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It's been a rough couple of weeks.

That's the best way to put it. First, there was the sad moment when I learned that Marty Gear had passed away. Now, you may have heard that I once MCed the Science Fiction & Fantasy Masquerade at the CostumeCon in San Jose. It wasn't a disaster, but it was teetering on the edge. Marty, one of the greats when it comes to MCing, wasn't impressed with my work, and we talked a bit about it. His advice to me was very good, actually: "You gotta develop a patter, and if you can't do that, steal one from someone better than you are."

That is, in the end, great advice.

Marty used Vampire puns to fill time and such. He was good at it. Very good. I didn't know him well, but we certainly chatted more than once. I knew Bobby Gear, greatly admired her. One of the nicest people I ever done encountered.

And then there's been Insomnicon 2013. Basically, I've forgotten how to sleep. For the last week, I've been getting between 0 and 3 hours of sleep. It's worn me down, is starting to effect every part of my being and sucks. Sadly, all the sleeplessness makes it hard to actually do an issue of The Drink Tank, which may sound weird, because I've got far more awake time, but it works out. Luckily, I've gotten one night sleep, and I hope it keeps up.

And I'm getting ready for a big month of travel and visits. Both the DUFF and TAFF delegates are visiting the BArea, and that's always a good thing, but at the same time, I'm heading to the beautiful city of NYC to do two Oral Histories for the Museum, then coming back and three days later going to WorldCon. Lots and lots of stuff happening.

And there's some Ditmar imagery in this issue, like that piece down there!

I had hope this issue would be the tribute to the late Iain M. Banks, but alas, things



