishings include "a hideous iron dog, originally intended for Victorian lawns, or perhaps for Hell" ("Time Locker").

I can't do justice to the stories, and the price is quite right. These classics of SF deserve to be on your device.

ALAS, TOMORROW

Review by Joseph T Major of

PARATIME TROUBLE

By John F. Carr

(2017; Pequod Press;
ISBN 978-0937912713; \$32.00;
Amazon Digital Services; \$7.99)

Nuclear devastation stories have been a fixture of writing from, oh Theodore Sturgeon's "Thunder and Roses" (*Astounding Science Fiction*, November 1947) on. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the background items of H. Beam Piper's Paratime stories has been the concern with certain timelines having too many nuclear-armed sovereignties, and can they get their people out in time? (That's also the background of his TerroHuman Future History, and given the assumptions in "Genesis" (*Future Combined With Science Fiction Stories*, September 1951) the TFH may be just one time-line watched by the Paratimers.)

In this case, the people who have to be got out is Special Chief's Assistant Special Assistant Hadron Dalla, in one time-line of the Beria Sector, investigating a certain psychic who seems to be very right. Not my notorious

relative, who died well before that, but Jeanne Dixon, who is forseeing a nuclear war.

Beria Sector? After purging his way to the top, Lavrenti Pavlovich began to put effort into developing not only nuclear weapons but delivery systems. (“Comrade Sudoplatov, what is news of Agent MLAD?” “Comrade First Secretary, he has made up with his brother and is sending plans for Main Enemy’s solid-fueled rocket.”) And now, what with that difference of opinion over Cuba, it may be the time to use them.

The Special Chief’s Assistant has to go extract his wife. Which becomes really inconvenient when the bombs hit New York while he’s in it.

The subsequent section is a trying-to-survive-in-an-irradiated-zone nerve-wracker straight out of Philip Wylie’s *Tomorrow!* (1954) with overtones of Pat Frank’s *Alas, Babylon* (1959). There are street gangs to consider on top of the hot spots, not to mention a Glad Hand style social worker named Majors (from New Hampshire, so almost certainly not related). Given how Vall deals with street gang members here, I wonder how he would handle Alex and the droogs?

And in the end . . . well, this is before *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (1965) so all’s well that ends, but the struggle is riveting. Carr should do more novels about the Paratimers in their own environment.

GENESIS AND FOLLOWERS

Review by Joseph T Major of
RISE OF THE TERRAN FEDERATION
edited by John F. Carr
(2017; Pequod Press;
ISBN 978-0937912700; \$36.00;
Amazon Digital Services; \$7.99)

This is a collection of the stories explaining the Terran Federation of H. Beam Piper’s TerroHuman Future History (TFH). Some of the stories are his, others are written in the universe by other people.

Their quality, not surprisingly, varies. Some are interesting in and of themselves, such as Wolfgang Diehr’s “Second Genesis”. Piper’s “Genesis” (*Future Combined with Science Fiction*, September 1951) tells the story of the settlement of the planet Tareesh by a desperate and poorly-planned expedition from the dying planet Doorsha, the next one out from the primary in their planetary system.

You can guess the other names of the planets.

“Second Genesis” has the story of the second expedition from Doorsha, many years later, which used a more advanced drive, ending up having them land on a planet of another star. Thus Diehr explains a throwaway line in *Uller Uprising* (1952) and a scene in “Omnilingual” (*Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1957). This is the sort of connection-making that we see in, for example, Sherlockian work (like the paper that argued that three unnamed servant girls in three different stories were all the same woman).

Other non-Piper stories include David Johnson’s “The Spine of the Knife”, a sequel to Piper’s “The Edge of the Knife” (*Amazing Stories*, May 1957), which again features the Arab-world unifying character of the Piper story.

THEY ARE STUCK
IN THE BAD PART
OF THE PAST...
WE ARE IN THE
GOOD PART!



More originally, Johnson’s “The Satchel” is another story about the expeditionary teams helping to rebuild the devastated Northern Hemisphere. It rather lacks the fanboyism of

“The Return”, by Piper and his drinking buddy John J. McGuire (*Astounding Stories*, January 1954; expanded version in *The Science-Fictional Sherlock Holmes* (1960)). For what it’s worth, there was a revision of “The Return” that changed it to fit the TFH, but it seems to have disappeared off the Net.

Johnson’s “Grandfather Encounter” is a tragic tale about the problems of sapient, but less developed, races encountering the expanding humanity. The last survivor of an indigenous uprising is making his final journey to the sacred place of his god. The story lacks Piper’s cynicism about religion, but fanhistory experts may laugh about the native going to submit his manuscript to DAW Books (the god is called “Ghu”; Donald A. Wollheim was the fannish deity Ghu).

Jonathan Crocker’s “The Sample” is not directly connected to anything, but it is an example of another Piper theme. The planet Baldur is very heavily bureaucratized, and a researcher from offplanet has no end of trouble just getting there, much less trying to do anything.

One odd choice is “The Condottieri”, where David Johnson revises Piper’s “The Mercenaries” (*Astounding Science Fiction*, January 1950) to fit it into the TFH. It’s still the story of the scientific research team for hire who find out how the great nuclear war was triggered.

The Piper stories included are “Genesis”, “The Edge of the Knife”, and “Omnilingual”. These are available due to most of Piper’s work having fallen into the public domain. As you know, Bob, “Omnilingual” is about an intriguing way of reading a lost language. One might almost call it a linguistic version of the Antikythera Mechanism.

There is a tendency, as is noted, for the Sherlockian habit to be repeated. Not reprinted is Johnson’s “It Becomes Necessary —” (2010), a revision of Piper’s “When In the Course” (1981), the story of the First Encounter (except it wasn’t) with the Freyans, to make it fit better in the TFH, but it may be in a future volume. It should be noted that “When In the Course” is, in effect, the first draft of the first section of *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (1965), so this isn’t original to Johnson. (What Carr and associates have been doing with *that* book . . .)

Also included are a time-line of the TFH and an essay on the Chartered Companies that

feature in so many of the stories of this universe.

If you have a taste for wanting to know “what happened next” this may be to your liking. So many fan fiction extensions fall into problems with the new writer imposing her or his own views on the original (What Carr and associates have been doing oh never mind) that it is noteworthy that this, at least, seems to avoid that problem.

PAPERBACK WRITER

Review by Joseph T Major of
**ONCE THERE WAS A WAY:
What If the Beatles Stayed Together?**

By Bryce Zabel
(2017; Diversion Books;
ISBN 978-1682303214; \$13.00;
Amazon Digital Services; \$4.99)
Winner of the 2017 Sidewise Award

Paperback Writer (1978) by Mark Skipper is the story of how the Beatles reunited. The time for them had passed, evidently; they ended up being the opening band for Peter Frampton, and as the lads sit behind the stage listening to him get the applause they didn’t get, they realize the time is over.

(In the real world, Frampton starred as Billy Shears in *Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1978), with the Bee Gees as the other three members. The movie richly merited its Golden Turkey Award.)

Then, Michael Bishop brought out “With a Little Help from Her Friends” (*F&SF*, February 1984). A Mary Sue manages to get the surviving lads to reunite for a concert, with a holographic John to undo Mark Chapman’s work. Then she slips into the hologram and the music overpowers her.

Much has happened since the Quarrymen changed their name, since Stu Sutcliffe died in Hamburg, since Pete Best was removed. The story begins with a surprise decision by Johnny Carson not to let his replacement take over interviewing John and Paul, after all.

The Beatles go through much suffering and many efforts in the following years. This isn’t a harmonious joining, such as Skipper and Bishop had. There are marital breakups, dissent, the lads being pulled different ways.

Ingeniously, Zabel recycles; what in our time-line were discarded album titles become the titles of other albums. The presentation of more Beatles songs makes you wish your

contact in the Paratime Police could get some for you.

Their extended performing career takes many strange and exciting turns and byways. From performing at Woodstock to rededicating Central Park, from recording in Nigeria (no doubt with several Nigerian Princes asking them for a foreign bank account so they can get \$26 MILLION Dollars out of the country) to a catastrophic studio collapse, the new songs have many chords and discords. And then there's John Lennon's little holiday with some people . . .

And some of the stranger ideas seem to come to pass. The making of the movie *The Lord of the Rings*, long before Peter Jackson had taken a picture even, turns out even odder. Because it has Stanley Kubrick directing, and the longest movie title ever.

In the end the lads go their separate ways. And come back together again, and go off, and come together right now . . .

Zabel is focused on his topic and some of the peripherals seem a little off. He has Tolkien willingly supporting Kubrick's movie and even appearing in an introduction. This seems hard to believe.

Similarly, he hates Nixon hates Nixon. To the point where, as the kidnapped Lennon is forced to read Weathermen propaganda, showing clear evidence of torture, Nixon has Lennon put on the Ten Most Wanted Men list. This also seems hard to believe.

Newer and bluer Meanies have been sighted in the vicinity of this review. There's only one way we can go out!

Singing!

WHAT MAD UNIVERSE

Review by Joseph T Major of
ALL OUR WRONG TODAYS

By Elan Mastai

(2017; Dutton; ISBN 978-1101985173;
\$25.00; Dutton (Kindle); \$9.99)

ANYBODY CAN JUGGLE THREE
LIGHTBULBS. THE TRICK IS
TO MAKE THEM TURN ON AND OFF!



“Why again is it called the ‘Goettrider’ Sector?” Chief Commissioner Verkan Vall had been busy when that sector was established, trying to settle his own connection with the Calvin Morrison Sector, and he was still annoyed over some of the rumors that still stuck to him, like being made a king in that Fourth-Level Timeline. The Goettrider Sector had made a sudden jump from Fourth-Level to Second-Level technology, and the Paratime Police were still evaluating the consequences before introducing some of the remarkable technologies from there.

