

ConNotations

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2005

The Bi-Monthly Science Fiction, Fantasy & Convention Newszine of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society

A Conversation with Quinn Yarbro & Suzy McKee Charnas By Catherine Book

I had the rare opportunity to chat with both Quinn Yarbro and Suzy Charnas during the last World Fantasy convention in October 2004. I asked them to interview with an emphasis on their vampire characters and stories. It seemed to me a perfect opportunity to talk about the role of sympathetic female vampires in today's literature. Who better to have an opinion

on the dominant male. Quinn laughingly ventured that she'd love to see a romance where the male and female stop and look at one another and say "This is a bad idea. I'll see you later," and walk away. 'Course it wouldn't publish well... Suzy explained that in most vampire stories, the focus is on social and economic dominance, which has never been



than these two women? Quinn didn't think it was easy to do a highly sexualized sympathetic female in *any* fiction. Even in romances, she says, the focus tends to be

familiar ground for female characters. Plus the fact that our culture is still resistant to the idea of women in posi-

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No Longer the New Guy

Labeling Crew for Volume 14 Issue 6: Stephanie L Bannon, Craig L Dyer, Bob LaPierre, Marguerite Murray, Gary Swaty

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SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

We're right smack in the middle of the new episodes of almost all the current genre series that I've got previews for. We've got some exciting news about *Stargate's* next season (now to be FarGate or is it Starscape?), the full blown return of *Doctor Who* to the small screen (in the UK, at least) and some other things in the works for the future.

SciFi has officially announced that both *Stargate SG-1* and *Stargate Atlantis* will return for new seasons starting in July. The even bigger news on top of that is that SG-1 will have a new crew member played by **Ben Browder**, who you just might remember from *Farscape* (John Crichton). According to *Stargate* Executive Producer **Brad Wright**, **Browder's** character (whose name has not yet been released) has played a major role in previous Stargate events and is awarded the chance to join the SG-1 team. We'll see some of his past via flashbacks to help bring him into the Stargate world.

Browder has been brought on in part to fill in the gap left by the reduced role of **Richard Dean Anderson**, who will likely have much less screen time in season nine that he has had in season eight. **Amanda Tapping** (Samantha Carter) will also not be around much at the beginning of the next season with her baby being due around the time that filming starts in March. To fill in this gap, **Claudia Black** will return for five episodes as Vala, a character first seen in *Prometheus Unbound*. The producers really liked her character and plan on having a lot of fun with her and having her interact with **Browder's** character. They might even get a bit of a ratings boost from wayward *Farscape* fans to boot.

That's enough about next season; we're into the final stretch of *SG-1's* eighth season and *Atlantis's* debut season as we go through February and March. In *It's Good to be King*, SG-1 must save a world once occupied by the Goa'uld when their former masters return to enslave them once again -- not knowing that their king is Earth's Harry Maybourne. In *Full Alert*, relations between the U.S. and Russia are strained when Russian military leaders claim that the U.S. government has been compromised by hostile aliens. In the two part episode, *Reckoning*, the Jaffa Resistance assembles an army to retake the holy city of Ta'kara, while the System Lord Baal seeks help from Earth when he is faced with an enemy common to both of them. **Cliff Simon** returns as Baal and **Issac Hayes** guest stars as the rebel priest Tolok. In what sounds like an inventive and fun clip show, *Citizen Joe* sees a barber from Indiana (played by **Dan Castellaneta** - the voice of Homer Simpson) confront Jack O'Neill, claiming that he has been seeing visions of SG-1's missions over the last seven years. In the

special 90 minute episode *Threads*, Oma Desala returns to offer Daniel Jackson another chance at ascension, while an old enemy threatens the entire galaxy with annihilation. Meanwhile, General O'Neill and Colonel Carter struggle with their respective personal relationships. This is scheduled to air on March 11th, and *Atlantis* and *Battlestar Galactica* will start a half hour later that night on SciFi. *Moebius* ends the SG-1 season (but not the series) with a two part story in which SG-1 travels back in time in a daring plan to steal a piece of Ancient technology from Ra, the powerful Goa'uld who ruled in ancient Egypt and when the time line is changed by SG-1's actions in the distant past, an alternate version of SG-1 must use the newly-discovered time ship to set things right. According to writer/co-executive producer **Joseph Mallozzi** "It's the time travel / alternate timeline story to end all time travel / alternate timeline stories -- a story so full of twists and turns that one of the producer's heads actually exploded trying to understand it." According to **Amanda Tapping**, "Our last two episodes are going to be quite funny. You see a bunch of different versions of us. There are alternate reality versions of Daniel and Carter, and Michael and I had so much fun playing that."

Let's not forget the Atlantis team still stranded out in the Pegasus Galaxy. In *Sanctuary*, The team finds a paradise world (named Procul-Arum) that would make an ideal sanctuary for those fleeing from the Wraith, but the local inhabitants believe their goddess will not permit it. In *Hot Zone*, several residents of Atlantis are infected with a deadly nanite virus, forcing a lock down of the city. *Before I Sleep* sees a woman found in suspended animation in Atlantis, and the team is shocked to see that it is Dr. Weir herself, who tells them of her trip 10,000 years into the city's past. In *The Brotherhood*, The team searches for a valuable Zero Point Module rumored to be hidden on the planet Dagan -- but their new allies have motives of their own. *Letter From Pegasus* has members of the Atlantis expedition composing video messages home to their loved ones when they have a brief opportunity to send a data transmission to Earth. In *The Gift*, when she is plagued by terrifying nightmares, Teyla begins to recall a time when she and her

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24 Frames

Movie News

By Lee Whiteside

Babylon 5: The Memory of Shadows is moving towards production. Recent leaks have indicated that filming will begin in April, although nothing has still been formally announced. A synopsis released with a casting audition call indicates that the movie will deal with Shadow technology left behind that used by the technomages. The plot summary released is : "The technology of the ancient and extinct Shadow race is being unleashed upon the galaxy by an unknown force, and Earthforce intelligence officer

Diane Baker, whose brother was recently killed in a mysterious explosion, is out to find out who is behind the intergalactic conspiracy. Joining her in her investigation is Galen, a techno-mage who has been charged with keeping the technology out of the hands of those who would abuse it..." Also listed in the casting call is Earthforce marine Colonel Joss Morgan and the technomage Tyrell, Galen's rival, who has been developing the ancient Shadow technology and selling it to the highest bidder.

Now we all know that Galen was played in *Crusade* by **Peter Woodward**, but from the casting call it appears that they are looking for a star name for the role. Indications are also that other *Babylon 5* characters (Sheridan, Londo Mollari, Delenn, Lochley, etc) may not be

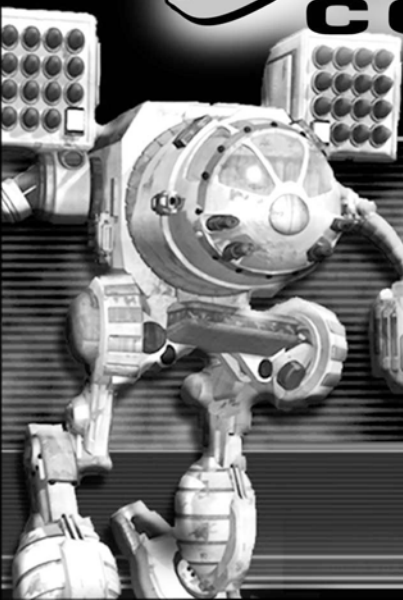
played by the actors who played them on TV. This has gotten Babylon 5 fans up in arms and they have started up a campaign to convince Warner Bros. to reconsider this. At press time, there has been no official (or even unofficial) response to this other than "No comment" from creator **J. Michael Straczynski** and Executive Producer **Adam W. Rosen**. For the latest info and where to write to, check the Keep Babylon 5 Alive web site at www.keepb5alive.com.

Superman is finally Up, Up and Away! It looks like Superman is finally going to fly again on the big screen with Superman Returns in 2006. With **Bryan Singer** at the helm, there's been a spate of casting announcements as they get ready to start filming this summer. Superman will be played by relative unknown actor **Brandon Routh** but other cast members are a bit more known. Playing reporter Lois Lane with be **Kate Bosworth**, most recently seen as Sandra Dee in *Beyond the Sea*. **Kevin Spacey** has been signed up to play Lex Luthor with **Hugh Laurie** (currently starring in *House*) as Perry White, and **James Marsden** (Cyclops in The *X-Men* movies) as Michael White, who is related to Perry and also a love interest for Lois.

The latest Crow movie, *The Crow: Wicked Prayer*, has finished filming and will be released later this year. **David Boreanaz** stars as Luc Crash, the leader of a group of satanic bikers who, with the help of his girlfriend Lola (**Tara Reid**) kills an ex-con named Jimmy Cuervo (**Edward Furlong**) and his girlfriend, Lily (**Emmanuelle Chriqui**). Jimmy is

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SF Tube Talk (Cont'd from page 3)

father were captured by the Wraith and subjected to disturbing experiments. To finish off Atlantis' first season will be the two part episode *The Siege*. With a group of Wraith hive ships on the way to Atlantis, the team searches for a place to flee and a way to destroy the city. McKay leads a team to try and activate the Ancients' orbital weapons platform. When communications with Earth is re-established, a new military contingent from Earth is sent to take command of Atlantis and defend it from the impending Wraith attack.

To round out SciFi's Friday nights will be the new ***Battlestar Galactica***. SciFi has already ordered six more episodes to continue the first season so that they will have some new episodes this summer. Upcoming episodes include *Act of Contrition* where a deadly accident on the hangar deck forces the Galactica to draft inexperienced pilots to fly Vipers -- and brings up painful memories for Starbuck and Apollo. *You Can't Go Home Again* sees Apollo and Adama stir up controversy by conducting a search that uses the fleet's precious resources when Starbuck is hit by enemy fire and goes missing. *Litmus* has a Cylon attack on board the Galactica reveal that the enemy agents can be indistinguishable from humans, prompting a tribunal inquiry that puts Valerii and Tyrol on the spot.

Number Six shows up on board the Galactica posing as someone else, prompting a crisis for Baltar when she accuses him of being a traitor in *Six Degrees of Separation*. *Flesh and Bone* has Starbuck ordered to interrogate a Cylon prisoner, who claims that he has hidden a bomb on board the Galactica. In *Tigh Me Up, Tigh Me Down*, Colonel Tigh is stunned when his wife miraculously turns up in the fleet, having escaped the Cylon attack and wishing to reconcile. The Galactica launches a daring attack on a Cylon base in *The Hand of God* (based on the episode of the same title from the original series). **Richard Hatch** returns as Tom Zarek in *Colonial Day* when the impending election of a new Vice President gives activist Tom Zarek an opportunity to make a move for political power. In the spring finale, the two part *Kobol's Last Gleaming*, the fleet discovers the planet Kobol and Cylon raiders shoot down a Raptor from the Galactica over Kobol. It is possible SciFi may hold back part two for the summer. This episode is also based on the two part episode from the original series, *Lost Planet of the Gods*.

It wouldn't be SciFi without those classic Saturday night movies (although at least one of them might just be worth catching, especially for Xena fans).

First up is ***SlipStream*** (Feb. 12) A scientist plots a bank robbery based around his newest invention: a time-travel gadget that will send its user 10 minutes into the past. Everything goes according to plan - until he crosses paths with a

violent group of thieves who have planned their heist of the same bank for the same day. **Sean Astin** (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy) and **Vinnie Jones** (*Snatch, Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels*) star. Next is *Alien Siege* (Feb. 26). A hostile alien race demands millions of human lives be sacrificed in order to save their species from a deadly virus. In exchange, they'll provide humanity with vast knowledge and technology, effectively ending hunger and disease and solving that pesky power-supply problem. If Earth fails to comply, however, the aliens will take what they want by force and destroy our world down to the last microbe. What if no one volunteers? Who decides who should be sacrificed? What if the people chosen to die for the greater good have other plans? A small group of renegades escapes and fights back - and finds itself locked in a life-or-death struggle not just against the alien threat, but against the rest of humanity - which might not be getting the great deal that it has been led to expect.... **Brad Johnson** (SCI FI Pictures' *Riverworld*, the *Left Behind* movies) and **Carl Weathers** (the *Rocky* films, *Predator*) star.

The movie that everyone has been waiting for (or is that dreading), ***Mansquito***, will debut on March 12. It stars **Corrin Nemec** (*Stargate SG-1*) and **Musetta Vander** (*Dune*) and is about a scientist who is trying to find a cure for the West Nile virus. Unfortunately instead she turns herself and a junkie into mutant mosquito creatures, which, of course, wreak havoc. Finally, in a ***Xena*** reunion of sorts airing on March 26th, ***Alien Apocalypse*** has astronaut doctor Ivan Hood (**Bruce Campbell**) and his fellow astronaut Kelly (**Renee O'Connor**) returning from their mission in space, to find the world has been taken over by Aliens. Now Dr. Ivan Hood and Kelly must lead a revolution to free the human slaves from their Alien masters. It was written by ***Hercules, Xena*** and ***Jack of All Trades*** veterans **Josh Becker** and **Robert Tapert**.

We've still got ***Enterprise*** going along on UPN on Friday nights. Ratings have been fair and the critical response has been mostly good about their Trek mythology oriented storylines and the current batch of episodes is no exception. The current mini-arc features *United*, wherein Archer tries to unify the Andorians, Tellarites and Vulcans in a plan to capture a marauder ship threatening to destabilize the region. Following that is *The Aenar* where Archer visits Shran's icy homeworld to find an Andorian subspecies called the Aenar, in order to determine their connection to the marauder destroying ships in the region. This group also features the Romulans in some manner. Next up is a two part Klingon story, which may reveal the truth behind the look of the original series Klingons, an event that Worf alluded to in the ***Deep Space Nine*** episode *Trials and Tribbleations*. In *Affliction*, while Enterprise visits Earth for the launch of

Columbia, Phlox is kidnapped and forced to help the Klingons deal with a grave threat toward their species. Archer and Reed also get involved with the beginnings of Section 31. Part two, called *Divergence*, will feature a multiple starship action sequence and reveal more about the Klingons. Finally, the episode *In a Mirror, Darkly*, will take a look at the Mirror Universe, complete with a mirror universe version of the opening credits and the event that caused the split in the timeline. In a recent interview, producer **Manny Coto** indicated that for the end of the season (and maybe the series), he plans for "the final story will be mankind overcoming its own prejudices, to begin this process of [founding] the Federation. The last challenge will be our own solar system. The final obstacle will be ourselves."

Smallville continues to further explore the Superman mythos with new episodes that will see another of Clark's friends learn his secret and even bring Krypto into the mix. First is *Accused*, where Lana meets a mysterious man who tells her all about Smallville before the meteor shower and Clark is still dealing with Alicia Baker, who has returned and is still *Obsessed* with him. In *Recruit*, Clark visits Metropolis University, which is trying to recruit him for their football team. He finds out that one of their current players is a meteor freak and is using his powers to help him win games. Another football player is killed and Lois is the prime suspect. In *Krypto*, following the events of *Recruit*, Lois is kicked out of Metropolis U and temporarily stays with the Kents. She also finds a stray dog that has been the subject of tests at LutherCorp. In *Sacred*, Dr. Crosby (**Margot Kidder**) visits Clark and tells him that Dr. Swann has passed away and that all of his records were destroyed at his request, except for the Kryptonian key, which she gives to Clark. Lex, Lana and Clark also end up in China during this episode (China?) following up on something Lionel Luther has turned up. During all these episodes, things progress with Jason, Lex, Genvieve and Lionel as well, leading to who knows what but likely some sort of big confrontation at the end of the season. The next new episode will likely not be until April, where rumors are that we may meet Lois Lane's sister Lucy.

Elsewhere on the WB, following a near-Armageddon storyline that concludes early in February, **Billy Zane** will guest star in three episodes of ***Charmed*** as a poetry-spouting demon named Drake that seeks the sisters' help. He made a deal with a sorcerer to be human for a year and his time is almost up.

William Shatner pulls one over on the future birthplace of Captain Kirk in Spike TV's reality miniseries "***Invasion Iowa***" premiering Tuesday, March 29th and running nightly through Friday, April 1st. Last summer, **Shatner** and a film crew landed in Riverside, Iowa (population 968), under the pretense of filming a low

budget SciFi movie. Many of the locals were enlisted to help out in various manners as crew and extras. What they saw happen was a very insane movie shoot with **Shatner** being very over the top with a large entourage of crazy assistants played by improvisational comic actors. At the end of it all, **Shatner** revealed that they weren't actually there to shoot the movie, but were filming for a reality series to show the town's reaction to their being invaded by strange beings from Hollywood. As a thank you to the townspeople of Riverside for being such good sports, **Shatner** presented town officials with a \$100,000 city service contribution and the cast and crew donated \$12,000 to the Riverside Elementary School Book Fund. Riverside has long been touting itself as the future birthplace of James T. Kirk on March 22, 2228 and has been having an annual Trekfest for many years. **Shatner** said that "I fell in love with the people of Riverside. The hardest part of this whole experience was containing my empathy for the individuals who listened to and identified with the Hollywood dysfunction that we played in front of them."

Over in the UK, the BBC looks to start airing the new series of ***Doctor Who*** at the end of March. There is not yet any announced outlet for the series in the U.S., though. If something isn't set up quickly, there will likely be a lot of internet file sharing going on when the series debuts. That has been an issue with the new ***Battlestar Galactica***, which started airing in the U.K. on Sky One in October, three months before it's U.S. debut on the SciFi Channel. The British press has been all over the series, with lots of interviews, location filming reports, and rumors of a romance between the two series leads.