Strangelets with a Side of Grilled Spam: Season One by Michael Angel

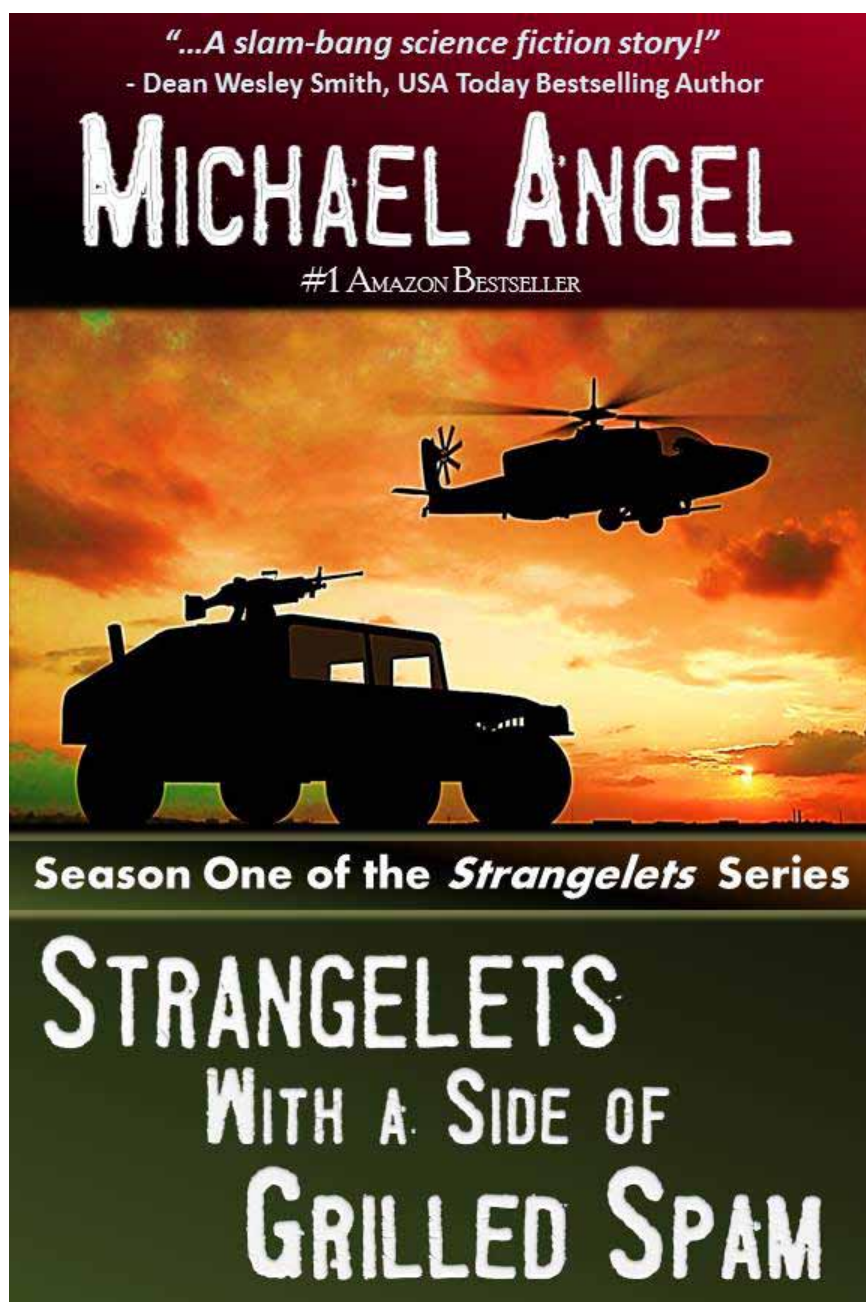
Review by Sandra Childress

[Full Disclosure: As CampbellsBookSoup.com, I am the Editor for this series. I am not the author.]

Titles create expectations. First lines of stories tell you a lot. First paragraphs tell you more...

I got nothing against Willie Nelson. But I'll swear on a stack of Gideon bibles that listening to On the Road Again for two solid weeks has got be grounds for murder. (first paragraph of Strangelets with a Side of Grilled Spam: Season One, Episode One)

[Strangelets with a Side of Grilled Spam: Season One](#) by newcomer Michael Angel sets you up to expect humor in this compilation of four post-apocalyptic/buddy/adventure novellas. In his seventh published full-length title, Angel takes the reader on an adventure of survival and hope in a world where it seems there is no hope left through the eyes of Lieutenant MacWilliams, of the 189th Infantry, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



It may be cliché to say that this collection of novellas is like reading a summertime blockbuster movie, but don't take just my word on it. Reviews are trickling in on Amazon like this one...

How good is Michael Angel's Strangelets...? Here's what it did to me:

I was reading the latest Jack Reacher novel when I received a tweet announcing the publication of Strangelets with a Side of Grilled Spam. I had read and loved several of Michael's stories ([Adventures of Amanda Love](#) and [The Detective and the Unicorn](#)), so I interrupted my reading for a moment to take a look at a sample of Strangelets...

I never got back to Jack Reacher, not until I'd read all four volumes of Strangelets... It's the kind of fascinating science fiction that satisfies an entire spectrum of fandom. There's aliens [sic], of course, but their [sic] half bio and have[sic] mecho. There's warfare, but the humans are losing and very much on the brink of extinction. There's plenty of brand new, innovative near-future tech, and not just weapons. (5 stars) -- Gerald M. Weinberg, author

Or how about this review:

This novella was a quick and easy read, with wonderful/quirky word images throughout,

painting each scene very well. Not an origin I have seen before (as far as I can recall). If anything, it just felt TOO SHORT. (On the other hand, I'd have gotten in more trouble if it had been longer and I'd stayed up even later reading it...) I'm off to buy the next one, so that I can keep reading. (5 stars) – L. Jones (fan)

