ConNotations

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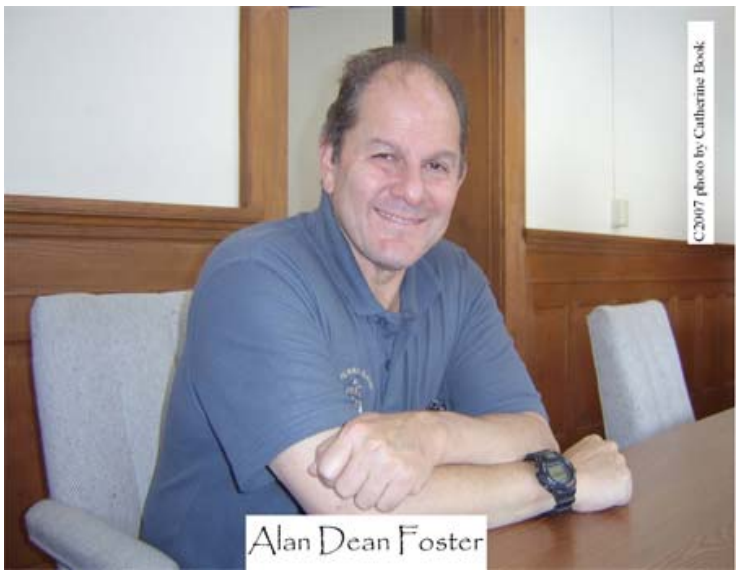
The Bi-Monthly Science Fiction, Fantasy & Convention Newszine of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society

A Conversation with Alan Dean Foster

by Catherine Book

I've met Alan several times over the past few years and it belatedly occurred to me that he would probably give great interview. He was appearing at the Arizona Book Festival this past April and agreed to spend a few minutes with me. And I was right….



I've always been impressed with how well-traveled Alan is. Once he emailed me from Palau. So, why, I wondered, did he choose to live in Prescott, Arizona? He was raised in LA, met his wife in California and she was from Texas so it was a bit of a challenge to find a location that was a good compromise. It had to be mild climate all year long with the possibility of finding a Victorian-era home with no tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes or mudslides. Prescott was featured in an Arizona Highways issue and attracted them. It turned out to be all they wanted for the past 26 years…with the exception of being close to sea for Alan; but since he travels frequently, he does get to the ocean from time to time.

So, with all the places he's been to in the last forty years, what's left to interest him? He's planning a trip to the Yap outer islands in Micronesia – pretty much off the beaten path. Did he ever get to West Papua to see the Tasmanian wolf? Unfortunately, the local political climate kept him away.

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CASFS Business Report

September……

*CopperCon 26 is being closed.
*CopperCon 27, Bob stated we had a con, details at wrap-up. Committee had no rope, so he is still here in one piece.
*CopperCon 28 has GOH author Mary Janice Davidson. First meeting Oct. 21.
*HexaCon 18 is looking at hotels. No date set until more hotels seen.
*HexaCon 19 is hotel searching. Sponsor is Demented Dragon.
*ConNotations is printed, labeling on Sun.
*Quartermaster reports CopperCon27 used and returned the shed equipment.
*Tom Perry is to donate some video projection equipment to CASFS.
*Note of meeting change to Oct 12.

October…….

*CopperCon 26 books are closed. The con had the required turn back of $2300, estimate $1000 cleared over expenses.
*CopperCon 27 badge count at 460, no hotel bill yet to determine money.
*CopperCon 28 hotel search in progress.
*HexaCon 18 hotel search in progress.
*HexaCon 19 hotel search in progress.
*Database added CopperCon 27 to ConNotations mailing lists.
*ConNotations. Catherine to acquire an author address list to add to mailings.
*ConNotations finances discussed. Current CASFS funding needs to be increased to cover increasing expenses. Conventions are not as profitable the last two years. CASFS has to decide how to fund ConNotations or end it. LONG discussion about this topic. Nothing decided.

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SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews
By Lee Whiteside

At press time, the screenwriter's guild has gone on strike. If it goes on for any length of time, it will definitely affect pretty much all of the US-produced TV series. Some Canadian shows that use primarily US writers will likely also be affected. As always, planned airings are subject to change, and very much so, if the strike continues for any significant length of time. In the meantime, there're still a few new things turning up in December and January in the science fiction and fantasy genre on TV.

Coming up on SciFi is their big December miniseries, ***Tin Man***. It will run on three consecutive nights (December 2, 3 and 4) at 9 pm ET/PT with all six hours airing back to back on Sunday December 9th starting at 5 pm ET/PT. SciFi is hoping this will be a breakthrough miniseries for them but fan anticipation and internet buzz so far has been pretty lackluster. From the information I've seen and reported previously, it may be worth catching to see how they've reimagined the original story. Chances are there won't be much else new on the air to watch, so check it out.

SciFi has announced that ***Stargate Atlantis*** has been renewed for a fifth season. Since post-production is still in progress for season four, ***Atlantis*** producers have not announced any major changes to the show but are hoping to have **Amanda Tapping** and **Jewel Staite** continue with them. Coming up on December 7th will be the ***Stargate Atlantis*** mid-season finale, *This Mortal Coil*, which will feature a return of **Torri Higginson** as Elizabeth Weir. Not much information has been released about the episode, though. It will lead into the second half opener *Be All My Sins Remembered* which will have the Atlantis team working together with the Wraith against a common enemy and will feature a really big space battle with Wraith ships, The Apollo, The Deadalus, and the enemy ships (maybe Replicator ships?). At press time it was assumed the second half of the ***Stargate Atlantis*** season would resume in early January, but SciFi has not yet confirmed their schedule for the first of the year. Next up will be *Spoils of War* which will, essentially, be the third part of the mid-season two-parter following on from the events in the prior two episodes. It promises to give the fans more information about The Wraith including a birthing scene. In *Quarantine*, Rodney McKay is stuck in the botany lab with Katie Brown when the city of Atlantis is unexpectedly locked down for a quarantine that traps crew members in various parts of the city. In *Outcast*, John Sheppard and Ronon visit Earth and discover that a human-form replicator engineered by scientists is on the loose. The producers promise a lot of Sheppard backstory in this episode that was based on a story idea from **Joe Flanigan**. In early February, *Midway* will feature a guest appearance by **Christopher Judge** as Teal'c when several of the Atlantis team visit the Midway space station set up to provide a bridge between the Pegasus Gate system and the Milky Way gate system. Things get dicey when some Wraith show up.

On the ***Battlestar Galactica*** front, SciFi just aired the ***Battlestar Galactica: Razor*** movie and the DVD release will be on December 4th with the young Bill Adama segments aired as minisodes leading up to the airing of the movie incorporated into the movie for the DVD release along with additional scenes not broadcast. You may want to pick up that to tide you over until April when the fourth and final season of ***Battlestar Galactica*** is scheduled to debut. Reports are that the first half of the season has been completed but the remaining episodes may be delayed by the writers strike.

SciFi has announced they have renewed both ***Eureka*** and ***Destination Truth*** for new seasons to air next summer. They have also green lighted ***Ghost Hunters International*** that will follow a new paranormal team as they investigate paranormal sites in Europe. The International team will consist of veteran TAPS investigators **Robb Demarest, Andy Andrews, Brian Harnois,** and **Donna La Croix**, along **with Barry Fitzgerald** (memorable from the ***Ghost Hunters'*** legendary investigations in Ireland) and newcomer **Shannon Sylvia**. Look for the debut of ***Ghost Hunters International*** in January.

SciFi has also announced several pilot movie pickups that could potentially turn into series. First up is ***Earthlings***, a dramedy looking to tap into the ***Eureka*** viewership with another quirky show. It is about three humanoid aliens stranded in middle America. SciFi describes it as exploring themes such as those in "classics ... ***Stranger in a Strange Land, The Day the Earth Stood Still,*** and ***Starman***, but with a healthy does of ***South Park***-like satire. Stranded on our world under false pretenses, the intrepid trio - a woman and two men in human form - must figure out how to escape, while navigating the subtle and confusing social conventions of present-day Earth. Despite their extremely advanced technology and intellect, they find themselves naive in the commonplace things that humans take for granted: falling in love, paying bills, the joys of a chocolate binge, etc." I'm thinking it might owe a lot to ***3rd Rock From the Sun*** as well... The pilot is being written

(Continued on page 4)

24 Frames

Movie News
By Lee Whiteside

The cast is set for the ***Star Trek*** movie and filming is underway. James T. Kirk is being played by **Chris Pine**, Spock by **Zachary Quinto** (with **Leonard Nimoy** also appearing as an older Spock), **Karl Urban** as Dr. Leonard McCoy, **Simon Pegg** as Montgomery Scott, **John Cho** as Hikaru Sulu, **Anton Yelchin** as Pavel Chekov, and **Zoe Saldana** as Uhura. **Eric Bana** will be playing Nero, the villain of the film, **Bruce Greenwood** will be Captain Christopher Pike, **Rachel Nichols** has an unspecified role, and **Greg Grunberg** is likely to have some sort of small role, as he has in all of **J.J. Abrams** TV shows and films. As to what is actually happening in the film, there is still no real information. It has been indicated that it will serve as an origin story of sorts for Kirk, Spock and McCoy, but may also jump around in time a bit. Now that filming is underway, more information is likely to leak out. As for **William Shatner** appearing as Kirk in the film, that now doesn't appear to be happening and **Shatner** has made sure to mention it whenever he does an interview, claiming it is a "bad business decision" for the film makers.

There's also been some new movies announced; although if scripts are not ready, they may not progress much until the writer's strike is over. **Guillermo del Toro** is planning to write, direct, and produce a film adaptation of the 1960's British television series ***Champions***. It is about a team of government agents who crash in the mountains and are rescued by a hidden advanced civilization and given extraordinary powers. **del Toro** also has in the works ***3993*** which will complete the fantasy trilogy started with ***The Devil's Backbone*** and ***Pan's Labyrinth***. It will have the Spanish Civil War as a backdrop and will take place in 1993 as well as 1939. Before he can get to either of those two movies, he'll need to finish up post-production on ***Hellboy II: The Golden Army***.

The latest classic movie to get a remake is ***The Day the Earth Stood Still***. **Jennifer Connelly** has signed on to star as Helen Benson along with **Keanu Reeves** and possibly **Kathy Bates** in the updated retelling of the cautionary tale of alien visitation where the aliens land and inform the humans they must live in peace or be destroyed. Also in the works is a new version of ***The Wolf Man*** with **Anthony Hopkins** as Sir John Talbot and **Benicio Del Toro** as Lawrence Talbot. **Mark Romanek** is directing a script that **Andrew Kevin Walker** finished right before the strike started. Things aren't looking as good for the planned remake of ***Escape From New York***. Director **Brett Ratner** pulled out of the movie and star **Gerard Butler** did the same a few days later. **Jonathan Mostow** has been brought in to rewrite the script and possibly direct it once they find a new lead actor.

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson is getting lots of genre roles. He plays Agent 23 in the ***Get Smart*** movie, a ex-con Las Vegas taxi driver in the ***Escape From Witch Mountain*** remake from Disney, and he'll also be playing Black Adam in the ***Shazam***! movie bringing Captain Marvel to the big screen. According to **Johnson**, the ***Witch Mountain*** remake will really bring to life the Witch Mountain facility that the kids are escaping from and promises a lot of action, humor and will be a fun, fast ride. As for playing Black Adam, he was originally being considered for the role of Captain Marvel, but after fans at San Diego ComicCon told him about the Black Adam character, he looked at the history and decided that would be a better role to play. ***Shazam***! is being directed by **Peter Segal** (who also directed ***Get Smart***) and will likely film late in 2008.

Sarah Michelle Gellar is also continuing with roles in genre movies, having already filmed the role of Sorrow opposite **Kevin Bacon's** Love, **Brendan Fraser's** Pleasure and **Forest Whitaker's** Happiness in the movie ***The Air I Breathe***. According to **Gellar** in a recent interview "it's basically based on the Chinese concept of emotion and each one of the actors represents an emotion. And the general concept behind it is that, until you've experienced all the emotions, you can't really live [any of] them. You don't know ... pleasure until you've known sorrow. You don't know happiness until you've known pain. ... So we represent those different characters." She also stars in ***Possession***, a psychological thriller about a woman whose husband and brother-in-law both end up in comas, but when her brother-in-law comes out of his coma, he believes that he is her husband. Has her husband come back in her brother-in-law's body or is there something else going on? Her co-stars are **Lee Pace** and **Michael Landes** and it likely opens in March of 2008.

On the fast track into production is the long delayed ***X-Files 2*** movie. Both **David Duchovny** and **Gillian Anderson** return as Mulder and Scully. **Chris Carter** will direct from a script he co-wrote with **Frank Spotnitz**. It is scheduled to be released in late July of next summer. There's little information about what the movie entails other than it will be a stand-alone mystery and will take Mulder and Scully's relationship into "unexpected directions."

Previews of upcoming releases for December and January.

The Golden Compass (Dec 7) This year's

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SF Tube Talk

(Continued from page 3)

and executive produced by **Dan Walters** (***Demolition Man***) with **Darryl Porter** (co-executive) and **Arron Geller** (executive) also part of the producing team.

Also green-lit for a pilot is ***Revolution***, an epic drama about the struggle for independence from Earth of "New America", a distant colony on an Earth like planet in the future. ***Revolution*** is created and written and executive produced by **Ed Redlich** (***Shark, Without a Trace***) and **John Bellucci** (***Jack and Bobby***, ***Without a Trace***) with **Simon West** (***Con Air, Lara Croft: Tomb Raider, Keen Eddie***) on board as an executive producer, with **Jib Polhemus** also on board as a co-executive producer. It is the future and the United States of America has settled a colony 50 light years away from Earth where many contemporary problems are echoed in their fight for freedom. The drama will focus on the Hart family, one of the founding families of the New America colony. Tom Hart is the family patriarch and faces pressure from the government to heavily tax the colonists. His two rebellious sons are involved with rebellion and revolutionary causes while Tom's 16-year-old daughter is just trying to find herself. Other characters include the local Governor torn between her allegiance to the colony and her desire for peace and a young ambitious bureaucrat looking to bring the colony under control again. According to **Mark Stern**, SciFi's Executive Vice President of Original Programming, "***Revolution*** is a powerful drama with all of the key emotional elements. There are power struggles, love stories, rebellions, victories, great sacrifices plus thrills and action. Ultimately it's a story of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances and the heroes that emerge even in the most trying of times." In other words, they are trying to put a futuristic spin on the standard generational drama and hoping for something to draw in people who don't normally watch the SciFi channel. Depending on the casting and who they bring on board to write the series, it might have potential.

Finally given the go-ahead for a pilot for SciFi is ***Warehouse 13*** with **Rockne S. O'Bannon** executive producing a script by **O'Bannon, Jane Espenson,** and **D. Brent Mote**. It had previously been announced in development with **Ronald D. Moore** involved, but it appears that **O'Bannon** has taken over that role. It is also a dramedy and will focus on a pair of FBI agents who, after saving the life of the President, are "promoted" to the top-secret location of Warehouse 13 in South Dakota. It is a secret storage facility not unlike the one seen at the end of ***Raiders of the Lost Ark***. The duo are in charge of tracking down some missing objects as well as keeping an eye out for any new objects that should be confiscated and brought back to the storage facility. SciFi describes is at "part ***Raiders of the Lost Ark,*** part ***X-Files,*** and part ***Moonlighting***." **Mark Stern** calls it "a fun, intriguing concept that should continue to broaden our audience through present-day, relatable stories with an imaginative twist." In other words, they hope it will attract the viewers who tune into ***Eureka*** each week during the summer.