In charge of the whole series is Executive Producer/Head Writer **Russell T. Davies**, who has won many awards for his productions on U.K. television (including ***Queer as Folk*** and ***The Second Coming***). **Davies** is writing about half of the episode with others being written by **Mark Gatiss** (co-creator of ***The League of Gentlemen***), **Steven Moffat** (creator of ***Coupling***), **Paul Cornell** (novelist and scriptwriter including many ***Doctor Who*** novels), and **Rob Sheaman** (scriptwriter of many recent ***Doctor Who*** audio adventures). Taking on the role of The Doctor is **Christopher Eccleston**, who has had a wide range of roles in his career so far including the lead in ***The Second Coming***, as well as roles in ***28 Days Later*** and other British films and television series. Joining the doctor as companion Rose Tyler will be **Billie Piper**, a former U.K. Pop Idol who has made the transition to acting much more successfully than others. Guest stars for the series include respected British actor **Simon Callow** as Charles Dickens, **Anna-Louise Plowman** (Dr. Gardner/Osiris on ***Stargate SG-1***) and **Simon Pegg** (***Spaced***, ***Shaun of the Dead***).

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SF Tube Talk (Cont' from page 4)

The new series will be an up-to-date contemporary production with modern production values and special effects. It will not be a series reboot or re-imagining, though it won't dwell on past history. It will be the ninth Doctor and it will introduce new monsters and villains, but will also bring back some old foes, like the Autons and The Daleks (and rumors of another resurrection of The Master). Opening the series will be the episode *Rose*, which introduces the new Doctor and his first encounter with Rose Tyler. The Doctor will once again be dealing with The Autons, an alien intelligence that takes over inanimate objects, including some famous subjects in Madame Traussade's Wax museum. Other early episodes include *The End of the World* which is an adventure at the end of time on an alien space station, *The Unquiet Dead* set on Christmas Eve, 1869, where the Doctor will team up with Charles Dickens to save the world, and *Aliens of London*, a two parter where aliens have invaded contemporary London. For lots more info and up to date information on the series, visit the new series news page at www.gallifreyone.com

[Editor's Note: The BBC is publishing **Doctor Who** reprint novels on the net. Seven titles are available at this time. Serialized in weekly installments, the free download features illustrations and author's commentary on each chapter. Check it out at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cult/doctorwho/ebooks/>]

There's not much advance info on the rest of the broadcast network series. NBC's *Medium* with **Rosanna Arquette** debuted to very strong ratings in early January and looks to be a fixture for a while. The series is based on a real life medium from Phoenix, **Allison Dubois**, although obviously exaggerated for dramatic purposes. You can find out more about the real life medium at her website at www.AllisonDubois.com. *Alias* returned to strong ratings as well, now following **J. J. Abram's** *Lost* on Wednesday nights. They've reset the series some and plan to try to recapture the magic they had early in the series.

Debating on FOX in late January was *Point Pleasant*, with former *Buffy* producer **Marti Noxon** at the helm. It centers on a mysterious young woman, Christina Nickson (**Elisabeth Harnois**), who is the offspring of the devil and a mortal woman. The series deals with her finding out about her legacy and how her presence affects other people in the town. While Christina struggles to control the demon inside her (and the powers that come with it), the fight for her soul has begun and the town of Point Pleasant has turned into the ultimate battleground of good vs. evil. Also starring are **Dina Meyer**, and **Richard Burgi**. It looks like it might be worth checking out, but you never can tell with FOX. As of press time, FOX has yet to announce when, or if, they will eventually air the six produced

episodes of *Tru Calling's* second season.

Coming up on Cartoon Network starting March 26th will be the next installment of the animated *Clone Wars*. These will air as five 12 minute segments as opposed to the twenty 3 to 4 minute segments of the initial run of the series. The new series will fully set things up for *SW Episode III*, detailing a lot of the events that will be mentioned in the opening text scrawl of the movie. According to Animator **Genndy Tartakovsky**, "in these new ones, we have a lot of character and still a lot of action, but we were able to really do some more acting and relationship-building. Cartoon Network should also be airing more new episodes of *Teen Titans*, *Justice League* and *Duck Dodgers* during February.

Shows recently announced as filming or in pilot stages include *Book of Daniel*, an NBC pilot that is described as a "darkly comedic drama that centers on an Episcopalian minister and father who finds himself conversing with a hip, modern Jesus who helps him navigate family problems, church politics and even his nagging reliance on prescription painkillers." I doubt if they will put it up against *Joan of Arcadia*, though. NBC has also ordered a pilot for *Fathom*, about mysterious creatures in the bottom of the ocean. They're hoping it will be their answer to *Lost*. SciFi's two hour pilot movie for *Painkiller Jane* will star **Emmanuelle Vaugier** (Dr. Bryce on *Smallville*) in the title role. Based on a comic from Event Comics, it deals with a young Marine officer (**Vaugier**) who acquires rapid self-healing powers after being exposed to a biochemical weapon.

For more schedule information, news and links, visit the Magrathea/SFTV Pages at www.sftv.org Contact Lee Whiteside at SFTV@casfs.org

24 Frames (Continued from page 3)

brought back from the dead for revenge and to stop a ritual that would transform Crash into a demon.

In remake news, Disney has hired screen writers **Brian Klugman** and **Lee Sterntal** to write a new version of *Tron*. This time the computer programmer gets trapped in a cyberworld, representing the internet. It will be interesting to see how they work email spam into it.

David Duchovny recently talked to the press about the second *X-Files* movie. It is looking to film late this year or early next year and instead of tying into the whole alien mythology of the TV series, it will deal with Mulder and Scully investigating some sort of supernatural case.

James Cameron is getting ready to film *Battle Angel 3-D*, which is based on the Japanese manga series *Battle Angel Alita*, about a cyborg in the distant future. **Cameron** will utilize the digital 3D camera system he developed for *Ghosts of the Abyss*. He hopes that by early 2007, there will be enough digital capable theatres to present the film properly.

Joel Silver and **The Wachowski Brothers** will next tackle producing a movie adaptation of *V for Vendetta*, a futuristic comic series by **Alan Moore** and **David Lloyd**. **Natalie Portman** will play the female lead, a young woman who becomes the ally of V, a mysterious masked revolutionary. It is set in a future Britain after a devastating war has ravaged the planet. No word yet on who will play "V". Filming begins in March for a November release.

Here's what's coming out in the theatres in the next couple of months.

Boogeyman - The story tells the haunting tale of a young man traumatized by memories of terrible events he experi-

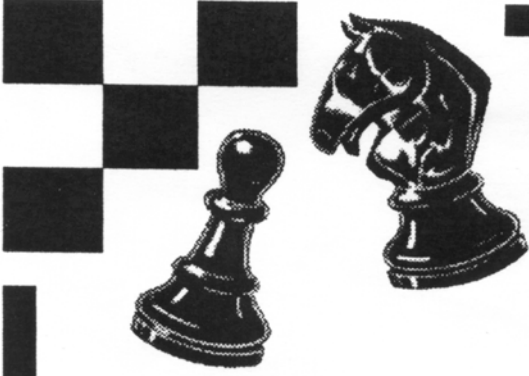
enced in his childhood bedroom and who, years later, reluctantly returns home to face his fears of a monstrous entity that could be real or merely a figment of his imagination. Produced by **Sam Raimi** and **Rob Tapert** (*Xena & Hercules*). Stars **Barry Watson**, **Emily Deschanel**, **Skye McCole Bartusiak**, **Lucy Lawless**, and **Robyn Malcolm**. It is directed by **Stephen T Kay**.

Constantine - **John Constantine** (**Keanu Reeves**) is a world-traveling, mage-like misfit who investigates supernatural mysteries and the like, walking a thin line between evil and good. **Constantine** teams up with a female police detective, **Angela** (**Rachel Weisz**), who seeks **Constantine's** help while investigating the suicide-like death of her twin sister. Does it have something to do with a mysterious group called "The First of the Fallen"? And what is it about **Constantine** that puts him in a position where he is making deals with representatives from both Heaven and Hell? Based on the *Hellraiser* comic.

Son of the Mask - The Mask of **Loki** has found its way into the hands of aspiring cartoonist **Tim Avery**, whose son is born possessing some of its spectacular powers. But when **Loki** comes to earth looking for his "son," a power struggle of epic proportions and cartoon-like contortions ensues. Stars **Alan Cumming**, **Jamie Kennedy**, **Traylor Howard**, **Bob Hoskins**, and **Ben Stein**.

Cursed - This one is finally being released after having several previously announced release dates. An estranged brother and sister living in Los Angeles, mourning the recent loss of their parents, are brought together by a savage werewolf attack, forcing them to fight for survival, against both the beast and the

(Continued on page 6)



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dangers of its virulent curse. Stars **Christina Ricci, James Brolin, Portia De Rossi, Jesse Eisenberg, and Shannon Elizabeth. Wes Craven** directed.

Robots - Set on a world populated entirely by robots, this is the story of a young genius, Rodney (**Ewan McGregor**), who wants to make robots capable of making the world a better place, but he finds his dream challenged by a corporate tyrant and a master inventor, Big Weld (**Mel Brooks**), while also being seduced by a sexy corporate robot, Cappy (**Halle Berry**).

Kung Fu Hustle - In Shanghai in the '30s, times are dangerous and gangs rule the streets. The most notorious of these, the Axes, strike fear into the hearts of honest citizens and inspire admiration in one young wannabe. One day, in a slum on the outskirts of town, he wreaks havoc when he recklessly poses as an Axe member and causes a veritable riot between the real gang members and the denizens of a housing project who just so happen to be strangely well versed in the art of kung fu. Directed by: **Stephen Chow**

The Ring Too - Rachel Keller moves with her son to Portland after the events in Seattle, but when a copy of the sinister videotape kills a boy and her son gets sick with an unexplained ailment, she has to dig deeper into the history of the girl that appears in the tape. Stars **Naomi Watts, Simon Baker, David Dorfman, Emily Van Camp, and Sissy Spacek**.

D.E.B.S. - To the outside world, the D.E.B.S. look like picture-perfect, plaid-skirted, well-schooled young women. But really they are our nation's first line of defense. Their arch enemy? Lucy In The Sky, a sexy, diamond-bejeweled bank robber so evil that no crime fighter has faced her and lived to tell the tale - until the D.E.B.S. are ordered to take her down. Stars **Jordana Brewster, Meagan Good, Devon Aoki, Jill Ritchie, and Michael Clarke Duncan**.

Sin City - Based on the Frank Miller comic series, Sin City is a violent city where the police department is as corrupt as the streets are deadly. In this movie, we follow three stories, the central of which is Marv, a tough-as-nails and nearly impossible to kill street fighter who goes on a rampage of vengeance when a beautiful woman, Goldie, he sleeps with for only one night is killed while lying in bed with him. Stars **Mickey Rourke, Bruce Willis, Benicio Del Toro, Clive Owen, and Elijah Wood** Directed by **Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller**.

Pro Notes

We have lots of new names this month plus some returning faithfuls.

We'll start with a new name this time, new to ProNotes but not new to us: **Diana Gabaldon** swears the only thing her fans want to know is when the next Claire & Jamie book will be done. Her answer: when she's done writing it! But the good news is that she is almost finished with "**A Breath of Snow and Ashes**," the 6th book, no publication date yet but maybe in 2005. The second thing everyone wants to know is when there will be a movie. The book is in negotiation for an option but that's no guarantee. And, No, Diana doesn't get to say who plays Jamie. "**Lord John and the Private Matter**" was recently released in trade paperback. The significance of this is that you get more for your money -- the book includes the short story "**Lord John and the Hellfire Club**," never before printed in the US plus the first three chapters of "**A Breath of Snow and Ashes!**"

I'm also real excited about introducing ya'all to **Charlaine Harris** from Arkansas. Charlaine writes a great series about southern vampires (see Aug/Sep '04 ConNotations for a book review of "**Dead Until Dark**") that I just love. She tells me that she's going over the page proofs for "**Dead as a Doornail**," the next Sookie Stackhouse (book 5). DAAD has another great Lisa Desimini cover. The book should be on the shelves by May 1. She's in the final rewrites of a new book featuring Harper Connelly, a lightning strike victim who makes her living by finding bodies. The title is still a bit up in the air. The Harper Connelly books are more mystery and less supernatural than the other series, and they're far more *noir* in tone. You'll see this one in the stores in the fall. In between books, she's writing a short story for the P.N. Elrod anthology "**My Big Fat Supernatural Wedding**."

Lee Modesitt was at World Fantasy when I cornered him and got him to agree to contribute. His "**Ordermaster**" -- the thirteenth RECLUCE novel -- is being published by Tor this January, 2005, in hardcover. In June 2005, the fourth book of the COREAN CHRONICLES -- "**Alector's Choice**" -- will be out in hardcover, also from Tor. In addition, in June, the first two books of the "ghost" trilogy will be re-printed as a trade paperback titled "**Ghosts of Columbia**." The reprinted version also contains a 3,000 word *Afterword* containing more information about the background of the books. Then, in October, Tor will be releasing in hardcover a new stand-alone science fiction novel, titled "**The Eternity Artifact**." Lee will be a guest at the BYU symposium -- Life, the Universe and Everything [LTUE] in mid-February, and then, traveling to Roanoke, Virginia, in

late February for SheVaCon.

William Dietz turned up this month to tell me that at the moment he's in the middle of a two-book duology set about a million years in the future. The first, "**Runner**," is about a freelance runner named Jak Rebo hired to deliver a boy predestined to become a major religious leader to a distant planet even as members of a competing sect attempt to assassinate the youngster. "**Runner**" is due out in Oct 2005. The second book is still untitled but due the next fall.

Stephen Donaldson just published the first of four books of the LAST CHRONICLES OF THOMAS CONVENANT but you probably already knew that. He is, of course, hard at work on the next one. But just to keep his life interesting, producers Mark Gordon ("Saving Private Ryan") and Peter Winther ("Independence Day") have acquired the rights, and are now seeking financing, for a "**Lord Foul's Bane**" film. Of course, rights get acquired (optioned) all the time and they don't always produce a movie. But, hey, who knows?!

Well, I have news from other lands, as well. **Nancy Kilpatrick** wrote me from Canada -- her current book is on the shelves, "**The Goth Bible: A Compendium for the Darkly Inclined**" (St. Martin's Press -- October '04). It's a non-fiction look at the goth culture worldwide (and should probably be required reading for some parents). Also out in Oct of '04, "**Hellboy: Odder Jobs**" which has the short story "**Sleepless in Manhattan**" (Dark Horse). She just handed in the novel "**Jason X: Planet of the Beast**" which will be published in '05 by Black Flame (UK). And, she's been contracted to write another book in the JASON X world, which will come out in 2006. Nancy and **Nancy Holder** have handed in an anthology they've co-edited, "**Outsiders: Stories on the Edge of the Fantastical**," to be published by Roc/NAL in 2005. As well, she sold the short story "**Our Lady of the Snows**" to Tesseract 9. Currently, she's working on "**Mercedes—Day of the Dead**" for Blue Moon books in conjunction with VIVID.

Another Canadian, **Charles de Lint**, has an update on the 20th Anniversary Edition of "**Moonheart**" (Subterranean Press, illustrated by **Charles Vess**) which was supposed to be out in time for the World Fantasy Convention. Then it was before the end of the year. Now it looks like it will have a January release. Also due very soon from Sub Press is "**Quick-silver & Shadow**" the second of the early story collections. This one will have a cover by his wife, **MaryAnn Harris**. Next up will be a small NEWFORD collection (as yet untitled) that will have one new story in it plus two previously published but as-yet-uncollected stories. Charles is also hard at work on a new novel for Tor tentatively called "**Widdershins**." He says he likes the title,

but isn't sure it suits how the book's turning out, so it may well change. For those of you who've been following the NEWFORD stories over the years, this book focuses on Geordie and Jilly.

And from just a bit further away (the UK) comes **Brian Aldiss** who is still hopeful for his opera, "**Oedipus on Mars**", which his company, Avernus Media, has just published as a text. {see more detail in Issue 14.3 of ProNotes} He just completed his long ambitious novel, "**Walcot**", on which he has been working for the last two years and will probably take a much-needed vacation. Congratulations, Brian! Two other novels will be published, "**Sanity and the Lady**" from Peter Crowther's outfit, and "**Jocasta**" from the newly established Rose Press.

Back home in Arizona, **Judith Tarr** shared that "**Rite of Conquest**" (Roc, October 2004), a fantasy about William the Conqueror, got a starred review in Booklist--they called it "irresistible!" (punctuation is theirs). She also has a story in the anthology, "**The First Heroes**," that made #3 on the Amazon list of Best SF of 2004. She has handed in "**King's Blood**" (sequel to "**Rite of Conquest**"--about William Rufus) to Roc, and it will be published in the fall of 2005.

Caitlin Brennan's "The Mountain's Call" (Harlequin LUNA, September 2004) has been getting plenty of attention from the romance side of the fence. It's been nominated for the Romantic Times Editor's Choice Award for Best Fantasy of 2004, and one of the amazon.com editors made a point of informing her LUNA editor that the book just missed the top 10 for Best Romance of 2004--it was in the top 15. (As her agent said, "But it's not a romance!" No, it's a fantasy novel, but it seems the romance side of the Force likes it just fine.) She has handed in the sequel, "**Song of Unmaking**" (which is slotted for October 2005), and is working on a third novel in the series.