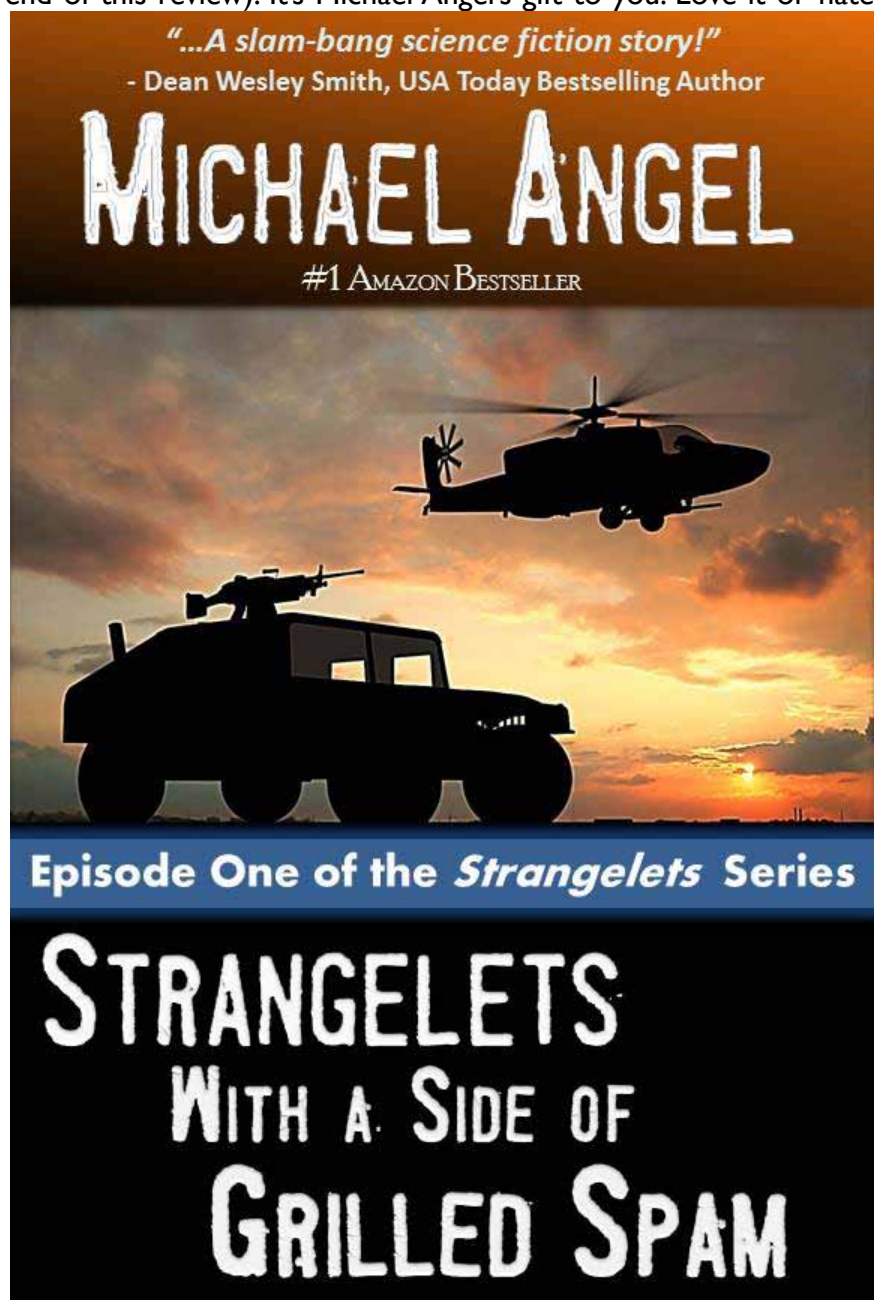
Overall, the ratings are coming in averaging at 4.5 stars at Amazon (as of 7/22/2013) when you take into account the original short story as well as the separate Episodes as well as the final Season-compilation. The variety of reviewers (based on looking at what else they may or may not have reviewed) reveals that Angel's style of writing is approachable as well as enjoyable. His talent to turn a phrase, especially for things that could be rude and crude, means that parents can even let their younger teens read this Season without too much concern. (More happens in any Bruce Willis movie than in this story line that I would worry about kids seeing/reading.) His writing style is much like his first novel, *The Detective & The Unicorn* ([Amazon](#), 4.9 stars) and his second, *Centaur of the Crime* ([Amazon](#), 4.8 stars, and a [Quarterfinalist in the 2013 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award](#) [#71 on the list]) where you wouldn't be embarrassed by the intimacy if your grandmom or your young teen were to pick them up to read.