Over on the broadcast networks, things are a bit light during December and January and may be even lighter if the networks decide to hold back episodes for February sweeps if they will run out of them due to the writers strike.

On NBC, early December will see ***Heroes*** wrap up the *Generations* volume of the second season which intends to wrap up the majority, but not all, of the storylines they have been dealing with so far. According to press reports, an alternate ending to the final episode of this block has been filmed that would serve as a season finale if the rest of the

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season is scrubbed by the writer's strike. Also now on the shelf due in part to the strike (and also possibly the lower ratings for ***Heroes*** this season) is the ***Heroes: Origins*** spinoff which would have featured standalone stories in the ***Heroes*** universe from **Kevin Smith** and **Eli Roth**. NBC's other new genre shows have been struggling in the ratings, with all three of them struggling to maintain a steady audience level. ***Chuck*** appears to have stabilized in the ratings and the mix of humor, action, and spy storylines has kept the audience tuning in each week. ***Journeyman's*** lack of a strong cast and been there, done that time travel has been losing viewers each week and would likely have been canceled already if not for the strike. ***The Bionic Woman*** has also been losing viewers each week but NBC is hoping a new creative team led by **Jason Cahill** will bring viewers back and plans to heavily promote a re-launch of the series in January. NBC still has new episodes of ***Medium*** waiting for mid-season that might turn up on Sunday nights after football ends or could end up replacing ***Journeyman***.

ABC's ***Pushing Daisies*** debuted strong and has kept hold of a significant chunk of those viewers with its fantastical and whimsical mix of comedy, fantasy, and murder mysteries. CBS's vampire detective show ***Moonlight*** has held up relatively well on Friday nights, keeping a good part of the ***Ghost Whisperer*** audience and a good number of viewers in the desired adult demographics. Mid-December will see a holiday-themed ***Ghost Whisperer*** episode *Holiday Spirit* that has Melinda spending time with a young boy named Riley who has been seeing strange things happening.

Over on The CW, look for holiday-themed episodes of both ***Smallville*** and ***Supernatural*** and mostly repeats until January for those shows as well as ***Reaper***. In *A Very Supernatural Christmas*, Dean tries to convince Sam to get a tree with presents and celebrate Christmas like they were kids. We'll see flashbacks to Christmas Eve when Sam discovers the truth about their father's demon hunting. Sam and Dean also run afoul of a Pagan couple who claim they are gods, and end up on the pagans' Christmas dinner menu. ***Smallville*** will lightly delve into the Christmas spirit in *Gemini* which focuses on a new experiment by Lex much in the vein of Project: Ares and Project: Mercury. Few other details have slipped out but expect a lot of twists and turns and a change in the relationship for one of the show's couples. In January, look for the return of **James Marsters** as Braniac/Milton Fine in *Persona*. Apparently another Kryptonian has been in hiding on Earth, Dax-Ur, played by **Marc McClure** (Jimmy Olsen in ***Superman Returns***). Next up is *Siren*, which sees the return of **Justin Hartley** as Oliver Queen/The Green Arrow as well as the introduction of **Alaina Huffman** as Dinah Lance/The Black Canary. Dinah Lance is the host of a conservative talk radio show but is also working for Lex Luthor as the vigilante Black Canary. With the Justice League thwarting a lot of Luthor's plans, he gives the Canary the job of capturing The Green Arrow. After that should be *Fracture*, where Lex is shot (yet again) and we take another trip into his psyche with flashbacks/hallucinations and such. According to ***Smallville*** producers **Al Gough** and **Miles Millar**, they have completed fifteen scripts for the season, with the last one ending in a cliffhanger that would also serve as a season finale if the writer's strike continues.

Debuting with a two-night premier on Sunday January 13th and Monday January 14th on FOX will be ***Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles***. With the writer's strike, FOX has decided to hold back ***24*** and will be airing the ***Terminator*** series in the 9 pm ET/PT time slot on Monday. According to the producers, the series will follow on from ***Terminator 2*** and will not adhere to the events depicted in the ill-received ***Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*** sequel. The pilot opens with Sarah Connor (**Lena Headey**) and John Connor (**Thomas Dekker**) in hiding, trying to keep a low profile from the Skynet agents from the future that are still trying to find them. When they are discovered, they decide to try to keep the government from creating Skynet and save the future. They find an ally in Cameron Phillips (**Summer Glau**), an advance cyborg whose mission is to protect John Connor. She poses as a high school student to keep an eye on John and when evil cyborgs show up, becomes his protector. Also joining with them is FBI agent James Ellison (**Richard T. Jones**) who has been tasked with bringing to justice the dangerous fugitive Sarah Connor, but becomes an ally when he discovers the truth. Indications are that the series will be a good adaptation of the movie storyline and likely will draw the fans in and keep them. There haven't been any reports of behind-the-scenes problems such as those that have troubled shows like ***The Bionic Woman***. Elsewhere on FOX, the news isn't near as good for their other genre show, ***New Amsterdam***, with FOX shutting down production on after only six of the 13 ordered episodes were produced. Reports are that FOX was not happy with what they were seeing so far and were going to reevaluate the show before determining if they would resume production. They have announced that it will air on Friday night starting in late February.

Back to the cable realm, BBC America will start airing the second and final season of ***Life on Mars*** in early January. It continues the story of Inspector Sam Tyler who appears to have traveled back in time to the 1970's even though he is having visions of the present day. In the first episode of the second season, Sam encounters a nasty murderer he put away in 2006 and tries to take steps to stop him from becoming a killer. In episode two, Sam encounters his future mentor, their first black team member, Glenn Fletcher. Sam is surprised at the racist jibes directed at Fletcher and tries to help inspire him to become the man Sam learned from. In episode three (they don't have titles on them) Sam and his team deal with a bomb warning that is attributed to the IRA. Sam realizes it is not the IRA's standard methods he knows of. When his attempts to deal with it using his special knowledge puts the team at risk, he must fight to regain their trust and make things better for them all. In episode four, the discovery of a murdered young woman who is a beauty rep leads Sam and Annie into an investigation of a suburban car dealer who is hiring models and young women for swinging parties with wife swapping and other nefarious activities.

Over on the BBC, they've just completed the first series of the ***Sarah Jane Adventures***, which has been well received and reportedly has been picked up for a second season. There's no news yet of if or when the series will turn up on US TV, but BBC America is a likely outlet. For their annual Children in Need charity telethon, the BBC produced a special ***Doctor Who*** mini-episode bringing together **David Tennant's** tenth

(Continued on page 5)

SF Tube Talk (Continued from page 4)

Doctor with **Peter Davison's** fifth Doctor that has been called "*Time Crash*." It was written by **Stephen Moffat** and apparently will take place right at the end of *The Last of the Time Lords* before the TARDIS crashes into the Titanic. That then leads into the next new ***Doctor Who*** that will be broadcast on the BBC on Christmas day, *Voyage of the Damned*, with The Doctor ending up on the Titanic and discovering the truth about the ship's sinking (or something along those lines, maybe). He will be joined by singer/actress **Kylie Minogue** as waitress Astrid Perth, who teams up with The Doctor in the adventure. There're various rumors going around about what the story actual entails, from it being a space Titanic, not the ill-fated earthbound sailing ship and that Astrid being an anagram of TARDIS has some special significance. It may also tie more directly into the *Time Crash* special much like the one that showed us more of the after affects of the Nine/Ten regeneration two years ago.

Also coming up early in the new year is the second season of ***Torchwood*** on BBC2, possibly starting in late January or early February. The BBC is usually pretty tight-lipped about actual return dates, but the debut of an official *Torchwood* magazine in early January is a good indication the second series will start soon after. Early episodes feature **James Marsters** in a guest role as a fellow time agent who has a very close relationship with Jack. Other things rumored for the second season are a marriage, a death (or a traumatic experience), more aliens, more details on the weevils. Confirmed is the appearance of **Freema Agyeman** as Martha Jones in three episodes in the middle of the season. BBC America has done well with ***Torchwood*** this fall, so it may turn up on US screens much quicker than the first season.

Also in the works in the UK for Sky One is the second miniseries based on ***Terry Pratchett's Discworld, The Colour of Magic***. The first miniseries, ***Hogfather***, aired in late November on the Ion TV network and has been released on DVD on a Border's exclusive DVD. The production of ***The Colour of Magic*** is expected to air in the UK around Easter and will be broadcast on Ion TV later in 2008. It covers the major storyline in the first two Discworld books, *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*, following the adventures of Rincewind, the Wizard, Twoflower, the tourist, and The Luggage. Playing Rincewind in the miniseries will be **David Jason, Sean Astin** stars as Twoflower, and **Christopher Lee** will provide the voice of Death. Also starring are **Tim Curry** as the evil wizard Trymon, **David Bradley** as Cohen the Barbarian, **Laura Haddock** as Bethan, and **James Cosmo** as Galder Weatherwax. **Terry Pratchett** will have a cameo in the film as he did in the ***Hogfather*** miniseries.

24 Frames (Continued from page 3)

big fantasy movie is the highly anticipated ***The Golden Compass***, based on the first book in **Phillip Pullman's** ***His Dark Materials*** trilogy. It tells the story of Lyra Belacqua (**Dakota Blue Richards**), a young girl at Jordan College in a world where everyone is accompanied by a daemon that is a physical representation of a person's soul in animal form. She eavesdrops on a conversation between her uncle, Lord Asriel (**Daniel Craig**), and some scholars about a mysterious particle called Dust that allows one to connect with parallel worlds. When students begin disappearing due to Gobblers and when her friend Roger (**Ben Walker**) is taken she sets out on a journey to rescue him with the aid of her daemon, Pantalaimon, and an Alethiometer given to her by her schoolmaster to aid her in her quest. Her journey takes her to the arctic north with the Gyptians where she joins up with the Witch Queen Serafina Pekkala (**Eva Green**) and the great Armoured Bear, the exiled king Iorek Byrnison to rescue the missing children and her uncle being held captive in the Bear kingdom of Svalbard. **Peter Weltz** is directing as screenplay by **Tom Stoppard** with **Nicole Kidman** starring as Mrs. Coulter, **Nonso Anozie** as Loreck Byrnison, and **Sam Elliott** as Lee Scoresby.

Alvin and the Chipmunks (Dec 14) A Live action/CGI adaptation of Alvin and the Chipmunks stars **Jason Lee** as Dave Seville, **Cameron Richardson** as Clair. It's about a musical group of chipmunks adopted by the human, Dave Seville. Not many details about the plot have surfaced, but does it really matter?

I Am Legend (Dec 14) **Will Smith** plays Robert Neville, the last man on Earth in this new adaption of **Richard Matheson's** classic story. Neville is apparently the lone survivor of a virus that wipes out humanity, leaving only mutated humans who live in the dark. As he travels the world trying to find any other survivors, he hopes that he can find a cure from his immune blood and somehow save the human race. Also appearing are **Alice Braga** as Anna, **Salli Richardson-Whitfield** as Ginny Neville, and **Charlie Tahan** as Ethan.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets (Dec 21) **Nicholas Cage** is back as treasure hunter Benjamin Franklin Gates who is out to discover the truth behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln contained in 18 missing pages of John Wilkes Booth's diary. The answers lie in the Book of Secrets that only the President of the United States is allowed to see and Benjamin wants to see it for himself which leads him on a global adventure with lots of big budget action. Also stars **Diane Kruger, Ed Harris, Helen Mirren, Justin Bartha** and **Jon Voigt**.

Alien Vs. Predator: Requiem (Dec 25) For those of you who don't get enough mayhem opening your presents on Christmas morning, there will be plenty of it in the ***Aliens Vs. Predator*** sequel opening on Christmas Day. When a small Colorado town has a Predator scout ship crash nearby, they soon find themselves caught in the middle of a war between Aliens and Predators and must fight to survive the carnage. Victims include **Reiko Aylesworth, Steven Pasquale, Gina Holden, David Hornsby, Johnny Lewis, Shareeka Epps, John Ortiz, Kristen Hager, David Paetkau,** and **Victoria Bidewell**. Based on the trailer, expect lots and lots of carnage and very few survivors, if any.

The Waterhorse: The Legend of the Deep (Dec 25) While dad's watching the ***Aliens Vs. Predator*** movie, mom and the kids can take in the fantasy story based on **Ding King-Smith's** ***The Waterhorse***.

When a couple of kids find an egg on a beach in Scotland, it hatches and is a baby sea monster they call the "waterhorse". It eventually grows up to become the Loch Ness Monster! It apparently is very cute when it is small.

One Missed Call (Jan 4th) The holidays are over, so its time to bring out the movies that they decided to dump in January. First up is ***One Missed Call*** where Beth Reynolds (**Shannyn Sossamon**) has witnessed two friends die gruesome deaths in the span of a few days. What is different about these deaths is they each received cell-phone calls with recordings of their last moments days in advance. Beth works with police detective Jack Andrews (**Edward Burns**), whose sister die in a similar fashion and when Beth receives her special phone call, time is running short for them.

In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale (Jan 11) **Uwe Boll** once again directs a fantasy video game movie adaptation. When an unspeakable evil army threatens the kingdom of Ehb and a simple man named Farmer seeks to save his kidnapped wife and avenge the death of his son. Stars **Jason Statham** as Farmer, **John Rhys Davies** as Merick, **Kristanna Loken** as Elora, **Leelee Sobieski** as Muriella, with **Burt Reynolds, William Sanderson** and **Ray Liotta** also appearing.

Fanboys (Jan 18) **Kristen Bell** stars in this comedy about four die-hard *Star Wars* fans who undertake a cross country trip to sneak a peek at *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* at Skywalker Ranch as a final treat for a dying friend. Also stars **Dan Fogler, Jay Baruchel, Christopher Marquette,** and **Sam Huntington**.

01-18-08 (Jan 18) The as-yet-untitled **J. J. Abrams** monster movie is released upon the world on January 18th. About all that is known is revealed in the trailer where a monster attack on New York City is seen from the point of view of a group of friends having a party. Stars **Michael Stahl, Odet Jasmin, Mike Vogel, Lizzy Caplan,** and **Blake Lively**.

FYI

Book Discussion
Bent Cover Books
12428 N. 28th Drive, Phoenix
3rd Tuesdays, 7pm, in the Coffee Bar
Sponsored by
Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society (CASFS)
email questions to book@casfs.org

We are a small, friendly group of science fiction/fantasy literature fans who like to get together to talk about our favorite books. We welcome potential new friends.

December 18 - *Mutineer's Moon* by David Weber. For Lt. Commander Colin Maclntyre, it began as a routine training flight over the Moon. For Dahak, a self-aware Imperial battleship, it began millennia ago when that powerful artificial intelligence underwent a mutiny in the face of the enemy. The mutiny was never resolved-Dahak was forced to maroon not just the mutineers but the entire crew on prehistoric Earth. Dahak has been helplessly waiting as the descendants of the loyal crew regressed while the mutineers maintained control of technology that kept them alive as the millennia passed. But now Dahak's sensors indicate that the enemy that devastated the Imperium so long ago has returned-and Earth is in their path. For the sake of the planet, Dahak must mobilize its defenses. And that it cannot do until the mutineers are put down. So Dahak has picked Colin Maclntyre to be its new captain. Now Maclntyre must mobilize humanity to destroy the mutineers once and for all-or Earth will become a cinder in the path of galactic conquest.