For the SIME~GEN fans out there -- **Jean Lorrh** (Kentucky) and **Jacqueline Lichtenberg** (Arizona) told me that the next SIME~GEN book, "**To Kiss or To Kill**," has been turned in to Meisha Merlin for over a year, but they (Meisha Merlin) have bought out another publisher and completely rearranged their schedule. At the moment it's not known when "**To Kiss or To Kill**" will appear. It's frustrating, as this is the first new SIME~GEN book in over fifteen years, and the fans are salivating to get their hands on it. "**To Kiss or To Kill**" is all new, never before published work. The long title novel is by Jean, there is a short story about two of the supporting characters in the novel, also by Jean, called "**Best of Fools**," and there is a short novel by Jacqueline called "**Personal Recognizance**." In the meantime, Jean is working on "**Companions**" and Jacqueline is working on "**The Farris**"

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We are anticipating a great art show this year, so be sure to come down and see the pride of a lot of super artists. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in reserving display space, please contact Ray Gish at 2527 N. Silverado, Mesa, AZ 85215 or call 480-641-3997 or email at RGASAS@aol.com

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We have a report from our resident MIB, **Jessie Foster**: The winter has seen the release of several fantastic products from Steve Jackson Games. The new "hot" card game called "**Burn in Hell**" casts you as one of the Lords of the hottest place under the earth. A variety of the damned come to you for sorting into circles. What do Jim Jones, Lucrezia Borgia, General Custer, and Aleister Crowley have in common? It's your job to find the commonality to score points before Hell freezes over. With artwork from Greg Hyland (of Munchkin Fu fame) and designed by Evil Stevie himself, this is surely a hot one! The GURPS 4th Edition line continues to flourish. The past two months have seen the release of Fantasy, everything you need to design and run your own fantasy game, and Magic, all your favorite spells from 3rd Edition and then some. By the time you read this, GURPS Infinite Worlds will be on the shelves. The long awaited "core setting" for GURPS puts you in the role of a member of the Infinity Patrol, a police organization monitoring travel between an infinite number of alternate worlds, or perhaps a refugee from one of those worlds. The possibilities are literally...infinite! The Issaries line just released "Men of the Sea", exploring the oceans of Glorantha from the eyes of sailor heroes. Munchkin fans won't be disappointed to see the expansion to last year's chop sockey sequel to Munchkin in January. Munchkin Fu -- "Monky" Business" New styles such as Fee Fi Fo Fu and Sna Fu, new weapons, the Tofu Tonfa, and new monsters like the Sex Gaki or Genghis Cong will put a new kiai in your Munchkin. By the time convention season starts up, you can look for "Space Pirate Amazon Ninja Catgirls...SPANC." As always you can find out more information by going to our website, www.sjgames.com and if you're running a convention or gaming

Pro Notes

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Channel," both under contract to Meisha Merlin. On a more personal note, in March, Jean will present a paper on "**Intimate Adventure: the Hidden Genre**" at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. Intimate Adventure is the genre Jacqueline and Jean write--works in which the internal conflict is more important to the intended audience than the external--which doesn't

mean there is no external action! Jacqueline named this subgenre years ago, and they are trying to get the term recognized so that fans of this kind of writing--who are legion--will have a category to ask for instead of just their own list of authors they have laboriously compiled who give them the particular sense of wonder they are looking for. And Jacqueline had some exciting news about her LIFEWAVE series - in March 2005,

Cheryl Ann Costa will be running a LARP based on the LIFEWAVE Novels using her own original character and background. Find out more at <http://www.simegen.com/jl/kren/krenlarp/> It is a first-hand live role-playing with a character inspired from the LIFEWAVE Universe. It's called "**Washington Press Conference.**" And this is a really different LARP.

event and would like to have the MIB demo Steve Jackson Games games there, contact me at MIB.6361@cox.net. And remember, next time we game, it's your turn to bring the munchies!

And, finally from our own **Larry Vela**, who runs Velavision -- he tells me that his Star Wars fan film that Velavision has been working on so long is finally in pre-production and they plan to film by

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Conversation (Continued from page 1)

tions of power...especially when they are supposed to be sympathetic. The vampire in fiction is commonly portrayed as a rich, powerful man who is able to do pretty much anything he wants. Perhaps, I asked them, no one wants to read about a woman who dominates the man? Suzy agreed, saying that readers expect the woman to dominate only through her 'womanly wiles.' Quinn also pointed out that a woman can be expected to be strong to protect her man and children. But, as Suzy added, it is extremely difficult for a woman to take the role of the vampire who travels about enjoying an independent, wealthy lifestyle and dominating the 'made' vampires in his world. There have been a couple exceptions to the rule; but overall, it is a very hard character to create and most vampire writers don't go in that direction. Quinn is, of course, a notable exception with her two female vampires, Olivia and Madelaine. She explained that it can be a real challenge to find a place in history where a woman can be slipped in, especially as an outsider. And, since vampires are the ultimate 'outsider' this task is doubly hard, even impossible. Since even Quinn hasn't written as many books with her female vampires as with her male, Saint-Germain, I asked her what was the driving force – publishers? Oh, yes, she replied. They don't want that type of book. Her last Madelaine book (*In The Face of Death*) was an e-book for quite a while before it finally published in soft-cover. Quinn has a fourth Olivia book proposal but no publisher. (*It is set in England with Queen Elizabeth I. A very good time for an independent woman of power as long as she doesn't attract any interest from one of the Queen's court...*)

Suzy brought up the fact that there is a whole sub-genre of romance books about vampires and, with few exceptions, are all about the lovely heroine being seduced by the dark, sexy, dominant male vampire. It's very hard to go against the cultural pattern at this time, she said. Suzy believes there should be a counter-balance happening by now; but, as she said, the pattern ingrained in the cultural mind isn't hungry enough yet for this change. I bemoaned that fact as I've been wishing for stories about woman like Madelaine and Olivia. With vampires being so romantic and seductive in our literature, movies and TV, I think it's just as important to have strong female role models there as anywhere else in our culture. It's just one more barrier that needs to come down. Suzy consoled me with the idea that it will happen eventually and Quinn added that it just won't happen overnight. I asked Suzy if she thought there could ever be a female 'Weyland' character. She wouldn't say never but thought it unlikely. The publishers, she said, are uneasy with the idea. Although, she reminded us, at

one time science fiction was written for teenaged boys. Early science fiction didn't even have many women or girls for a long while. They made the publishers uneasy. So too, the female vampire as an independent, strong woman in a positive role, makes them uneasy today. The whole concept of vampirism is so tied up in sexual power that it makes the whole idea (of a sympathetic dominant female vampire) seem improbable. We all hoped for a gradual reformation and an advent of new writers willing to break down the stereotypical vampire role.

After a collective breath, I asked Quinn how she keeps Saint-Germain honestly located in history. She admitted that she keeps a chronology so she always knows where he's been. A few mistakes have made it into her books and her fans delight in finding and reporting them. Suzy doesn't need to do that for Weyland just yet. But her *Holdfast* stories require several timelines and outlines to keep straight. From here, Quinn and Suzy digressed into an intimate discussion of the state of their respective homes relative to the amount of paper amassed there. Quinn declared that she destroys all her notes after a book is finished, in an attempt to control the amount of paper but Suzy admitted that all her papers will still be there when she dies. They'll be somebody else's problem...

I was curious about their respective writing styles and habits. Some folks like a tight outline and others keep adding to it until the book is almost written. Did either of them have a similar penchant? Suzy's style is to start with a question and write from the beginning to the end. For her, the adventure is finding the answer to the question in the process. If she knew the answer right off, she said, she'd be bored with it (the process of writing.) Quinn likes to start with a short outline, 5-10 pages, but often departs from it; especially if a minor character speaks up and takes over. She learned early on that if you, as the writer, believe you know what is happening (in your story) but a character tells you that 'no, that's not what's happening' then the character is always right and you're always wrong. She believes that this process is one of the harder things a new writer needs to learn: to know when to get out of the way and let the character tell the story. Suzy agreed wholeheartedly. As she said, when she tried to make her characters do what she told them to do, the story went dead. She simply couldn't write past the blockage; the blockage was the wrong direction. Both of them emphasized that one needs to listen to one's characters. I asked if it wasn't difficult to recognize when one was at such a point. They agreed and added that it comes with experience; although, Suzy admitted that she occasionally 'forgets' and finds herself banging her head against the wall.

Suzy had to leave and Quinn & I

chatted a few moments longer about the (infamous) third *Sisters of the Night* book. Quinn confirmed that the book is done and the manuscript was turned into the publisher back in about 1998. The problem lay in publishing house mergers. That was about the time Avon Books merged with Harper Collins. Quinn explained that whenever there's a merger, they sacrifice a whole bunch of editors to the gods of publishing. Quinn never knew which editor had been given the book and the book subsequently disappeared. Due to differences with the publisher, she isn't particularly disturbed by this event. Only the diehard fans miss it. Quinn regrets that the fans are disappointed.

It was a lovely interview with two very talented, friendly and charming women and I thank them again.



Pro Notes (Continued from page 7)

mid-February. The film will debut at LepreCon 31 in the spring. And my column wouldn't be complete without a report from the **501st Stormtrooper Legion/Dune Sea Garrison**. Check out their awesome rebuilt website at www.az501st.com The 501st is very active in the community and fandom and here are some of the events in which they'll be participating: Visit to the **Phoenix Children's Hospital** – Feb or March, **2005 Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith** – AZ Line up & opening night May 25, **2005 MS Walk on the Wild Side** in April. **Star Wars Celebration III** on April 21 -24, 2005 in Indianapolis, IN. They'll also be coming out to play at our **LepreCon 31** convention on May 6-8, 2005. They'll be providing: a Full Prop Replica/Costume display, Panels on props & costuming, possibly Workshops on RTV & Resin casting and How to Build a Junk Gun. They'll also host the Empire vs. Rebellion: The Great Debate and the Masquerade Half Time Show.

That's it for this issue, watch for me next June. And, as always - if anyone wants to contribute or knows someone who knows someone...please write to ConNotations or email me at Editor@casfs.org – Catherine Book.

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NonGenre by Genre

Fletcher Pratt
1897-1956

Fletcher Pratt was a marvelous writer of Fantasy and Science Fiction best known for his collaborations with L. Sprague DeCamp in The Incomplete Enchanter. Unknown to many he had a second career as an historian. He was also author of books on space travel, a cookbook and a book on codes and ciphers. Many of these can be found in local libraries. Those available at ASU are indicated in brackets after the entry. All About Famous Inventors and Their Inventions. New York, Random House [c1955] 141 p. The Civil War. Garden City, N.Y., Garden City Books [1955] The Battles That Changed History. Garden City, N. Y., Hanover House [1956] Civil War in Pictures, Garden City, N.Y., Garden City Books 1957. 256 p [ASU] Civil War on Western Waters, New York, Holt [1956] [ASU] The Compact History of the United States Navy. Rev. by Hartley E. Howe. Illus. by Louis Priscilla New and rev. ed. New York, Hawthorn Books 1962, 350 p. [ASU] The Cunning Mulatto and Other Cases of Ellis Parker, American Detective, by Ellis Parker told by Fletcher Pratt. New York : H. Smith and R. Haas, 1935. 295 p. Eleven Generals; Studies in American Command. New York, W. Sloane Associates [1949] [ASU] The Empire and the Glory; Napoleon Bonaparte: 1800-1806. Illus. by Inga. New York, W. Sloane Associates [1948, c1949] [ASU] Empire and the Sea, illustrated by Inga Stephens., New York : H. Holt and Company, [1946], 446 p. illus. (incl. maps, plans) [ASU] Fleet against Japan, by Fletcher Pratt, with a foreword by Admiral Nimitz. New York, London, Harper & Brothers [1946] The Heroic Years; Fourteen Years of the Republic, 1801-1815, New York, H. Smith and R. Haas, 1934. 352 p. front., illus. (incl. music) plates, ports. U.S. History — 1801-1809 [ASU] Hail, Caesar! by Fletcher Pratt. With illustrations by Da Osimo and relief maps by the author. New York, H. Smith and R. Haas, 1936. 349 p. The Lost Battalion, by Thomas M. Johnson and Fletcher Pratt. Indianapolis, New York : The Bobbs-Merrill Company, [c1938] 9 p. l., 17-338 p. front., plates, ports., maps, [United States. Army. Infantry Regiment, 308th (1917-1919)] A Man and His Meals by Fletcher Pratt

and Robeson Bailey, illustrated by Inga New York, H. Holt and Co. 1947 The Marine's War; an Account of the Struggle for the Pacific from Both American and Japanese Sources. New York, W. Sloane Associates [1948] [ASU] The Navy: a History; the Story of a Service in Action, by Fletcher Pratt. Garden City, NY, Doubleday, Doran & company, inc., 1938. [ASU] The Navy Has Wings, with a foreword by Rear Admiral J.S. McCain, illustrated with photographs by U.S. Navy. New York, Harper, 1943. Night Work: the Story of Task Force 39, New York, H. Holt and Company [c1946] [ASU] Preble's Boys; Commodore Preble and the Birth of American Sea Power. New York, Sloane [1950] [ASU] Road to Empire; the Life and Times of Bonaparte, the General, New York, Doubleday, Doran & company, inc., 1939. [ASU] Description xxiii, 346 p. front., illus. (incl. maps, music) Rockets, Satellites, and Space Travel, by Jack Coggins and Fletcher Pratt. Edited by Willy Ley. New York, Random House [1958] Secret and Urgent; the Story of Codes and Ciphers, by Fletcher Pratt. Indianapolis, New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939. 282 p. [ASU] A Short History of the Civil War : Ordeal by Fire / by Fletcher Pratt, New York, Pocket Books, 1948, 413 p., maps, Includes index [ASU] Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea. By Verne, Jules. The English version made from the French by Mercier Lewis, with a new intro. by Fletcher Pratt, and with hand-colored illus. by Edward A. Wilson Los Angeles, Printed for the members of the Limited Editions Club at the Plantin Press, 1956

Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War. New York, Norton [1953] 520 p. port., maps. [ASU] The Third King. New York, Sloane [1950] 313 p. maps, Subject: Valdemar IV Atterdag, King of Denmark, 1320 (ca)-1375. [ASU] War for the World; a Chronicle of Our Fighting Forces in World War II. Toronto, Glasgow, Brook & Co.; New York, United States Publishers Association c1950. [ASU]

What the Citizen Should Know about Modern War [by] Fletcher Pratt. Illustrations by Andre' Jandot. New York, W. W. Norton & company, inc. [1942] 184 p.

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In Memoriam

**Will Eisner
Kelly Freas
Michael Mason
June Patton**

**Will Eisner
1917-2005**

Will Eisner passed away on January 3rd, 2005 at the age of 87 following quadruple bypass heart surgery. The surgery was performed on December 22, and was considered successful at that time.

Best known for "*The Spirit*," Eisner was a pioneer in newspaper comics, comic books and graphic novels for nearly 70 years. His most recent graphic novel, *Fagin The Jew*, was published in September 2003, and a final novel, *The Plot* is scheduled for release this year. Each year since its creation in 1988 he presided over the Eisner Awards, presented annually at the San Diego Comic-Con International.

He will be buried next to his late daughter, Alice, who died in 1969. Surviving Will are his wife, Ann, and his son, John. Condolence cards may be sent to the Eisner family at the following address: Will Eisner Studios, Inc., 8333 West McNab Road, Suite 131, Tamarac FL 33321. Donations may be made to the Cartoon Research Library at Ohio State University, 27 W 17th Avenue Mall, Columbus, OH 43210.

**The Spirit Goes On
(In memory of Will Eisner)
by Jeffrey Lu**

Comic book reader-
Graphic?
Fantastic!

A first hero from the graveyard
Bears the color red, white, and blue
Fighting not only with fists
But with head, heart, and home.

The man is a storyteller
Who goes beyond the pulp.
He influences generations:
From readers
To writers.
From artists
To collectors.

He is gone but...
The Storyteller gives us the tools.
The Storyteller shows us the techniques.
The Storyteller provides us the tricks.
The Storyteller guides us the trades.
The Storyteller still even now thrills us
For his Spirit moves on.

**Frank Kelly Freas
1922-2005**

Frank Kelly Freas passed away on January 2, at his Los Angeles home with his wife Laura by his side.

Kelly was an eleven time Hugo Award winning illustrator known for his cover and interior art for science fiction, fantasy, as well as advertising, and MAD Maga-



© Chaz Boston Baden

zine. He had been involved with science fiction from 1950 until weeks before his death. His illustrations were used for stories by writers such as Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, A. E. Van Vogt, Poul Anderson, and Frederik Pohl.

Kelly was a member of First Fandom and the Dorsai Irregulars. His art work covered many fields, he was an official NASA mission artist, his space posters hang in the Smithsonian, he designed the Skylab I crew patch, he did album and CD covers for Queen, he painted beautiful women on the noses of World War II bombers and portraits of five hundred saints for the Franciscans as well as contributing to Mad Magazine character Alfred E. Neuman.

His funeral was held on Monday, January 3 in Canoga Park, California followed by burial at Oakwood Memorial Park in St Chatsworth California.

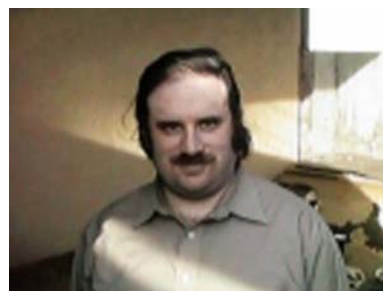
He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Laura Brodian Freas; a daughter, Jacqueline; a son, Jeremy; and six grandsons. Messages of condolence and remembrance may be sent via his web site at www.kellyfreas.com

**Michael Mason
1960-2005**

Michael Mason was found dead in his apartment on January 4, 2005. He was 44 years old.