“The scientist who made the fundamental discovery which created the sector was named Lionel Goettrider . . .”

— Not by H. Beam Piper

Sherman Weaver wanted to be Martin Padway; to be responsible for a dramatic forward leap in science and technology. But

when he brought together “Aristotle and the Gun” (by L. Sprague de Camp, *Astounding Science Fiction*, February 1958) he found out that Mysterious Martinus had been right to just put things out there instead of forcing them on others.

Tom Barren is an ordinary kid of an ordinary world with infinite energy. Because of a unforseen product of a love affair, he finds himself the Sherman Weaver of, in effect, our time-line.

The Doppel (from *What Mad Universe* (by Fredric Brown, 1949), which is only \$2.99 from the Amazon Kindle store, so why don't you have a copy?) of the other time-line is a scientist named Lionel Goettrider, who devised and built a device that produced unlimited energy, starting it on July 11, 1965. Instead of holing up in the Colorado mountains and inflicting on the country a six-hour speech about philosophy and his outré take thereupon, he died almost immediately after starting his machine, leaving it to humanity. Fortunately he had his records in a safe place, and after they figured out how to avoid the lethal blast of radiation the first Goettrider Engine made when it was turned on, unlimited energy became available to the whole world.

The story here may be tedious, but it's Tom trying to explain things that are commonplace to him to those who have never had them. It's almost an ordinary life in this world of a different society.

“Almost”, in that he volunteers to become a chrononaut. His father has developed a time machine, and one that is synchronized to the earth's surface. Watching Marty McFly and Doc, and Moses Nebogipfel, dying in the wastes of interplanetary space, is not on the agenda. (The TARDIS is airtight, note.)

Tom's father has selected six skilled individuals to travel back to the turning point of civilization, the moment when the first Goettrider Engine was turned on. One would think they would have to be a good bit away from the place.

Then, Tom gets one of the chrononauts pregnant. (Will the Thirteenth Doctor have to worry about *this*, too?) The project falls into confusion . . . and in a moment of hubris, enthusiasm, and upstaging, Tom triggers the time-traveling device and goes there by himself.

This turns out to not be a good idea. Tom

pops into the room where Goettrider is about to turn on his apparatus. The sudden irruption of an almost-invisible man causes him to make a goof, and the apparatus burns off one of the witnesses's arms. (Hodge Backmaker, call your agent.) Startled, Tom pops back to the future.

Our future. Where he discovers his family life is subtly changed. He has a sister, his mother is still alive, his father is a speculative writer, and his name is Marty McFly . . . er, **John Barren**. John Barren is a successful architect, unlike Tom Barren, who was a layby. Fortunately he has access to both sets of memories and skills. Oh, and the Goettrider Engine never worked.

Tom/John sets out trying to find things out. He tracks down the woman that in the other time-line, he had impregnated. She seems more agreeable in this time line. Then he begins tracking down the surviving Witnesses. In his original time line, they all died not long after the demonstration, because of the radiation. (And they all got descriptive bynames: “Lionel Goettrider and the Sixteen Dwarfs”.)

One of them knows where Goettrider is now. (His wife had been having a very intermittent affair with him.) So, Tom Barren, detective, sets out to Hong Kong, to find Lionel Goettrider.

Who, it turns out, managed to figure out how not to fry himself and everyone else around him when he turned his gadget on, and with all the energy to hand, has launched on a career of very covert invention; Tom Swift hiding in a mega-mansion.

Now, someone who has been there and done that is unravelling the riddle . . .

Mastai has turned a trope on its head, and produced a slow-starting but in the end intriguing story.

ZERSTÖRERMÄNNER BAND V

Review by Joseph T Major of
KAISERKRIEGER 5: DIE FLUCHT

(*The Emperor's Men 5: Escape*)

by Dirk van den Boom

(2018; Atlantis Verlag Guido Latz;

ISBN 978-3864026263; \$12.00;

Amazon Digital Services; \$4.99)

<http://www.atlantis-verlag.de>

Magister Militum Rheinsberg has

problems. The rebellion of Maximus with the aid of an Imperial German defector succeeded in conquering much of Italia. They managed to destroy the laboratories but rebuilding is on the way.

Then Rheinsberg ends up getting arrested in Constantinople. This proves perilous, though the charming habit of blinding, nose-slitting, and other forms of judicial plastic surgery has not yet been established.

Meanwhile, the Quest for Coffee continues, with its own problems. Mysterious Martinus couldn't get to Axum, since Justinian was in the way, note. I wonder why Rheinsberg hasn't yet considered an expedition to get tobacco, but he has more pressing issues at the moment.

This is a multi-threaded story, and in this volume issues are not so much resolved as continued, yet such continuation is how such matters would progress. At least they haven't decided to destroy everything so the future won't be changed when this is . . .

Fortsetzung folgt.

PAPERS

Review by Joseph T Major of

CODENAME: HERO

The True Story of Oleg Penkovsky and the Cold War's Most Dangers Operation

By Jeremy Duns

(2016; CreateSpace; ISBN 978-1507539040; \$9.99; Amazon Digital Services; \$2.99)

The Main Enemy and its Main Ally had a tap into the inner workings of the Soviet Union. When the Cuban Missile Crisis was blazing, they were aware that the missiles were in Cuba because the Soviet Union did not have reliable intercontinental ballistic missiles. (The only existing missile with the range, Korolev's R7 Semyorka, was liquid fuelled and did not have reliable storage.)

The reasons for such an insider to turn are well known, and designated as MICE: Money, Ideology, Compromise, and Ego. In this case, it was more the second and forth. Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky was at a dead end in his advancement through the ranks, because it turned out he had bad class ancestry, being the son of a counterrevolutionary officer (he had never known). This made him less than entirely content with the Soviet System.

He approached various contacts, from random tourists on Moscow streets to foreign

military attachés. Finally, the Firm took him on and realized the Company might want a piece of the action.

Debriefed by a brilliant British and American combined team, Penkovsky couldn't give them enough. He produced reams of documentation on Soviet military capabilities. And he had contacts; he was very close to GRU chairman Ivan Serov.

In fact, he was too enthusiastic; he wanted, for example, to be provided with suitcase nuclear weapons which he could hide across Moscow and other prime sites, and detonate, thus smashing Soviet Power. No matter how that might stoke the enthusiasm of people like Curtis LeMay, that just would not do.

And then, after a brief but productive career, he was caught, tried for treason (along with one of his couriers, a helpful British businessman named Greville Wynne, who set him up with women and later on wrote an even wilder memoir), and sentenced to the supreme measure of punishment.

Naturally, there was much doubt in certain circles about this. This continued when a book said to be his memoirs, *The Penkovsky Papers* (1966) came out. Some said it was forged, others, such as SF writer and editor (and some other things) Robert Conquest, thought it true. (The book seems to be Penkovsky's words, more or less, but written up by CIA people.)

Duns is best known as a spy thriller writer. This book provides a recounting of the Penkovsky story, along with some speculations as to the real cause of his detection.

Duns thinks that Penkovsky was detected entirely by chance, early in his work, by a unwitting revelation by a British source for the Soviets. This is an original idea, and could be usefully explored.

The book is however rather sketchy, by comparison with its best-known predecessor, *The Spy Who Saved the World* by Jerrold L. Schecter and Peter S. Deriabin (1992). Schecter is an expert on Asian and Soviet history and affairs (he was one of the translators and editors of Pavel A. Sudoplatov's *Special Tasks* (1994)) and Deriabin was a KGB defector who had among other matters reviewed Penkovsky's debriefings and documents. Unfortunately it is out of print and not available for Kindle.

This is an interesting introduction to a

minor but significant figure of a crisis-era in world history.

PLAYING THE CHEKISTS

Review by Joseph T Major of

THE SPY AND THE TRAITOR:

The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War

by Ben Macintyre

(2018; Crown (Random House); ISBN 978-1101904190; \$28.00; Random House (Kindle); \$14.99)

The Cold War lasted forty years. For the record, the West won it. But not without cost. This book is for those who spent so much of their lives in the shadowed places. Those were the days, my friends.

— Frederick Forsyth, *The Deceiver*

Macintyre fumbled one of the most striking elements of this incident. When Oleg Gordievsky was being debriefed by the CIA, finally, one of the debriefers was a top man in their Soviet section. At the time, Gordievsky did not know that he was looking into the face of the man who had betrayed him to the Second Chief Directorate, in charge of internal security. It was a unique occurrence.

Oleg Antonovich Gordievsky was a second-generation Chekist; his father Anton somehow managed to survive the Yezhovshchina and the downfall of Beria. Anton's two sons followed him into the State Security.

Oleg studied various languages and, after some work in the bureaucracy, got a foreign posting. It was to East Germany, but well it was foreign. That was where his disillusionment began. He was there to see them put a wall up to keep their people in, to prevent them from leaving.

Then he was posted to Denmark. He found out that while in the Socialist Motherland they couldn't even build a decent refrigerator, capitalist oppression produced diversity and wealth.

They also produced decent counterintelligence services. The Danish counterintelligence marked him down as a KGB officer very quickly.

The disillusionment of Oleg Antonovich continued. He was posted to Czechoslovakia

to see the crushing of the Prague Spring. Somehow, after that, he got sent back to Denmark. But other things rushed in on him, such as the death of his brother (who was also a KGB officer).

And then he made his offer.

Yurovsky, of the Second Chief Directorate of the KGB, was a patient fisher of men. He liked to trawl for as long as possible before he pulled in the net.

— Robert Moss, *Moscow Rules*

So is the Firm, the Secret Intelligence Service. They were able to sit back and let Gordievsky work in Moscow, not trying to contact him, waiting until he was abroad again.