January 15 - *Restoree* by Anne McCaffrey. Published in 1967, this is McCaffrey's first full-length novel. Her protagonist, Sara, is a strong, intelligent, self-sufficient woman a rarity at the time McCaffrey wrote this. Science fiction was still a predominantly male field, written by men, for men, about men. Women were often portrayed as weak, helpless beings in need of rescue. In Restoree, McCaffrey turns the tables. For Sara, the past is a blur. One day she is walking in Central Park, the next thing she knows, an indefinite amount of time has passed and she is in some unknown place, far, far away. However, as her awareness returns, it becomes obvious that things are not quite right. Apparently she is now a caretaker in some sort of medical facility, and the authorities believe she is incapable of independent thought or action. Gradually Sara realizes that her charge, Harlan, may not be there of his own free will.

February 19 - *Eye of the World* by Robert Jordan. Three teenage boys — Rand, Mat, and Perrin — from the quiet village of Emond's Field find themselves watched by a spooky man in black, a Fade. Soon after Trollocs, huge subhuman creatures, attack. Two strangers — Lady Moiraine, an Aes Sedai, a woman who can wield the One Power, and her Warder partner, Lan — tell the boys they must leave for the safety of all, for the boys are being sought by the evil Dark One. They depart in the night on horseback joined by Thom Merrilin, a traveling entertainer, and Egwene, an adventurous girl. They travel through places the boys have only heard of in stories, barely ahead of Trollocs and worse. The boys are pieces of the Pattern. They are ta'veren, around whom the Wheel of Time weaves surrounding life threads. Others, such as the young "wise woman" from their village, Nynaeve, become entangled in their plight.

March 18 - *His Majesty's Dragon* by Naomi Novik. The novel begins when the H.M.S. Reliant captures a French ship carrying a dragon egg that is primed to hatch. A substantial prize, it puts Laurence — the Reliant's captain — and his officers — gentlemen and aspiring gentlemen — in a difficult position: One of them must become the creature's rider when it hatches. The prize then would become a deadweight, bringing to an end "any semblance of ordinary life. . . . An aviator could not easily manage any sort of estate, nor raise a family, nor go into society to any real extent." For the one chosen by the hatchling (and a dragon won't let just anyone harness him), it would mean "the wreck of his career." Naturally, it is the heroic Capt. Laurence whom the dragon picks. And who is this dragon? "A pure, untinted black from nose to tail . . . [with] large, six-spined wings like a lady's fan," he is a Celestial, a Chinese dragon bred for emperors alone. Laurence names him Temeraire, and it's Novik's characterization of the dragon, who speaks in perfect 19th-century English, that makes the book hum. No ancient wisdom for him, just a voracious intelligence that demands bedtime readings on such subjects as mineralogy (dragons do like gems, you know) and historic battles.

April 15 - *Man in the High Castle* by Philip K. Dick. It's America in 1962. Slavery is legal once again. The few Jews who still survive hide under assumed names. In San Francisco, the I Ching is as common as the Yellow Pages. All because some 20 years earlier the United States lost a war—and is now occupied jointly by Nazi Germany and Japan.

May 20 - *Crystal Cave* by Mary Stewart (avail in paperback) In my humble opinion, this is the best treatment of the Arthur/Merlin legend ever...

June 17 - *Hominids* by Robert Sawyer. An engrossing story encompassing science of alternate universes, evolution and sexual identity. The beginning of the Neanderthal Parallax trilogy.

Do you like to write?
Do you enjoy reviewing books or movies?
Would you like to get involved in
Producing this newszine?

We need your creativity and assistance
Please join us and see how you
can contribute.

7pm on First Tuesday of
December, February, April,
June, August, October

Bookmans, Northern & 19th Ave
Community room
Or write us: editor@casfs.org

AZ Browncoasts Present Bedlam Bards

The **AZ Browncoats** will be hosting an event on Saturday, **December 8th at 3pm to7 pm** at the Goathead Saloon, 1423 S Country Club Dr, Mesa, AZ 85210. The event will feature the Bedlam Bards as well as the Whiskey Bards. Also appearing: Bedouin Tribe Bellydance Troupe. The cost is $10 with the proceeds going to St Judes Childrens Hospital. Tickets available at the door only. For more details http://azbrowncoats.com/ or www.goatheadsaloon.com

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Fantasy/Sci-Fi Discussion Group
4th Wed, 7pm
Borders, Glendale

Path of the Craft Discussion group
discusses Neopagan theories inspired by both fiction and non-fiction books about magic, nature, mythology, and spirituality.
4th Sunday, 6pm
Borders, Phoenix Camelback

Sci-Fi Fantasy Book Club
2nd Thursday, 7pm
Changing Hands/Wildflower Bread Company

Manga Bookclub
1st Tuesdays, 7pm
Borders, Chandler

Manga Bookclub
Dec 15, 7pm
Jan 19, 7pm
Barnes & Noble, Goodyear

Graphic Novel Book Club
2nd Sunday, 8:30pm
Four Peaks Brewery, Tempe

Science Fiction Book Group
Dec 11, 730pm
Jan 8, 7:30pm
Barnes & Noble, Eastside Tucson

AUTHOR SIGNINGS

Dec 4, 7pm **Diana Gabaldon**
Barnes & Noble, Pima & Shea

Dec 29, 7pm **James Sallis**
Poisoned Pen bookstore

Jan 10, 7pm **Douglas Preston**
Poisoned Pen bookstore

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FYI

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SCIENCE EVENTS

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER
Materials Science Workshops
These workshops provide fun hands-on experiences to help participants understand how materials scientists manipulate the properties of various materials to create the products that we use in our everyday life.
Check website for dates and topics
Lecture Series: Living in a Material World
The development of advanced materials has greatly improved our quality of life and will continue do so for decades to come. Dr. Adams will talk about a broad variety of examples of advanced materials science and engineering, from catalytic converters for cleaner air to helicopter blades for safer flight. Plus the Imax film "Sea Monsters 3D"
Jan 4, 7pm
Global Climate Change
7 free lectures series:
"Could Geoengineering Reverse It?"
Dec 12, 7pm
"Ocean Impacts and Feedbacks"
Jan 23, 7pm
"Disease and Society"
Feb 13, 7pm
"What's Ahead"
Mar 5, 7pm
"**Designing Policy Responses"**
Apr 9, 7pm

HONEYWELL FIESTA BOWL AEROSPACE CHALLENGE
ASU WEST CAMPUS, PHOENIX & **CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER, PEORIA**
Designed to enhance knowledge of space technology for 5th thru 8th grade students, the Aerospace Challenge requires participants to develop plans for a 'new' generation International Space Station complete with a physical scale model. More info at:
www.aerospacechallenge.com
Pre-lim Competition on **Dec 3 & 4,** 8am-4pm
ASU West Campus, Phoenix
Final Competition on **Dec 28,** 9am-noon
Challenger Space Center, Peoria

CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER, PEORIA
"Earth 3 2 1 Blast Off"
Intro to science for ages 3-6. Learn about rockets and the Space Shuttle, create & fly a whirlybird, and color and design your own rocket and launch it.
Dec 17, 930am-1130am
Stargazing
Dec 29, 7pm
Starlab Planetarium
Dec 29, 1130am and 1230pm
The Space Place is a 2-hour interactive program for little ones with big imaginations!
Designed for children ages 3 through 6, the program features age-appropriate activities designed to teach preschoolers about our planet and solar system. Call for reservations.
3rd Mondays, 930am-1130am

PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, TUCSON
Santa Lands at the Pima Air & Space Museum
Dec 2, 1pm-4pm
New Volunteer Orientation
Dec 8, 9am-11am
Volunteer Presentation Series
"The U2 and its Spy Days"
Dec 15, 10a,-1130am
Space Shuttle Endeavor Crew lands Mar 1

TITAN MISSILE MUSEUM TOURS
Reservations only
The only publicly accessible Titan II missile site in the nation. Tour the underground missile site. See the 3-ton blast doors, 8' thick silo walls and an actual Titan II missile in the launch duct. Visit the launch control center, experience a simulated launch, and more.
Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 22, Apr 26, and more

SETI Institute's Weekly Science Radio Program
Mondays, avail as podcast
http://radio.seti.org
http://podcast.seti.org

GAMING EVENTS

FOOD DRIVE AT DRAWN TO COMICS
2 Cans food gets you a $1.00 coupon
Benefits St Mary's food bank
Nov 26 Dec 23

BOOKMANS, PHOENIX
Dungeons & Dragons Night
Dec 3, 5pm
Dec 17, 5pm
Jan 7, 5pm
Jan 21, 5pm
Feb 4, 5pm

BOOKMANS MESA
Hero-Clix-Super Hero Gaming Night!
Sundays, 6pm
Dungeons and Dragons RPG Night!
Mondays, 6pm

BOOKMANS, SPEEDWAY TUCSON
Rteam Gamers Family Game Day
Feb 2, 12pm

DRAWN TO COMICS
Heroclix, open play
Every Saturday, 2pm-5pm
MechWarrior Tournaments
Sundays, 1pm
Open all night - Dec 31

GAME DEPOT
Heroclix Tournament
Every Wednesday, 5:30pm-7pm
Halo action clix
Dec 8, 10am
Living Arcanis
Dec 8, 10am
Warhammer 40K Apocalpyse event
Dec 29, noon

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES
Federation Commander
2nd Saturdays, noon
RPG
1st & 3rd Sundays
Boardgames & Demo Nite
Thursdays
Mutants & Masterminds RPG Demo
Dec 7, 7pm
Warhammer 40K tournament
Dec 15, 1030am

OTHER GENRE-RELATED EVENTS

METAPHYSICAL MONDAYS DISCUSSION
Mondays, 7pm
Borders, Glendale

METAPHYSICAL WEDNESDAYS DISCUSSION
Wednesdays, 7pm
Borders, Avondale

PSYCHIC SATURDAYS, 1230pm
Bookmans, Mesa

SCIMITAR-TALON
is a group of people wanting to enjoy recreating portions of the middle ages prior to 1600 AD. Classes on Medieval Arts and Sciences.
1st Saturday, 130pm-230pm
Bookmans Phoenix

ACROSS PLUS ANIME CLUB
Sundays, 7pm
Bookmans Phoenix

BEGINNER BELLYDANCING
Fridays, 5pm
Bookmans Phoenix
&
Thursdays, 7pm
Bookmans, Mesa

METAPHYSICS GROUP
2nd & 4th Mondays, 7pm
Bookmans, Speedway, Tucson

Check the web sites for confirmation, location and more information.
http://www.borders.com
http://www.poisonedpen.com
http://www.bookmans.com
http://www.barnesandnoble.com
http://www.changinghands.com
http://browncoats.lagemann.org
http://www.imperialoutpost.com
http://www.azchallenger.org
http://www.samuraicomics.com
http://www.drawntocomics.com
Game Depot, 480-966-4727
http://www.library.pima.gov
http://www.novaspace.com/Spacefest/
http://www.seti.org

Delving into James Sallis

By Shane Shellenbarger

"I heard the Jeep a half mile off. It came up around the lake, and when it hit the bend, birds took flight. They boiled up out of the trees, straight up, then, as though heavy wind had caught them, veered abruptly, all at once, sharp right. Most of those trees had been standing forty or fifty years. Most of the birds had been around less than a year and wouldn't be around much longer. I was somewhere in between." This is the opening paragraph to *Cypress Grove* by James Sallis.

Local author, Jim Sallis, has recently completed the third and final book in a series that defies pigeonholing: *Salt River*, which was preceded by *Cripple Creek* and the first book in the series, *Cypress Grove* (all are available from Walker & Co.) The series focuses on Turner, a man who returns from the Viet Nam War, joins the Memphis police force, kills his partner, and while in prison studies to become a psychotherapist. The series deals with Turner's attempts to understand his past and the changing society that conflicts with him and consults with him. While not a mystery series, the books strike me as crime fiction with emotional depth.

Writer, essayist, critic, poet, teacher, Jim Sallis is a Renaissance man in the field of writing. He took some time out of his busy schedule to answer a few questions.

Shane Shellenbarger: Jim, it seems to me that you've been teaching for decades. What is it about teaching or your students do you find invigorating and energizing?
James Sallis: I really haven't. I taught years and years ago, at the Clarion workshops, then for a brief time in New Orleans, then not at all for a considerable time until beginning again at Phoenix College five years ago. It's no specific action on my student's parts that energizes me, though it *is* good to see them getting better before my eyes, several having at

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Sallis

(Continued from page 7)

this point finished novels; rather, the atmosphere of possibility and discourse that develops when a class is going well. Not to mention that I simply have some damned fine writers sitting out there. Who wouldn't gain from that?

S.S.: I'm going to go out on a limb and assume that you aren't teaching for the money. What do you derive from the act of teaching and what do you receive from your students?
J.S.: When one has been doing this for a long time, one becomes professionalized, and can all too easily forget, or lose contact with, the reasons one began doing it in the first place. Teaching reminds me of that, and reaffirms for me the importance of what I do.

S.S.: Several years back you were teaching classes in mystery, science fiction, and fantasy short story writing in addition to novel writing. You are currently only teaching novel writing. Short stories were once the training grounds for novelists. With that marketplace dwindling, where are the next generation of novel writers to come from?
J.S.: You're right, there's almost no short story market these days, and in my teaching I find very few interested in writing them. With the proliferation of

small presses, it is much easier to write a novel and get it published these days. The problem, with experienced and newer writers alike, lies in *continuing* to publish; and I wonder at the potential for young writers to sustain any kind of career.

S.S.: On the subject of small presses, have the number of vanity presses reduced as small presses proliferate? How effective is it to launching a career when a writer makes a sale to a small press? Can it hurt a career?
J.S.: I'd assume vanity presses largely to have been undone by the availability and ease of self-publishing nowadays. *Small press*, meanwhile, is rapidly joining such terms as *jazz* and *noir* in becoming semantically scooped-out and empty. "Small presses" are university presses, one-author presses, presses that publish friend's poetry, presses that do a book a year, presses, like Poisoned Pen here in Scottsdale, that do forty or more. Can a small press launch a writing career? That depends on your definition of career. Certainly you can have a fine coming-out party there: let the eligibles know you're available. I've gone back and forth all my life, but then, I write, and have written, many different kinds of material.

S.S.: You recently traveled to Anchorage, Alaska to receive Bouchercon's 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award. What was the highlight of your trip?
J.S.: As always, the people — something of an odd statement from a man given to hermitdom. But I had great conversations with the likes of John Straley and new novelist Keith Gilman, and participated on a kickass panel about genre fiction. Alaska, of course, is breathtakingly beautiful, and Karyn and I had a chance to drive out from Anchorage and see a tiny piece of it.

S.S.: What are your feelings on awards and honors as they pertain to your body of work and your skills as a writer?
J.S.: They are totally irrelevant — but nice to have.

James Sallis is currently teaching Planning & Structuring the Novel and Revising the Novel at Phoenix College. His band, Three-Legged Dog will next perform at the Second Floor Reading Room in the Burton Barr Central Library on November 7th at 6:30 p.m. Word has it that the three members of the band will be joined on stage by fourteen instruments, most of which have strings attached.

James Sallis web site: http://www.jamessallis.com/index.html
A review in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction http://www.sfsite.com/fsf/2007/js0705.htm
Phoenix College classes taught by James Sallis:
CRW272- PLANNING & STRUCTURING THE NOVEL http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/cgi-bin/curric.pl?crs=crw272&trm=20082&host=www.pc.maricopa.edu&inst=01
CRW274- REVISING THE NOVEL
http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/cgi-bin/curric.pl?crs=crw274&trm=20082&host=www.pc.maricopa.edu&inst=01
Three-Legged Dog: http://www.three-legged-dog.net/index.html
Three-Legged Dog at Phoenix Folk Festival: http://0wanderingattention.blogspot.com/2007/04/three-legged-dog-at-phoenix-folk.html

Conversation

(Continued from page 1)

How do his travel experiences influence his writing? I was curious if he traveled with a specific purpose to apply to a story or if he just 'absorbed' stuff he used later? Once, before a trip to Tanzania, he prepared an outline for a book he intended to write about Africa. But since the trip proved to offer more experiences than he anticipated, he threw out the outline and wrote an entirely different book. Since then, he never plans anything; just takes what the trip offers him.