Chaz Boston Baden writes of his friend:

"Michael was in charge of the LASFS library for many years. Not a trained librarian, he did what he could, and he had a love for the LASFS Library



© Chaz Boston Baden

nonetheless. LASFS used to purchase its NESFA Press books by way of Bruce Pelz, and when Bruce died Michael Mason joined NESFA expressly to continue that arrangement. Now who will buy our books?

Michael was a habitual Worldcon attendee, and his collection of Worldcon t-shirts was one he was proud of. He had enough to wear a clean Worldcon t-shirt every day. He chaired Loscon a year ago, and "helped" with the Loscon program most recently."

The funeral was held on Sunday, January 9 at Mount Sinai Los Angeles Memorial Park. A memorial ceremony was held on Sunday, January 23, 2005 at the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society clubhouse. If you would like to send a card or a note to his family please send them to: Michael Mason Family, c/o Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood CA 91601

**June Patton
1945-2005**

Donna June Patton, the owner of The Bent Cover bookstore at 28th Drive & Cactus, suffered a stroke Thursday night, January 13, 2005. It was a very serious stroke and there was no hope of recovery. She was removed from life support Saturday and passed very quickly after that. June was 59 years old.

She is survived by her son, Richard and his wife, Susan, and five grandchildren, James Dean, Richard Thomas, Jack Riley Wyatt, Diantha June Gourdin and Thomas Andres Schlagenhaft, and several siblings. June's top priority was to see her grandchildren taken care of and educated. If you wish to make a donation to June's grandsons in lieu of flowers, the family would greatly appreciate it. Donations can be made to the Wyatt Children Education Fund at Desert Schools Credit Union, account no. 1070249803. Her viewing was Monday, January 17th, from 5-8pm at Hanson Mortuary at 8314 N. 7th St, Phoenix. The funeral was Tuesday at 10am at the same location.

June touched thousands of people over the years and will be desperately missed by many. Last year she decided to clean up her store by sending books to our soldiers in Iraq and had sent over 15,000 books. Several soldiers visited her while on leave to thank her. Many more sent letters, pictures and t-shirts. She left a hole in space that cannot be filled.

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Aliens of the Deep The Incredibles

Aliens of the Deep
48 mins
Directed by James Cameron
& Steve Quale

James Cameron, Academy Award winning director and adventurer, turns his talents in a new direction. In *Aliens of the Deep* he takes us to the depths of earth's oceans to several hydrothermal vent sites in the Atlantic and Pacific. These violent volcanic regions are a place where the interaction between ocean and molten rock creates plumes of super-heated, chemically-charged water that nurture creatures unlike anything ever seen before. Cameron is joined by a team of NASA scientists who study these creatures in order to extrapolate on the types of life we might find in outer space not only on distant planets orbiting distant stars, but also in our own solar system.

The creatures found here in the depths do not depend on sunlight to live, unlike all other life on earth, instead competing with each other for just the right spot in the super-heated water that will give them what they need without frying them.

And these creatures are beautiful, well one fish is kind of ugly but still interesting. There was a breathtakingly beautiful transparent something, drifting and floating in the darkness, as well as pretty white worms with blood red plumes, yucky white crabs with no eyes, a truly gorgeous white octopus and a weird blob of shrimp that latch on to the "Jake" roving probe.

The 3D IMAX format makes this film a treat though it was much shorter than I expected. I was disappointed there wasn't more explanation of the creatures we saw and how they related to potential life on other planets.

Definitely go see this in the 3D IMAX format, the \$9 ticket price is worth it for the feeling of actually being there that the 3D effects produce. Recommended. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

More Animated Than Most: *The Incredibles* is a Super Story By Shane Shellenbarger

If you haven't seen *The Incredibles* in a theatre by now don't be disheartened. As of this writing, the movie about a very above-par family of superheroes is still playing at twenty-two theatres in and around the Phoenix Metro area. Granted, it moved from the largest screen at Harkins Metro where I saw it on November 6th to the smallest screen at the same theatre when I saw it on December 23rd, but it was every bit as enjoyable during the second viewing.

The Incredibles is proceeded by the western short tale, *Boundin'*, an allegory of a lamb, a jackalope, and ridiculing prairie dogs. While I didn't care for the character design, and the story didn't

have the depth of *Red's Dream* or the ending poke-in-the-funny-bone of *Tin Toy* or *Knick Knack, Boundin'* is still a delight for children of most ages.

When *The Incredibles* begins, we're treated to what appears to be an old interview of Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson), at first fumbling with his microphone and then bemoaning the tendency toward chaos and entropy. "I just cleaned up this mess," he says. Then we move to current times where we find a very busy series of events to complicate Mr. Incredible's day: A bank robbery, a cat stuck in a tree (these events become linked), an over-achieving fanboy, a holdup followed by an unexpected assist from another Super, a foiled suicide, a coincidental encounter with a super villain, a second (and portentous) encounter with Buddy (Jason Lee), the fanboy, culminating in a late arrival at his own wedding! An amazing first few minutes. But, marital bliss is not to be Mr. Incredibles fate. He and all of the other super powered peoples must soon stop their aid to the common good. Are the Supers brought down by alien creatures, bent on subjugating mankind? Has a plague robbed the Supers of their powers and abilities? Alas, the greatest examples of mental and physical perfection the world has ever known are defeated by lawyers. Sued by the man who sought suicide as a solution to his woes, Mr. Incredible hangs up his supersuit, a hero no more. Soon, the government places all of the Supers in a form of the witness protection program, calming the lawsuitmania and forcing anonymity on the former heroes.

Flash forward fifteen years. Mr. Incredible and Elastigirl, now known only as Bob and Helen Parr (voiced by Holly Hunter), their children, Violet (Sarah Vowell), Dashell (Spencer Fox), and Jack Jack (Eli Fucile and Maeve Andrews), live quiet lives in suburbia. Unbeknownst to his family, Bob is living a quiet life of desperation. He can't stomach that the insurance company for which he works is more concerned about the quarterly profit statement than it is about the ruined lives of customers whose claims they constantly deny. One day, Bob snaps, puts his boss, Gilbert Huph (voiced by Wallace Shawn, but looking like a diminutive William H. Macy) in the hospital, loses his job, and risks revealing his superpowers and forcing another relocation on his family. Just as he is about to confess his dire state to his wife, Bob discovers a mysterious envelope containing an invitation to be a hero once more and the promise of financial freedom for Bob and his family. Little does Bob know, but his life and the lives of all of the Supers will be

forever changed by what he does next. To find out what happens, race to your local macrotheatreplex now!

I found this movie a delight, one of the most entertaining films of 2004, and I can hardly contain myself waiting for the dvd release and the hoped for extras disc. With an estimated cost of \$92,000,000.00 and a gross of \$251,657,004.00 as of January 2nd, 2005, *The Incredibles* is a solid hit doing incredibly well. Just imagine the dvd sales.

<http://www.pixar.com/>
<http://disney.go.com/disneypictures/incredibles/index.html>

<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/incredibles/trailers.php>
<http://www.ifilm.com/ifilm/detail/2473523>
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0317705/>
http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/incredibles/?beg=0&int=169&creamcrop_limit=38&page=all
<http://pc.gamezone.com/gzreviews/r23431.htm>
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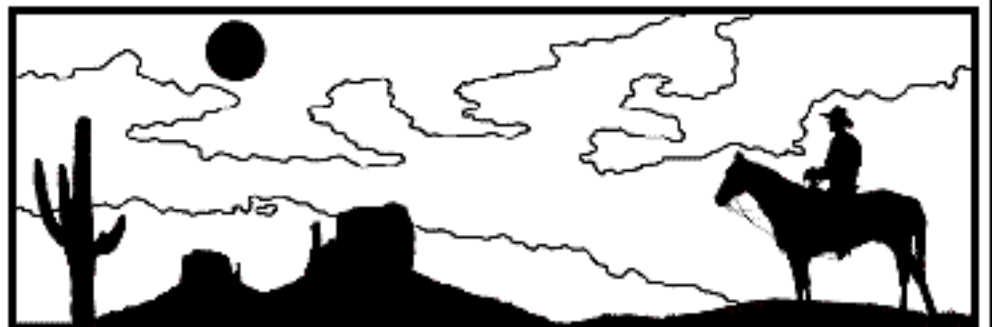
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FYI

Jack Chalker III

Author Jack Chalker, has been hospitalized for congestive heart failure since December 7. He has had several long periods of unconsciousness and is on and off a respirator. He is permanently disabled but not fully retired. When his condition permits he will be moved to a nursing home for further recovery. The status of his current book, *Chameleon*, and future writing is uncertain

Cards and letters may be sent c/o The Mirage Press, P.O. Box 1689, Westminster, MD USA 21158-1689

Donations to the Chalker Family Emergency Fund may be made via Paypal at www.evawhitley.net

Eva Whitley adds the following, "I've established a site at www2.caringbridge.org/md/jacklchalker/ with news updates on Jack's condition, and hospital contact info."

CASFS Book Discussions

The CASFS Book Discussion is held monthly at the Barnes & Noble bookstore at Metrocenter, 10235 N. Metro Parkway East. We will be meeting on the third Wednesday of each month at 7PM

Books scheduled for discussion are: **February 16 - St. Patrick's Gargoyle** by **Katherine Kurtz**, **March 16 - Summon the Keeper** by **Tanya Huff**, and **April 20 - The Eyre Affair** by **Jasper Fforde**. Please join us.

For more information contact Catherine <books@casfs.org>

Letters to the Editor

Well, ConNotations fans - here's your chance to be heard. We'd like to know what you like and don't like about our publication. We're in the throes of doing lots of new things and we really need to know what we're doing right ...or wrong. You can address your comments to the publication in general or to any particular staff writer or contributor. Our Letters Editor, Catherine Book, will screen all letters and direct them to the addressee or relevant party for a response. Letters and responses will be printed, space permitting. So, please, take a moment to write and let us know we're being read. You can reach us at:

Editor@casfs.org

or

ConNotations

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Arizona Book Festival April 2, 2005

The annual free Arizona Book Festival, now in it's eighth year, will take place on Saturday, April 2nd at the Carnegie Center at 1101 W. Washington St. in Phoenix, Arizona from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The festival is sponsored by the Arizona Humanities Council and as with the previous seven book festivals, CASFS and LepreCon will be exhibiting. CASFS will be presenting a one hour program block and will be bringing in author **Jacqueline Carey (*Kushiel's Dart, Banewrecker*)** to speak and sign during the festival. Other Arizona based science fiction and fantasy authors will also be on hand including **Adam Niswander, Dennis L. Mckiernan, Jeff Mariotte, Michael A. Stackpole, Michelle M. Welch, John Vornholt** and others. LepreCon will be having some art demos and a display of Science Fiction and Fantasy art.

On the main stage presented by the Arizona Humanities Council will be **Luis Urrea, Brad Dimock, Lisa Michaels, Andrew Clements, and Linda Lael Miller**. Many other authors of all genres will be speaking and signing at various exhibitor booths throughout the day. There will be stage presentations, panels, and multi cultural programs, rare and antique book appraisals, cook book demonstrations, and an entire area devoted to children's activities and costumed characters Check the book festival's official web site at <http://www.azbookfestival.org> for listings of exhibitors and authors and the programming schedule.

For more details on the activities at the CASFS and LepreCon booths, visit <http://www.casfs.org/azbookfest>. If you have any questions, contact CASFS & LepreCon Arizona Book Festival Liaison Lee Whiteside at leewsfv@yahoo.com

WesternSFA Book Drive for the Thomas Pappas School for Homeless Children

We are proud to announce that our fellow fen have been very generous to the Western Science Fiction Association book drive for the Thomas J. Pappas School for homeless children.

Here are the counts for 2004:

LepreCon 30: 65 books

Westercon 57/ConKopelli: 180

CopperCon 24: 45 books

World Fantasy: 340 books

ConKopelli itself donated approximately 200 books.

We will continue our book drive for the Pappas school during our conventions in 2005. Look for the Harry Potter box.

Books For Soldiers Care Packages for the Mind

What does a soldier do with his down time when he's stationed in the Middle East? If he's lucky, he has a book to read.

What can you do? A donation of \$5 will send a box of 15-20 books to a military person to read and share with his/her tent mates. A donation of \$10 will send a 25-pound box of books - and that's a lot of books!! So far more than 7,000 books have been sent from The Bent Cover to military personnel in the Middle East. Plus, the World Fantasy Convention donated 954 books that were sent to our soldiers in Iraq plus the postage for all those books and ConKopelli donated 225 books.

We need your help and your donations. Books and postage donations for Books for Soldiers will continue to be accepted at The Bent Cover bookstore, 12428 N. 28th Drive, Phoenix, (602) 942-3778.

The 21st J. Lloyd Eaton Conference On Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Literature Call for Papers

The 21st J. Lloyd Eaton Conference On Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Literature will be held at the Science Fiction Museum in Seattle, Washington on May 5-7, 2005.

Topic: Inventing the 21st Century: Many Worlds, Many Histories

Science fiction emerged in the 20th century as the literary, artistic and cinematic genre that dealt with scientific and technological advances and their relation to human institutions and aspirations. It shaped the way we see and do things, the way we dreamt of things to come. But what will be its role in the 21st century? What does a look at the SF of the last decade and events leading to it, tell us about future directions and metamorphoses of SF? In a century where the themes and icons of SF have moved from literary origins to manifestations in all areas of society and culture, what might be the future forms of SF? In other words, to paraphrase Gauguin, where is it coming from, what is it today, where is it going?

The conference invites informed papers on development in SF over the last century, both the scientific and cultural developments that have been shaping SF, and in the opposite sense, the developments in SF that have been shaping science and, more broadly, culture. Scientific areas of comparison and speculation in which discussions are most sought are as follows: medicine, biology, nanotechnology, social engineering, information science, virtual reality, space travel and terraforming, ecology and population biology, linguistics and alien communication. One key question, regardless of scientific field of speculation, is the continued role of print SF (novels and stories) in all media, including all the new multi-media and interactive forms of SF that have arisen, or may

arise in the future, and how, in reverse fashion, these transformations of SF have led to reshaping of the conventional forms of narrative in recent SF novels and stories?

The conference will have four sections, organized around the following areas of investigation.

The Astounding Age: The Past, Present and Future of Hard SF. Under consideration here is the legacy of Astounding Stories, and the way in which Astounding Stories altered the course of SF in its 75 years of existence. Also under consideration will be how Astounding Stories influenced our scientific investigations and discoveries, if at all.

From Analog to Digital and Sometimes Back Again: The SF World and Its Tomorrows. This section deals with film, television, toys, video games, architecture, product design and other manifestations of SF seen not merely as a type of writing but as a worldview. What have been the relations between non-literary forms and classical written SF? How are the new forms of SF, multimedia or otherwise, likely to influence the writing of SF?

Remembrance of Things To Come: Future Histories and Alternate Histories. Examined here is the rise of future and alternate history as an SF thought experiment, and the analysis of such experiments in present and future social and cultural contexts. What purposes have future and alternate histories served? What purpose can they serve? What can be learned from them?

The Frankenstein Century: The Age of Biology. Under consideration is the oft-expressed idea that the science of the new century is that of biology. Under consideration will be questions of reproduction, life extension and immortality, augmentation, and guided evolution. How will the stories of SF be influenced by the dramatic changes in actual science?

We encourage potential speakers to submit an abstract of their talk in a chosen session by March 1, 2005, in order to obtain feedback on the appropriateness of their presentation. While full papers are encouraged, oral presentations, even with added video, are acceptable. Please feel free to contact either Profs. Heath or Slusser with any questions.

Finished presentations should be delivered as 20-25 minutes papers (corresponding to 9-12 typewritten pages). We hope to have the best papers published in book form, as has been done in past Eaton Conferences. Presentation selection and a complete program will be announced March 28, 2005. All correspondence should be sent to either Robert Heath at heath@citrus.ucr.edu, or George Slusser at george.slusser@ucr.edu or, by mail, at:

**The J. Lloyd Eaton Collection
Tomas Rivera Library
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, CA 92517**

Conference Coordinators: Greg Bear (SF Museum), Robert Heath (UCR), Leslie Howle (SF Museum) and George Slusser (UCR).

Organizing Committee: Paul Alkon (USC), Gregory Benford (UCI), Howard Hendrix (CSU Fresno), Daryl F. Mallett (Prismic Publishing), Larry McCaffery (SDSU), Joseph Miller (USC), Toby Miller (UCR) and Eric S. Rabkin (University of Michigan).