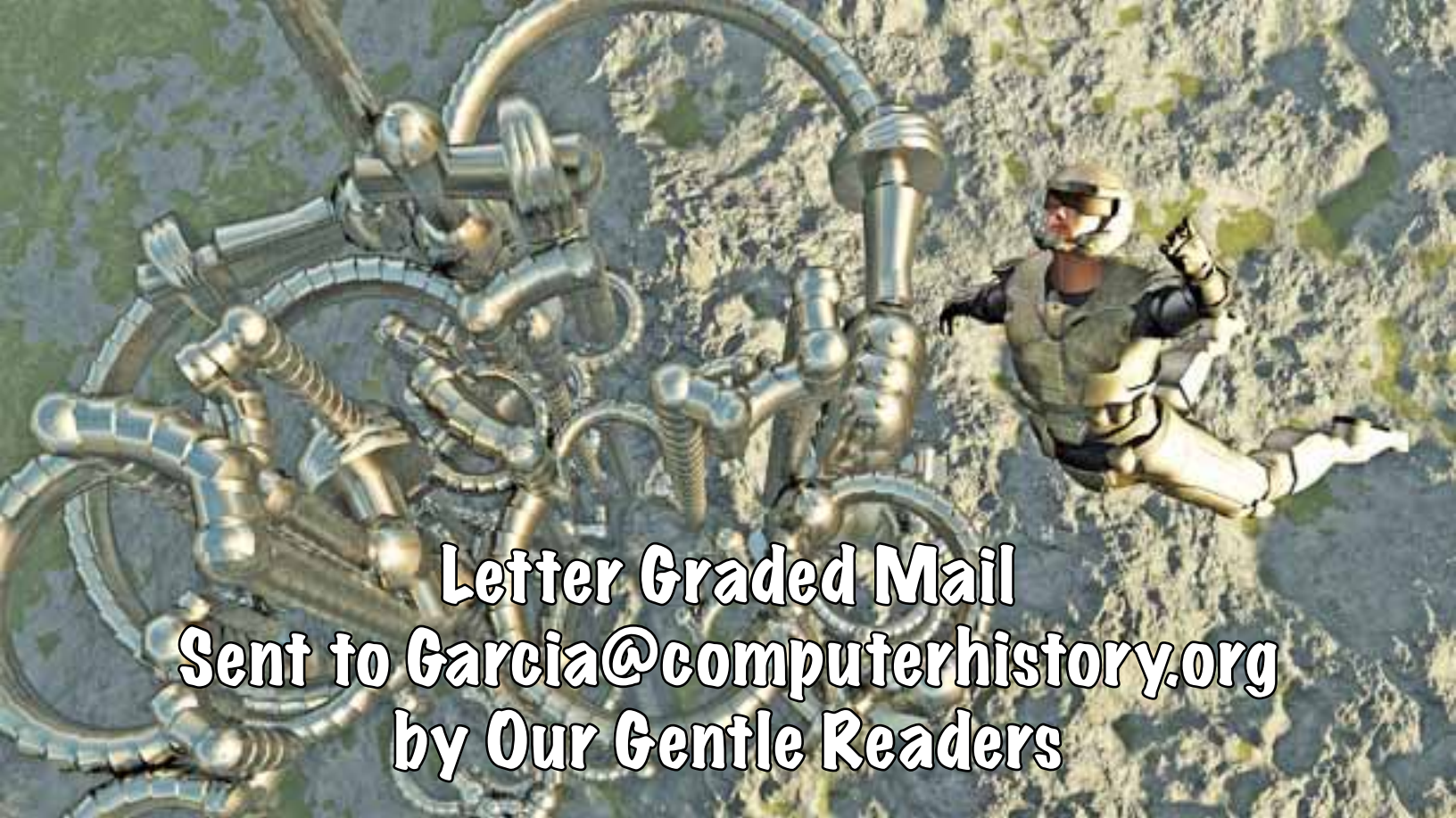
So, here's my offer to you, loyal fan of our beloved science fiction genre: go download Episode One at the link provided (QR-code or the long-link at the end of this review). It's Michael Angel's gift to you. Love it or hate it – write a review and post it on Amazon. Post it on Goodreads. Post it where others can see. Then email a link to that review to us at strangeletsreviews@gmail.com. Once we have verified the review is out there, you will receive Season One: Episode Two. Rinse and Repeat, and get Season One: Episode Three. Rinse and repeat one more time, and you will score Season One: Episode Four.