And he was posted to London. The Security Service was ready to rerun its Doublecross game. Gordievsky got good information. His superiors were embarrassed. Gradually it got to where the British were virtually running the *rezidentura* in London.

Then things came apart. The agents in the Soviet Union were unmasked. And Gordievsky was called back. This time, he figured, it was the end.

The British exfiltration of their agent was ingenious, if not quite like the one in Forsyth's "The Price of the Bride" (Part Two of *The Deceiver*). Hidden in a secret compartment in an automobile, Gordievsky was driven across the Finnish border, then flown to London.

And now he lives in an ordinary British suburb in Surrey, a single man (his second marriage broke up), watching the seasons go by. Aldrich Ames is in prison in Terre Haute and will be there for the rest of his life.

Gordievsky was made CMG, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, in the 2007 Birthday Honours. *Auspicious Melioris Aevi* [Token of a Better Age]

THE INSIDIOUS RA'S AL-GHUL

Review by Joseph T Major of

SON OF BATMAN

Directed by Ethan Spaulding

Written by Joe R. Lansdale

(2014; WarnerBrothers)

Based on characters created

by Bill Finger & Bob Kane, Julius Schwartz, Marv Wolfman & George Pérez, Gerry

Conway & Don Newton, Neal Adams, Gene Colan, Denny O'Neil, and Bob Brown
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3139072/>

We begin with a desperate battle against a raging drug addict, stealing to get his next fix of steroids. Athletes do that sort of short-sighted thing.

But we cut from there to a giant fortress in the mountains of Central Asia, where a criminal mastermind and his descendants overwatch the exercises of the army of martial artists who are at their master's command. We would expect to hear in a voice alternately guttural and siblant orders to take out Sir Denis Nayland Smith, or perhaps Buckaroo Banzai and the Hong Kong Cavaliers, but no. The master of this arcane army is not the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu (who was also the man behind the World Crime League of *Buckaroo Banzai*) but Ra's al-Ghul, long-lived environmental activist, father of Talia al-Ghul, the beautiful and tightly clad woman standing beside him (did I mention the movie is rated PG-13?), and grandfather of the strange little boy.

(*Ra's al-Ghul* means "Head of the Demon". The "al-Ghul" part is the origin of the name of Beta Persei, Algol. Julie Schwartz thought him up.)

Things don't go well. What looks like a very large group of spetsnaz in helicopters storm the castle, and while some of the defenders' weapons are effective, the ordinary kung fu fighter finds it hard to take on a guy with a SKS. Ra's and Talia take lead roles in the defense, and the kid runs.

In the depths of the castle, not far from the Lazarus Pit, the ultimate confrontation comes between Ra's and his former heir, Deathstroke, who ends up ending Ra's's long life forever, he hopes. Fu Manchu would not have had so much trouble. (The way Ra's blocks bullets with his sword makes one wonder what he could do with a light saber.)

Talia bugs out with the boy. For Gotham, where she has a confrontation with the richest, most powerful man in the city. Who can say to the boy, "Damian! I am your father! Join with me and together we can fight crime in Gotham!" Including the roid-raged Killer Croc, who we saw getting beaten up back in the introduction.

Damian has a little trouble adjusting to being Damian Wayne, son of Bruce Wayne.

And for that matter, becoming the latest Robin, assistant to Batman. Whatever happened to Dick Grayson, you ask? Robin No. 1 grew up and became Nightwing, and he steps in to help the little brat adjust.

And he is a brat. Doing business, Bruce heads to the office, having to deal with a business opportunity which he may lose to LexCorp. That's as in Alexander "Lex" Luthor. You know who he is.

When Bruce opens his office door, there is Damian, sitting at the executive desk, doing executive things. Mind you, he's ten years old.

You have to understand, Ra's al-Ghul wanted to have a proper heir to his vast organization, the League of Assassins, just in case he couldn't get to the Lazarus Pit in time and his life ran out (which seems to have happened, but you never know). His daughter picked on this eminently suitable father to the heir . . . who had other qualities not immediately visible at the time. (*Whatever will Selina say?*)

Damian is a trial to everyone, including the faithful Alfred Pennyworth (who in this incarnation sounds an *awful* lot like Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard of NCIS) and the loyal Dick Grayson. One of his taglines in this movie is an frequently-repeated offer to drive. He isn't tall enough to see over the dashboard of the Batmobile.

There are more problems than roid-raged Killer Crocs in Gotham, and it's not the Cobblepot for Mayor election campaign, either. There are manbats in the area. This is an inversion of the natural order of things.

It seems that Deathstroke had more than one string to his bow. He kidnapped the family of Dr. Kirk Langstrom, developer of the man-bat serum, and told him to get to work if he ever wanted to see his wife and daughter again. He did. (Who did he think he was, Dr. Henry Jekyll? And no Mary Reilly to do the char work, either.)

Thus, Batman (Bruce), the 5th Robin (Damian), Nightwing (Dick), and Talia have to try to get the Langstroms out of Deathstroke's lair and persuade Dr. Langstrom to work on a counterserum. Then they have to get Deathstroke.

Deathstroke's headquarters is on a oil rig off the coast of Scotland. Why there? Well, there's a Lazarus pit beneath the seafloor, which turns out to be convenient for Talia.

(Where is the Royal Marine Commachio Group, responsible for drilling platform security?)

The confrontation is remarkably bloody (I *said* the cartoon is PG-13) and ends with a horribly wounded Damian (knife through one forearm, sword through the other, fortunately between the bones) confronting a beaten and broken Deathstroke. Who says, "Go ahead and kill me, you're your grandfather's grandson." But, he has come to realize, he is also his father's son. (And not Jason "If you kill 100 murderers there are 99 fewer murderers in the world" Todd, alias Red Hood, the late Robin No. 2, either.)

Which begins the current thread in the relationship of Batman and Robin (No. 5, but that's how it goes). The story draws on a wide number of references from the established continuity (for example, the reference to LexCorp), which helps build background. DC animation does not seem to be afraid of getting into the dark and gritty. I hate to think what Fredric Wertham would have said of Bruce Wayne's having an illegitimate son. Well maybe not, Talia is seductive, but hardly innocent . . .

EMPATHY CONQUERS ALL

Review by Sue Burke of
CHILDREN OF TIME

by Adrian Tchaikovsky
 (2015; PanMacmillan;

ISBN 978-0316452502; \$10.99 paperback;
 Kindle \$8.99)

People who had read my novel, *Semiosis*, recommended this book to me, so I bought it, and they were right, it's an excellent book. Adrian Tchaikovsky had also provided the extremely favorable cover blurb for the British edition of my novel. I owe him one for that.

There's a lot to love about *Children of Time*. Tchaikovsky probably doesn't know it, but in the Kindle edition, at the 99% mark (that is, at the very end) this sentence has been highlighted by 686 readers: "Life is not perfect, individuals will always be flawed, but empathy – the sheer inability to see those around them as anything other than people too – conquers all, in the end."

This assertion is the rocket fuel that propels the book to science fiction's heights. Our better natures triumph.

The novel won the 2016 Arthur C. Clarke

Award and tells about a terraformed planet. Humanity, which is about to die out of its own foolishness, is desperate to live there because there is nowhere else to go. The uplifted Earth creatures there, however, don't welcome them with open appendages.

As I had been told, the book touches on some of the same themes as mine: human beings attempting to colonize other planets, first contact with non-human life forms, and the sad certainty that humans will make at least a few bad choices. Tchaikovsky approaches those questions from an entirely different angle, though, one that produces a different but very satisfying story.

He also uses some wise storytelling techniques. The narration alternates between the stories of humans and uplifted spiders. He finds a way to follow the same human beings across a long period of time (600 pages and thousands of years). The new masters of humanity's last refuge, the spiders, go through a great many generations (this is not a spoiler) but they keep the same names. All this helps the reader move easily through a complex and ambitious plot.

In the end, the humans and spiders enter into direct conflict, but they don't share the same culture or technology, so they don't want the same outcome from the conflict. This is the ending that inspired so many highlighters.

Permeating both his book and mine is this question: How would intelligence differ in different species? It's a question with as many right answers as there are species. Tchaikovsky's book considers what spiders would think if they could think. He works through that question with patience and logic, and he creates a fascinating alien civilization.

I have only one quibble. The ideal reader for this book would have arachnophobia. I do not, and I would have enjoyed the book even more if I had to overcome my fears during the course of the story. Here on Earth, I admire the spiders I encounter, even the ones inside my house – they eat mosquitoes, so I consider them allies. What if we could go to the stars with these clever beings? This book makes me want to do that.