Pip and Flinx is one of his most popular series with the newest novel, *Patrimony*, just out. But Alan isn't done with the series. He's just finishing up *Flinx Transcendent* which is scheduled for 2008. This book will tie up a lot of loose ends and finish off storylines but it is not,

he assures me, the last Flinx book. The Spellsinger series was a favorite of mine and Alan hasn't written one of those in several years. He says he's been asked but since no publisher is beating down his door, he'd really prefer to write something new.

So, what about his writing? Can you work on more than one project at the same time, I asked him. No, he answered, he just can't. The best he can do is put one project aside for a short time to work on something short and on a short deadline; such as being asked to do a rewrite for *Ghosts of Yesterday* which is the prequel for the Transformers film which came along while he was working on *Flinx Trascendent*. But he couldn't work on two books simultaneously.

I asked him what element of a story was most important to him. I was pretty sure I could've answered that one but I wanted to hear what he'd say. Characters, of course. As he explained – when you boil the story down, the one thing the reader is most interested in is… what happens to the characters. Everything else is just window-dressing.

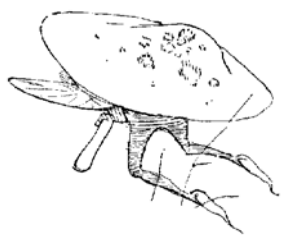
He writes just one draft and no one reads it. Then he'll do one polish and wait for the galley; in which he might do a few edits. He says he's always worked that way even when he was young. John W. Campbell published his first short story so when he had his first novel ready, he sent it to Campbell. Campbell returned it with 6 pages of notes; some of which Alan used and some he didn't. Then he resubmitted it, and again it came back with 6 pages of notes; some of which he used and some… After a third submission, Campbell finally told him he couldn't use it since he had enough serializations for several years. Alan submitted it to Doubleday who rejected it and then to Betty Ballantine who did buy it. So, no one ever gets to really change his books (with one notable exception of *Catchalot* where he cut one passage at Judy-Lynn del Rey's insistence.)

After *Flinx Transcendent*, Alan says he'd like to do a heroic fantasy he's been thinking about – no details yet. A new science fiction world is much harder to write than a fantasy world. But even here, Alan doesn't like to do the same thing. He wrote a story set in eastern Pennsylvania/New York and couldn't sell it. Maybe if he'd set it in East Anglia in London, he mused…

I had planned to ask Alan how he felt about collaborations but after having spent this much time listening to him, it seemed obvious to me that this was a man who paved his own way and somehow, now, I couldn't see him doing a collaboration. So I was going to skip the question but he urged me to ask him anyway. He pointed out that he does do a sort of collaboration when he does novelizations or works in someone else's universe. A sort of once-removed collaboration. But he didn't think he would, it doesn't really interest him. He thought he *could* though…. Maybe if the right situation came along?

And about the publishing world… did Alan think the publishing world would ever lean back towards science fiction and away from fantasy? These things do tend to run in cycles, he explained; although fantasy will always be more popular with a bigger audience than SF for obvious reasons. Science fiction requires more of both the author and the reader. A SF writer has to figure out how to get his character from point A to point B and make it work. In fantasy, the character can fly or just wish herself to point B.

I could have cheerfully listened to Alan for a great deal longer but he had panels to attend that day. I have not read all his books (the man is incredibly prolific, after all) but the ones I've read have impressed me with the obvious intelligence behind the story. While there are loads of authors who entertain me, there are very few I respect as much as Alan Dean Foster.



Videophile

****** Dark Shadow The Beginning Volume 1 & 2**
******* Vincent Price: MGM Scream Legends Collection**
***** Fantastic 4: Rise of the Silver Surfer (The Power Cosmic Edition, 2-Disc Set)**

******* Dark Shadow The Beginning Volume 1 & 2**
MPI Home Video, 840 min (Vol 1) & 690 min (Vol 2), NR
DVD $59.99

Before vampire Barnabas Collins showed up and Dark Shadows shot to cult status, there was a nifty gothic romance soap opera about governess Victoria Winters and her employers, the Collins family. These two volume present the first 70 episodes of the show. We meet the Collins Family of Collinsport, Maine. Matriarch Elizabeth Collins Stoddard (Joan Bennett), who hasn't left her

family's great estate, Collinwood, in 18 years for unknown reasons; her brother, Roger Collins (Louis Edmonds), who is a vain snob and, like his sister, hiding a huge secret; Elizabeth's daughter, Carolyn Stoddard Nancy Barrett), who is a typical 60s teen - full of rebellion and angst; and Roger's son David Collins (David Henesey), who is really really troubled. Into this comes Governess Victoria Winters (Alexandra Moltke Isles), a young woman who grew up in a New York orphanage and was mysteriously offered her post as governess with the Collins family.

Each volume contains 35 episodes. *Dark Shadows the Beginning* is a planned six volume set that will cover all the episodes before Barnabas showed up around episode 200. These are a greatly desired release for those of us who watched Dark Shadows pre-Barnabas and a wonderful introduction to the show for those whose viewing either started with Barnabas or those who have only seen the show on video release. I look forward to the rest of the "Beginnings." Recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

******* Vincent Price: MGM Scream Legends Collection**
MGM, 675 minutes, R
DVD $39.99

The set consists of five discs containing 7 of Vincent Price's best horror films, *The Abominable Dr. Phibes, Tales of Terror, Theater of Blood, Madhouse, Witchfinder General, Dr. Phibes Rises*

Again and *Twice Told Tales*. as well as three short, yet quite informative documentaries about Price, as told by a group of film historians, writers and critics.

This is a great set for the Vincent Price fan and is highly recommended. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

***** Fantastic 4: Rise of the Silver Surfer**
(The Power Cosmic Edition, 2-Disc Set)
20th Century Fox, 92 minutes, PG
DVD $34.98

I missed this in the theaters and thus pre-ordered it as soon as it became available. The story is simple enough, "Invisible Woman: Sue Storm and "Mr. Fantastic" Dr. Reed Richards are about to be married, or at least try for the umpteenth time. In the midst of the wedding planning, Reed is working on a project to track a mysterious phenomena. Of course, the phenomena, the mysterious alien we learn to call the Silver Surfer, crashes the wedding. His presence indicates Earth's impending destruction unless the four superheroes can stop him.

Of course, Dr Doom returns as the team is forced to work with him, and equally predictably, the Silver Surfer is not the ultimate bad guy we initially think he is. The story is predictable but the ride is fun and the effects are all one could hope for.

In the 2 disc set, disc 1 is double-sided and has both widescreen and full-screen editions of the movie, with two commentary tracks. Disc 2 has five extended/deleted scenes, including a longer title sequence. There is a behind-the-scenes documentary that follows the crew as they scout locations, test early special effects, and then work with the cast. There's a detailed look at the Fantasticar and five featurettes: the development of the Fantasticar (10 minutes), the Surfer effects (15 minutes), the history of the Surfer in comic books (39 minutes), the Thing suit (11 minutes), and the music score (four minutes). The "plain vanilla" version has 1 two-sided disc with both full and wide screen versions of the film but apparently none of the extras. For the difference in price I'd opt for the 2-disc version if only for the deleted scenes. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

An American in Canada Part Eight: Last Words

by Jeffrey Lu

Being a tourist, I enjoyed the evergreen forests of Canada. This was paradise for campers, naturalists, and hikers. Sadly, I could not live here due to two reality checks.

First, Canada's winters are harsh. I've been told snow is at least ten feet and lasts at least about six months. I like cold but not when a whole city will have to go underground for at least half a year.

Second, the gas price is way beyond me. Sure, I complain when the gas goes up per gallon of gas in America. Instead, I found out the gasoline at Canada is per liter. They pay almost four times more than I do.

Besides these things, I like Canada. I just can't live there for now.
Next: An American in Australia Part One- Is that you, Sydney?

Editorials

(The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the author of this article do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints or official policies of the Central Arizona Speculative Society, the ConNotations editor or staff.)

No More CopperCon or HexaCon.

This was the take-home message from the October meeting of CASFS.

All it took was a simple analysis of the treasurer's report which shows that over the past 6 years CASFS has consistently spent more money than it has taken in. This equation has one chilling outcome: in 2 to 3 years CASFS will be broke and since CASFS runs CopperCon and HexaCon as it goes so do they. Where is the money going? Same place it always has, to fund CopperCon and HexaCon, pay for ConNotations (ad revenue only pays for ~50%), corporate operating costs and miscellaneous costs. If you want the details contact the CASFS treasurer.

The 2 to 3 year window is based on whether or not CASFS ceases to publish a hard copy version of ConNotations. Keep ConNotations and the estimate is 2 years, drop the print version and the estimate goes to 3 years. Since the majority of the costs associated with ConNotations are fixed, scaling back on the number of pages makes little difference and publishing less often will have a negative effect on the advertising revenue, (for the details contact the ConNotations editor) so the choice boils down to either keep the print version or drop it.

The primary cost of the conventions is the venue; since we live in a free-market society the conventions pay the going rate based on their buying power (how many rooms can they fill) and the Con committees are always looking for the best deal. So it appears that a long-term solution does not lie in changing CASFS' expenditures but rather in increasing its income, which is currently primarily derived from CopperCon and HexaCon, and in turn generate income by selling memberships.

How simple - sell more memberships and everyone will live happily ever after. Well, not so simple, since in order to sell more memberships we need to figure out why they haven't been selling in the past. I've heard various reasons, inadequate advertising, poor location, obscure guests and poor programming to name a few. The easy thing to do would be to blame the convention committees but since the convention chair and banker (the two principle members) are nominated and selected by the CASFS general membership then the ultimate responsibility would appear to lie with CASFS as a whole.

CASFS, stands for Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society, the name doesn't sound too bad, speculative fiction that's pretty inclusive. So just who are these people? Well, folks - they're us, or at least they used to be. I attended my first CASFS meeting back in 2000. My wife and I drove up from Tucson and the meeting was packed, they were bringing more chairs from the main part of JB's in order accommodate everyone. After relocating to Casa Grande last year we attended our second meeting in November of 2006, what a shock, compared to the meeting in 2000 the room was desolate, where the hell had everyone gone? I was told that some moved on to other more special interest fannish organizations, others gafiated, moved away, or sadly, passed away and some left as a result of various disputes fannish and/or otherwise.

During the subsequent months following that November meeting CASFS began soliciting nominations for officers and for CopperCon and HexaCon chairs and bankers. The response of the majority of those individuals, when asked if they would accept a nomination to one of the aforementioned positions, couldn't have been any less enthusiastic if you had offered to give them a warm, rancid fat enema. Why the lack of enthusiasm? Don't these people care? Yes, they care, but they're burning/burnt out, the membership pool is too small, and to fill all of the positions needed to put on a successful Con would take the majority of the regular CASFS meeting attendees. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to game it out; if you accept the position of Chair you need to find a program coordinator, hotel liaison, publicity coordinator and a host of other individuals that are all required to make a successful Con and for each position that you cannot fill you'll probably end up having to cover it. Being in charge can be a joy when you have an enthusiastic and competent team to work with, without it - pure misery. Now no one in CASFS has said die yet, but it's obvious that folks are wearing thin.

A reasonable question at this point might be why someone would even belong to CASFS if they weren't willing to serve? Well, unlike LepreCon or BASFA (the TusCon folks) CASFS does not exist for the sole purpose of putting on a convention, it is also a social organization. So, at any given moment, not everyone who is member of CASFS wants to be involved in running a convention or conversely, interested in any social activities and the degree of their involvement ranges from just looking to total immersion. But with the current membership so low there is just not a large enough pool of potential committee members and so being the Con Chair or Banker is pretty much guaranteed to be a miserable experience and the offer of an retrograde infusion of warm, odiferous and oleaginous joy starts to look attractive in comparison.

There is only one viable, long-term solution to this and it's you. Whether you belong to an organization such as the UFP or the Brown Coats or if you've never really considered belonging before, you're needed now. You don't even need to join CASFS unless you want to try your hand at being either the Chair or the Banker. What is needed is your support. Sure, I know you make a point of volunteering when you can, but not to belittle your efforts, I'm afraid that isn't near enough. The real work actually starts two years prior to the actual Con, that's when the planning starts and is when your energy and ideas will have the greatest impact.

Yes, to be honest I'd love to see you all become members, CASFS offers you an opportunity to broaden your horizons as well as meet and network with other fen. Our claim to be a speculative fiction society mandates that we be as ecumenical as possible and since CASFS leadership is democratically chosen the society is responsive to the concerns of the membership.

But the truth is YOU are more important than your membership, if you've ever had a concern or suggestion about some facet of CopperCon or HexaCon early participation affords you the opportunity to have a voice in the selection of our conventions venue, guests of honor, programming and special events. I'm not saying that you have jump right in and take charge, just by being present, willing and able to lend your energy and enthusiasm is enough to make a significant difference in averting the aforementioned outcome.

So come attend a CASFS meeting and offer your help, let's make a liar out of Pogo. For without you CASFS will just plod along for possibly another 2 or 3 years and then fade away with a whimper, proving that Pogo really did have it right, *the enemy is us*, taking CopperCon, HexaCon and the potential for much more along with it.

MangaZone

Princess Resurrection Volume 1
Reiko the Zombie Shop Volume 1-4
Mushishi 1
Mushishi 2

Princess Resurrection Volume 1
By Acinar Mitsunaga
Del Rey, 224 pages, $10.99

Original Title **Kaibutsu Oujo**.

Follow the adventures of Princess Hime as she tries to survive and rebuild

(Continued on page 11)

MangaZone(Continued from page 10)

her army to protect herself from the rest of the royal family. Flandre, her cute small robot maid, and Hiro a freshly risen-undead servant assist her. Watch how they fight against Vampires, Fishman, Werewolves, even the Invisible man, as they try to secure her position on the throne. This is a great manga with lots of blood and humor (they rebuild the house almost every chapter). This manga is sure to thrill your funny bone. - **ninjakittyofdoom**

Reiko the Zombie Shop Volume 1-4
by Rei Mikamoto
Dark Horse Manga, 192 pages (200 pages Vol 2), $12.95 each

Reiko Himezono is a high school student with a unusual side job. She is known as The Zombie Shop. With her

symbol of darkness on her palm she raises the dead to tell how they died, and she gets paid a pretty penny for it. The first four volumes of this series deal with Reiko and her fight to stop her sister's plans from turning the world into zombies.

This book is full of blood, Zombies, dismemberment and loads of Death. It is a very enjoyable read. - **ninjakittyofdoom**

Mushishi 1
Mushishi 2
by Yuki Urushibara
Del Rey, 240 pages each, $12.95 each

Mushi have existed since the beginning of time. While the word means

"bug" in Japanese, mushi are more like a third kind of life being neither animal or plant. Few people can see them though their presence is sometimes felt or perceived as supernatural phenomena. Ginko, a mysterious man, is one of the few who can see the mushi and he travels the world studying them and trying to help people when problems occur because of mushi contact.

Each volume has several stand-alone stories of the mushi and those they affect, only Ginko's presence connects these stories so you can, literally, dive in anywhere without being lost.