And as a bonus: If your reviews are posted by August 9th, they may be included as part of the Masquerade and Hugo pre-show at LoneStarCon 3.



<http://bit.ly/16hRlcm>





Letter Graded Mail Sent to Garcia@computerhistory.org by Our Gentle Readers

OK, so I'm behind! Here's 5 issue LoCs from Lloyd Penney!

Dear Chris:

Three issues of The Drink Tank are here, 340, 341 and 342. As you are enjoying Memorial Day, today for us is Victoria Day, and our first really warm day. And, I'm going to see the mixed-review new Trek movie this afternoon, so I'd better get with it on this issues.

In all the hubbub and so on of the last few moths, I've been droppign teh balls all over the place!

340... We never get the egoboo we'd like to get in our heart of hearts, but what we do get is pretty good. School was not a good place for me either when I was growing up, but I was prescient enough to realize that life could easily open up as soon as I was out of high school, and the family moved to the west coast, and that's exactly what happened. Taral, you were lucky enough to find someone in town who spoke your language, but I grew up in Orillia, north of Toronto, a small town of about 23,000. No one else there spoke the language I wanted to speak... getting out of Orillia and off to the west coast did the trick.

It's hard to think like that for me, and I know it's weird the dichotomy between me and Taral. I'm not in it for the egoboo, and i certainly get far more than my fair share. Taral, who deseres ever accolade that could be laid at his feet, who is the best writer in fandom not named Claire Brialey, and he seldom gets what he deserves.

If I had my way, a number of us would have at least one silver rocket, but there's only so many to go around. We'll have to make do with the egoboo.

If I had my way, there'd be at least one rocket in Etoicoke!

341... Taral should have a silver rocket, and so should Steve Stiles. And it doesn't happen this year, those chances get slimmer as the days go by. Perhaps David Thayer/Teddy Harvia's return to fanzines might get on the ballot again; the competition gets tougher.

It'll be interesting to see if Teddy can make the ballot again. Galen Dara's nomination might be the harbinger of what is to come.

I thought that Best Fancast and Best Fanzine were supposed to separate the blogs and podcasts from the fanzines, but as I expected, that didn't happen. I know my own time will be done when I fail to recognize the majority of the people on the ballot, and that time is just about here, probably at London. If Montreal doesn't

win the 2017 Worldcon, I think that time will be next year in London, and it's been a good run.

The changes made last year were supposed to shuttle off the blogs to other quarters, but alas, wrong-thinking administrators looked at it the wrong way. Such is life.

342...A fine Starkey cover... We continue to lose our friends, with the departure of the Wombat and Roger Ebert. Jan was definitely hyperactive, but his happiness came about from being as involved with what was happening as possible.

Wombat and I had a lot in common, and quite a lot not in common. He was a fun guy and I really enjoyed our airport talks...

The Nebulas are handed out, and I saw something from Jean Martin about who won...The Kim Stanley Robinson novel picked up the Lucite block, that's the only one I remember.

I was at the Nebulas here in San Jose and it was a lot of fun. Aliette de Bodard and E.C. Meyers both won, as did KSR, so it was a good year.

The fandom I see from my own vantage is that fans do their thing, and as those things happen, we are successful most of the time, we fail here and there, and we try our best to enjoy ourselves, and make that enjoyment happen for others, too. I don't like to bring gender into it, but successful conventions, clubs, etc. are run by both genders, and I hope the day will come when we won't have to differentiate by gender. We're not there yet, and discussion will bring us to that day. The last four or five conventions I've attended were all run by women, so all of this will balance out over time. We all participate as best as we can.

Gender (and race for that matter) will always be something we should be thinking about. It's also something that we'll forever be considering and both over-and-under-valuing, which makes it more difficult.