SIDEWISE AWARDS 2017

Short Form

Harry Turtledove, "**Zigeuner**," *Asimov's*,
 9-10/17

Long Form

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

RELATED AWARDS

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer

Rebecca Roanhorse

The World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) Award for Best Young Adult Book

Akata Warrior, by Nnedi Okorafor
(Viking)

First Fandom Hall of Fame Award

Robert Silverberg

First Fandom Hall of Fame Award (Posthumous)

Len and June Moffat

David Kyle Big Heart Award

Mike Glyer

2018 HUGO AWARDS

"Best Fan Artist"

Geneva Benton

"Best Fan Writer"

Sarah Gailey

Best Fancast

Ditch Diggers, presented by Mur Lafferty
and Matt Wallace

Best Fanzine

File 770, edited by Mike Glyer

Best Semiprozine

Uncanny Magazine, edited by Lynne M.
Thomas & Michael Damian Thomas,
Michi Trota, and Julia Rios; podcast
produced by Erika Ensign & Steven
Schapansky

Best Professional Artist

Sana Takeda

Best Editor - Short Form

Lynne M. Thomas & Michael Damian
Thomas

Best Editor - Long Form

Sheila E. Gilbert

Best Dramatic Presentation - Short Form

The Good Place: "The Trolley Problem," written by Josh Siegal and
Dylan Morgan, directed by Dean
Holland (Fremulon / 3 Arts
Entertainment / Universal Television)

Best Dramatic Presentaton - Long Form

Wonder Woman, screenplay by Allan
Heinberg, story by Zack Snyder &
Allan Heinberg and Jason Fuchs,
directed by Patty Jenkins (DC Films /
Warner Brothers)

Best Graphic Story

Monstress, Volume 2: The Blood, written
by Marjorie M. Liu, illustrated by Sana
Takeda (Image Comics)

Best Related Work

*No Time to Spare: Thinking About What
Matters*, by Ursula K. Le Guin
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Best Series

World of the Five Gods, by Lois
McMaster Bujold (Harper Voyager /
Spectrum Literary Agency)

Best Short Story

*"Welcome to your Authentic Indian
Experience™,"* by Rebecca
Roanhorse (Apex, August 2017)

Best Novelette

"The Secret Life of Bots," by Suzanne
Palmer (Clarkesworld, September
2017)

Best Novella

All Systems Red, by Martha Wells
(Tor.com Publishing)

Best Novel

The Stone Sky, by N.K. Jemisin (Orbit)

1943 RETROSPECTIVE HUGO
AWARD WINNERS**Best Fan Writer**

Forrest J Ackerman

Best Fanzine

Le Zombie, edited by Arthur Wilson
"Bob" Tucker

Best Professional Artist

Virgil Finlay

Best Editor - Short Form

John W. Campbell

Best Dramatic Presentation - Short Form

Bambi, written by Perce Pearce, Larry
Morey, et al., directed by David D.
Hand et al. (Walt Disney Productions)

Best Short Story

"The Twonky," by Lewis Padgett (C.L.
Moore and Henry Kuttner)
(*Astounding Science-Fiction*,
September 1942)

Best Novelette

"Foundation," by Isaac Asimov
(*Astounding Science-Fiction*, May
1942)

Best Novella

"Waldo," by Anson MacDonald (Robert
A. Heinlein) (*Astounding
Science-Fiction*, August 1942)

Best Novel

Beyond This Horizon, by Anson
MacDonald (Robert A. Heinlein)
(*Astounding Science-Fiction*, April &
May 1942)

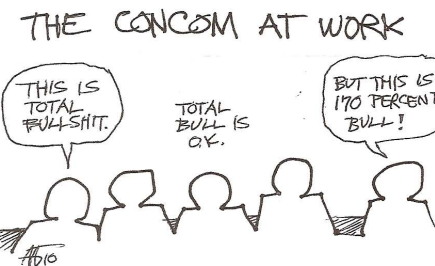
The "Best Fan Artist" and "Best Fan
Writer" appear to have won for paid work.
Maybe it's time to revive Milt Stevens's
idea and drop the Fan categories altogether.

N. K. Jemisin made a snarky comment
in her acceptance speech about how it was
that women were sweeping the awards. How
adult of her.

Mike Glyer has permanently withdrawn
File 770 from consideration. Which means
that a fanzine as we knew it will never
again win the Best Fanzine Hugo. See
above under the "Fan Artist" and "Fan
Writer".

Silverberg was presented with the First
Fandom Hall of Fame Award by Mel
Korshak. If more than one percent of the
attendees knew that Korshak had been at
the *first* Worldcon, and was one of the
only two attendees still living, I would be
surprised.

John Campbell continued his sweep of the
Best Editor Short Form Retro Hugos.
Heinlein won two more, and Kuttner &
Moore got some well-deserved recognition,
finally.

**Worldcon San Jose: the 76th World
Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention
August 16 to 20, 2018
McEnery Convention Center
San Jose, California****Report by Sue Burke**

I attended Worldcon 76 with my husband,
Jerry Finn, and had a wonderful time, as
always. This was my fourth Worldcon, and
it was a five-day celebration with more than
5,300 friends.

Thursday, August 16

A slight haze veiled the hills around Santa
Clara Valley as our airplane from Chicago
descended in the early afternoon into the San
Jose Airport. California has a fire problem,
and a little smoke and ash had drifted to the
area, also known as Silicon Valley. I'd spent
the flight reading *Rogue Protocol*, the third
novella in the Murderbot Diaries series by
Martha Wells. The first novella in the series,
All Systems Red, was up for a Hugo.

Jerry and I met some other convention-
goers as we took a bus and then light rail to
downtown. We checked into our hotel, the
Fairmont; I convinced it not to charge me
\$13.95 a day for internet connection (the
swimming pool is free, but not the internet?).
We went to the Convention Center two blocks
away and waited an hour in line to get our
credentials.

By then opening ceremonies were about to
start, but I went to the Publications Office

because I had volunteered to help with the convention newsletter, *The Tower*. I did some proofreading, then left with a stack of newly printed newsletters for distribution. That job took me to the Exhibition Hall containing the art show, dealers, gamers, and more. It was an impressive space.

Then I met up with Jerry, and we wandered back to our hotel for parties, and a couple of hours later, suddenly it was time to go to bed.

Friday, August 17

The next morning I attended the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America meeting, hoping to get some breakfast there, but by the time I arrived at 8:05 a.m., five minutes after it opened, all that was left was oatmeal, yummy oatmeal, and not very much of that. I learned that SFWA was having a good year, financially successful, and full of activities. At 10 a.m., I was assigned an hour in the autographs area in the Exhibition Hall and met some fans and signed some books. I was awed to meet them. They liked my book enough to seek me out!

At noon, at a panel, some authors who were part of the Mexican Initiative read their works in Spanish. Artist Guest of Honor John Picacio had organized a fundraising drive to sponsor 50 authors, artists, filmmakers, and fans from Mexico to attend the convention. I came to the reading to enjoy the music of the language of Cervantes, and I found an author I want to read more of.

Next I listened to Jo Walton read from her upcoming book, *Lent*, which apparently contains lots of scary demons and sounded worth reading. Then I checked in at the newsletter office and was assigned to distribute more newsletters. I attended some panels, and at 5 p.m. moderated “Exploring a Wider Universe: Beyond the World of Anglophone SF/F.” We had panelists from China, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Mexico, and Spain (me). It ended with a story by the Saudi author and publisher about how he battled censors over the fantasy/magic content of a book.

I attended another panel, got some food at the Art Show opening, and looked at all the exhibits (lots of cats and kittens in the art), then attended room parties at the Fairmont Hotel. Many of the parties were a bit

overcrowded. I think that might be because the Fairmont lobby bar had a band playing with its speakers cranked to 11. Talking was impossible, and we had all come to meet and talk, so we had no alternative social space besides the parties.

Saturday, August 18

I helped proofread and distribute the morning edition of the newsletter, then went to panels. A couple of times, the ones I hoped to attend were full, which was how I found myself in “The Magic of Plotting” presented by Kay Kenyon, which I hadn’t meant to attend, but her ideas helped me enormously with the novel I’m trying to write now.

That afternoon, a group of self-described “patriots” held a rally in front of the convention to protest ... something, I’m not sure exactly what, and some of the groups that promised to participate had a worrisome history of violence. So when the rally was underway, I went to a window to see what was happening. “Just a dozen guys are out there,” a man who’d been watching for a while told me, “and I think some of them might actually be waiting for the bus.” We had worried over nothing.

Because I’m bilingual, I was chosen to moderate “Beyond the Border II: Borders, Crossings, and the Lands Beyond.” This was a Spanish-language discussion about the future of Mexican SF. I had little to do besides open the discussion and direct things now and then. The panel had a lot to say, especially about subverting Mexican publishers’ narrow expectations.

At another panel, “Houston, We Have a Problem,” I saw astronaut Kjell Lindgren and other people in the space program describe how they plan for problems. “Failure is not an option, it’s a necessity,” Lindgren said. Things will go wrong, so NASA rehearses solutions to all kinds of trouble before the mission begins.

Next I took part in the Broad Universe Rapid-Fire Reading, and I read a little essay about describing how if I were a plant, I would rule the Earth. Broad Universe is an organization that promotes the work of women writers, and often at conventions it hosts a reading featuring a series of authors, in this case 15. Most of us read from one of our books, but I read about a theme related to my book. It was meant to be funny, and people

laughed, so I think it worked.

That evening, my agent hosted a dinner for her clients and their guests. She tries to get us to know each other, so it was a dinner of friends.

To close the evening, Jerry and I toured a few parties.

Sunday, August 19

After a satisfying breakfast of bagels and lox in the Con Suite, I helped with proofreading and delivery of the morning newsletter, then participated in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Association poetry reading, celebrating the association’s 40th anniversary. Then I attended other panels. At “Why Do Writers Kill Characters?” Ada Palmer said a wise thing: It’s not the death of a character that affects the readers, it’s the mourning for that character in the story.

My literary agency sponsored an afternoon reception at a local brewpub — San Jose has lots of them — so I went, and we all did our best to help spend the budget. The beer and food were good, and the company delightful.

Then everyone got ready for the Hugo Awards. The line to get into the Grand Ballroom was long, but Jerry and I headed for the Callahan’s Place bar area of the Exhibition Hall, where the ceremony would be livecast and food and drinks were available. A lot of people had that idea, so chairs from other parts of the hall were commandeered.