The stories are intriguing, and since there is no overall story arc they are a good starting place for those new to manga; as well as a must for experienced manga fans. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

Words of Wozdom – An Eclectic Column

by M. Wozny

In case you have missed the news lately, incidences and outbreaks of skin infections caused by the antibiotic-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, are on the rise. As if the potential for another international bird flu epidemic wasn't bad enough, now we get this. The staph "superbug" can be carried on the skin and easily transmitted by contact; it turns dangerous when it gets inside the body. Reports of the numbers of cases and the percentages of deaths vary, but older people seem most susceptible to MRSA, although drug-resistant pneumococcus ear infections are on the rise in children.

I spent 2 years as an Army medic in the 90's, stationed overseas where our access to medical care was limited. I had an interest in folk remedies and homeopathy; since historically, most people have not had access to hospital care and had to evolve medicines and therapies empirically. Our soldiers still went to the Dispensary and the Surgery ward for most conditions, but sometimes they came to me. I kept tea tree oil to clear up the fungus infections we got on our hands and feet in the damp climate, and it worked better than the goop from the dispensary. My aid bag always had packets of Emergen-C and Rescue Remedy among the bandages and extra rolls of socks. (Soldiers were always leaving socks behind to make room in their kits for pogie bait, and then they wondered why they got blisters.) I kept a few other things on hand too, for soldiers who were worried about piss tests.

Another medic who also offered medical care beyond the dictates of our manuals once warned me, "*Never* prescribe. You can get thrown in jail for exceeding your training. What I do is tell a soldier how I would use something in a hypothetical case, and show them what I would use, and then tend to something elsewhere in the room with my back turned."

So what would a hedge medic do for a skin infection of MRSA? This morning, I noticed a painful, bumpy rash on both my legs, just above the ankles. I had been at a school fair yesterday, surrounded by hundreds of unwashed potential vectors of transmission. First, I washed and applied tea-tree oil as a disinfectant. The rash subsided over the next hour, but it didn't go away, and it still hurt.

Have you ever heard of Seneca oil? It was the external remedy of choice for any risk of skin infection after lacerations in the 1800s and early 1900s. Thick, sticky black stuff, it was collected from surface pools of crude oil. Nowadays it is still used under the name of Ichthammol ointment, and the best way to get it is to go to a horse feed and supply store and get the 20% tub of the stuff for a fraction of what a 5% prescription tube would cost. I had bought a tub two years ago to treat a spider bite that bore a suspicious resemblance to write-ups of brown recluse bites. It drew the poison out and my skin healed, no harm done, except to my socks, and I keep a good detergent. So an hour ago I rustled under my bathroom counter, came up with the Ichthammol, and smeared some on both afflicted areas. The pain has stopped.

My guess is that small cuts made by grass on my bare legs had let *something* nasty in. Might not have been MRSA; but with diagnosed Arizona cases already approaching 1000 for this year, and God knows how many undiagnosed, I am keeping the Ichthammol handy. It might work where antibiotics fire blanks.

This is not a prescription; just a friendly consideration.

(The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the author of this article do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints or official policies of the Central Arizona Speculative Society, the ConNotations editor or staff.)

YOUR LOGO DESIGN COULD BE HERE

WesternSFA is looking for a graphic mascot/logo.
The logo/mascot would be used on our web site, letterhead and possibly merchandise such as shirts..

The logo should:
--Tell the world what we do.
We are an Arizona nonprofit organization dedicated to promotion of science fiction and fantasy literature, gaming and Anime. We host fan-run conventions including the annual AniZona Anime convention. Graphic possibilities include spacecraft, planets, monsters, aliens and other fantastical creatures, books, etc. Our name should be in there somewhere. (The Corporate Treasurer is quite fond of space-going Samurai penguins...)

--Be scalable.
The logo should look good and be easy to recognize at all sizes, from business cards to posters. Line art is better that anything that depends on colors, best is a design that works as line art as well as colored. Simple is good.
The winning designer will receive a free membership to any local fan run convention in 2008 (AniZona, LepreCon, CopperCon, HexaCon, Tuscon) and the right to boast "That's my design!". WesternSFA will retain all copyright to the winning design.
Send your designs by January 31, 2008 to:

Attention Logo Contest
WesternSFA
PO Box 67641
Phoenix AZ 85082
logo@westernsfa.org

Screening Room

Dragon Wars
The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising

Dragon Wars
Starring: Jason Behr, Amanda Brooks, Robert Forster
Director: Shim Hyung Rae
Runtime: 100 Minutes
Rated: PG-13
Opened: September 14, 207

Dragon Wars opens at the scene of an explosion. When reporter Ethan Kendrick (Cody Erens) arrives, a mysterious object is uncovered and we enter a rather lengthy flashback to when he was a boy. A mysterious shop owner named Jack (Robert Forster) explains to him in a flashback within a flashback, about the prophecy. There are powerful serpents on the earth and every 500 years the heavens place the essential energy that will allow one of the serpents (Imoogi) to transform into a Celestial Dragon into a woman. The woman and the Imoogi join together mystically. Usually this is good, but in 1507 an evil Immogi raised an army in order to take the chosen vessel for himself. Things do not go the way anyone expects them to do and five hundred years later the stage is set for the rematch between good and evil.

When we finally return to the present we find that Ethan is the reincarnation of the warrior-apprentice who has a chance to redeem his past failure if he can find the reincarnation of the woman intended to celestialize the good Immogi. The only thing in his way is the evil serpent Buraki and an army of dragons and their armored trooper allies.

D-Wars had a decidedly Godzilla feel to it, with the film throwing in mostly pointless scenes - filled with B-movie dialogue - inbetween model-destroying appearances of Buraki as he pursues the Ethan and Sarah (Amanda Brooks) throughout the city. We can tell it's time for our heroes to go because each time they run out of room to run, a vehicle conveniently throws itself in their path. Eventually the army arrives to battle the dragon forces, providing one of the more entertaining elements of the film.

The only real plot elements are developed in the opening flashback. Because of that it happens to be the most engaging portion of the film as far as story-telling goes. While in the flashback I wished they would get to the present day story and when they did I regretted that they had. The action scenes were fun and I especially like the clash between modern and ancient fantastic armies.

This may not be a film appreciated by all audiences. My suggestion is to wait for it to release as a rental then watch it with the sound off and supply your own story line. - **Randy Lindsay**

The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising
Running Time 134 minutes
Rated: PG
Novel by Susan Cooper
Screenplay by John Hodge
Director David L. Cunningham
Opened: October 5, 2007

This is the movie adaption of the second book in *The Dark Is Rising* series

by Susan Cooper. Will Stanton(Alexander Ludwig) is a young boy who, like all young boys, feels he just doesn't fit in. Then one day, strange things start to happen to him. Crows, and dogs start chasing him. Then, at a Christmas party, he is approached by Merriman Lyon(Ian McShane) who says he is the head of a small groups of immortals (Frances Conroy as Miss Greythorne, James Cosmo as Mr. Dawson, Jim Piddock as Old George) who have waited for him, and that he is the Seeker, a person reborn, who is to find the six items spread out through time and bring them together to defeat the Darkness. He has five days to do this and at every step of the way The Rider (Christopher Eccleston) is waiting and trying to get the item before him.

This was a very fun family movie. I loved seeing Eccleston as a villain. My favorite line from the movie is when Merriman instructs Will on his powers, which include great strength, the command of fire, the ability to move objects at a distance and the unique knowledge to decipher an ancient text. Will then asks what about flight to which Merriman responds "this isn't a comic book." I recommend this movie for the whole family. - **ninjakittyofdoom**

Gamer's Corner

Aletheia
Game System
Hager, Foster, Valentinelli
$29.95, Abstract Nova Entertainment LLC, 174 pages

This is a game based on investigation of paranormal activities. The system uses six-sided dice and the number rolled depends on the task and your skill level. The player investigates potential paranormal events including but not limited to spontaneous combustion, UFOs, telepathy, ghosts, and other inexplicable events. The style is extremely role-play heavy, and needs careful attention to detail. The system is simple to learn and allows people to get deeply into their character. It isn't designed for people who prefer roll-playing, but will be welcomed into many play groups.

The chapters are well laid out, and designed to be easily referenced (not that you will need to reference much). Combat is not difficult but also not used a lot. - **Bob LaPierre**

Neverwinter Nights 2
Forgotten Realms
Role-Playing Game for the PC
$49.95, Atari/Obsidian

This is the last of the Dungeons and Dragons 3.5 games. I enjoyed most of it, but there are some minor things I disliked. Among the better things are the additional companions; you can have three companions instead of one and if you succeed at certain tasks you can get a fourth. The story is interesting if predictable, and allows some discretion in how you solve encounters. I find the way you acquire NPCs a little heavy handed (I purposely tried the first two encounters with NPCs outside the village multiple times so I could change my answers to the encounter, it still wound up with me entering combat on the side of the NPC).

Many answers have different ways of saying the same thing; however, many of them also influence your NPCs and can shift your alignment. I'm still in the low teens for level so I cannot comment on how it plays at higher level play. The biggest problem I had was I thought that a scene in a slaughtered town should NOT have had dead cats all through it. It was an unnecessary gross factor. Another problem I have is the lack of choices for the NPCs. You cannot change their class even to put them into a prestige class. And while we are on the subject …where the @#&& are the clerics?

The items are neat, the item creation rules are interesting, and I hope some of it bleeds over into D&D 4.0.
Buy it before it is gone. - **Bob LaPierre**
— See you next time.

(Continued on page 13)

Gamer's Corner

(Continued from page 12)

Warhammer 40,000 The Saint- A Gaunt's Ghosts Omnibus
by Dan Abnett
Black Library Publication, $11.99, pp. 1023.

Colonel-Commissar Ibram Gaunt and his men from Tanith First-and-Only must fight against the Chaos forces in the Sabbat Worlds Crusade. What they do not expect is meeting a saint- a reappearing of Saint Sabbat.

This is the second arc to the Tanith series. The novels that are in this omnibus: "Honour Guard," "The Guns of Tanith," "Straight Silver," and "Sabbat Martyr."

Overall, I loved it! The stories are very dark and seemed to explain what the Sabbat Worlds Crusade are. Recommended for dark sci-fi readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer Lord of Ruin
by Dan Abnett and Mike Lee
Black Library Publication, $7.99, pp. 413.

The dark elf Darkblade is back after getting four artifacts. He is almost done with his quest - finding five powerful items in less than a year. In this book, Malus Darkblade commands an expedition to fight a huge Chaos army. He is not only betrayed by his family but also by his own people. Next, he needs to get the last artifact in time or he forfeits his soul to Tz'arkan. Last, he has to deal with the betrayal of his inner demon, Tz'arkan.

This is the fifth book of the series of "A Tale of Malus Darkblade"

Liked it but very dark. Recommended to Warhammer fans and dark fantasy readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000 The Traitor General
by Dan Abnett
A Black Library Publication, $7.99, pp. 415.

Colonel-Commissar Ibram Gaunt and his selected people are to find a high-ranked Imperial general in a Chaos-infested world. The team are on a suicide mission to either rescue the general or assassinate him, if he is a traitor.

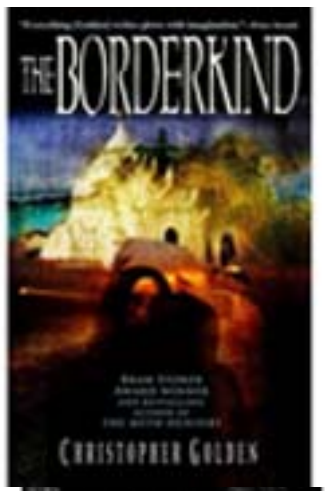
This is the beginning of a third arc on "The Lost" series.

Interesting but realistic. Very dark. Recommended for dark sci-fi readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

In Our Book

The Borderkind
by Christopher Golden
$12.00, Spectra Fantasy, 375 pp

This is the second of Golden's Book of the Veil series and was eagerly anticipated by yours truly. Golden is known for his superlative horror and his fantasy is just as great. It's really more horror-fantasy. The Veil is what separates our 'real' world from where our myths and legends now reside. Oftentimes, people accidently pass through. These are the Lost Ones and can never return. Some



creatures, called the Borderkind, are able to travel at will between worlds. Jack Frost is one of the Borderkind. In the first Book of the Veil, Jack Frost was injured by a hunter from his world who appeared to be hunting the Borderkind. A human lawyer, Oliver Bascombe, was forced to assist Frost and in doing so, traveled through the Veil and was unable to return. He fell into fellowship with Frost and other legends and began a journey through the other world. His goal was to find the legend, the Sandman, who murdered his father and kidnapped his sister, Collette, and was apparently murdering children throughout the world.

The second book continues Oliver's journey to certain goals that he hopes will lift a death sentence on his head, find the child murderer and rescue his sister. Frost and the other Borderkind hope to find the one responsible for setting the hunters and discover why the Borderkind present a threat. Unbeknownst to Oliver, the detective investigating Oliver's father's murder, and Oliver's fiancé accidently pass through the veil while following Oliver's trail. They are now part of the Lost Ones. While Oliver, due to his unique heritage, is able to pass back and forth at will, just as the Borderkind do, his fiancé, Julianna, will never be able to return to the real world. As the detective, Halliwell, and Julianna travel through the unbelievable world of myths and legends, Halliwell's sanity is sorely tested while Julianna's faith in reuniting with Oliver is strengthened. They all finally meet at Collette's prison and confront the horror who imprisoned her as bait to catch Oliver. Meanwhile, Frost and the other legends are confronting the sorcerer who instigated all the murders and trying to discover the reason why.

It's wonderful storytelling. The plot is complex enough to keep my interest but not confusing. The characterizations are well drawn. With each book less than 400 pages, this could have been marketed as a single large volume. But I'm real happy that they were published as smaller novels; it was fun anticipating the next installment. - **Catherine Book**

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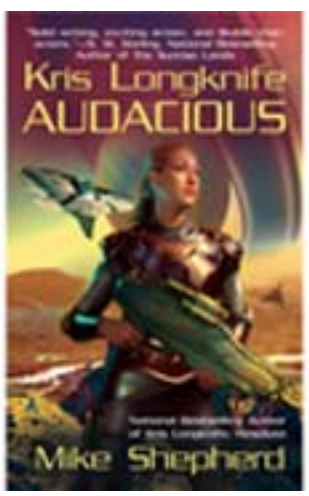
Kris Longknife: Audacious
By Mike Shepherd
Ace Books, New York 2007, Mass Market Paperback 373 Pages, $7.99

Kris Longknife, that Long Suffering Scion of the Longknife Clan, is again thrust into danger by her Uncle, King Ray Longknife. King Ray is ostensibly sending her as the Naval Attache for Trade in the civilized Realm of Eden, Earth's first interstellar colony.

Kris almost immediately realizes that all is not as it seems. For one thing she almost immediately endures three



assassination attempts. These, however turn out to be the work of her old and very dead enemy's sister and not directly related to her unknown mission. Strangely, the news is so controlled that no mention of the quite spectacular attempts reaches the data nets. Her personal computer, Nellie, reports that the local nets are quite useless for any kind of research. She and her Marines find themselves in battle whenever she goes out on any kind of an excursion. While rescuing her Grandmother, she finds an arms cache and other signs of skulduggery. But what is going on? A message from a teen-aged local says "They're going to kill them all." But who are *they* and when are they to be killed? She believes her old enemy's family, the Peterwalds of Greenfield are hip-deep in these events

The characters of Kris's bodyguard, Jack, and her two assistants, Penney and Abby, contribute much to the flavor of the story. Nellie, her computer, is important too. Her Grandmother is delightful. We learn more about what makes these people tick and through them we achieve a greater understanding of Kris herself.