Calendar of Events - February/March 2005

To have your event or meeting listed please email calendar@casfs.org - **Deadline for April/May Submissions - March 15, 2005**
(This is a free service. All release dates are tentative)

February

February 1 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Charmed Season One, Wonderfalls Complete Series, The Brak Show Volume One, SeaLab 2021 Season Two
DVD Movies The Grudge

February 2 - Wednesday

Meeting: ConNotations Staff Meeting - 7PM at JB's I-17 & Indian School Info: editor@casfs.org

February 4 - Friday

Movies Boogeyman

February 5 - Saurday

Meeting: UFP meeting - Video Production www.u-f-p.org

February 6 - Sunday

Meeting: LepreCon Inc- 7PM at JB's I-17 & Indian School Info: mwillmoth@earthlink.net

February 8 -Tuesday

DVD-TV: Greatest American Hero Season One, Highlander Season Six
DVD Movies Shark Tale

February 12 -Saturday

Meeting: WesternSFA Quarterly Meeting: Craig's house Info: info@westernsfa.org

February 15 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Angel Season Five
DVD Movies Saw

February 16 - Wednesday

Book Discussion: 7PM at Barnes & Noble Metro Center. Info: books@casfs.org

February 18 - Friday

Event: Fannish Open House at Craig & Stephanie's place - Info: laetitia@doverkeep.com

February 18-20 - Friday-Sunday

Event: Sixteen Swashbucklers of Gallifrey One, Van Nuys Calif - www.gallifreyone.com

February 19 - Saturday

Meeting UFP Meeting - Boating at Tempe Town Lake www.u-f-p.org
Movies Constantine, Son of the Mask

February 22 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Stripperella Season One

February 25 - Friday

Meeting: CASFS - 8PM at JB's I-17 & Indian School Info: info@casfs.org
Movies Cursed

February 26 - Saturday

Event: ConRunners 10 From 8:30AM to 6PM at Embassy Suites North, I-17 & Greenway. Info: Conrunners@westernsfa.org

February 27 - Sunday

Meeting: HexaCon 15 Committee Meeting 5PM at JB's I-17 & Indian School Info: info@hexacon.org
Meeting: CopperCon 25 Committee Meeting 6PM at JB's I-17 & Indian School Info: info@coppercon.org

March

March 1 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Lost in Space Season Three, Volume One, Wonder Woman Season Two, Doctor Who: The Visitation, Doctor Who: The Green Death
DVD Movies Exorcist: The Beginning

March 5 - Saturday

Meeting: UFP Meeting - Kartchner Caverns www.u-f-p.org

March 8 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Xena Season Six

March 11 - Friday

Movies Robots

March 15 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: La Femme Nikita Season Two, The Pretender Season One, Red Dwarf Seasons Five and Six
DVD Movies Star Trek First Contact Special Edition

March 18 - Friday

Event: Fannish Open House at Craig & Stephanie's place - Info: laetitia@doverkeep.com

March 18-20 - Friday-Sunday

Event: IceEscape www.iceescape.com
Movies Kung Fu Hustle, The Ring Too

March 19 -Saturday

Meeting UFP Meeting - Taco Bar & Calendar Planning www.u-f-p.org

March 22 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: Star Wars Clone Wars #1

March 25 - Friday

Meeting: CASFS - 8PM at JB's at I-17 & Indian School Info: info@casfs.org
Movies D.E.B.S.

March 25-27 - Friday-Sunday

Event: Anizona - Phoenix, AZ - www.anizona.org

March 29 - Tuesday

DVD-TV: The Lone Gunmen Complete Series
Upcoming Events:

April 1 - Friday

Movies Sin City

April 2 - Saturday

Event: Arizona Book Festival - www.azbookfestival.org

April 3 - Sunday

Meeting: ConNotations Labeling & Potluck - Stephanie's house Info: editor@casfs.org

See FYI for detailed information on Book Discussion Groups, Signings, Writer's Groups or other events

Ongoing Events

Wednesdays

6pm New Comics Arrive!
6pm Hero Clix Tournamets
6pm Mech WarriorTournaments
6pm L5R CCG

Thursdays

6pm Magic, The Gathering Tournament
6pm Camarilla Anarch Game
6pm Mechwarrior Dark Age Tournament
6pm Magic ThG type 1.5 Tournament

Fridays

6pm Warmachine League
6pm Magic the Gathering DCI Sanctioned
7pm HeroClix Tournament
7pm Magic: The Gathering Tournaments

Saturdays*

AllDay Yu-Gi-Oh! Tournament
Noon Warhammer Fantasy & 40K
Noon Hack Tournament
Noon Duel Masters Tournaments
3pm YU-GI-OH Tournaments
6pm Anime Club Meeting

Sundays*

Noon Hero Clix tournament
3pm YU-GI-OH Tournaments
3pm Dragonball Z CCG Tournament
6pm Dragon Page Live Fire SF/F Radio Talk Show -

Samurai Comics, 7th St & Camelback
Samurai Comics, 7th St & Camelback
Samurai Comics, 7th St & Camelback
Imperial Outpost, 49th Ave & Thunderbird
Pop Culture
Kiwanis Park
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When Worlds Collide: The G4TechTV Channel

By Shane Shellenbarger

I have always been a bit of a gadget freak. I bought a used Panasonic reel-to-reel video tape recorder for \$250.00 from a friend by painting his house when I was 17 and 1-hour tapes each cost \$15.00. At the time, I was so green that I didn't know that the recorder required a separate television tuner that would set me back an additional \$350.00. All of my income as a grocery store bagger was going into my new passion: video tape recording. The machine wasn't cutting edge technology, but it allowed me the freedom to time shift programs: I could finally see Harlan Ellison interviewed by Tom Snyder on the Tomorrow Show. When Sony offered their SL-7200 Betamax videocassette recorder for sale on February 18, 1976, I was ready. I'd been saving for months and I was prepared with the \$1000.00 (wholesale) for the tape deck and an additional \$120.00 (again, wholesale) for a case of twelve K-60 tapes. What a difference 29 years can make. Now you can buy a Sony VHS videocassette recorder for under \$80.00 and Sony VHS tapes for as little as \$0.46 each.

VCR's weren't the only arena for my gadget passion. My video game purchases go back to (but aren't limited by) the Atari 2600, I bought a Sony Walkman in 1980, I bought a Sony FD-20A Watchman (portable black and white TV) in 1983, a Sony WM-F10II Walkman that was as wide as a Compact Cassette when closed and opened up one inch wider to accept the tape. In 1997, I bought the Sony Minidisc bundle consisting of the MDS-JE510 and MZ-E40. CD players, Laser disc players, DVD players, MP3 players (both flash memory and hard drive-based units), **Replay** digital video recorders (no I don't have a TiVo . . . not that there's anything wrong with that.), a Commodore Vic 20 and a C64, an Amiga 1000 and 3000, a Power Mac, and Windows 98, ME, and XP's. I haven't always been a user of bleeding edge technology, or even cutting edge technology, but I do consider myself as much of a gadget geek as anybody you'd find at the Consumer Electronics Show (I've been there three times).

So we've established that I'm a technology nut, a gadget gourmet, a . . . well, you get the picture. Therefore, I keep my eyes and ears open for all things that feed my hunger for more ways to frustrate myself with technology. You heard right I said frustrate, because as technology gets more complex, as you attempt to use that technology in new and different ways the software and hardware will find new and different ways to frustrate you. Just ask anybody who has spent an afternoon trying to make a birthday card on his or her computer only

to have the printer ruin each envelope you try to run through it. Ask the person who is trying to copy a one-of-a-kind audio cassette to a cd only to have the tape wrinkle in the deck, or the MP3 recorder stop for no reason one minute before the end of the tape, or they discover that they recorded in the WMA format and their conversion software doesn't convert WMA's into MP3's. Ask the person who wants to save digital pictures to a DVD, spends hours on the placement of thousands of stills and then discovers that the finished DVD won't stop at each still, but must be viewed with a preset delay. Technology constantly frustrates me. The gap between what I want to use technology for and the ease with which technology can be used is a gulf the size of the Grand Canyon.

Given that level of frustration, I was excited when I happened upon a sampler of a show named *Call For Help* on a channel called Tech TV. Later, I caught *The Screen Savers* and I noticed that the host was the same guy, Leo Laporte, a jovial, intelligent, humorous guy who can make the most complex technology understandable to the densest dilettante. My regret is that I didn't immediately take the necessary steps to get Tech TV. One thing after another delayed me and it wasn't until February 2004 that I forked out the bucks to bring a digital box into my home and allow me to become a Tech TV Junkie. I was hooked. Little did I know that storm clouds loomed on the horizon.

By the end of March of 2004, Comcast announced that it was buying Tech TV from Vulcan Ventures (who had completed the purchase of ZDTV from Ziff-Davis Publishing on January 21, 2000) and that Comcast's gaming channel, G4, would combine with Tech TV to create G4TechTV. Well, that shouldn't be bad, I like video and computer games, maybe this will be a good thing. Alas, it was not to be.

Oh, for those "Good Old Days" when *The Screen Savers* had content worth watching. Hints, tips, help for computer problems, material that was meaningful to the viewer. In those G.O.D's, the on-air talent (primarily Leo Laporte and Patrick Norton) would kid each other, but the attempts at humor were light and the viewer never felt as if the hosts were trying out for the 3:30 a.m. slot at The Comedy Store or practicing for the Bat Mitzvah gig they'd wrangled for the weekend. In those oh, so fondly remembered G.O.D's, bands like LIT (which I'm guessing isn't short for LITERATURE) would be on a show dealing with rock and roll or heavy metal in games, not filling time to keep the commercials from slamming together.

I can't believe that G4 bought TechTV just to run the channel into the ground. I had hoped that the shows would get

better, that the hosts (Leo) would return or not leave (Pat) when Comcast fired all of the San Francisco staff and moved the production South to Los Angeles, but I guess I was just kidding myself. Judging by the crop of G4 hosts and advertisers (primarily the Army and YOUFILLINTHEBLANK Computer Graphic Design School), G4TechTV doesn't have any interest in an audience older than 29. One source claims that before the merger, G4 was viewed in 15 million homes and TechTV was seen in 43 million homes. I think that Comcast is backing the wrong horse.

The Good:

ICONS: Jake Steele is the unseen narrator. I love the history and the behind-the-scenes material on this show.

FRESH GEAR: I do love the gadgets, the hosts, Stephanie Siemiller and Chris Leary . . . not so much. This show is not currently scheduled, which is rarely a good sign.

CHEAT: I watch and enjoy this show for the game tips and tricks, but I could do with less of the supposed comedy skits on the part of host, Cory Rouse.

X-PLAY: Good, but Adam Sessler and Morgan Webb need to cut back on the so-called comedy skits and concentrate more on the reviews.

ELECTRONIC PLAYGROUND: Victor Lucas, Tommy Tallarico, Julie Stoffer, Geoff Keighley, and Jade Raymond conduct interviews with industry insiders and while the talent acts silly, the industry people are serious enough that the finished product is actually quite good. THUNDERBIRDS: Originally aired on Saturday 2nd October 1965 and the last time it was seen on terrestrial British TV screens was in 1993 (BBC 2) The interesting difference is that the episodes that air on G4TechTV have been given the Pop-Up Videos treatment with tidbits about the series.

The Bad:

ARENA: Lee Reherman and Kevin Pereira often seem bored, disinterested, can't wait to cash their checks. For me, a show like this should include more critiques of play style and the interviews with the winners should concentrate on how the gamers achieved their win. FILTER: Diane Mizota is attractive enough and she reads the script well enough. If G4 would remove the lists and add more interviews, they'd have a show worth watching. This is another of the supposed comedy skit shows.

G4TV.COM: Tina Wood and Laura Foy are good at questioning callers, but they often interrupt guests and need to listen more.

The Ugly:

SWEAT: Horses sweat . . . 'nuff said about this show.

PLAYERS: Why would I care what game some overpaid so-called celebrity likes to play?

JUDGEMENT DAY: I find Victor Lucas to be a fairly solid host (he should look at his interviewee more and into the camera less) and Tommy Tallarico varies from barely acceptable to coarse, crude, and not worth watching.

The Indifferent:

FUTURE FIGHTING MACHINES: I'm not a military-type, so I don't watch this show.

ROBOT WARS: Radio-controlled lawnmowers leave me cold.

The Fondly Remembered:

INVENT THIS!: A good show, a bit quirky, but always interesting. The last new episode aired on 07/05/2004.

NERD NATION: I enjoyed the diversity of what's considered nerdy. The last new episode aired on 06/05/2004.

EYE DROPS: Weird, wild, wacky, and worthwhile. The last new episode aired on 08/20/2004.

CALL FOR HELP and THE original SCREEN SAVERS: Where have you gone, Leo and Pat? Our nation turns it's lonely eyes to you (woo, woo, woo)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TechTV>

<http://www.betainfoguide.com/Tidbits.htm#timeline>

<http://www.colortini.com/index2.html>

<http://www.tiscali.co.uk/technology/timeline/1972.html>

http://www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center/sloan/DAR/timeline.html

<http://www.transistor.org/collection/sony/sony31.html>

<http://www.makeyougohmm.com/pivotblg/entry.php?id=779>

<http://news.designtechnica.com/talkback37.html>

<http://www.digitalnetworksna.com/replaytv/default.asp>

<http://www.leoville.tv/radio/>

<http://www.g4techtv.com/>

http://pages.prodigy.net/dianamorris/tech_tv.htm

<http://grc.com/media.htm>

<http://www.thunderbirdsonline.com/site/>

http://www.compukiss.com/populartopics/tech_gadgetshtm/article1184.htm

The Costume Closet



Some thoughts on Stage Costumes

by Randall Whitlock

I began the Costume Closet column two years ago with a discussion of “Hall Costumes,” which are those worn by congoers to any and all convention events for their own fun and amusement. The reciprocal of the hall costume is the “Stage Costume.” Stage costumes are worn for presentation at a convention masquerade.

What is a Masquerade?

To the SF convention culture, the masquerade is a costume competition, usually held on Saturday evening of a convention, on a stage in the hotel ballroom. The stage is surrounded on one or more sides by the audience. The layout is not unlike a fashion show. Competitors enter the stage, show their costume, and exit. The presentations are introduced by a master of ceremonies and accompanied by as much technical support as the convention can provide, which may include music and lighting effects. The costume presentations are rated by a panel of judges, with the best in various categories awarded ribbons or other prizes. At smaller cons, the masquerade may be combined with a dance or other evening events. At the largest cons, the masquerade can last all evening.

The 20-Foot Rule

A stage costume will be seen by a seated audience at some distance. Few, if any, of them will be close enough to see the fine details of your costume. To make a good impression, your costume should have bolder, broader lines and features than most hall costumes. This is called the “20-foot rule.” Anything that can’t be seen clearly from 20 feet will not register with the audience.

The bigger the masquerade, the more this rule of thumb applies. For a huge masquerade, like Worldcon, your whole body may not be big enough. Many presentations at giant masquerades compensate by making the costume outlines broader and taller with wings or other features. Other presentations include many persons performing together. Lots of motion in your presentation can help to fill a large stage.

Just because your first audience will not see the details is not a reason to skimp on them. Most masquerades give awards for workmanship. You’ll have your chance to show fine features of your costume to the judges in a close-up interview. A retired stage costume often becomes a hall costume, where your

friends will see it one-on-one.

Competing Up

Once you have put all that time and effort into building a first-rate stage costume, it would be a pity to show it only once. Hence masquerade competitors follow a tradition called, “Competing Up.” A successful costume that has been presented at a local convention (like CopperCon) might be shown again at a regional convention (like Westercon) and thence at a national or worldwide convention (like Worldcon), much as plays can be tried out in regional theaters before going to Broadway. Costumes that have won awards at larger conventions are not generally entered in competition at smaller conventions. This is more a matter of sportsmanship than an actual, written rule. Costumes from large masquerades, however, are often shown out of competition (also called “For Display Only”) at smaller masquerades.

Stage Presence

The most successful masquerade presentations are those where the contestants plays a character, rather than simply acts as a walking coat rack. This can be very, very subtle. You don’t need a lavish sketch or dance to show your costume on the stage — a fashion show walk-across across is plenty — but the audience and judges will pick up your body language. Practice moving in your costume until it feels natural. Let the costume help you project the air of being an entirely different person!

ReAnimation

- ***** Batman The Animated Series Volume One
- *** Sakura Wars
- *** Bionicle 2 - Legends of Metru Nut
- *** Ikki-Tousen Vol 1 - Legendary Fighter
- *** Ikki-Tousen Vol 2 - Historic Battles
- *** Kim Possible - The Villain Files
- ***** RahXephon Vol 1 Threshold
- ***** RahXephon Vol. 2 - Tonal Pattern
- **** RahXephon Vol. 3 - Harmonic
- **** Lupin the 3rd Volume 3 - Family Jewels
- **** Lupin the 3rd Volume 4 - Thieves Paradise
- **** Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discovering Numbers & Counting
- ** Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discovering Letters & Words

- ***** Batman The Animated Series Volume One Warner Brothers, 625 min, NR DVD \$44.98

I usually hate spam e-mail, but when Amazon.com notified me that the first 28 episodes of *Batman The Animated Series* were available as a DVD boxed set, I jumped on it.

Batman The Animated Series was broadcast from 1992 to 1995 on the Fox

network and later on Kids WB and the Cartoon Network. To my mind, this is the best treatment Batman has ever received on any screen. At last, people who really understood the character and his foes The series had first-rate writing, famous voice actors, thoroughly integrated background music and a uniquely dark look obtained by painting the backgrounds on black paper

The series was inspired by the first two Tim Burton-directed *Batman* films, but goes far beyond. The fuzzy time setting (with steam trains and high-tech computer networks) and odd architecture of Gotham City are retained from the movies. Eventually the influence went the other way, with the Mr. Freeze story created for the animated series incorporated into the Governor’s portrayal of the character in *Batman and Robin*. The story continuity that began with this series continues today in Cartoon Network’s *Justice League Unlimited*.

Commentary and documentary features included in the boxed set relate how Bruce Timm and Eric Radomski, confident from the success of *Tiny Toon Adventures*, produced a short demo film to show the network executives what could be done. This film is included in the collection, as well as audio commentary on two episodes.

Volume Two should be available by the time this review hits the press. - Randall Whitlock

*** Sakura Wars GENEON, 85 mins, 13 up DVD \$29.98

Description: “The Imperial Fighting Troupe is called again to defend Tokyo against the demons. However, this time, the Douglas-Stewart Company is selling a superior fighting machine that will revolutionize Japan’s defense and make the Flower Division obsolete. However, the girls suspect something may be wrong when members of their team begin to vanish But what can they do when their division has been placed on indefinite stand-by status?”