The ceremony went efficiently, but halfway through I left to go to the newsletter office. There, behind a locked door, the team was preparing a special Hugo edition listing the winners. I helped with proofreading — *All Systems Red* (Murderbot) had won the novella category. In the other categories, I was satisfied by the winners, but it had been a strong ballot, so my satisfaction was guaranteed. The newsletter was printed, and I was dispatched with still-warm copies to distribute when the ceremony was over. As I waited in the Grand Ballroom, papers clutched tight against wandering eyes, I saw Martha Wells try not to cry as she said thank you, and N.K. Jemisin describe how hard she had labored to bring her writing to the world.

I handed out newsletters as people left the auditorium, and they seemed glad to receive them. When those had been distributed, Jerry and I had intended to go to a dance, but it was

cancelled, so we went instead to parties at the hotel. The Brony Boys (male fans of the *My Little Pony* television series) turned out to be young men who were fired up by the idea that the world would be a nicer place if we would all just be kind to one another. Hard to argue with that. At another party, I said I had a sore throat, and a San Jose local suggested that might be due to the smoke in the air.

Monday, August 20

Alas, it was not due to smoke, and I woke up with the start of a “con crud” cold the next morning. The newsletter office wasn’t open, so after more bagels and lox in the Con Suite, I had time for one panel before leaving, “Computer History” by Christopher J. Garcia. I was more interested in seeing Chris Garcia than I was in computer history. He’s a curator at the Computer History Museum and has a famously exuberant personality. His talk was an entertaining hour, at times a little technical, but I understood why some of the jokes were funny even if I didn’t quite get the punchline.

Then it was time to go to the airport. On the plane, I read a book I got at a freebie table at the convention, *Yaqteenya*, by Yassar Bahjatt, who had spoken about Saudi Arabian science fiction on the panel I moderated. It was an interesting tale of alternate history in which Muslims discover America. I had lots of time for reading. A storm delayed our arrival by five hours. Eventually we landed in sodden Chicago, and at 2 a.m. I was in bed.

DRAGON AWARDS 2018

Best Science Fiction Novel

Artemis by Andy Weir

Best Fantasy Novel (Including Paranormal)

Oathbringer by Brandon Sanderson

Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel

Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

Best Military Science Fiction or Fantasy Novel

A Call to Vengeance by David Weber, Timothy Zahn, and Thomas Pope

Best Alternate History Novel

Uncharted by Kevin J. Anderson and

Sarah A. Hoyt

WORLDCON BIDS

Best Media Tie-In Novel*Leia: Princess of Alderaan* by Claudia Gray2021
Washington, D.C.
<http://dcin2021.org/>**Best Horror Novel***Sleeping Beauties* by Stephen King and Owen King2022
Chicago
<https://chicagoworldconbid.org/>**Best Comic Book***Mighty Thor* by Jason Aaron and James Harren, Marvel Comics2023
Chengdu**Best Graphic Novel***Brandon Sanderson's White Sand Volume 1* by Brandon Sanderson, Rik Hoskin, and Julius M. Gopez, Dynamite EntertainmentNice, France
<http://worldconinfrance.org/en/>**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series***Game of Thrones*, HBO

New Orleans

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie*Black Panther* directed by Ryan Coogler2024
United Kingdom
<http://www.ukin2024.org/>**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy PC / Console Game***Middle-earth: Shadow of War* by Monolith Productions2025
Seattle
Perth, Australia**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Mobile Game***Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery* by Jam City**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game***Red Dragon Inn 6: Villains* by Slugfest Games**Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Miniatures / Collectible Card / Role-Playing Game***Magic: The Gathering Unstable* by Wizards of the Coast

NASFiC BIDS

2020
Columbus, Ohio

WORLDCON

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

NASFiC

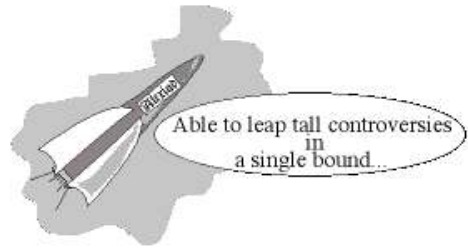
2019
Layton, Utah
July 4-7, 2019
<https://www.spikecon.org/>

It was observed by a commentator on the alternatetheory.com board that the Alternate History nominees were all worlds with magic, mindpower, and (I'd say, "and/or") aliens and just a smattering of alternate history. In other words, something like *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (by Susanna Clarke, 2004; Best Novel Hugo, 2005).

The New Zealand Worldcon has named Mercedes Lackey (and Larry Dixon, her other half) as Guest of Honor. There has been some speculation about whether or not they know what they may be in for.



Letters, we get letters



From: **Lloyd Penney** August 27, 2018
 1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON
 M9C 2B2 CANADA
penneys@bell.net
<http://lloydpenney.livejournal.com/>

My, I have let things slide here. I never meant to let it go this far, but I have had an amazing summer so far, full of travel and vending opportunities, and we have had such fun. But, it has also meant that my writing has been neglected, and I have a huge number of issues to catch up on, including two *Alexiads*. First of all, thank you for issue 99, and congratulations on issue 100, a real milestone. Comments on both issues start now.

99... I think I might like to see *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!*, but as you say, it is 70 years old, all who were involved are long gone...yet, feuds seem to be everywhere, and our tempers and attention spans are shorter than ever. Still, it seems to be a valued part of fan history.

Ave Al Bean, fourth man on the moon. I will continue to ask, if we can put a man on the moon, why can't we put a man on the moon today? We're too busy fighting wars, especially political ones. I hope the nightmare will soon be done, for all our sakes.

Cataract surgery...I am sure I have already told you all my tales. I hope it's been an easy recovery, and that you didn't wake up halfway through the procedure. I remember when having being diagnosed with cataracts was almost like a death sentence as far as your sight goes; now, it's a simple procedure, with an easy recovery time. It was interesting to see my eye refill with the vitreous humors, and eventually fill again. You can call yourself the Bionic Man now, and carry on with life. (At

some point, I will probably have to have the lens replaced in my other eye, but every time I go to see my ophthalmologist, the progression of the cataract seems to have stopped. I might never need that operation.)

I agree with Nic Farey; I think for many of the assorted fan awards, the people we might call fans don't seem to qualify for them anymore. Those who do win are minor pros or friends of the pros.

The Best Fan Writer got it for writing on Tor.com which is not a fan venue. I think the definition has slipped to "writing about SF/F".

My loc...congrats to Mike Glycer on another silver rocket, and I hope he recovers quickly. I know so few of the names on the final ballot, and soon, I will recognize none at all. The cellar of loc-writers? I had to lay them all off, too expensive, so now, the whole workload is mine, and that's why I am so far behind. Corflu...did Yvonne and I go out to dinner that Saturday night? No, we didn't. Either people didn't plan to go out, or they slipped out without my noticing, so I went home for dinner. I wonder about the fanzine fan community sometimes. I suspect that will be my last Corflu.

Hey, John Purcell! I think the Rapture was postponed due to inclement weather somewhere. Either that, or all suitable candidates for the Rapture, all 17 of them, were taken away, and the rest of us never noticed.

There was a meme I collected:

The youth minister fell asleep at the meeting. We laid clothes on the chairs and slipped out. Then someone blew a trumpet.

My interest in steampunk conventions... I think I was getting tired of so many conventions, media and literary alike, where we were expected to cater to the ego of the main guests. Come in, pay your memberships, spend the rest of your money in the dealers' room, but now go in, sit down, shut up and watch the writers/actors perform. More and more, we are urged to attend, but be part of a passive audience. I want to go someplace

where I can do things, too. The steampunk conventions are full of creativity. Those who attend are supportive of each other, and I freely admit that before getting into fanzines as heavily as I did starting in the 80s, Yvonne and I were costumers (still are), and we participated in the masquerades of Worldcons of the 80s. Steampunk has allowed us maximum creativity in the costumes we create and wear, and the steampunk events we attend and vend at have been great fun. Glicksohn's Maxim comes heavily into play here.

As I've said, it's a transition from participant to consumer.

Happy 100th!... Summer this year has been hot and sunny, except for heavy thunderstorms (like today). I have yet to make any comment on the passing of Harlan Ellison anywhere. I never met him, and all my time in fandom, the positive stories and the negative stories ran about neck and neck. Perhaps the only thing I can say is that I have read most of his writing, and I enjoyed every word. I think I should leave it there.

I haven't been to a Worldcon since Reno, so I have read what happens before, during and after Worldcon. The possibility of an alt-right demonstration may have caused a few people to stay home, but I think Kevin Roche and crew did a good job. I hope there is lots of support for Dublin 2019 chairman James Bacon and New Zealand 2020 chairman Norman Cates. If people have to travel that far, and spend that much money, they may not be so forgiving for certain mistakes made.

The alt-Right demonstration had maybe 20 people, not including Jon del Arroz, who had an excuse. And the Sad Puppies web address has been taken over by an Italian company. So much for that.

Given your interest in horse racing...Yvonne may be retired, but knows that if we want to do things, she may have to go out and take another assignment, given that now, I don't seem able to find any employment at all. She has taken a 4-6 month assignment, and she is now working at the Woodbine Racetrack, in the northern part of Etobicoke. She is working in their Account

Payable department, and is working in an old paddock building.

Based on what I've been reading post-Worldcon this year, it looks like Chengdu, China may be bidding for the 2023 Worldcon. I dare say that even the biggest wallets will feel much thinner after the 2019 Worldcon in Dublin, and the 2020 Worldcon in New Zealand, so something closer to home (Washington in 2021, Chicago in 2022) might appeal to the voters.

Chengdu is in Sichuan (Szechuan). While it's a very large city, it is in the center of China, just about. Presumably anyone coming would fly in anyhow, but it still seems a bit out of the way.

— JTM

I think I may be done. It is still raining or threatening to rain here, and I never know if that last noise from outside was thunder, and I should shut down the computer. Anyway, there's lots more to do here, so I'd better get with it. Thank you for these two issues, and I look forward to the beginning of your next hundred issues. See you soon.