This is perhaps a poor letter to receive for three issues of The Drink Tank, but this has been a busy weekend for me. Saturday was cleaning up the apartment as much as we could, Sunday was spent helping with the cleaning of one of our favourite pubs, and today is a day of rest, and trying to get over the various aches and pains of our labours. Tonight is a fannish pub-night at the same pub we cleaned, Tuesday is a doctor's appointment in nearby Mississauga, and Wednesday is a job interview with an advertising agency. I think I'm ready...or maybe I'll just clone myself, and he'll report back to see how I did.

Any Lloyd Penney LoC is awesome!

Good luck with the Hugo, we have no vote this year because we bought for London instead of San Antonio, and we continue to save for London.

Luck is always appreciated, though I don't think I'll need to be preparing a speech!



And a bit later from Lloyd!

Dear Chris:

The crazy times are just passing here...interviews, family commitments, promises kept, and the big Steam on Queen 2 show the end of June, and with all of it done, I can try to get caught up. I have four issues of The Drink Tank here...I hate falling behind like this, but I've gotten through another period of time where it's not for me to control. Time to get moving, and see what I can do for issues 343, 344, 345 and 346.

And away we go... again.

343...Neat cover...looks like something Alan White or Ditmar would do, but it's a Michele Wilson. Very nice. Indeed, there's a number of artists who should have had a silver rocket by now, and Steve Stiles is at the top of the list. I hope the Texas Worldcon is kind to him.

Mo did a great job setting it, and I love Michele's work! I hope we see Steve Stiles win some-time! Texas probably isn't the year, but you never know!

At ConQuesT, I hope you saw the Toronto folks who came down to party with the KC Worldcon bidders. I could really use a party like the one you enjoyed in KC. I know my blood pressure would be off the scale, but it looks so good! I gotta win a lottery so I can come down to where you're guesting, and party with you!

A lot of folks from T-Dot were around, and they seem to get around all over the place! You gotta wi the Lottery so you can hand around more!

John Purcell, I wish I had something for you for the fanzine lounge like extra zines or time to help out, but it's not in the cards. Hmm...I gotta start saving my transporter credits. Maybe Air Miles will have to do?

I'm looking forward to the Fanzine Lounge at WorldCon. I'm not doing too much other than a few panels and shooting interveivs for 5 Cons!

Hugos are practical, I've heard...do you keep your socks together on them? Paperweight? Hey, fandom, what do you do with YOUR Hugos? My loc...I didn't get that job at the advertising agency, the doctor's appointment led to an operation to remove the cataract in my right eye, and I have two appointments tomorrow and Tuesday with a local community college's offices to help with the job hunt.

I keep mine on a bookshelf, so when the inevitable earthquake happens, if it's THE BIG ONE, it'll fall down, staking e through the heart! Also helpful in case of Zombie Apocalypse!

344...Kurt Erichsen is someone else who should have had a silver rocket by now, too. The comics are familiar only because I may have seen the covers over the years, Interesting side stories of some of the Marvel characters...Stan Lee has been to local pro-run cons in Toronto over the years, and I think he's coming back up here next month. I got my copy of The Best of Xero at the Corflu I was at in Las Vegas, an excellent read.

I love Kurt's stuff, and I am so glad I get to use some again! I love Xero and am Lucky enough to hae a couple of originals in my collection.

345...I recognized that cover as Richard Bergeron's style, and smiled to see that Taral had created it. Fandom is full of interesting backstories. I don't really have any plans to see the newest Superman movie, but today on television, I saw the original of this movie, Superman II, with Christopher Reeve and Terence Stamp. (I saw it in the theatres when it first came out, so yes, I am old.) I think Stamp was recently asked about the new movie, and he had little to say about it, especially the fact that (spoiler) that Superman kills Zod, which says this isn't the real Superman to so many. Nothing more to say about it...

love Bergeron's style, though I don't have too many examples to go from. That is one of my three or four favorite Taral Pieces, though! I saw Superman II in the theatres too. Actually, I am almost 100% certain I saw it at teh Drive-In!

346...Hey, multi-generational talent! Wonder how Macy feels about her mother's Hugo?

Macy's awesome and Mo's a proud Momma! I hope I can get more from her!