The animation is superb. Unfortunately the translation of the dialogue seems to have gaps and I found the story was hard to follow since I had not seen the TV series and thus was not familiar with the characters. As a movie there should have bee some sort of explanation of the characters and their motivations so that it could stand alone. I’d say this is good for a fan of the series but it wasn’t too much fun for me. - Stephanie L Bannon

*** Bionicle 2 - Legends of Metru Nut Buena Vista, 70 mins, PG DVD \$29.99

Bionicle 2- Legends of Metru Nut follows 2003’s *Bionicle: Mask of Light* continuing the Lego movies series designed to promote their line of toy robot warriors. This is actually a prequel to

(Continued on page 18)

HEXACON 15

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*Special gaming and events for Pre-registered members starts Thursday, Aug 4 Tempe Mission Palms, Tempe, AZ

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Gaming starts at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug 5 and runs non-stop until Sunday, August 7th at 7 p.m.

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Email: hex15@hexacon.org

ReAnimation (Continued from page 17)

Mask of Light, and tells the origin story of the Toa, young people in the city of Metro Nut who are chosen to be transformed physically in order to protect their home.

I borrowed my 9 year old nephew for this one since he is a fan of the toys. He was entranced and watched it four times over that weekend. The story didn't really hold my interest but the animation was beautiful. My suggestion is to get this for the youngsters in your family but if there are no kids in your family you can probably give this one a pass. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

***** Ikki-Tousen Vol 1 -
Legendary Fighter
GENEON/Pioneer 100 min, 16 Up
DVD \$29.98**

From the back cover: "Once again blood flows in the streets of Kanto. The eternal fate that has been handed down for over 1,800 years is now being fought by ancient warriors who have been reincarnated into the students of the seven top schools.

One such student, Hakufu Sonsaku, arrives on the scene and is rumored to be the legendary Shou Haou (the one who is said to be the one to defeat many in battle). But can this blonde air-head with the overly-endowed assets actually be the legendary Shou Haou?"

Contains episodes 1 thru 4 of 13. Well the plot is poor, but the fighting is so-so good. Too many sex shots, way over done. This was done for Japanese TV in 2003. It has very good English dubbing and audio sound tracks. The scripting is very well done. - **Craig L Dyer**

***** Ikki-Tousen Vol 2 - Historic Battles
GENEON/Pioneer 75 min, 16 Up
DVD \$29.98**

From the back cover: "After her defeat by the honorable Taishigi, Hakufu takes it upon herself to fight even harder to reach the top. Even as the tournament's battles rage on, the head of each school plots to defeat the others by manipulating their pawns into battling each other. Will Hakufu become an unwitting tool, or will she be able to control the warrior spirit growing inside her?"

Ikki-tousen is based off of the book *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, but does not do it justice. This DVD covers episodes 5 thru 7. There is more fighting on this DVD. All the actor's voices fit their roles well. The plot is slow and the crude jokes are just as bad. The fighting of the girls where their clothes are cut away is just badly done. Definitely earns it's 16 up rating.

Maybe the next 6 episodes will get better? I would rent this one first. - **Craig L Dyer**

***** Kim Possible - The Villain Files
Disney, 87 mins, G
DVD \$19.99**

From the back cover: "The world's coolest teen crime fighter is at it again as she and her trusted sidekick Ron Stop-pable keep the world safe from more seriously wacko bad guys in *Kim Possible: The Villain Files*. It's big-time fun as Kim Possible takes on Duff Killigan, Senor Senior Sr., and a host of other archenemies in this super series of adventures.

Experience four awesome Kim Possible missions, including a never-before-seen episode starring the dreaded Dr. Drakken as he unveils his plot to take over the planet. In other action, Kim tries to predict her perfect mate and finds herself in humiliation nation when she literally almost dies of embarrassment. It's way cool action you don't want to miss."

I borrowed my 7 year old niece for this one, she loved it and while I was not as enthralled the stories were cute and the animation is excellent. While I am unlikely to sit down and watch it on my own it was a good choice to share with my niece. A good addition to your kid's DVD collection or a really nice gift idea for the younger kids in your family. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

******* RahXephon Vol 1 Threshold
ADV Films, 125 min, 15 Up
DVD \$29.98**

From the back cover: "The city of Tokyo has been overthrown, taken over by the Mu, invaders who have devastated the rest of the planet. Within the domed walls of the city, however, time flows in a different path, and none of the citizens even know they've been conquered. Outside Tokyo, the remnants of the human race have fought a desperate 15-year war against the Mu, knowing only that the key to victory lies within the occupied city. But no one has been able to get into Tokyo-until Ayato Kamina, a young resident fleeing a horrifying attack on the city, unwittingly breaks out. An extraordinary mystery unfolds as Ayato confronts a world he has never known, and begins to learn the horrifying secrets of RahXephon, a humanoid super weapon which apparently only he can control."

This volume contains the first 5 of 26 episodes. *RahXephon* has been acclaimed for its innovative music and animation as well as its complex plot and character development. The animation is crisp and clear and the mechas are very original in design. You will need to pay close attention to the action because if you don't you will lose some of the plot and character development. Well worth buying. - **Craig L Dyer**

******* RahXephon Vol. 2 -
Tonal Pattern
ADV Films, 125 min, 15 Up
DVD \$29.98**

From the back cover: "As the Mu launch a succession of attacks against the free world, TERRA is forced to use their

secret weapon, the RahXephon, despite the reluctance of its pilot. Lost in time and trapped in a world he thought had been destroyed, Ayato must confront both a new wave of Dolem and his suspicions that he is only a pawn in a much larger game. The mysterious advances of the girl known as Quon and the reappearance of a supposedly dead friend are only a few of the many mysteries that must be unraveled in the second collection of *RahXephon*."

Contains episodes 6 thru 10. This volume has more character development even as the plot thickens.

So far this series is great. But I would watch them in order. - **Craig L Dyer**

****** RahXephon Vol. 3 - Harmonic
ADV Films, 100 min, 15 Up
DVD \$29.98**

From the back cover: "Just when Ayato thought he had finally learned the truth, the walls between the world of the Mu and our own "real" world begin to crumble once more. With the enigmatic Quon and Reika as guides, he must discover the truth of his own nature or be forever trapped inside a prison of his own dreams. Reality and fantasies intertwine in nightmarish rhythm, but the ultimate horror is yet to come as the fabric of time and space itself begins to unravel in the third volume of *RahXephon*!"

Contains episodes 11 thru 13. This series is directed by Yutaka Izubuchi who is known for the *Patlabor* series.

This is one of the most interesting and intriguing anime series I've seen. I have

watched half of the episodes and this has been great. But now I have to go out and buy the next 4 DVD's. - **Craig L Dyer**

**Lupin the 3rd
**** Volume 3 - Family Jewels
****Volume 4 - Thieves Paradise
GENEON, 125 mins each, 13 up
DVD \$24.99 each**

Family Jewels Description: "Lupin and his pals run afoul of fake gems, cursed jewels and rare stones in their latest capers! Fujiko nearly gets married, zombies come out to play and just for a switch, someone's impersonating Lupin! From San Francisco to Jamaica, Inspector Zenigata is determined to capture Lupin, whether he committed the crimes or not!"

Thieves' Paradise Description: "Lupin is such a nice guy, but everywhere he goes, he runs into trouble! After "appropriating" a birthday present for Fujiko, helping Goemon avenge his slain mentor, and accepting a challenge from the world's leading safe manufacturer, Lupin, Jigen and the rest end up on in a paradise filled with beautiful women - who are all out to kill Lupin."

These two volumes are from the second season of the TV series. The series follows our hero Lupin, the world's greatest thief, and his cohorts, crack shot Jigen, super-samurai Goemon, and sexy Fujiko, as they travel around the world, pulling off incredible heists and impossible escapes. Even though they never manage to actually hold onto the loot they always manage to escape their nemesis, Inspector Zenigata of Interpol.

(Continued on page 19)

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ReAnimation (Continued from page 18)

The animation is crude by today's standards but this is still a favorite of mine for the humor and the characters. Definitely a good addition to my collection. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

******Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discovering Numbers & Counting**
****Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discovering Letters & Words**
Buena Vista, 30 mins each, NR DVD \$19.99 each

These two titles are aimed at kids under 6 though based on my test audience only the younger ones, 18 months to 3 years, will enjoy it. Older kids may find them boring.

In *Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discover-*

ing Numbers & Counting Christopher Robin has a party and informs his friends that they must each count out 10 items in order to attend. Pooh and Roo get upset because they do not know how to count so Owl teaches them with a song that tells them "Every number has its own name, and each number has to be in the right order." The rest of the gang join in and soon Pooh and Roo can count.

This worked well with the younger kids and they wanted to watch it over and over all afternoon. They seemed to be

picking up the idea of counting so in that respect it also worked as a teaching aid as well as entertainment.

In *Winnie The Pooh 1-2-3 - Discovering Letters & Words* autumn has come to the Hundred Acre Woods, and it is a perfect time for Christopher Robin to read the ABC book to Pooh. But when Pooh borrows the book it gets blown away so he and his friends decide to rewrite the book themselves.

This one seemed to work OK as entertainment but I question it's educational value since only five letters are covered (P, R, T, O, E).

Both are good additions to your child's video collection, though they will need something else to help if you want them to learn the whole alphabet. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

In Our Book

Rite of Conquest
by Judith Tarr
Roc Fantasy; 375pp, \$16

This fabulously rich and intriguing historical fantasy deals with the life and times of William the Conqueror and his wife Mathilda of Flanders.

It's a wonderful magical look at how William of Normandy became the Conqueror and King of England.

Since this is fantasy, Ms. Tarr has a great deal of fun developing the events that led to the Battle of Hastings. And they are so deliciously steeped in magic and ancient rituals along with the more contemporary rituals of the Catholic Church of the time. This is one of things I find I like best about Ms. Tarr's take on history: that Christianity and the Old Ways could blend together for the benefit of all, and that the Old Ways were not the workings of the Dark. (Unless of course we are dealing with dark magic.) That archbishops of influential bishoprics are frequently, in her histories, more than just titular heads of the Church.

And of course, in this particular novel, that a King-to-be is more than a mere Duke of Normandy.

William of Normandy was born with a great deal of magic having been conceived on a midwinter's night beneath an oak sacred to the Druids. As Ms. Tarr has Mathilda say when she meets him: "You are goddess-born, the year-king's child." You don't get much more magic than that.

However magically conceived and thus imbued with strong magic, William's life is not an easy one. But his trials of course just temper the steel of his spirit, readying him for his fateful confrontation with King Harold at Hastings in 1066.

And Mathilda is his inner heart and strength, and according to Ms. Tarr's notes, theirs was an unusual marriage in that they apparently were openly in love with the other, something that was very uncommon at the time, especially in high born marriages.

This connection makes it easier for Mathilda as she becomes his teacher in the Old Ways so that when he confronts the bound magic of England, and Harold at Hastings, he is ready.

Oh, the magic that is weaved through this tale, the spirits and kobolds, sprites and the Horned King and the Guardians of Gaul and England. The "straight lines" which are magical roads from here to there and back again, slipping easily through time and weather. There's a little of everything here to delight you: battles, romance and magic. - **Sue Martin**

Polaris
By: Jack McDevitt
Ace, 370pp, \$24.95

In the far distant future, two stars collide in one hell of a great fireworks show. The *Polaris* is one of many ships sent to record and view the event. The *Polaris* is notable as it carries 6 dignitaries of galaxy level importance to view this event. After the event the ship does not return. A search and rescue operation

(Continued on page 20)

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Literary Concepts in Fantasy and Sci-Fi

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In Our Book (Continued from page 19)

finds the ship, but nobody is left onboard her. They simply seemed to have vanished.

That was 60 years ago; the mystery of what happened is one of the great ghost stories of the time. During a celebration event and auction to sell off items recovered from the ship a bomb goes off. Right after this, everyone with items from the ship starts having things happen to them. It seems somebody does not want this event to resurface.

In our story, humanity has spread out to populate a great number of worlds. One such world, “Rimway” is the setting for most of this book. While this book contains a space backdrop, most of it happens on this planet and this book could have just as easily been done in a modern setting here on Earth.

At the heart of the book is a mystery, and our leading characters Alex Benedict and his associate Chase Kalpath are akin to an amateur Sherlock Homes and Dr. Watson. The story is told as if Chase is writing her memoirs, and thus allows you to see inside her head and feel what she is experiencing throughout the book.

My only complaint would be that this book is a bit predictable, but I thought it was a good read nevertheless. It also portrayed a good view of a society that has so many high tech toys you barely need to do anything yourself. Again, if you’re looking for a great science fiction novel this may not be it, but it does bridge the gap between sci-fi and mystery, and overall the story holds interest until the end. - **Ivan C. Erickson**

The Shadow of Saganami By David Weber Baen 2004 Hardcover, 735 pp, \$26

Mr. Weber has begun a new series in the Honor Harrington Universe which he calls “The Saganami Island series.” *The Shadow of Saganami*, the first of the series, is a stand alone novel, not a piece of a super novel though there are elements which will allow a continuing story arc involving many of the same basic villains and heroes.

This book continues development of the drama caused by Jordin Kare’s discovery of the new Lynx Terminus of the Manticore Wormhole Junction. This opened up a new trade route to the edge of the Solarian Federation. Complicating matters is the renewed war between Manticore and the Republic of Haven. Resources are stretched thin. The Solarians plot with corporations and interstellar slavers to wipe out the under strength Manticoran garrisons at Lynx and the nearby Talbott Cluster. They back political movements in the Talbott cluster seeking to undermine support for the plebiscite asking for admission to the Star Kingdom of Manticore. They build up the military of an ambitious local republic.

The Fat is in the Fire. The story is built from many different viewpoints. We see things through the eyes of the newly graduated Saganami Island Cadets on their Midshipman Cruise, through the eyes of the Solarian political operative known as the Firebrand and through the eyes of operatives on both sides at all

levels. The technique works very well.

The characters are cleanly drawn and are not cut from stock templates. The five cadets, Helen Zilwicki, Paulo D’Arezzo, Aikawa Kagiya, Ragnhild Pavletic and Leopold Stottmeister, are real to you having talents and flaws to match. We have Helen, daughter of a certified military hero and a super spy. Next is the magnificently handsome Paulo, genetically engineered to be a pleasure slave. The other cadets are equally captivating.

The villains are equally wonderful. The maniacal Agnes Norbrandt, leader of the Kornati Freedom Alliance leaves bodies and debris scattered across her home planet without a qualm.. The conscientious Steve Westman, leader of the Montana Independence Movement is quite different. Upon meeting him you wonder if he belongs where he is. The delightfully slippery Firebrand, agent the Solarians is worthy of much study. He is your quintessential amoral servant of the state. There are many more and varied villains and heroes.

In the military there are two delightfully drawn head honchos, Captain Aivara Terekhov of the HMS Hexapuma and Admiral Augustus Khumalo, Commanding Officer of Talbott Station. Khumalo is your bureaucratic administrative type with little initiative. You don’t expect much from him. Terekhov is your dedicated talented officer from whom you expect much. He delivers; but whether the enemy will be deterred effectively depends on Khumalo.

The novel is compelling and I recommend it though Mr. Weber includes his usual wealth of extraneous detail and his excessive historical parallels. When I recognize the parallel he is using I am fascinated, when I do not ... Anyway The book is excellent. I will continue reading him in spite his failure to write exactly as I would have him do. – **Gary Swaty**

Starfist: A World of Hurt by David Sherman and Dan Cragg Del Ray, 312 pp, \$19.95

While this is the 10th book in the military SciFi *Starfist* series, the authors take the time at the beginning of the book to develop the characters so that a first time reader of the series can immediately grasp what is occurring.

The book runs two story lines that converge on a single planet, Maugham’s Station. The 34th FIST (Fleet Initial Strike Team, aka Marines) is sent to the planet to deal with what they think are the alien invaders, (Skinks) first encountered in a previous volume. A number of the inhabitants of Maugham’s Station have been killed in unexplored regions of the planet by something that uses acid to dissolve the flesh from the bodies. The Skinks are the first intelligent and hostile force that humans have encountered in their expansion across the galaxy, and they use jets of acid as weapons, hence the reason to send in the Marines.

At the same time this story is unfolding, the authors create an almost humorous secondary tale of the “mighty” We’re Here navy. The We’re Here navy is chasing pirates that are stealing ore from a planet that We’re Here feels is under their influence. The We’re Here admiral thinks that Maugham’s Station is up to their ears

in the thefts and sets out to invade and teach them a lesson. Of course, the We’re Here navy doesn’t know of the arrival of the 34th FIST which adds a bit of unexpected trouble to their invasion plans. In the end, the 34th FIST is triumphant over all adversaries.

For those who enjoy military based stories this is a fast paced enjoyable book. The military background of both authors provides realism to the story. They really show that it is the people in the service that make the military what it is. Semper Fi – **Mark Phillips**

Nocturne by Elaine Bergstrom Ace Fantasy, 377 pp, \$6.50

I wouldn’t normally pick up just any old vampire story but this one seemed different and I am so glad I took a chance. Ms Bergstrom is quite a bit edgier than Yarbrow and a lot less grim than Rice. This is a wonderfully complex story with fully-developed characters that seem to take over the story.

In “*Nocturne*”, we meet Richard and Patrick, twins, who are the first children born to the Austra family in decades. Their mother was once human and chose to change to her husband’s life – the life of *vampyr*. Richard seems fated to meet and love Irena, a gifted operatic soprano who is a refugee from Romania. There are enough secrets and strange family relationships in this story to impress a Mafia family. Irena has the potential to make the same change as Richard’s mother and be capable of bearing children

to the family. But she is equally important to others, outside of the family; who are aware of her potential and need it for their own family.