From: **Timothy Lane** September 3, 2018
timothylane51@gmail.com

Ah, weight loss. Strangely, being stuck in a nursing home seems to be good for my waistline. Especially when I had digestive problems a few months back. I still haven't been able to clean all the vomit out of the keyboard, though at least it's dried now and doesn't affect typing too often. But the net result is that my August weighing was 229.4 pounds, the lowest it's been in perhaps 40 years.

I see a lot of alternate history reviews here, which would be nice if more of them made sense historically. Turtledove's deserves points by bringing up the actual (if extremely brief) Republic of Fredonia (which might better be called the Pretenderdom of Nacogdoches). Given how little support they had even among American settlers (and virtually none from anyone else), I doubt they ever stood a chance.

The Malta scenario seems one of the more fantastic ones. Hitler dying and being

replaced by Hermann Goering makes a good start, and Der Dicke was the sort to let others run things. Halder would be a suitable choice since he was the existing Army Chief of Staff, but it's hard to see why Beck would be involved — especially since Goering may have known of his political inclinations from his wiretappers. And it's hard to see why the Army would support the idea of a Nibelungenlegion. They wanted fewer paramilitary groups, not more.

The RFK scenario has some good points. He had a lot more support from Democrats such as Daley than McCarthy did, as well as having won more primaries (especially California's winner-take-all bash). But I get the impression they have the GOP convention after the DNC, though in fact it came beforehand. And why would Reagan step down, knowing the likelihood that he would follow Nixon?

The alternate Antietam could be interesting, but there are questions. Does Little Mac suddenly stop listening to Pinkerton? That sounds very unlikely, especially since he was naturally cautious to begin with. (Cox, in his comments on Rich Mountain, points out the similarities between McClellan's performance there and his performance later in the war. He sent Rosecrans off to win the battle and left it all up to him, which fortunately worked in that case.) If McClellan had been acting this way from the beginning, the Peninsula Campaign would have gone very differently.



As for Red Adolf, that probably could have happened, but then he'd just be another KPD backbencher. He probably wouldn't have

become even a minor war hero if he were already a communist, and communism had far less appeal in Germany than voelkisch nationalism, especially among the military. Nor would the likes of Fritz Thyssen have funded Red Adolf, as many did in 1932. I'm not sure a Communist could have won the Nazis' rural support either.

I had problems with most of them myself. The Antietam one seemed the most plausible. Mac dithered and delayed, which was why it took so long to conquer a virtually defenseless Virginia.

The various articles on the awards were interesting in one respect: I not only hadn't heard of any of the books (of course), but am familiar with only a few of the writers. But some of those books do sound like a review would be nice.

I rather like George W. Price's approach to conspiracy theories. I tend to be skeptical myself, but he has a nice, logical way of handling the subject. I see little to add to his discussion of summits, especially starting with them rather than ending a diplomatic process that way.

I read Lynne Truss's book, but not the one Robert Kennedy mentions. But we left nearly all of our library behind when we sold our house for what we owed on it.

Actually, Wallonia belonged to the Holy Roman Empire at the same time that it belonged to Burgundy, Spain, and Austria.

Not only do most actual Indians see nothing wrong with the Cleveland Indians, but also the Washington Redskins and probably the Atlanta Braves (though I've never seen any polling on that). The exceptions are Indians who've been assimilated to PC leftism. No doubt the rest realize that the names are intended as compliments, not insults.

Taras has a very good point about the difference between the oppression of totalitarians and those of most businesses. Even the Silicon Valley executives don't murder millions of people. Nor does Donald Trump, for that matter.

The Army relied heavily on Indian scouts to fight other Indians. Joseph is right about Crazy Horse, who made the offer because the column from the west in 1876 had Nez Perce scouts. Custer himself relied on Crow scouts

at the Little Bighorn. What happened wasn't their fault. Crook and Miles used various southwest Indians to hunt down the Apaches, too. For that matter, most of the participants at the Camp Grant Massacre were Indians (Papagos, I think).

That was one problem I had with Martin Cruz Smith's *The Indians Won*. How did his hero get the tribes to lay aside their differences? Also, how did he get the guns into the Plains? And his long explanation of why the Indians were so superior shows why they could be defeated: they lived off the land, he explained. In winter?

— JTM

From: **George W. Price** September 27, 2018
4418 N. Monitor Avenue, Chicago, IL
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August *Alexiad*:

Taras Wolansky refutes "the attempt by certain historians to blame the Indian caste system on the British," noting that "DNA studies . . . have proved that caste divisions go back thousands of years."

Yes, indeed. One of John Masters' novels about India — I can't remember which one — said the caste system began about three thousand years ago when Caucasoid conquerors swept down from Central Asia and overwhelmed the peoples then inhabiting India, primarily Dravidians. Most of these were very dark-skinned, brown to black like Africans (though with very different hair and facial features).

The conquerors set up the caste system to institutionalize their rule, with the dark-skinned Dravidians being on the very bottom. As usual, interbreeding (to say nothing of intermarriage) between conquerors and conquered was severely discouraged, but of course happened anyway.

While skin color was not explicitly tied to caste (according to Masters), it generally worked out that the higher one's caste, the lighter one's skin.

Was this true? I don't know. But I have seen English-language Indian newspapers with matrimonial ads that often described women

as "fair" complexioned. I doubt if that meant blue-eyed and blonde. No, it meant lighter-skinned than the Indian average, that is, more likely to be higher caste. And that of course was a plus.

When I read this in Masters, I thought, "Americans distinguish between black and white, and think how much trouble that has caused us! But, my God, the Indians even distinguish between fine shades of color!"

This wasn't really fair, because Americans have also distinguished between lighter and darker blacks. I recommend Barbara Hambly's "Benjamin January" novels, beginning with *A Free Man of Color* (1997), set in 1830s New Orleans. The social distinctions between blacks, mulattos, and quadroons were quite significant. Many quadroon women were openly kept as mistresses by upper-class white men.

In any case, Indians have no cause to look down on Americans for our racial problems — they have plenty of their own.

* * * * *

As we approach the Census of 2020, we are seeing mounting complaints about gerrymandering of U.S. congressional districts. Traditionally, the party that dominates a state legislature will carve up the districts to give itself a disproportionate number of congressmen.

The Illinois state constitution requires congressional districts to be "compact and contiguous," and I think some (but not all) other states have a similar rule. "Compact" obviously precludes the more blatant gerrymanders, which is why such rules are routinely ignored. I like to imagine the uproar if some judge ruled that non-compact districts are prima facie violations of the state constitution. I have never heard of any such case ever being brought in any state. Which is to say, gerrymandering is a perquisite too precious for either party to willingly give up.

Still, it could be worse. Suppose gerrymandering is struck down. And the dominant party in a state responds by requiring all the candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives to run "at large."

That is, there are no congressional districts in that state; each candidate is on the ballot in the entire state. If the state is entitled to ten

representatives, then every ballot in the state lists ten Democrats and ten Republicans and ten Libertarians (or whatever) and so on, with a note: "Vote for ten." The obvious result is that whichever party has the most voters will elect all of its ten, and the other parties will be shut out entirely. (To be sure, a voter could split his ballot by voting for, say, eight Democrats and two Republicans, but I think that would happen too rarely to be significant.)

I find nothing in the Constitution to explicitly prevent this. There's no requirement that a state's congressional delegation be elected by one-man districts — that's only a custom which has grown up (like the party system), but is not actually in the Constitution. And there have already been a number of "at large" elections held under special circumstances.

However, even though the Constitution doesn't forbid "at large" elections, it does give Congress the power to undo any such attempt by a state. Article I Section 4 authorizes states to set their own election regulations, but then adds, "the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations . . ."

Come to think of it, Congress may have already passed laws forbidding "at-large" elections except in very special cases. Have any of you ever heard of that?

Such legislation was passed in 1842 but not enforced. A new law forbidding that was passed in 1967.

— JTM

Otherwise, I suspect that if any state tried such a caper, Congress would respond to it in the same way as to gerrymanders: It would be tolerated, or not, strictly according to what gave a political advantage to the dominant party. Ah well, perhaps I am being too cynical. Let us hope so.

From: **Sue Burke** September 28, 2018
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It's almost the last minute, so I should write this LOC and turn it in. I tend to wait in

case something exciting will happen. Hope springs eternal.

I'd like to voice my agreement with George W. Price on the proper place of summit meetings in negotiations. There are experts at negotiating who shouldn't be blithely bypassed.

I also want to praise Paul Gadzikowski's Page 12 cartoon on the delight that money would bring to artistic endeavor.

I will continue my disagreement with Taras Wolansky over the danger of corporations. He's right to point out the slaughter in Cambodia, but we're in the United States. What has caused more death here lately, bloodthirsty hordes of Sorbonne alumni, or a pharmaceutical corporation's deliberate campaign to sell opioids, knowing beforehand how addictive and destructive (and profitable) they would be, and lying about it?

Elsewhere in this issue, there should be a review of Worldcon, which was my big excitement since the last issue.

I also sprained a toe the morning I was leaving on a brief trip to promote my book, proving that anyone sufficiently clumsy can get "turf toe," which bedevils professional athletes. I grabbed a cane and headed to Michigan anyway, limping around on a foot that swelled up and turned purple. By my account, I've spent more than 200 hours promoting my book — interviews, blog tours, articles, creating a website, hand-selling at book fairs, and anything else I or my publisher can think of to do. Selling is hard work. To ease the sting of that work, I think I'm going to stop keeping track of the time spent on it.

My foot, by the way, is healing well.