The story flows crisply and the action carries you on. An excellent readable story. Recommended. [Next, *Kris Longknife: Intrepid*] – **Gary Swaty**

The Music of Razors
by Cameron Rogers
Ballantyne Books $13.95; 314 pp

If you read unexpurgated Grimm's fairy tales, you find horrors, from the mild horror of the bloody-footed sisters of Cinderella to the full blown horror of "The Juniper Tree" or "The Robber Bridegroom." Fairy tales keep their thumb on the dark pulse, where evils are numerous and many-faced and the only virtues are integrity, resiliency, kindness, and the intuition which goes ignored to one's dire peril.

The Music of Razors is a modern fairy tale that draws interconnecting story lines into a complicated knot, fleshing out the quote at the novel's beginning: "Anyone alive is bait for demons." There is a forgotten angel stripped of its powers, "an unlimited potentiality without possibility of use;" but he has planned ahead for just

(Continued on page 14)

In Our Book (Continued from page 13)

such an indignity, seeding the earth with slivers of silver bone from a murdered angel, which exert influences on the susceptible. In the most heart-wrenching story line, four and a half-year-old Walter

is manipulated by a mysterious red-haired entity so that he loses the protection of his guardian; then he becomes a guardian to his own sister, Hope. Henry Lockrose is a medical student in Boston in 1840 who can't go home again and wouldn't want to if he could, who falls in with occultists and lives beyond the ordinary span of years. Nimble is a mechanical ballerina invented by the occultist Athelstane for the protection of his daughter Millicent. Another character is Suni, a schoolboy with a stutter, who chases a kleptomaniac gremlin called Nabber into a dimension where all lost things are hoarded.

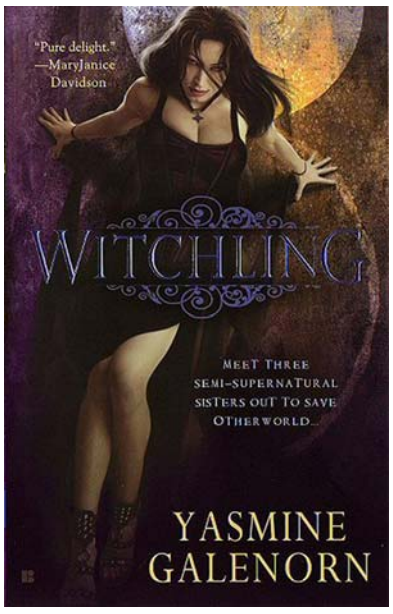
The writing is superb: spare, intelligent, twisty. An author's photograph near the back reveals that Cameron Rogers resembles a dark elf version of Legolas. Under the pen-name Rowley Monkfish he writes children's stories as well. – **Chris Paige**

Witchling
Berkley, 276 pages, $6.99
Changling
Berkley, 278 pages, $6.99
Both by Yasmine Galenorn

Camille, Delilah and Menolly D'Artigo are half-human, half-Faerie sisters who find themselves in the middle of a war between good and evil. Think *Charmed* with a dark twist in which the world has come to know about faeries and other supernatural beings.

Each of the sisters has a talent, Camille is a witch, though her spells don't always work the way she expects, Delilah is a shape-shifter who sometimes turns into a tabby cat at the most awkward moments and Menolly is a vampire. Each book is told from the viewpoint of one of the sisters.

In *Witchling* we are introduced to the sisters and their world, or more accurately, worlds. There is Earthside, where the sisters live and work for the Otherworld Investigative Agency and then there is the Otherworld, where the elves, faeries, and other supernatural beings live. Long ago the two worlds intermingled in harmony before events created an Earthside where humans considered supernatural beings to be myth and legend. The Fae never totally left Earthside, having visited constantly over the centuries, but they have now come out of the closet, so to speak, and modern humans have learned that Faeries, vampires and other beings are not the myths they thought they were. Society has adapted: we have Faerie Watchers, sort of a Faerie groupie club, Vampires Anonymous to help vampires and their families get along in polite society and establishments like the Wayfarer Inn



where Menolly works, that serves as a meeting place for humans and Faeries as well as a portal to the Otherworld. Add into this mix a Shadow Wing, a really bad guy from the Subterranean Realms who wants to take over earth, a civil war in Otherworld and you've got the basic background.

Changeling, told from Delilah's viewpoint, expands on the plot, and introduces new complications to the sisters' lives in the forms of new enemies (creepy were-spiders *shudder*), new friends, a band of were-pumas, and new complications to the sisters' love lives. I particularly enjoyed the scene at a Vampires Anonymous when Menolly meets Wade's mother.

I am enjoying the plot and the characters, there is a nice balance in the storytelling that sweeps the reader along with the sisters. These are, however, part of Berkley's Paranormal Romance line and are not suitable for young readers. There is graphic sex as the sisters hook up with their various men friends and somewhat graphic descriptions of the battles.

I can easily recommend this series. *Darkling*, told from Menolly's viewpoint, is due out in January and I eagerly await it. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

The Book of the Dead
by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child
$7.99, Warner Vision, 597pp

Nora Kelly is a curator at the New York Museum of Natural History. She's really quite happy working on her potsherds project. She's not exactly thrilled when she's asked – no, required – to curate a 70-year-old forgotten Egyptian exhibit that has been bricked up in the subbasement of the museum. It seems that a generous donation has come at just the right time. The Museum is embarrassed by the theft of their diamond collection; and their subsequent return – but as a bag of diamond dust. They need a grand exhibit and a gala to distract the public and the press. But there was a good reason why the exhibit was abandoned – a lot of people died at its first opening.

The person responsible for the diamond theft – and its destruction – plus the attack on her coworker is in FBI custody. But he, Aloysius Pendergast, former FBI agent, and his supporters maintain it was his brother, Diogenes, who is responsible; and if they are right, the man is still loose with an unfulfilled agenda. It is clear to Agent Pendergast that the only person who could possibly find and stop his brother is himself – but he'll have to get out of a maximum security Federal Prison which has a spotless record of no successful escapes.

The story has several threads that contribute to it. As we, the readers, and the characters discover more and more about Diogenes and his pathological hatred of his brother, the more intense the story becomes. I was fascinated by the idea the authors gave Diogenes to use for his ultimate revenge, it was really quite brilliant. I don't think there were any points where the story slowed. The plot was intricate, the characterizations were good – not great – but very good, the

(Continued on page 16)

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Ellyn Stern - '*Robotech*', *Digimon*, '*Noein*', 'Jack's Mom' in *Mar*and 'Haraway' in '*Ghost in the Shell 2-Innocence*'

David Vincent - *GUN X SWORD* as the voice of Van and Fukusuke Hikyakuya in *Naruto*.

Chris Hazelton - Manga Artist "*Building 12*".and "*A Steel Wing Shattered*".

Amanda Tomasch - Publishing Editor for Demented Dragon and author and concept artist for "*Midnight Blue*"

Toshifumi Yoshida - Producer who got his start as a founding member of Animag and then spent time at VIZ working on *Inuyasha*. He is currently working as a translator on the *Negima*! Manga series for Del Rey.

Trish Ledoux - Voice actress. Her credits include *Outlanders* as Princess Kahm, *Macross II* as Wendy Ryder and *Fatal Fury: The Motion Picture* as Reiko Chiba.

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Natz started his music career as a guitarist in 1994 in Saitama, Japan in a band called LUPPY. In 2002, he came to the US to study and now lives in CA. His music is influenced by Japanese pop and rock though he also listens to 80's metal.

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and much more...

Watch our web site for announcements of more guests and events!

In Our Book (Continued from page 14)

pacing was fast. This was a I-wish-I-didn't-have-to-put-it-down kind of book. My single complaint is that I wish someone had told me it was the third in a story arc of several books. I think I would have enjoyed the characters background even more if I knew them better. **- Catherine Book**

Burdens of Empire
by C. J. Ryan
Bantam Spectra Books, $6.99, 356 pp

In the 34th century, humanity has taken to the stars. The Earth empire spans more than 2600 worlds and has over 3 trillion citizens under its Imperial umbrella of authority. Long ago, notions of a democratic republic leading mankind to an era of benevolent interstellar expansion were surrendered to a more realistic view of aggressive conquest.

Centuries of growth has placed the Empire in danger of collapse with half of the ruling caste pushing for further expansion to stave off the political rot that is taking place, while the rest argue for supporting the existing member worlds.

Introduce the kidnapping of Earth's most skilled negotiator by the inhabitants of a small and unimportant world and you have the *Burdens of Empire*.

Our protagonist is Gloria Van Deen. She is the beautiful and heroic ex-wife of the Emperor. Earlier in her life, she underwent treatments that augmented her sexual traits and has rendered her no mere beauty, but absolutely gorgeous; a point that is mentioned many times in the book, by just about every male character that dialogues with her. In addition to being dead hot sexy, her skill set includes the ability to get things done and being the ex-wife of the Emperor. Basically, she is a socialite with a good work ethic and a reasonable amount of common sense.

Gloria is sent to the planet to assess the situation and with the not-so-secret mission of getting Earth's most valued diplomat safely returned. However, within hours of landing on the planet a rebel bomb kills the Planetary Governor and leaves her in charge of the planet until a replacement can be sent. The story deals with her handling the problems inherent in an empire ruling over a conquered people, unraveling the mystery that is the strange alien culture of the indigenous life forms, and the finding of Lord Kenarbin the diplomat.

Burdens of Empire starts slowly. The kidnapping of Lord Kenarbin takes place in chapter one and provides a hook that grabs your attention, but it is surrounded by a mountain of backstory designed to bring the reader up to speed with what has happened to the Empire over the last two thousand years. If you are the type of reader that enjoys long stretches of exposition, then you will probably enjoy the history lesson.

I was disappointed that the protagonist didn't show up until chapter three and then in the middle of a philosophical debate about imperial treatment of alien species. Frankly, I would have liked to see a hero with more to offer than being gorgeous and the willingness to flash plenty of shapely flesh to the marines in order to keep their spirits up. Although, others might like a protagonist with a more realistic level of abilities. This is not the first book in the series so I am assuming that her exploits have been enjoyed by many. - **Randy Lindsay**

An Ice Cold Grave
by Charlaine Harris
Berkley, 288 pages, $23.95

The third book in the Harper Connelly series.

In her teens Harper was struck by lightening. Now the dead talk to her as they seek closure. Using her talent to support herself, Harper and her step-brother/friend/manager Tolliver Lang travel the US helping families set their dead to peaceful rest.

This time Harper is hired to find the body of a missing boy in rural North Carolina. Instead she finds eight bodies and a serial killer. Things heat up as Harper is assaulted, the tension between her and Tolliver reaches a head and her psychic friend Xylda Bernardo and her

grandson, Manfred, make a gruesome discovery when they come to help. Add in extreme winter storm, skeptical law enforcement and townspeople reluctant to acknowledge that a killer has lived undetected in their midst for years and you have yet another exciting novel.

While I enjoy the Sookie Stackhouse novels, Harper is fast becoming my favorite of Ms Harris' characters. The crime stories are interesting in and of themselves and the paranormal twist adds the edge to keep you turning each page with a "can't wait to see what happens next" anticipation. I can't believe it will be a whole year before I can find out more about Harper. Highly recommended. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

Claimed by Shadow
by Karen Chance
Roc, $74.99; 374 pp

This a true sequel, not a stand alone, to *Touch the Dark*, continuing the miss-adventures of Cassandra Palmer, reluctant clairvoyant and time-traveling Pythia-in-training. She is still dodging vampires, gun-toting mages, and Myra, a malevolent and *ambitious* rival for the Pythian throne and powers.

This story begins with Cassie trying to keep the 3 Graeae, the Grey Ladies of the Perseus myth and the Disney film Heracles, out of trouble at a casino staffed by incubi. One friendly incubus makes the moves on her and gets his infernal hand

slapped forcibly away by a mysterious *geis* set to protect Cassandra from advances made by anyone other than the caster – or an approved substitute, and the incubus is not on that short list. Who cast it, and why? It doesn't take Cassie long to deduce the who, and she quickly figures out the why as well: that attractive Master vampire Mircea wanted to make sure she'd be left alone, for only a virgin can become the next Pythia – and only then by losing her virginity ritualistically. Cassie wants the *geis* gone, but only someone at least as powerful as the caster can remove it, and entities packing that much power and friendly to Cassie are few.

She teams up with the mage Pritkin, even though he previously was one of those commissioned to hunt her down with extreme prejudice. Pritkin owes allegiance to the regulatory Circle of Mages, but he owed first allegiance to the former Pythia, Agnes; if Agnes wanted Cassie to succeed her, that's what he intends to facilitate, which he can't very well do if she's dead.

Book Two follows several of the threads left dangling by Book One to neatly tied resolutions, but by no means all. Fortunately, Book Three, *Embrace the Night*, has a release date of April 1st, 2008; and if you go to the author's website, www.karenchance.com, you can even read a couple of chapters. – **Chris Paige**

Reader and Raelynx
by Sharon Shinn
Ace Books; $24.95, 420pp

Another terrific novel of the Twelve Houses, this time Shinn ratchets up the tension by throwing in war—one that has been brewing throughout the other three novels in this series.

In the midst of this escalating strife, Cammon, the orphaned mystic Senneth and her friends discovered in the first novel is really coming into his own here. His empathetic powers have become vital to the other mystics in his group, Senneth, Justin, Donal, Tayse, Ellynor and Kirra. He can feel approaching danger for his six comrades and more importantly any that which threatens King Baryn, his Queen Valri and his daughter Amalie.

Ah, Princess Amalie. She is the heart of this story. Though there are battles and confrontations and drama, the main thread of this tale is Cammon and Amalie's growing love for the other. A love, of course, that on the surface would be impossible to allow. He is a nameless orphan, and she is the future Queen of all Gillengaria.

But because he can sense danger and has proven his worth over and over, Cammon is commanded to shadow the princess at any public function. While the other six friends work to bring together as many mystics as possible to confront the amassed armies of mercenaries and foreigners, as well as traitors, pulled together by Halchon Gisseltess and his fellow conspirator Rayson Fortunalt, Cammon is left in the capitol city of Ghosenhall to vet the continuous stream of suitors for the 19-year-old princess. And though the Queen, who is highly protective of Amalie usually plays chaperone, the two do get their moments alone. And one is just priceless. Naïve and sheltered, Amalie has no idea about the physical side of marriage. She also claims she has no idea of what a naked man looks like (Having, apparently, not even seen any naked statues). And so Cammon blithely shows her one cold afternoon out

(Continued on page 17)

In Our Book (Continued from page 16)

in the wilds of a garden, far from any prying eyes. He literally strips down naked and shows her his body. Amalie gives him a good once over, asks questions and then Cammon dresses. No innuendo and no sex. A wonderful way to handle a delicate subject!

This is one of my favorite novels of this series, because of the focus on Cammon and Amalie. The war is a big issue, of course, and the battles are huge. But Coralinda Gisseltess, the woman who has pulled together the followers of the Pale Mother and is leading them

personally to join up with the rebels, plays a very small part in this book. Each villain, though, does get their come-uppance and Coralinda and Senneth get to fight it out in a fantastic duel.

And all the loose ends are tidily taken care of, including Cammon and Amalie's *affaire d'amore*. I assume this is the last of the books in this series. But I certainly hope it is not the last of Shinn's novels set in Gillengaria! - **Sue Martin**

Secret of the Dragon's Eye
by Derek Hart
iUniverse, 244 pages, $16.95

Back cover blurb: "*Secret of the Dragon's Eye* is a tale of fantasy for all ages, with a high-spirited dragon named Thaddeus Osbert and three adolescents who befriend him. Faced with danger and intrigue, the children band together with the dragon, to thwart a German top-secret mission, aimed at seizing the mystical and magical sword of King Arthur-Excalibur. By combining their wits, their courage, and their imagination, the children overcome many obstacles to forge friendships as solid as time itself. Yet there is a price to pay for their brave intervention against the forces of evil. Will they be willing to once again battle incredible odds to make amends? What sacrifices will be required to save their mythical, fire-breathing friend from his pre-ordained fate?"