It is not, unfortunately, a perfect book. I did not care for how Ms. Bergstrom structured her story-telling. There is a confusing prologue where Richard is introduced but by his childhood name – Dickie – which gave me some small confusion trying to place the characters. I couldn’t see the use for the prologue; I don’t think it added anything to the story. The critical facts could have been given to the reader more simply. She gives Richard a voice through most of the book but often tripped me up by changing voice to his twin, Patrick. She did give warning in the chapter heading but I would get so caught up in the story that I ignored the chapter headings. Patrick was treated as a walk-on character and I would have enjoyed reading a parallel story to get to know him better.

This book is part of several books about the Austra family who left Romania to find lives within human society. One of my strongest criticisms about sequels or serials is that once past the introductory first novel, the author depends on what has gone before and the new reader jumping into the middle is lost. Ms. Bergstrom doesn’t do that. I didn’t realize until deep into the novel that I was in the middle; she gave me all the background and information I needed in a very smooth, sophisticated manner. I will happily read more about the Austra family. – **Catherine Book**

(Continued on page 21)

ConRunners 10 **February 26, 2005** **Embassy Suites Phoenix North** 2577 W Greenway Rd, Room 3005

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We will provide coffee, tea, some soda and light snacks

In Our Book (Cont'd from page 20)

Dragon's Kin
by Anne & Todd McCaffrey
Del Rey, 292 pp, \$24.95

I am, of course, a die-hard Pern fan; I couldn't turn down a Pern book anymore than I could turn down good chocolate. But I was a bit ambivalent – I admit it – about reading a Pern novel written by someone other than Anne so it sat on my shelf for a bit. I should not have worried so. I also wondered what more could be said about Pern and dragonkind.

Anne and Todd leave the weyrs and go down into a coal mining settlement with common folk for this story. But there is an uncommon boy and girl living in this particular settlement. Tragedy strikes (as it tends to do on Pern); the boy, Kindan, loses his entire family and turns to the Camp's Harper for security. The girl, Nuella, is the daughter of the Camp's leader and due to her handicap is hidden by her father lest she bring shame and distrust to him and his plans to make the Camp a true Crafthold. In the middle of this is a story of what exactly is a watch-her. As it happens, knowledge of why

watch-whers were bred and for what purpose was lost as was so much other ancient knowledge. Folk like the miners, use the watch-whers without truly understanding their nature. But since the only person in their camp who had any understanding of the watch-her (Kindan's father) is dead along with the watch-her as well, it is now up to Kindan to train a new watch-her. For Kindan, the process is one of trial and error for both him and his baby watch-her. However, with Nuella's unique insight the two of them are in a singular position to see the watch-her's true potential without the handicap of conditioned ignorance. They have no one watching over their shoulder to tell them that something won't work.

This is a fine young-adult novel that manages to keep to the tradition of Pern stories. My single criticism is that I was unable to date the story in the Pernese chronology. I would have appreciated more references so I could place the story within other stories occurring at the same time elsewhere on Pern. The writing was seamless; I did not feel any moment of change or dislocation when a different writer picked up the pen. I look forward to seeing what Todd can do on his own – "*Dragonsblood*" is due out next Spring. – Catherine Book

Absolution Gap
by Alastair Reynolds
Ace Books, 565 pages, \$24.95

This is the final volume in Reynolds's trilogy and completes the story of *Revelation Space*, and *Redemption Ark*. The story

in *Absolution Gap* is complex and bounces back and forth between multiple times and settings. There is a planet Ararat, with a sea full of organisms that can take over the minds of humans, home to a refugee colony of humans; an airless world, Hela, where people either live underground or in self-sustaining moving buildings, and a spaceship captained by a cruel "woman" looking for lost artifacts. And, if this is not enough to keep the reader absorbed, the author introduces other characters and causes throughout the book.

The basis for the story is that the spread of humans into space has precipitated attacks by machines that are designed to destroy any civilization that has advanced enough to go into space. Great battles rage in space, entire worlds are destroyed and humanity is fighting for its very existence.

The humans on Ararat have existed on the planet for 20 years while hiding from the killing machines, but times are changing and they are forced to once again flee. They are given instructions by an unborn child who has powers to see into the future, and head for the planet

Hela where "salvation" awaits.

Meanwhile on Hela, Quaiche has seen what he feels is a miracle when he witnesses the planet's sun disappear for a brief instant. He has formed a religion based on moving giant vehicles, "cathedrals," to keep them under the planets gas giant in hopes of again seeing the miracle of the disappearance.

Also, on Hela a young woman, Rashmika, is trying to reach the cathedrals in an effort to find her brother and to determine the truth of the miracle. Rashmika has unusual powers and includes the ability to tell if someone is being truthful. Her search brings her into contact with the power of Quaiche and his "religion."

The author weaves the stories between time and space till finally they all converge on Hela for the conclusion of the saga. I felt that the author left the ending somewhat vague, leaving much to the imagination of the reader and, of course, as an opening for additional books along this same line.

I had not read the first two volumes of this story and found myself somewhat lost as to what was happening for about the

first 50 pages. I was surprised when I determined that the numbers on the sub-chapter headings were, in fact, dates and not just astrological locations. I enjoyed the story and was interested in where it was heading; but, if you don't know what Ultra, baseline human, pig, inhibitor or conjoiner are, then you should think of reading the other volumes of this series before opening this book. – Mark Phillips

Hybrids
by Robert Sawyer
Tor, 396 pp, \$24.95

"Hybrids" is the third in The Neanderthal Parallax series, preceded by "*Hominids*" and "*Humans*." In the first book we are introduced to Ponter, a Neanderthal scientist who, with his partner, was working on a quantum-computing experiment involving alternate universes when their quantum computer found and accessed our universe. Ponter fell through and the gateway closed. Ponter's presence in an underground secure facility caused no end of questions until an expert on

(Continued on page 22)

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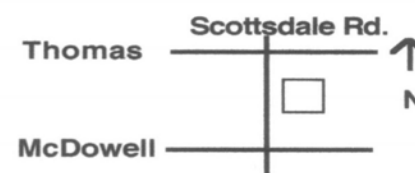
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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 21)

Neanderthal DNA, Mary, was called to determine what he really was. Once she pronounced him Neanderthal the game changed. Now he was no longer a potential terrorist but a media marvel. Meanwhile, in his universe, his partner is charged with murder even though a body can't be found. The book entertained and romanced me so easily that I immediately picked up the next book and dove right in.

In “*Humans*”, Sawyer explores the growing romance between Ponter and Mary and the confusing familial relationships of the Neanderthal culture as Ponter introduces Mary to his family. Ponter and his partner discover a way to keep the gateway open which gives easy access between the universes. Both universes are eager to trade ideas and technology. Sawyer paints a vivid picture of our Earth under the care of the Neanderthals. The theory is that some 40,000 years ago the universe diverged. In one universe, homo sapiens achieved awareness or true intelligence and in the other, the Neanderthals won the lottery. In each, the other species died out. On the surface, the differences seem simplistic: we became an agricultural society and destroyed much of our environment in an attempt to control it. The Neanderthals never developed agriculture and remained a hunter/gatherer society. Their need to protect and conserve their resources led to a less exploited environment. In their universe, there is no pollution from fossil fuels; all the species that homo sapiens hunted to extinction still exist. The Neanderthals realized several generations earlier that population control was absolutely necessary (only so many hunters to so many acres), so their world is under-populated. And yet, the differences run much deeper. Sawyer blends stories and events from each universe to explore the cultural and sexual differences between these fundamentally different, yet both human, societies. He discusses some fascinating ideas of why we do what we do.

In the third novel, “*Hybrids*”, the title itself suggests the story's direction. Ponter and Mary have proclaimed their love but despair of ever having a child since their physiologies are incompatible. However, the discovery of a proscribed device give them an unprecedented opportunity. Now they can actually “design” the perfect child with the best attributes of each species. Sawyer does use a clichéd storyline to give his novel somewhere to go while he discusses his scientific theories. A homo sapien male sees the device as an opportunity to exploit the Neanderthal's “Garden of Eden” and Mary, Ponter and friends have to race against time to stop his nefarious scheme. But I didn't mind – really! I usually hate authors who use their stories to preach their favorite theories from a soapbox. But Sawyer is so charming while he's about it, that I not only didn't mind, I truly enjoyed the lectures. The science is not so dense that I couldn't follow it; in fact, he explained his ideas so smoothly that I could clearly understand the logic. What I want to know is: how much of what he told me is actually possible... does any of this technology exist yet... and, most

fascinatingly – could our ability to imagine ‘higher beings’ such as gods be *physiological*? {Mr. Sawyer is our guest at the next CopperCon this coming September. I will make sure there is a panel to discuss these books. So, read ‘em and bring your arguments and outraged sensibilities and we'll have a place to vent.} – **Catherine Book**

The Orpheus Industry
by Jennie Kermode
Double Dragon Publishing, 234 pages,
\$5.99
www.double-dragon-ebooks.com

Oscar MacIntyre is a young Scottish rock guitarist and songwriter. Some things are the same everywhere, even in a world still ruled by the close presence of the gods of classical Greece. There are always those who will exploit a rising talent for their own purposes. As he grows accustomed to the trappings of fame, Oscar finds himself caught in a love triangle between sun-god Apollo, who holds his recording contract among other things, and Persephone, the recently dethroned goddess of spring and the dead. In the meantime he manages to accomplish some serious drinking. The story literally goes to hell about three-quarters of the way through, but that's where the pace really picks up.

I found the novel difficult to get into at first because of the language. Not the F-bombs (though there are plenty of those), but rather the sentence fragments and other sloppy grammar. A few chapters into the story, I came to see this as a deliberate device to define character. Our Hero is simply not very bright. The story is imaginative and I see good things ahead for the author, though I recommend the services of an experienced editor.

To my mind, the book is to be rated a hard “R” for language and strong ambulo-sexual content (This is my new word for a character who will mate with anything that moves).

The Orpheus Industry is distributed as an electronic book by Double Dragon Publishing, which offers a wide variety of titles. Some books are priced as low as one dollar. The e-books can be downloaded in most of the common formats, including Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Reader. - **Randall Whitlock**

The Rowan Gant Series
by M. R. Sellars
Harm None
Willowtree Press, 380 pp, \$8.95
Never Burn A Witch
Willowtree Press, 380 pp, \$8.95
Perfect Trust
Willowtree Press, 369 pp, \$8.95
The Law of Three
Willowtree Press, 327 pp, \$12.95
Crone's Moon
Willowtree Press, 332 pp, \$12.95

The synopsis of the series from the web site states: “The series follows the life of Rowan Gant, practicing Witch and self-employed computer consultant; his freelance photographer wife Felicity; his best friend Ben Storm, a homicide detective for the city of St. Louis; and a host of other colorful-- and true to life-- characters. The unfortunate thing for

Rowan is that when the dead choose to speak, he hears their whispers. Compelled to listen, he is left with no choice but to help, and that is when things start to happen. Character driven and filled with action, these novels are an entertaining blend of dark, police procedural thrillers with actual Pagan dynamics and concepts-- And, of course, a healthy dash of Magick.”

The series begins with **Harm None** which introduces us to most of our regular characters, Homicide detective Ben Storm, Rowan Gant, a practicing witch, and his wife Felicity, Detective Carl Deckert and FBI Agent Constance Mandalay. There has been a murder in St Louis and finding “occult” overtones Ben turns to Rowan for advice. It turns out the victim was a former student of Rowan's and now she speaking to Rowan in an attempt to help find her murderer before he strikes again.

Never Burn A Witch is the second entry in the series and introduces Eldon Porter, a foe who is determined to stamp out the non-believers of St Louis. He is following the Malleus Maleficarum that was used by the Inquisition and recreating their methods of torture and execution. Once again Rowan is contacted from beyond but the ties this time are not just to the dead but to those who are Eldon's current victims putting both Rowan's life and sanity on the line.

Perfect Trust in the third book in this series. Rowan hasn't completely gotten over the events of the previous book, in fact he finds he is sleepwalking and even ends up at a murder scene without knowing how he got there. Rowan keeps channeling the dead cheerleader who seems to be more in control than Rowan is and ll the while the body count rises. We meet Ben's sister Helen in this book, a woman who may be more than she seems at first glance.

The Law of Three has the return of Eldon Porter who is out for revenge on the man who got away, Rowan Gant. Catching him is complicated by the new person in charge of the Major Case Squad, one Lt. Barbara Albright who almost seems more sympathy for Eldon than she does for the victims.

Crone's Moon, the fifth entry. In the months since the climatic confrontation between Eldon Porter and Rowan, life has been quiet. Rowan begins to hope his psychic connection to the other world has passed. But his hope is in vain as he starts having seizures... a murder victim is calling him to the scene of the crime and this time it is not just his life and sanity that is at stake.

While this series is technically a mystery series, as opposed to fantasy or science fiction, the supernatural themes of psychic powers, victims that speak from the grave and magick are ones that will appeal to our readers. I saw **Harm None** advertised on Amazon.com and contacted the author for a review copy. He quite generously sent me the entire series, I am so glad he did. From the first page of the first book to the last page of the last one I read them straight through.... they are gripping. Each book, while being a self-contained story, also builds on the previous ones and gives hints of more to come. The characters are becoming more

fleshed out as the series progresses, their friends and family react to the events and Rowan's religion, in a totally believable manner. The plots are fulls of twists and turns that are guaranteed to keep you eagerly turning the page to see what happens next. I did figure out the villain in **Perfect Trust** before Rowan did but the suspense still held due to the interaction between Rowan and the dead cheerleader. The author's skill has clearly grown as the series has continued and he didn't fall into the comfortable rut of letting an insane murderer, Eldon Porter, be Rowan's constant foe. Hopefully he will also avoid having let Lt Albright become a cliché foe as realistic as her reactions tp his faith are. My only complaint, and it is a minor one, is I got tired of the word “gelid” repeatedly being used to describe the cold atmosphere.

I can't wait for the next one in the series. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

An American in England

Part Three: Theatre and Tea in England

by Jeffrey Lu.

Temptations- ice cream or ice coffee? After a death in the family, I needed a break. But where? Where Shakespeare acted? Where T.S. Eliot worked?

Where Samuel Johnson's House still stands? England!

I decided to join a college summer tour group because I did not know England well. I wanted to taste the sights of London but have no clue where and what to do.

Yet, the two-week tour consisted around ten days for the group in watching plays. A good portion were Shakespeare. Some shows were modern. Some were not. Some were very good.

My first show, a musical named, “Anything Goes,” was at Theatre Royal at Drury Lane. The program can be purchased for 3 pounds (around \$6). Being early, I bought one and went to the theatre's bar.

I ordered English Breakfast from an elderly matron.

Without thinking, I drank the hot tea. Like Agatha Christie's novel, a scream came out of nowhere.

Startled, I looked around. Nothing but me and a lady.

The English matron apologized for her outburst. She told me that usually people put cream and/or sugar in their tea. She had never seen anyone drinking the boiling tea, straight up.

I grinned and told her this was okay. I've been drinking tea like this when I was a kid. Hearing warning bells for the musical to open, I left quickly for my seat.

During the intersession, two women came with trays. Curious, I went forward to see what they were carrying. They were selling cups of ice cream for 2 pounds. I bought one.

After the wonderful musical, I went back to my hotel.

Next issue, An American in England Part Four: Wandering in Westminster Abbey

Club Listings

ADRIAN EMPIRE A medieval and renaissance recreationist club. Sword-fighting, arts, banquets, masquerades, dances. meets every Wednesday night from 7-10pm at Encanto Park. All are welcome. Free.

AERIAL MIRAGE JUGGLERS. Meets Wednesday 7-10pm in Encanto Park, 15th Avenue, south of Encanto. No dues, everyone welcome. All levels skill exchange in many areas of object manipulation Dave Davis <aerialmirage@gnerds.com>, 602-955-9446; or Ron Harvey <rbh1s@yahoo.com>, 480-775-4690 for more info or impromptu juggling sessions.

ARIZONA LANBASHERS LEAGUE A collaboration of computer gaming enthusiasts, the Arizona LANbashers League throws quarterly LANparty events. Between parties, support is given to local groups who wish to advertise their own gatherings. We have no set genre of games and play anything from strategy games to first-person shooters to driving/flying simulations. No annual membership is required and admission to an event ranges from \$5-\$15. See our webpage for current events. Email: azlanbashers@earthlink.net Web: www.lanparty.com/all/ VoiceMail: 602-306-9339

THE AWAY TEAM: The Away Team, is a general sci-fi appreciation group that meets once a month for discussion of various sci-fi news regarding several mediums to include: television, movies, video, books, comics, magazines, collecting, and so forth. The meetings are comprised of news, review and comment, BBS/computer news and help, meeting new members, video presentations, games, and socializing fun! Food and drinks are provided, via a \$3 munchie fee (per meeting) to compensate the host. (No other fees are involved.) The electronic home of the Away Team, is the Lightspeed Space Station BBS at (520) 325-6674.... Member ages for the group range from 13-40-something with both male and female members. Other activities include null-modem link gamefests, group theater movie viewings, convention trips and more. Have sci-fi fun in a relaxed, low-structure environment. NO RUBBER EARS ALLOWED!! For questions, you can call the BBS, or write to: LSS c/o R. Martin; 2522 N. Sparkman Blvd.; Tucson, AZ 85716

BASFA Local Tucson science fiction group that puts on TusCon. Contact us at PO Box 2528, Tucson AZ 85702-2528 or basfa@earthlink.net our website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/>

CENTRAL ARIZONA SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY, INC. (CASFS) The non-profit corporation that puts on CopperCon conventions, SmurfCons, HexaCons, occasional regional cons, and publishes Con-Notations. Best described as SF/F generalists with a strong bent towards literary SF/F. Guests welcome - meets at 8pm on the last Friday of each month in January thru September and the second Friday in October, November and December at JB's Restaurant, 2560 W. Indian School in Phoenix, AZ. Write PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or call Stephanie L. Bannon (602)973-2341 for information. Web www.casfs.org

*******C.R.O.F.T.** Celtic Reenactment of Fellowship and Trades is Phoenix based Reenactment group specializing in the western European renaissance. We research lifestyles and trades concurrent with the Celtic Peoples from 400 BC until 1746 AD. We emphasize Scots, Irish or Welsh crafts and do Celtic re-enactment. We open participation to anyone with an interest in period crafting and entertainment. Demonstrations occur at the Highland Games, Scarborough Fair, and the Arizona Renaissance Festival. Web page <http://www.crofters.org> We meet in Tempe at the Pyle Adult Center SW corner of Rural and Southern on the 2nd Saturday of every month, phone number (480)350-5211. The Board meeting will be at 2:00 pm with the General meeting starting at 2:30 pm.