Other than that, I've mostly been sitting around reading and writing, which has been heavenly. I've also acquired a waffle iron. There is a wide world of Walloon-inspired waffle-making to explore.

But no Fleming waffle-making? (I imagine the detailed instructions James Bond would give for making his waffle, oh, not that Fleming!)

— JTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** Sept. 29, 2018
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My heartiest congratulations on the production issue Number 100! Reaching No. 100 is always a milestone for a Fanzine.

I am very busy preparing to move to Boise, Idaho. Cleaning out my house and watching 60+ years of my life disappearing in two large dumpsters is enough to bring tears to a grown man. But there is no way to take it all. So, it's either try to sell some of it, give it away, in the dumpster, or donate to a thrift shop.

I feel your pain. I have been trying to sort out books I would like to keep from ones I can stand to give up. Neither Joe nor myself are getting younger. I have come to think minimalists have the right idea. I find it very difficult in practice. For most of my life I have collected books. Now I no longer feel equal to maintaining the collection. I am trying to deal with the reality that a lot of them will end up in the dumpster.

— LTM

"Three moves equal one fire".
Good luck on the relocation.

— JTM

In what free time I have I've been reading, for the third time, *WE FEW* by David Weber and John Ringo (2005). As most of you probably know it is the fourth and final book in a series. I have enjoyed all the books. But *WE FEW* has for me been especially outstanding. There are three scenes that have always remained with me and I can pull them up in my mind at any time. In any event I read the complete book again and enjoyed it just as much as the first time. I do wish there was fifth book covering the first few years of "Roger the Terrible" as Emperor. But no such luck. I'll just have to use my imagination.

Well, that's about it now. Back to work. I'll furnish my new address in my next letter. My email should remain the same, at least for now.

From: **AL du Pisani** September 30, 2018
945 Grand Prix Street,
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OF SOUTH AFRICA
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I had forgotten how much I loved Spanish

dancing. This week I had the opportunity the watch a show with James Grace on guitar, a Spanish dance troupe and visuals featuring the Spanish dance troupe in underwater photography. It sounds like a mess but it worked. I had seen James Grace before and knew that I was in for a treat — but I did not expect the sheer joy in the performance.

It made me think about how so many things have been distanced by the coming of television, where for all the treasure chest of shining performances, there is a huge pile of mediocrity, coarseness and malevolence you have to dig through. Even so, there is much distance between the performance as experienced by yourself, and the tidy packaged TV show.

A couple of things arising from my last letter. Joe, I have unfortunately not found *They All Laughed at Columbus*, but would like to read it. At the time I was following the stuff more or less at it happened on Usenet. Unfortunately, the stories were always a little bit thin, with the principals not communicating very well, and no specialist publications or communities of interested observers commentating. (This was before Usenet collapsed under the onslaught of trolls.) In this respect the space reporting ecosystem that has since evolved and the community that have to some extent coalesced around the NasaSpaceFlight web site is much of an improvement.

Rotary Rocket (the topic of *They All Laughed at Columbus*) had the problem was that it was an unsound design. But it was "cool" and the designers had a lot of fun hyping how important it was going to be (instead of trying to make the thing work).

Fernholz also make the argument that much of what the current big boys are doing are because of all of the attempts of at least the late 1990's, where traditional aerospace were given opportunities to collaborate with the new space guys. That the failure of the attempts cause the current players to bypass traditional aerospace and go their own way. And that all the players up to Musk and Bezos underestimated how long it was going to take, and how much it was going to cost.

There is an argument that SpaceX took

four years and \$100 million to build the team that put the ground work in place for their successes since, and that they were also extremely lucky with their initial NASA contracts – That they used the opportunities that internal and political processes placed on NASA to survive and thrive. Whereas NASA has failed to make use of the same opportunities and are believed by some to be destined for oblivion in the longer term.

My health is improving, especially since I finally received my tax rebate and could bypass my medical aid and buy the treatment I needed directly.

As I experienced last year, I had to supply documentation for all of my tax claims, and then wait a month for the Receiver to let me know they will pay me. A friend of mine had much more difficulty, so much so that he ran into cash flow issues, since the Receiver took so long to process his claim. Granted, his was a significantly more complex claim than mine, and was for a lot more money. But given all of what is being exposed by the current investigations into State Capture, especially at the tax authorities, you can understand both taxpayers reluctance to pay taxes, and understand why the government is trying to hold on to tax monies as long as possible. And as is true in so many parts of the world, we do not have an income problem, we have a spending problem, with the government living way beyond their income.

I knew it would happen some day that the friends I had relied on the most would move away or die. And I had a threat that they would move a couple of years ago, which did not realize because of health related issues. But now they have moved. And I suddenly realize how much I relied on them. It is no longer possible to drive 5 minutes and drop in on them unannounced. They have moved to a new location about 30 minutes away, but that is enough to require carefully planning for an outing.

Family related health issues for the organizers have also caused the local SF group to meet less often than previously. And, unfortunately, I have found that I need to watch what I say around them, as some of them have vigorous opinions about some aspects of SF that I do not share.

Work is going OK. My biggest problem there is boredom, where I feel that I can use more work than I am getting. In addition, I

need to start planning my post formal employment situation, as I have been encouraged to contemplate early retirement.

I always liked what I called “American SF” more than “British SF” - American SF always had hope. You could overcome. You could survive. You could thrive. May we survive, thrive and live with hope.

If only we were not turning into a British SF world, powered by the spirit of early J. G. Ballard. (Though he would be unacceptable today, having said “Thank God for the Atom Bomb”.)

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** October 1, 2018
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Well, it took some doing, but I finally got my copy of Collectors Item no. 100.

Joe: Paul Hynes' *The Red Führer*, which imagines Hitler as a Red, “skims over what one would think would be crucial elements in the triumph of the Revolution.” In particular, that an entirely reasonable fear of communism helped bring the supposedly “third way” socialist Hitler to power.

“This dead one has sinned deeply, yet has he been more deeply sinned against.” Um, if you're talking about Harlan Ellison, I don't think so!

At Albacon two weeks ago, I got into this a bit. When they asked for people who had personal contact with Ellison, I told them about the threatening phone call and postcard I received, and how I watched as he tried to destroy Jim Frenkel's career before an audience of thousands, because Frenkel wouldn't pay him more than they had already agreed to. (Ellison's story for an original story anthology had come in at double the agreed-upon length. This was “Mephisto in Onyx”, a serial killer story which proved to be a let-down, when I finally read it.)

Also, I remember how hurt and shocked Connie Willis looked after Ellison groped her “as a joke”.

Lisa: “I have gone from being a couch potato to someone who thinks nothing of walking a mile to work.” You're not getting older, you're getting better – and for once that

old saw is literally true.

Joe (review of Michael Benson's *Space Odyssey*): Who was Mike Wilson, and why was he making movies on Arthur C. Clarke's dime? Who was Hector Ekanayake? And what was it about those Mogul silver rupees, anyway?

Read Clarke's *The Treasure of the Great Reef* (1964) for an explanation of how Clarke, with diver and movie-maker Mike Wilson, and his personal assistant Hector Ekanayake, retrieved several thousand Mogul-era silver rupees from a shipwreck off the coast of Sri Lanka. Clarke and Wilson were business partners and Wilson was making movies on the partnership's shilling.

Sidewise Award nominations: Looks like white male authors are still eligible for this. Also the Dragon Awards: separating fantasy and science fiction novels is a good idea (and probably would be good for the Hugos, too).

Sue Burke's Hugo picks: On the whole, I tended to agree with Sue. “Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience” I thought was good most of the way but petered out at the end. Also “Rebecca Roanhorse” I vote as most likely to be the pseudonym of a white guy. Who will say he “identifies” as a Native American woman, if he's caught. (P.S.: But at Capclave a couple of days ago, Jonathan Braze informed me Roanhorse is a real person.)

Joe: “The programming problem at Worldcon has got even weirder.” I wasn't aware there was a programming problem. Then again, no matter how notorious a convention is for being badly run, I always have a good time anyway.

Mike Resnick got his program schedule with the list of the panels he was on. Bwana wasn't even going.

“Meanwhile, the Rabid Puppies are gloating over the whole mess.” Well, the overreaction to their ballot stuffing — the effective ban on white male authors, that is — has tended to discredit the Hugo Award even among progressives like Darrell Schweitzer,

which is exactly what the R.P.'s wanted, I think.

I hear people sneering at the Hugo as the “Hughette Award”, and saying they don't pay attention to it any more. But I point out to them that, even with works by white guys banned, that still leaves a lot of good work to choose from: let's say almost half of the SF, and maybe more than half of fantasy. (On the other hand, if the Sidewise and Dragon Award nominations are an indicator of what is really out there, then the percentage of all works that is Hugo-eligible is much lower.)

At Albacon, there was a panel on “things you hate that everybody else loves”. Passing over things everybody hates, like the Star Wars prequels; and things I feel only ho-hum about, like Doctor Who and Star Trek, I named N.K. Jemison's *The Fifth Season*. Setting aside the fact that it demands that the reader sympathize with a mass murderer, it's an example of “idiot worldbuilding”: it asks us to believe in a society that trains up wizards (Jemison calls them something else) that can break continents, and then goes out of its way to antagonize them so they actually do it!

I expected to get some pushback, but no one there seemed to have heard of the book, a Hugo winner. Which makes me wonder, exactly who is voting for the Hugo awards?

The same sort of people who write and edit the books?

Sue Burke: I thought *Semiosis* was excellent. It's old-fashioned in the best sense; that is, it's not inflated with air. I kept imagining how a modern pro would read it and think, “Sue, Sue, I'd have made a seven-book series out of this!” Pretty much, every chapter could have been expanded into a novel of its own.