Gavin and Emily are best friends living in near by villages in Cornish in 1940. The night before school starts, Gavin's father brings out an old family book, *Kings and Dragons*, and reads a few chapters to Gavin. Story time is short-lived though as Gavin's father joins the armed forces the next day and has to leave his family. Soon Gavin and Emily are joined by Bunty, orphaned by a German bombing and taken in by Gavin's mother. To this point we're dealing pretty much with straight historical fiction. And then the dragon, Thaddeus Osbert, shows up and the adventure begins.

I am a fan of both historical and young adult fiction and this novel fills both interests. Gavin, Emily and Bunty are engaging characters and Thaddeus is delightful. Read this to your kids, read this yourself. And then go out and buy book two when it comes out. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

Fiends of the Rising Sun
by David Bishop
Black Flame, 415 pages, $7.99

Set on the eve of America's entrance into World War II, *Fiends of the Rising Sun* is a tale of Japanese vampires serving their empire in preparation for the attack on Pearl Harbour. This book is inspired by *Fiends of the Eastern Front* by the same author.

I must admit, this book sounded ideal - vampires, war, and Japanese culture are all things that fascinate me. As a result of such high expectations, I was disappointed as the story began. It seemed rather predictable for what I considered an original idea. As each character was introduced I could see from which generic character box they'd been grabbed and predict to a healthy degree their fate. Still I read on.

It reads quickly, perhaps because there is so little description of the environment. Halfway through the book, the predictability factor goes down; however, my attachment to any of the main characters never rose above 'mild interest'. Once the attack began, I really didn't care who survived on either side. I just kept waiting for the battles to become

interesting; and then, they were over. The book faded to an end; obviously left open for another novel, one I have no plans to read. - **Suzanne Clay**

The Sharing Knife: Beguilement
by Lois McMaster Bujold
Eos, $7.99; 355 pp

Lois McMaster Bujold is my favorite living author, a cross between Jane Austen and Dorothy Sayers; her astonishing admixtures of character studies, humor, philosophical flashes, and combat are an utter feast for the mind and heart.

The Sharing Knife trilogy begins with *Beguilement* and continues with the recently published *Legacy*. The setting is neither galactic nor technological: the characters are either nomadic rangers who hunt deadly blights – immortal monsters who feed of the life energy of anything and everything and who suborn animals and men to its service – or rural folk, farmers mostly, for whom glass and brick are the epitome of civilization. But there are references to past civilizations that built immense cities, with connecting roads that rivaled the works of Rome, whose denizens sought immortality. It was this search that gave rise to the blights: the ancestors of the rangers created the blights, and their descendants are still trying to contain the mess and horror birthed by that lust for immortality.

The protagonists are Fawn and Dag. Both are carrying burdens when they meet: burdens of life and death, loss and memory, regret and responsibility. Disaster, necessity, and an extraordinary occurrence draw Fawn and Dag together, and it is Fawn, not the trained Dag, who ends up slaying the blight that has infiltrated the region.

There is a detailed, but implicit – *not* explicit – bedroom scene. Much less steamy than a Romance novel encounter, but also far more, um… open-minded.

By the end of the story, Fawn and Dag have formed an unprecedented alliance

(Continued on page 18)

FiestaCon
(Westercon 62)
July 2-5, 2009
Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, Tempe, Arizona
www.fiestacon.org

FiestaCon Guests of Honor

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Author Alan Dean Foster
Editor Stanley Schmidt
Fans Jim & Doreen Webbert
Music Jordin Kare
Toastmasters Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden

FiestaCon will be the 62nd annual Westercon. We will be at the Tempe Mission Palms in downtown Tempe, Arizona, with a variety of nearby restaurants, nightlife, and shopping with easy access to the Phoenix Light Rail and a great view of the Tempe July 4th Fireworks!

We are planning to have many local and western region artists, authors and other participants on hand for our programming.

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800-547-8705 (or 480-894-1400)
www.missionpalms.com

Membership Rates
Full attending is $50 thru 12/31/07, $55 thru 3/31/08, $30 Supporting
See fiestacon.org for info on discounts if you pre-supported or voted in site-selection.

FiestaCon Contact Information
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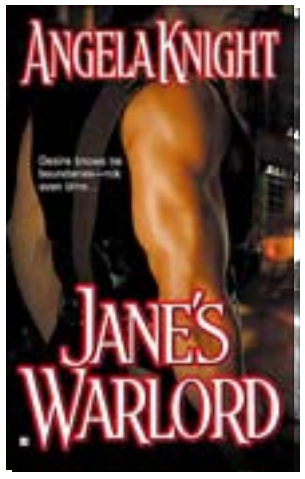
In Our Book (Continued from page 17)

that tests every member of her farmer community upon their arrival. These confrontations are the meat of the second half of the book, and some of them are laugh-aloud funny, if you have a dark and nuanced sense of humor. Any reader who has ever found himself or herself completely at wit's end in the sucking morass of familial dynamics can find glimmers of hope in these pages. And then you get to read the sequel. **– Chris Paige**

Jane's Warlord
By Angela Knight
Berkley Sensation (Paranormal Romance), New York, 2007, 298 Pages, $4.99.

This book is not a paranormal Romance. It is a well-written Time travel Romance. Readers should be aware the book contains explicit sex and violence.

Three hundred years in the future the Temporal Enforcement Police note signs of an incursion by a time traveling serial killer who has been responsible for many well-known murders in the past. The records indicate that they might have a chance to bring him down. They dispatch a genetically engineered super-soldier to intervene in his crime spree in 2007. Baran Arvid's orders are to stay with Jane



Colby until Kalig Druas shows up and then kill him.

The story has the inevitable romantic involvement between our hero and heroine, the truly violent and perverted activities of Druas, the confusion of the local police, the danger of Temporal Paradox, the higher ups in the Temporal Enforcement and the fact that Baran was not told whether he would or could save his new beloved.

The most interesting character in the book is Baran's assistant and sidekick, Freika, a genetically engineered talking wolf. He is acerbic and wise. Jane is a well-developed character. She is a news reporter, haunted by memories of a dominant and malevolent father who worked hard to make her feel small and useless. She runs the Tayanita Tribune inherited from her father. She is covering the first of Druas's local murders when Baran shows up. Baran, too, carries emotional baggage which threatens the success of his enterprise. Druas, himself, is interesting. The author has absorbed enough about the pathology of the serial murderer to make him a frightening and believable character.

After Baran's arrival the story goes into high gear and carries you along to the unexpected conclusion. I enjoyed it. – **Gary Swaty**

Jennifer Scales Book 3:
The Silver Moon Elm
by Mary Janice Davison & Anthony Alongi
Berkley, 368 pages, $9.99

This the third book in the series and is mainly set in an alternate universe ruled by the werespiders. Everything and everyone Jennifer knows and loves are either dead or polar opposite of themselves. She must learn to work with Xavier Longtail on the dragon council even though she knows he hates her, and her dead half sister. They will have to put their differences aside and work together to put Jennifer's universe back the way it belongs. This book was a great read although it kind of seemed to stand alone from the rest of the series for the most part. I can't wait for a fourth book - **ninjakittyofdoom**

The Ruby Guardian
by Thomas M. Reid
Wizards Of The Coast. 308 pp, $6.99

The Ruby Guardian is book 2 of *the Scions of Arrabar.*

Vambran and Emriana Mattrel have survived assassinations, family feuds, arranged marriages, and monster-guarded secrets. Now things are getting dangerous, family feuds become part of a non-violent economic wars become violent wars of a larger conspiracy. Religious ambition joins the crowd almost killing both. In one plot by the cast-out brother and the leader of the sect in which Vambran is a soldier-

priest, they escape only to be pursued and captured.

Lots of action and Vambran, Emriana, and Xaphira are reasonably well-drawn as characters. However, the author and editor chose to leave it as a cliff-hanger without creating any closure for the reader. This reviewer hates that when it happens. A TV cliff hanger can be resolved the following season, but the next volume may never show up. The writer has to complete the episode prior before I am interested in continuing the series. No recommendation from me on this one - **Pam Allan**

The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters
by Gordon Dahlquist
Bantam, 760 pp, $26.00

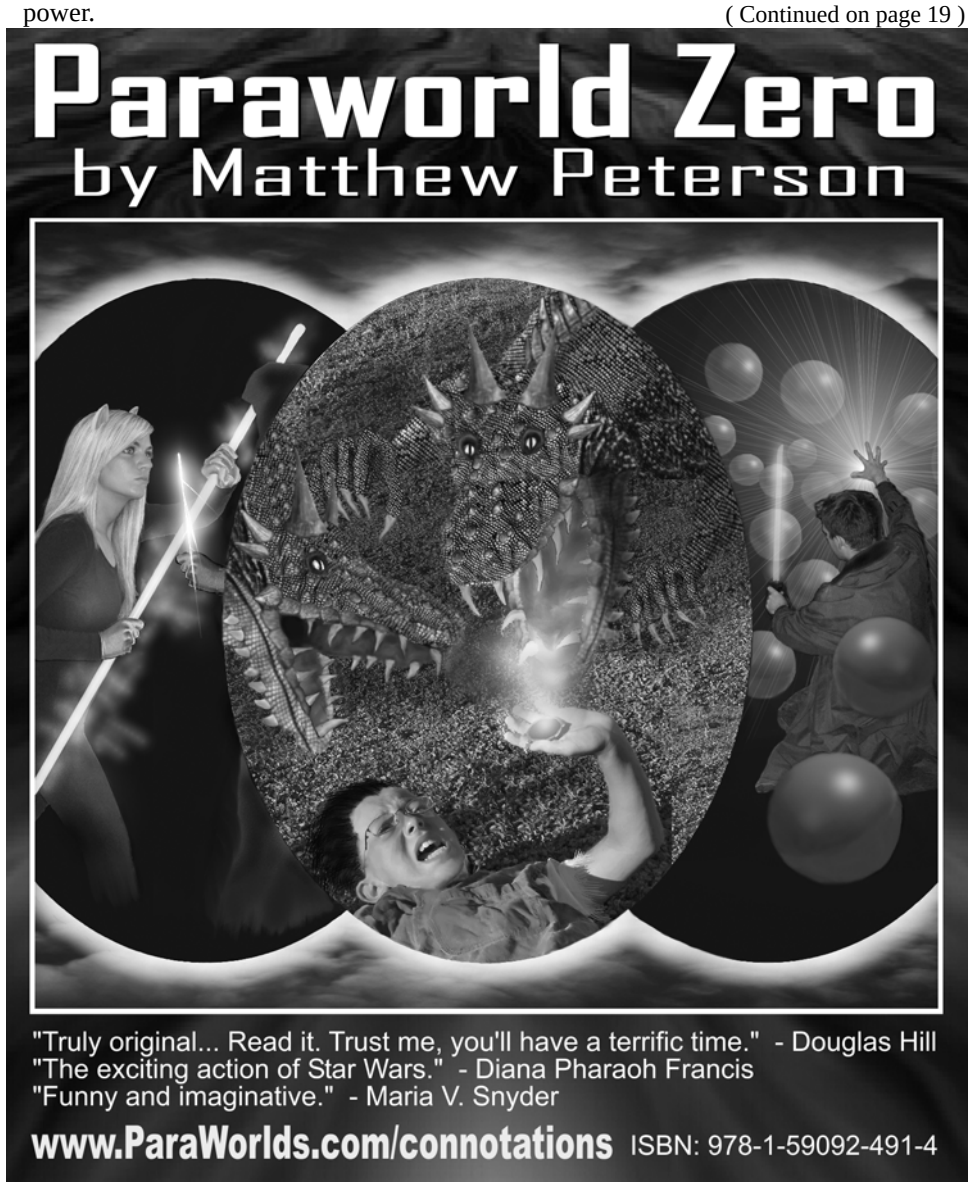
Glass Books of the Dream Eaters is Mr. Dahlquist's debut novel.

Miss Temple receives a letter from her fiancé breaking off their engagement with no reason given. Miss Temple wants to know why. So she trails him to isolated Harschmort Manor, a forbidding estate at the end of the railway. She sneaks in wearing a disguise, but nothing could prepare an adventure-seeking Victorian maiden for the bizarre and deadly game she becomes embroiled in. But she finds two allies, Cardinal Chang, a brutal assassin with the soul of a poet, and Dr. Swenson, fumbling, heroic, and sometimes brilliant. They have both lost someone to the plot. The closer they get to the truth, the more they are endangered. The conspiracy is beyond belief; a morass of perverted science, religion and lust for power. (Continued on page 19)

It is a disturbing dark fantasy on a Victorian mystery base that rockets from crisis to crisis through a world that is, by turns, seductive, brutal, and at times tender, even romantic. Her three protagonists involve you in the story to the last page. You won't want to put it down. A Fourth of July fireworks of a debut. I'm looking forward to the next novel. - **Pam Allan**

Blood Engines
by T.A. Pratt
Spectra paperback $6.99

This is a departure for Hugo-winner Tim Pratt. It's the first in a new series about sorceress Marla Mason, who rules the city of Felport. Marla and her helper



In Our Book (Continued from page 18)

Rondeau have come to San Francisco to hunt for an artifact called The Cornerstone, which Marla needs to help in her battle with a sorceress who is looking to take over her job. While in San Francisco, she becomes entangled with a mystery and gets on the wrong side of the local council.

Urban fantasy of this kind is a hot thing right now - Jim Butcher, Kim Harrison, Laurell K. Hamilton, etc. However, most of the things that make those books work are not present here.

First is the sheer clunkiness of the writing. As we are pitchforked headlong into the story, which in and of itself is not a bad thing, there is not much room for world building and character background. Instead, we get choppy paragraphs of "As you know, Bob…" style exposition tacked on to characters' thoughts interrupting the story flow. The other thing that makes these type of books work is the likeability of the characters, and here is another place where *Blood Engines* falls down. Marla is abrasive, impatient, classless and worst of all, uninteresting. We are told about many horrible things she's done to get and secure power but never really a cogent reason as to why. It isn't as though she's gotten rich, or that control over Felport does anything for her other than "she loves it", which is far too vague an explanation. All we know is that sorcerers are all power-hungry and awful people. Why? No explanation. All of them? Really? Kim Harrison's Rachel, Harry Dresden, even Anita Blake are entertaining characters with good qualities as well as bad - and the reader enjoys spending time with them. Marla, on the other hand has no interests, no friends, isn't particularly witty or charming or even exceptionally smart - just determined and power hungry. She isn't even interestingly evil. The secondary characters come off even worse. Rondeau is a psychic creature who took over the body of a young human boy, and is loyal to Marla for no reason ever explained - we do know she removed his jawbone once - all we really see is that he's fussy about clothes and reads guidebooks. The others fare even less well. The plot is okay - Aztec gods come into it, as does Marla's battle to retain control, but the poor writing and uninteresting characters more than take away any points gained by the plot.