THE DARK ONES (Dark-wunz) n. 1) An organization formed for the expression and exploration of various cultural themes including, but not limited to, the Dark Ages and the Renaissance through forms of art including, but not limited to, painting, drawing, writing, photography, spoken word, and acts of characterization. 2) a member of this organization. 3) Information available at www.darkones.org

THE EMPIRE OF CHIVALRY AND STEEL, INC. The Empire of Chivalry and Steel specializes in the general recreation of the culture of the Middle Ages including all of the Art Forms, Events (Feasts, Tournaments, Ceremonies and Wars) and Combat Arts covering the years of 800AD up to 1650AD and any location within Europe or its explored territories. For more information contact Leonard Byrd (Tucson) (520)742-2432 Web: www.galandor.org

THE JEDI KNIGHTS (Founded 1977) Meetings are the 3rd Sunday of each month. For more information call Carol Alves, Publicity, (760)244-9593 or write Jedi Knights, c/o Carol Alves 8038 "I" Street, Hesperia CA, 92345-7066.

LEPRECON, INC. One of the two Phoenix area corporations that put on yearly conventions. Best described as SF/F generalists with a main thrust into SF/F art. Guests are welcome. The meetings are quarterly on the second Saturday of February, May, August & November unless otherwise notified. August is the annual meeting where board positions are deter-mined. For more information, write PO Box 26665, Tempe, AZ 85285; call Mike Willmoth, 480-945-6890, Email mwillmoth@earthlink.net Webpage: www.leprecon.org

MIB The Men in Black is the official global organization of field operatives for Steve Jackson Games. We attend local conventions to demonstrate and promote products of Steve Jackson Games. We also schedule demos in local gaming stores as well as community service events. If you have a gaming store, convention, or community service that you would like to have official Steve Jackson Games representation at, please contact the MIB Arizona Cell Leader at MIB.6361@cox.net. We are also recruiting new MIBs in some areas of Arizona. If you're interested, contact us. You can find additional information about the Arizona MIB at our website <http://members.cox.net/mib.6361/>

ORANGE COUNTY SCIENCE FICTION CLUB meets last Wednesday of every month (except Dec.) We frequently have author guest speakers. You're all welcome to come if you're in the area. We meet in Fullerton,

about 5 miles north of Disney-land. For more details ph. Greg at [949] 552-4925 or send a message to our listserve OCSF@yahoogroups.com

PAReX is a non-profit, just for fun organization dedicated to the proliferation of robotics as a hobby. Monthly meetings will be held and will be announced under the Meeting Information page, <http://www.parex.org/meetinfo.htm>. All interest-ed persons are invited to participate. We are currently in the process of getting organized and becoming an official organization with tax status. Web page: <http://www.parex.org/> E-mail Contact: John Kittelsrud, johnkit@teamdroid.com

THE PHOENIX FANTASY FILM SOCIETY A Phoenix based club interest-ed in the entire realm of SF, Fantasy and Horror film. PFFS has been in existence for 30 years, meeting every 6 weeks in member's homes. Dues are \$10 per year. Membership includes newsletters, an annual film awards and various outings. For information, contact PFFS, P.O. Box 34023, Phoenix, AZ 85067 or call David Storck at (602) 274_7404, e-mail: Menzeez@aol.com.

RAGE ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST A Live Action Theatre Troupe based out of the ASU campus in Tempe, AZ. It is dedicated to the game Werewolf: The Apocalypse by White Wolf publishing. Contact Mike McLaughlin at (602)461-5842 or write 1730 W Emelita Place #2025, Mesa AZ 85202-3144 or warlok@aztec.asu.edu

RAW GAMES (Role-players & Wargamers, Inc.) Role-players & Wargamers, Inc. is the Valley's oldest role-playing and wargaming club. Currently meeting at 8159 W. Weldon in Phoenix every Sunday from 3pm-9pm (except during conventions and other special events). Open to new members - call (602) 849-9515. www.rawgames.org

SAMURAI OTAKU ANIME CLUB The Samurai Otaku is a group of fans of anime, manga, and Japanese pop culture. Meetings are held every Saturday night at 6pm at Samurai Comics, 5024 N. 7th St.. Members discuss anime and manga, work on a web comic, discuss fund raisers, and schedule club events. After each meeting the club views selected anime DVD's and plays games. Open to new members. Contact Moryha Banks— (602)265-8886, Email: moryha@samuraicomics.com

THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM The kingdom of Atenveldt doth lie in the state of Arizona. Within the fair kingdom can be found six Baronies: Atenveldt, Mons Tonitrus, Twin Moons, SunDragon, Tir Ysgithr and Ered Sul. For more information on any of these or for general information on thy past tomorrows thou mayest contact Mistress Myrddina o Dolwyddelan (Terry Schwartz) PO Box 584, Sonoita AZ 85637 (520)455-5835 Email: myrddina1@aol.com Web www.atenveldt.com

SOUTHWEST COSTUMER'S GUILD The Southwest Costumers Guild is a loose organization of persons interested in all facets of historical, cultural, science fiction, fantasy, and humor costume. Members are often seen on stage and behind the scenes at local and regional Science Fiction Convention masquerades. They meet on the last Sunday of each month at various members' homes in the greater Phoenix area. For details. Southwest Costumers Guild, PO Box 39504, Phoenix,

AZ 85609 or Randall Whitlock at costumers@casfs.org or www.southwestcostumersguild.org

SPACE ACCESS SOCIETY Space Access Society's sole purpose is to promote radically cheaper access to space, ASAP. We think it's possible within ten years, with a little luck and a lot of hard work. Join us and help us make it happen! SAS membership is \$30 for one year, which gets you emailed Space Access Updates the instant they pass final edit, plus discounts on our annual conference on the technology, politics, and business of radically cheaper space transportation, featuring leading players in the field. Email us at: Space.Access@Space-Access.org Web page: www.space-access.org/

SUPERSTITION SPACEMODELING SOCIETY is Arizona's club for builders of model and high-power rockets and those who love to see them fly. Launches are held on the second Saturday morning of each month in Rainbow Valley. SSS hosts the annual G. Harry Stine Memorial Rocket Launch every October. Visit www.sssrocketry.org for membership information, directions to the launches and meetings, and to read the monthly newsletter, "Newton's Minutes." **TARDIS** is a Phoenix-based General SF/Fantasy Fan Club, specializing in International media SF/Fantasy since 1983. **TARDIS** meets every two weeks at different locations around the valley. Activities include watching videos, discussions, parties, games, and occasional outings with more to come now that Doctor Who is returning from hiatus. Many members maintain an active presence at conventions. You can contact us at 2243 W Wagon Wheel Dr, Phoenix, AZ 85021, Voice Mail at (602) 864-0901, E-mail TARDIS-Info@cox.net or visit us at <http://members.cox.net/tardis-info>

TEKWAR FAN CLUB Sanctioned by the series' production companies and the USA Network! It is THE information conduit between the fans and the series! Fan club membership will bring you the following 1) subscription to the info filled Tek Informer newsletter; 2) official TekWar Fan Club membership card and kit. Membership is by regular mail only and the newsletter and materials will not be reproduced electronically. To join the action and initiate your annual membership, make check or money order out for \$12.50 to: Official TekWar Fan Club (Membership section), 2522 N Sparkman Blvd., Tucson AZ 85716-2417

T.H.E.M. is ASU's science fiction and fantasy club. Weekly meetings are held on the Arizona State University campus, with dates and places to be announced after the semester starts. For more information, Email them@themonline.org Web www.themonline.org

TUCSON FAN ALLIANCE E-Mail Address is Bkoehler@Juno.com or DMitchel1@Juno.com

USS STORMBRINGER The Stormbringer is a correspondence Star Trek fan club chapter of Starfleet, Intl. based out of Tucson AZ. The chapter was commissioned as the USS Stormbringer NCC-74213, attached to Division 31, Starfleet Covert Operations, on 10/31/98. As of 11/29/98 there were 32 members. There are no dues other than the \$15 for joining Star-fleet Intl.. Members are scattered world wide but the primary clusters are in Tucson, AZ and Plano, TX. They don't meet on a regular basis since they are a

(Continued on page 24)

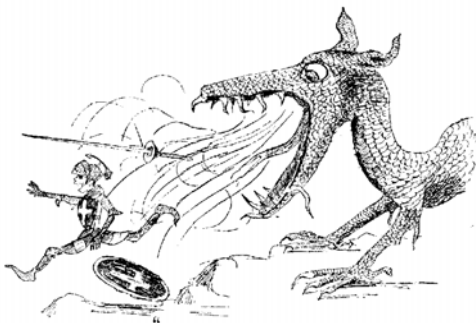
Club Listings
(Cont'd from page 23)

correspondence chapter. Their web site is: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Vault/9505/> and their contact/CO is Capt. Dave Pitts, thepitts52@hotmail.com

Z-PHILES are the ariZona x-PHILES. We maintain a mailing list for news and get-togethers of fans of the X-Files living in Arizona. We get together in both the Phoenix and Tucson areas. To subscribe, send an empty message to z-philes-subscribe@egroups.com

UNITED FEDERATION OF PHOENIX A Phoenix area Star Trek and general SciFi fan club. We are a social club that meets every two weeks at various locations around the Phoenix area. The UFP has been meeting for over 25 years of continuous activity. Dues are \$15/per year prorated when you join; no restrictions. Membership includes membership roster and monthly newsletter. Come to any two meetings at no obligation. For information, write the UFP at PO Box 37224, Phoenix, AZ 85069, or call Jim Strait at (602) 242-9203. Web page: <http://www.U-F-P.org> or Email to Info@U-F-P.org

WESTERN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION (WesternSFA) A non-profit corporation that sponsors the ConRunners seminars and sponsored the 2004 Westercon. Dedicated primarily to educational activities relating to literature, music, and visual and performing arts, especially in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, costuming, gaming and science. Applicants for membership in WesternSFA must be sponsored by a current active WesternSFA member. Dues are \$10 yearly plus a \$5 non-refundable application fee. General Meetings are held on the first Friday of February, May, August and November, usually at the home of a member. Guests are welcome. For more info contact Craig Dyer at WesternSFA, PO Box 87457, Phoenix AZ 85082, (602) 973-2341, Email: craig@westernsfa.org Webpage: www.westernsfa.org



What is CASFS?
What is really behind putting on a convention? What the funds raised by a convention used for? Why not attend a meeting and find out? We're the sponsor of ConNotations, CopperCons, HexaCons, SmerfCons and other conventions. We are a charitable, non-profit organization that exists to further science fiction, fantasy and science fields in Arizona. CASFS currently meets at the JB's Restaurant at 2560 W Indian School Rd in Phoenix (NW corner of I-17 and Indian School). The meetings begin at 8PM and are held on the last Friday of the month Jan. Through Sept. And on the second Friday of the month Oct through Dec. Everyone is invited to attend two meetings as a guest (non-member). Membership rates are \$12/year plus an initial \$3 application fee and rates are pro-rated for the amount of the year remaining. For more info Call: Stephanie L. Bannon (602)973-2341 Webpage: www.casfs.org email: casfs@casfs.org

Convention Listings

The Sixteen Swashbucklers of Gallifrey One (Van Nuys, CA) **Feb 18-20, 2005.** Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, CA Guests include Nicholas Courtney, Caroline John, Richard Franklin, Terrance Dicks, Barry Letts, new series writers Mark Gatiss, Steven Moffat, Rob Shearman, Paul Cornell, plus David Gerrold, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein and more. Memberships \$50 to Dec 31, \$55 to Jan 31, \$60 at the door. www.gallifreyone.com; Gallifrey Conventions P.O. Box 3021, North Hollywood, CA 91609

ConRunners 10 (Phoenix AZ) **February 26, 2005** - At the Embassy Suites Phoenix North, 2577 W Greenway Rd, Room 3005. Registration opens at 8:30AM - Morning Session 9AM-1PM: We plan a round table discussion to focus on topics of interest to AniZona staff.. Among topics to be covered are "Proper Staff Response to Security Problems", "How to Deal with an Irate Con Attedee", "Help! Our Guest of Honor Went Shopping and No One

Knows Where He Is", and, "HELP! We have Room for 900 Attendees and There Are 2000 People in the Registration Line". Lunch 1PM-2PM. Afternoon Session 2PM-4PM during which we will play "*If I Ran The Z/o/o Con*" a con running choose your own path adventure game.We will provide coffee, tea, some soda and light snacks. Membership \$15. For more info: ConRunners, PO Box 67457, Phoenix AZ 85082 Web: www.westernsfa.org Email: conrunners@westernsfa.org

ICE ESCAPE 2005, (Phoenix AZ) March 18–20, 2005. Author/Publisher Convention at the elegant Wyndham Hotel in the heart of downtown Phoenix. More info www.iceescape.com

AniZona (Phoenix AZ) **March 25-27, 2005** Embassy Suites Phoenix North, Phoenix, AZ Arizona's First Anime Convention Guests Colleen Clinkenbeard, Aaron Dismuke, Hide-san, and Katie Bair Memberships \$35 until 3/1/05, \$40 at the door Membership limited to 850. Hotel rates \$99 S/D, \$109 T/ \$119 Q (plus tax) (602) 375-1777 www.anizona.org, Email agrutta@anizona.org

Arizona Book Festival 2005 (Phoenix, AZ) **Saturday April 2**, Carnegie Center, 1101 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ. Hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Admission is Free. Authors appearing at the CASFS booth include Jacqueline Carey, Adam Niswander, Dennis L. Mckiernan, Jeff Mariotte, John Vornholt and others. Festival features two hundred local and national recognized authors, many booksellers and other exhibitors. Visit <http://www.azbookfestival.org> for general details about the festival and www.casfs.org/azbookfest for details about signings and activities at the CASFS and LepreCon booths.

LepreCon 31 (Carefree AZ) **May 6-8, 2005** - Carefree Resort, Carefree, AZ Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention with an emphasis on art Artist GoH Dave Dorman; Author GoH Kevin J. Anderson; Special Artist Guest Bear Burge; Music GoH Mitchell Burnside-Clapp. Local Artist GoH Sarah Clemens; Room Rates\$89 S/D, \$99 T, \$109 Q (plus tax and \$9 resort fee per room) (480) 488-5300 or (888) 488-9034 Memberships are \$30 thru 12/31/04; \$35 thru 04/15/05 ; Kids 7-12 half price, Kids 6 & Under Free (with Adult membership) Write LepreCon 31, PO Box 26665, Tempe, AZ 85285, Phone (480) 945-6890, Emaillep31@leprecon.org Web www.leprecon.org/lep31

Phoenix ConGames (Phoenix AZ) **July 21-24, 2005** Hilton Phoenix East. For more info www.iceescape.com

HexaCon 15 (Tempe, AZ) **August 507, 2005** Tempe Mission Palms, Tempe, AZ, Gaming starts on Friday and runs 24 hours until Sunday 4PM. Planned events include RPGA, LARP, LAN Party, CCG, Battletech and much more. Also Anime and a full consuite. *THURSDAY EVENTS for pre-registered members only include Barry Bard's Movie Previews and Giveaways. Memb: \$15 thru 12/31/04; \$20 thru 6/30/05, Hotel: Tempe Mission Palms, Tempe, AZ (800) 547-8705 Room Rates: \$91 S/D/T/Q, Info: www.hexacon.org or 623-773-1816

CopperCon 25 (Phoenix AZ) **Sept 9-11, 2005** Embassy Suites Phoenix North, Phoenix, AZ Guests Authors Greg Keyes, Robert J. Sawyer; Ghost GoH. Harry Stine; Music Escape Key Memberships \$25 thru 12/31/04, \$30 thru 5/30/05 Hotel rates \$89 S/D, \$99 T/ \$109 Q (plus tax) (602) 375-1777 CopperCon 25, PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082, Phone(480) 945-6890 EmailCu25@coppercon.org, Web www.coppercon.org

Mailing/Subscription Information

ConNotations is sent free of charge to those who have attended a CASFS sponsored convention in the past two years (currently 2003/2004). Attendees of CopperCon 23, CopperCon 24, HexaCon 13 and HexaCon 14 will receive ConNotations Volume 15 Issues 1 thru 6.

ConNotations updates it's mailing list each December.

Individual subscriptions are available for \$15 for 6 issues.

Some non-CASFS groups give their membership lists to CASFS and purchase a bulk corporate subscription so their attendees may also receive ConNotations

Currently these groups are: **WesternSFA** - If you attended Westercon 57 you will receive Volume 15 Issues 1 thru 6

Generic Convention Registration Form

Name: _____
Badge Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/ZIP: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ memberships for _____ convention.
(See individual convention listing for mailing address)
More info on ☐ Masquerade ☐ Art Show ☐ Volunteer ☐ Other