John Hertz's Classics of Science Fiction...I've read them all, but honestly didn't think much of Fleming's Moonraker. But, for the SF reader I am, the Kuttler and Moore book was a great read, followed closely by the Vance book.

I talked to John a little bit about the Classics of SF series. I love that he's doing them,



but the line for Classic has moved forward by now. I think stuff from the 1970s for sure, and certain pieces from the 1980s are in the classics arena nowadays. Things like *The Forever War*, *A Maze of Death*, *To Your Scattered Bodies Go*, *The Shockwave Rider*, *The Female Man*, *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sing* and *Varley's Titan* are all things that I would strongly argue are now not only among the classics, but have far eclipsed many of the classics from before the 1960s.

The posole looks great...hominy corn is not readily available in local supermarkets, but there's a Caribbean grocery store I know of in the suburbs where I can buy yellow hominy in cans. I've had beer can chicken, but I wonder if you could do the same with a can of Coke, and how the chicken would taste with a cola-style marinade?

Coke Can Chicken's pretty good, but Dr. Pepper Can Chicken's better!

Four issues, and I really didn't comment much on any of them...I will put it down to fatigue and a generational gap, and the fact that for someone involved in fandom for as long as I have, there's some interests at the heart of fandom that have never caught my interest. I always figured that if you were spread a little too thin, you'd never really get into any particular fannish interest.

Many thanks, keep them coming, and I will see if I have any more Garciazines in the hopper, ready for comment. See you the next time!

And the hits (or foul tips) keep coming!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

And now... Milt Stevens on issue 347!

Dear Chris,

Before reading *The Drink Tank* #347, I had thought about you as being young, but I hadn't thought about how young. You are a little more than half my age. Seven years ago, you were a little less than half my age. You have been aging a lot lately. Strangely enough, I can imagine you still running around at age 338. By then, you would need an asteroid to store the file copies of your fanzines.

And by then I'll be able to lasso an asteroid for just such a purpose!

Red Shirts may well win the Hugo for best novel. That's a reasonable political analysis. Scalzi's blog seems to have a lot of influence. I thought Red Shirts improved his claim to being the best fan writer. It was good fanzine material. The plot did take a left turn eventually to keep it from being totally predictable.

Scalzi's got a lot of influence, and that's not a bad thing. I like Redshirts, but it wouldn't be my first choice.

As I mentioned, I don't like *Blackout*. I am appalled by the idea that a zombie uprising novel might be the best thing produced by the science fiction field in a year. Aside from the gawdawful premise, all the characters talk and act like 13 year olds. A journalist needs at least some skill with words. The characters in this book don't seem to have any skill with words.

Yeah, *Blackout's* not for everyone, though the journalist an-

gle's not all that unbelieeable: I mean, look at what KTVU said about the names of the pilots for that crashed jet!

However, before reading this issue of Drink Tank, I hadn't been aware that any part of Blackout resembled the real world in any way. I pay attention to news that is validated by the BBC, London Times, New York Times, or Wall Street Journal. If one of those sources don't vouch for it, I don't believe it. With a few exceptions, the internet is a place where crackpots exchange misinformation. OK, so occasionally some real information slips onto the internet. I'm still going to remain dubious.

That's a smart thing to do, but none of them are either broad enough, nor do they dig enough, to get at everything I'm interested in. In fact, there's no single organization that could manage such.

As far as police communications are concerned, voice communications are only a small fraction of the people. As I recall, LAPD had one primary voice channel for each of the four geographic bureaus and a couple of tactical channels for each bureau. Each patrol car has a Mobil Digital Terminal which is part of an encrypted wireless network. Calls are dispatched on the MDTs. MDTs record when units arrive at the scene and where units are located each minute. There is also the Gamewell System. It's the old police call boxes. It's a dedicated phone system that isn't connected to any other phone system. Come to think of it, there is also a microwave system that connects all the security cameras in police stations into one system. From the watch commander's office in any division, you can access any cameral in the system. Just the thing for keeping track of your girlfriend.

Yours truly,
Milt Stevens

Hmmm... I can't think of a better use of that technology! Thanks, Milt!