I actually finished the book at Worldcon, and might have sought you out for an inscription – except I was ashamed to show you the book, which had picked up water damage somewhere. It's about time they learned how to print books on something not so perishable.

That the utopians in the book would rape and kill to preserve their “utopia”, was I thought a grimly realistic touch. Also you were probably wise to avoid economics: as at Plymouth Colony (before Governor Bradford divided the land), collectivized agriculture

means people a) slack off, and b) starve.

For example, Peter Uldanov's comment in *Time Will Run Back* [aka *The Great Idea*] (1951, 1966) about the kolkhoz with a hundred workers and their goal of 100 potatoes each.

P.S. Now available for Kindle for \$2.80, so you don't have to deal with the lunatics at LewRockwell.com.

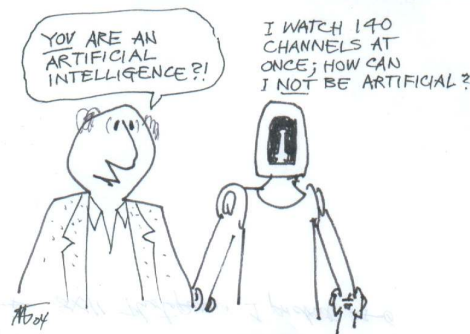
Perhaps I was using the wrong reading protocol to judge "River of Teeth". That is, I was treating it as serious alternate history, the realistic working out of the implications of a change. Perhaps I should have looked upon it more as "gonzo" alternate history, where the point is making amusing juxtapositions, regardless of plausibility.

"Colombia now has a wild hippo problem." YESSSS!!!! I have long advocated that endangered species, especially the great apes, have breeding populations established in the Americas, where society is more functional than it is likely to be in Africa for the foreseeable future.

You mean, like the way the Duke of Bedford saved the Père David's Deer (*Elaphurus davidanus*)? He assembled all the ones he could get from zoos and they were enough to make a decent breeding stock. The herd is one of the attractions of Woburn Abbey.

— JTM

AL du Pisani: I kinda get it — "Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst/Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst". But don't wait too long.



From: **John Hertz** October 10, 2018
236 S. Coronado St., N. 409 Los Angeles, CA 90057 USA

Hooray, hooray, for Double Ten Day. Some while ago I worked in a law firm whose telephone number ended in 1010. I had occasion to correspond with a museum in the Republic of China (Taiwan). They were pleased I knew the number was auspicious.

I always thought of Double Ten Day as the birthday of my cousin Mae. She was practically my aunt.

The 1990s editions of R. van Gulik's Judge Dee books don't have the introduction by D.F. Lach carried in the 1970s editions. I don't yet know why. He rated a New York Times obituary (6 Nov, 00) but it doesn't mention Ti Jen-chieh (Wade-Giles transliteration; other systems give "Dee" or "Di"). In Dutch his name means "laugh".

Congratulations on your centenary issue. At Worldcon 76, I led three Classics of SF discussions (see e.g:

<File770.com/classics-of-s-f-at-worldcon-76> 16 Jul 18.

Pangborn was Ghost of Honor, so one book of the three was *A Mirror for Observers*. I asked David Bratman if he thought the description of a gifted pianist's playing Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata was realistic. He wrote to me that it was, but he didn't like the book.

You can see our display of Rotsler Award winners at:
<File770.com/rotsler-award-exhibit-at-worl

dcon-76> 11 Sep.

Two of them, Gilliland and Schirm, are often seen here.

I report the Masquerade results (I was one of the judges) with some photos at:
<File770.com/worldcon-76-masquerade-results> 8 Oct

Fanziner, 2008 TAFF delegate, and swell guy Chris Garcia was M.C. I'd been on that hot spot — indeed at the previous San Jose Worldcon — and offered to confer with him. He said "Oh no, the job does itself." He found that was not quite the case. But he's admirable anyway.

This year's TAFF delegate and swell guy Johan Anglemark (whose name might mean "England") contributed to WOOF.

Next year's Worldcon is being chaired by 2004 TAFF delegate and swell guy James Bacon.

At Westercon LXXI, I found to no surprise that, lots of people hadn't read *Glory Road*. They'd only run their eyes over marks on the pages. In its Classics of SF discussion people thought it was a fantasy, missed the comedy of Gordon's finding nothing to do on Center (what happened to Herr Doktor Professor Gordon?) and not realizing what was going on even after seeing Rufo's office, and the near-tragedy of Gordon's near-clueless (but he is a real hero, otherwise there'd be no point to the book, pun intended) departure at the end and his after-written opening lines — a trenchant satire on male sexism which, of course, this author could never have created.

WAHF:

Martin Morse Wooster, with various items of interest.

Lloyd G. Daub, the same.

Marc Schirmeister, with a picture of pactsarcd. I deserved that.

Patrick McCray, **James D. Nicoll**, with thanks.

 I Love Lucy — The Finale

Opening commercials fade out.

A Hospital Waiting Room. LUCY is standing there, shaking. RICKY enters.

RICKY: Lucia! I came as soon as I heard! What happened!

LUCY: Oh Ricky! I had a terrible accident, the car is a total wreck, Little Ricky is still in surgery, the other driver is hurt bad, I didn't have my driver's license, I found the insurance check in my purse, fortunately that nice Mr. Cash from the company happened to be there and he said there would be a penalty, he didn't know how much, so just leave the amount blank and make the check out to him and then —

RICKY: Lucia!

The camera irises in on LUCY's face.

LUCY: **BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
WWWWWWW!**

Break to commercials.

We are now in a courtroom.

JUDGE: The defendant will please rise.

RICKY gets to his feet.

JUDGE: In the case of *People vs. Ricardo*, have you found a verdict?

FOREMAN: We have, your honor.

JUDGE: And what do you find?

FOREMAN: We the jury find Enrique Alberto Fernando Ricardo, known as Ricky Ricardo, **not guilty** of the murder of his wife, Lucille Esmeralda McGillicuddy Ricardo, on the grounds of justifiable homicide.

PROSECUTOR: Your honor, will you poll

the jury?

JUDGE: Very well. Mr. Foreman, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

FOREMAN: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Two, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #2: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Three, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #3: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Four, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #4: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Five, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #5: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Six, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #6: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Seven, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #7: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Eight, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #8: Not Guilty. And believe me, your Honor, it took a lot of convincing.

JUDGE: No interjections. Quiet in the court. Juror Number Nine, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #9: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Ten, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #10: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Eleven, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #11: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Juror Number Twelve, how do you say, Guilty or Not Guilty?

JUROR #12: Not Guilty.

JUDGE: Mr. Riccardo, you have been found not guilty of murder by a jury of your peers. You are discharged from custody and free to go.

Outside the courtroom.

REPORTER: Mr. Riccardo, what are you going to do now?

RICKY: I'm going home to Cuba. I understand there's some interesting things going on there.

End credits.

MADNESS IS THE EMERGENCY
EXIT

Doc Savage, the genius and adventurer, sat his office on the 86th floor of the great skyscraper. The vast skyline of the great city of New York did not draw his attention now.

The great radio stations of the city had all been interrupted by a strange message. How the speaker had managed to break into the communications of every station was a mystery in itself, and in time he would devote his mighty brain to unravelling that question.

For now, though, he focused on the words the strange speaker had uttered.

“Tonight, at precisely twelve o’clock midnight, I will kill Henry Claridge and steal the Claridge Diamond! Do not try to stop me! The Joker has spoken!”

Henry Claridge was a well-known millionaire and man about town. He kept in a sealed safe in his palatial mansion the fabulous Claridge Diamond, the stone which he had discovered during his prospecting in South Africa, which he had cut and kept as symbol of the origins of his fortune.

Now retired from the daily drudge of prospecting and management alike, he enjoyed the rich cultural life of the great city, declaring that he had striven for prosperity that he might be given the opportunity to make himself worthy of culture. His rough edges had quickly been smoothed, and he was known as a patron of the arts.

He was an acquaintance of Dr. Clark Savage, and sought to instil in him an

appreciation of the finer things in life. Grateful for the effort, nevertheless Doc Savage regretted he could not devote the full power of his efforts to this self-uplift, knowing that he must sacrifice his personal well-being for the greater good of all humanity.

That night, therefore, he was among the guests at the Claridge House, along with his five trustworthy aides. There were many officers of the police present, and even a few private enquiry agents. They conversed in low terms, curious, nervous, as the minutes ticked down to midnight.

Then the bells of the churches nearby struck the midnight peal. As the ringing counted down, there was a feeling of relief among the guests. The last peal struck.

Claridge said, “I’m still alive! I’m not dead! I’m safe!” and then began to laugh. But his laughter took a sinister tone as he seemed unable to stop. His weathered, yet cheery face drew up into a great, mocking smile . . . and then he fell to the floor, his limbs twisting in a grotesque convulsion.

Doc Savage himself rushed to the side of the millionaire, but his mighty medical abilities proved unavailing. As the mysterious mocking madman had predicted, Henry Claridge was dead at precisely twelve o’clock midnight.

As Doc vainly labored over the victim, a sudden cry erupted from the strongroom, whence a trusted servitor had gone to check. “*It’s gone!* The Claridge Diamond has been stolen! There’s a fake in its place! And this card was under it!”

It was a Joker. This Joker had done it!

In the next issue of *Doc Savage Magazine*, Doc and his aides face the most cunning adversary they have ever encountered — a grotesque grinning madman of mysterious origins who is possessed of skills and ingenuity rivaling that of Doc Savage himself.

In a terrifying venture that descends into the lowest slums of a great city, the Man of Bronze has to confront and defeat a formidable foe . . .

— Not by Lester Dent, Bob Kane, Bill Finger, and/or Jerry Robinson

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

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

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