If you're looking for a fun urban fantasy read, avoid this. Stick with Kim Harrison, Carrie Vaughn or Laura Anne Gilman. - **Nadine Armstrong**

Nova Swing
by M. John Harrison
Bantam trade paperback $16.00

Nova Swing is the sequel to the Tiptree-award winning novel *Light*. While not a direct sequel, I would not recommend reading this one without it; there is too much in the first one you need to know. Both books take place in a region of space at the edge of the galaxy called the Kefahuchi Tract, a region that is filled with gravitational anomalies, wormholes, odd stars and various contradictions of the laws of physics. People do live out there, mining odd elements, picking up bits of alien technology and selling them, etc. An unspecified number of years after the events of *Light*, a piece of the Kefahuchi Tract has fallen on a planet called Saudade. This has created an event site; an area in which nothing is quite as it seems, dangerously so. While it is. in fact, illegal to go in or bring anything out, people, of course, do so anyway - guiding

tourists and brokering artifacts. Recently, the site crime detective Aschemann has noticed activity even odder than usual around the site - people seem to be appearing from it, wandering around the city, and then disappearing again. He believes this has something to do with a tour guide named Vic Serotonin and an artifact broker called Paulie DeRaad. He investigates them, along with his assistant, while Vic is trying to please his latest client who really wants to enter the site. I did not enjoy this nearly as much as I did *Light* - I never found Vic or Aschemann as compelling as the characters from the earlier book. However, M. John Harrison's prose is gorgeous, and I enjoyed the world-building and the sense of mystery created around the site. The book itself feels more like setup for another book as the plot peters out well before the end of the book, and none of its questions are answered. I am in no way competent to comment on the physics, but they seem plausible, definitely a bonus. If you're looking for a novel using quantum physics in an interesting way, this will fill the bill; however, definitely pick up *Light* first. - **Nadine Armstrong**

Undertow
by Elizabeth Bear
Spectra paperback $6.99

Speaking of quantum physics, here's another take. Way out on the galactic frontier, Andre Deschenes is an assassin who wants to move up in the pecking order. If he could just find someone to teach him the ins and outs of manipulating probability, he could punch his own ticket; for conjure men, as they're called, are a rare resource. So far, it's one area in which he hasn't had luck. But things are changing in his city of Novo Haven.

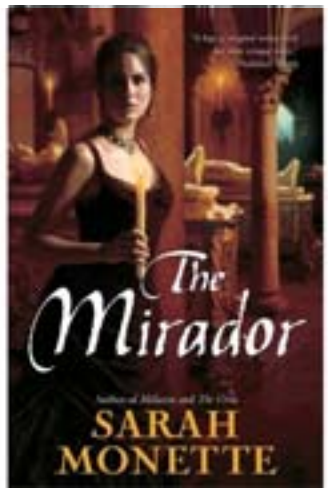
The aliens called Froggies are ripe for revolution - tired of being exploited by humans to mine the substance called tanglestone; which allows human society to function as it does: instant communications, matter transfer and the large scale twisting of probabilities. Many humans are tired of the exploitation and the stranglehold that the Rim Company has on their livelihood and even their lives. Andre is about to find a teacher and even a cause.

Bear has always been a good writer, and in this book she takes a step forward. Her fiction has always featured good characterization, but here they're even more fully realized than usual. The things that drive Andre to do what he does, the qualities that make him sympathetic despite his profession, all work together to make a compelling and believable presence. Her world-building is wonderful here too, although she has said that the quantum mechanics in this book are nonsense and based on disproven theories she makes it believable. Too, she has always thought about the political/ governmental/economical implications of her worlds and in this book it has never been clearer or more important. Tanglestone is, after all, the very foundation of mankind's society, so how would any threat to the supply, or the means to obtaining the supply be treated? To what lengths do people go to keep the power that they hold? All these questions are examined, and answered with thoughtful arguments.

It's also a very topical book with its look at usage of natural resources, the exploitation of labor, and the resulting class structure. Bear, however, resists the trap of lecturing the reader, preferring to present the scenarios and letting the reader draw his own conclusions, without pounding the reader over the head - an extremely refreshing approach. Too, her prose is clear and direct without being dull or overly simplistic. Finally, I've heard a lot of people complain that no one writes books with a sense of wonder any more. Those people are not reading Elizabeth Bear. - **Nadine Armstrong**

The Mirador
by Sarah Monette
Ace Hardback $24.95

This is the third book in what Sarah Monette calls *The Doctrine of Labyrinths* series (her publisher didn't like it). With this book, we add a third viewpoint character to the established ones of Felix and Mildmay; Mehitabel, an actress running from an oppressive government. This book finds the brothers settling into life at the Mirador, the governmental center of the city-state of Marathat and its capitol, Melusine. Now that the Virtu has been repaired and Felix has his sanity back, along with his status as a wizard of the Mirador, it's back to politics as usual. Stephen, the Lord Protector, needs to take a wife, but which family will he honor? The Bastion has not stood still; they still want to take down the Mirador and all its wizards so what are their plans? And how does Mehitabel Parr fit in? This book, while a satisfying read on its own, does tie



much more closely to its sequel *Corambis* in some ways than the Melusine was tied

(Continued on page 20)

In Our Book (Continued from page 19)

to *The Virtu*. Monette has referred to this series as a diptych of duologies rather than a simple four-book sequence and it's easy to understand why. I would not recommend reading this without reading the other two - the book is certainly readable as a stand-alone, but without seeing the beginnings of Felix and Mildmay's relationship, I don't think the book would be as interesting. Also, it helps to have an understanding of the politics and beliefs in the book, or some of the plot will go over your head. That said, this series is well-worth reading. Her fiction is grounded in a sense of place not common to many fantasy writers. While she doesn't go in for pages of description, I still have a very clear sense of what Melusine and the Mirador are like as places. What really makes the book are her characters. Lots of writers switch between viewpoint characters, most of them are not very good at it. Monette is. Felix and Mildmay are damaged people with lots of baggage, wildly differing views on most things, and brothers only incidentally; but each of them is so fully drawn and so much a whole person that to have only one narrator would ruin the books. I was very interested to see how the addition of a third character would go, if it would work, if I would be impatient with it, and since we see Mehitabel only for a short time at the end of *The Virtu*, how could she become as fleshed out as Felix and Mildmay. However, she made it work. Mehitabel's motivations, her feelings, what she does and with whom all really flesh out the plot and add even more layers to Felix and Mildmay's characters. Monette's prose is really lovely too, not lush but descriptive and her dialogue is spot on. The book does contain explicit sex both hetro-and homosexual-not much and it is all relevant and easy to skip over if you don't like reading it, but it is there. This is one of the most interesting and enjoyable fantasy series of the past several years. It is a real relief to see epic fantasy done without a quest structure - yay for no plot coupons - and with some refreshingly real characters. - **Nadine Armstrong**

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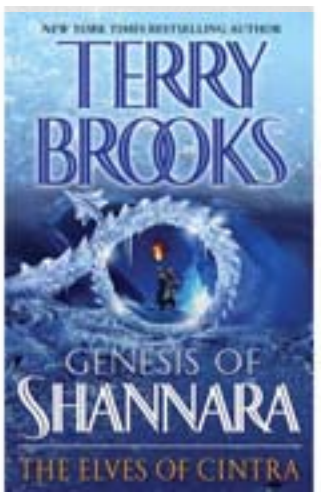
www.farpointmedia.net

Genesis of Shannara: The Elves of Cintra by Terry Brooks Del Rey hardback $26.95

The *Elves of Cintra* is the second book of the Genesis of Shannara trilogy that began with *Armageddon's Children*. With this book, the connections to Shannara and the Word and Void series are much more prominent where they had been downplayed with the release of the first book. Being the second book in a trilogy you know going in that everything isn't going to be resolved by the end of the book but you expect to see some sort of ending of the latest chapter and Brooks delivers, for the most part. In this series, Brooks is revealing that the world of Shannara is really our future and that the end of the world foreseen in The Word and Void novels is the end of our way of life and the beginning of the return of magic. Before that can happen, the Elves and enough humans need to survive the rise of the demons so that the world seen in the Shannara novels can come to pass.

We pick up where we left off in *Armageddon's Children* with two Knights of the Word dealing with different problems. Logan Tom is trying to get a group of kids named The Ghosts out of Seattle as it is being invaded by a horde of demons. On of them is Hawk, who is



really the Gypsy Morph that was birthed by Nest Freemark years before and has been in hiding. Angel Perez has escaped a doomed Los Angeles and has taken on a quest to join up with the Elven boy Kirisin Belloruus that has been tasked by the Ellcryss to move it to a safe location where it can survive and lead the Elves into a new age. She's also being stalked by a demon that nearly killed her in Los Angeles and may be her undoing. After a deadly attack following the discovery of the legendary Blue Elfstones, Angel, Kirisin and his sister Simralin head on a journey to find the Loden that can provide a safe means of transport for the Ellcrys and also help the Elves to regain their magic.

The book focuses primarily on Logan Tom and Kirisin but also devotes time to the supporting characters and their involvement with the goings on. We also get more background on several of the kids traveling with Logan Tom, finding out how and why they ended up alone at a young age. Through Hawk we run into a significant and long-lived character from the Shannara novels and during Logan Tom and The Ghosts journey we encounter a robotic facility that was first introduced in the *Voyage of the Jerle Shannara* trilogy. By the end of this chapter, we've had some characters suffer unfortunate fates and others have been really put through the wringer and left in a bad state while others are reunited to help

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In Our Book (Continued from page 20)

set things up for the next chapter where we will presumably find out how the Elves and remaining humans were saved to make the world we know from the Shanarra novels. If you've been a regular reader of Brook's Shannara novels, you should enjoy the latest chapter. If you are new to them, you can jump in with *Armageddon's Children* and start off with the beginnings of the world of Shannara before delving into the rest of the series. - **Lee Whiteside**

The Last Days of Krypton
by Kevin J. Anderson
Harper-Collins Hardback $25.95

Most everyone knows the basic story of how Superman came to Earth. His father Jor-El sent him away from the doomed planet Krypton to make him the Last Son of Krypton and thus the hero known as Superman. In this new novel, Kevin J. Anderson strives to tell the reader the full story behind superman's parents, Jor-El and Lara, as well as Kara Zor-El's parents, and General Zod and the Phantom Zone. With the various incarnations of the DC multiverse through the years, Anderson has expanded on the basic facts and given us an epic story of two brothers fighting to save their world and creating a special destiny.

We meet Jor-El before he has even met his future wife, Lara. He's an inventor and scientist on a Krypton that discourages such activities and pretty much anything he creates is deemed a possible weapon and is confiscated and destroyed by Dru-Zod, the head of the Commission of Technology Advancement in the capital city of Kandor. When he creates the Phantom Zone and is accidentally trapped in it, he is rescued by Lara, an artist working on his estate, and a relationship starts to bloom. Jor-El's brother, Zor-El, is the leader of Argo City and has been watching seismic readings and discovers a problem with the planet's core. Jor-El has been keeping an eye on Krypton's sun, Rao, and believes it may be close to going supernova. Of course, the ruling council of Krypton doesn't

listen to either of them. Meanwhile, Dru-Zod has been stockpiling Jor-El's inventions planning to make use of them to take control of the government and when an alien turns up planning to share technology and help Jor-El with his investigations, Dru-Zod has his mute ward, Na-Kem, sabotage Jor-El's experiment leading to the alien's death. When Braniac shows up and uproots and shrinks Kandor, Dru-Zod takes command and starts a civil war that may doom Krypton before natural forces do the job.

Through the course of the story, the reader well versed in the Superman legacy will enjoy the nods to other parts of the DC Universe and explanations of how things came to be. The means by which Jor-El learns about Earth is much more believable in the context of this book than the 60's stories showing Jor-El using a long range telescope to spy on Earth. There're also some surprises as several possible causes for Krypton's destruction are brought to the forefront before the final fatal piece of the puzzle plays out. You do get a good sense of the turmoil Jor-El and Kara go through leading up to their launching of their son to an unknown fate as their world is crumbling. The events that leads Zor-El to shield Argo City so that it survives the destruction of Krypton are also well presented. Even if you aren't well versed in Superman and Kryptonian lore, you'll find a good story with tragedy and hope. - **Lee Whiteside**

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Musty Tomes

Way-Farer
by Dennis Schmidt
Ace Books, 1978, 277 pp.

The first three chapters of this novel appeared in Galaxy magazine in 1976, and a second part in 1977, so … this story precedes Star Wars, really. To get the intro formula out of the way: a boy saw his homestead family killed by a band of ronin, so he joins the religious Brotherhood to learn the Way of the Sword, to enact revenge. On his own, he finds an old sword master in the wilderness and becomes his pupil. He then becomes a wanderer among homesteads, meets a young woman and the orphans in her charge. The ronins strike back, and we end with the return of the swordsman.

Unlike other stories, this one is based on Buddhism and Taoism. This colonized planet has alien mind parasites called mushin, who feed on emotions. To protect themselves, people use zen techniques to calm their minds, but this is not helping society much. Our young hero Jerome must a way beyond swords or passivity to defeat the intangible aliens and their human surrogates, the ronin. At novel's end he realizes the old master's Way of No Sword, which could be the path to victory. Three more novels in this series will tell the tale: Kensho (1979), Satori (1981), and Wanderer (1985). A rare treat to find Taoism so well-expressed in science fiction. Broaden your religious and philosophical horizons in a tale of swordplay! May the Way be with you. - **M.L. Fringe**

Through Time and Space
with Poul Anderson:
The Boat of A Million Years,
Tor Books, 1989, novel
The Shield of Time,
Tor Books, 1990, novel
The Time Patrol, Tor Books, 1991
(combines collections
The Guardians of Time, Time Patrolman, and
Star of the Sea novel)
There Will Be Time,
Doubleday, 1972, novel
The Dancer From Atlantis,
Doubleday, 1971, novel
The Corridors of Time,
Doubleday, 1965, novel
Seven Conquests, Collier Books, 1969
(includes 1958 story 'Wildcat')

In 'The Perennial Philosophy' Aldous Huxley wrote: "The politics of those whose goal is beyond time are always pacific; it is the idolaters of past and future, of reactionary memory and Utopian dream, who do the persecuting and make the wars." This is a good

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Musty Tomes

(Continued from page 21)

standard to judge religions by, but as a literary standard it would condemn much of science fiction to the rubbish heap. We look forward to a future where technology is better, and while we no longer see Utopia we often see Star Wars. Is it possible to write of history and wars without straying into idolatry, glorification? Well, yes, as demonstrated by Anderson's *Time Patrol* and similar stories.

I include a couple entries here that do not fall into the *Time Patrol* category, but which deal with time travel or the long view. The anthology 'Seven Conquests' has a time travel story from 1958, 'Wildcat', which is relevant in our age of oil wars. How's about going back in time to pump oil? Trouble with dinosaurs, though. As for 'The Boat of A Million Years', it's a tale of the few truly immortal humans, who survive the millennia of wars on earth to finally explore space in a starship. The Russian woman Katya's fight in the WWII battle of Stalingrad carries a gritty realism which should disabuse any gloryhound fools of the fun of war. Like a true science fiction writer, Anderson saw the purpose of humanity is to explore the stars rather than to just destroy things with high tech weapons. But he didn't shirk from exploring that history of weapons use to which humanity is so prone.

Which brings us to the *Time Patrol*. A few writers spent effort on this theme - the secret guardians who maintain the integrity of history. Jack Williamson had one novel, 'The Legion of Time' in 1938. Fritz Leiber did it with the 'Spiders and Snakes' beginning in 1958, while Anderson's first story 'Time Patrol' appeared in 1955. The main hero of most of Anderson's stories, including the novel 'The Shield of Time,' is Manse Everard, whose recruitment we get in the 1955 tale. He answers a newspaper ad for a job that includes foreign travel. The ad didn't say that such travel would be on a flying motorcycle that hops back and forth in time and space easily and often.

If you can get past the idea of motorcycle cops as time guardians, you have much of Anderson's explication of real history to enjoy. As with good literature, the occasional telling insight comes to the hero's mind, or is shown in some character's action. For example, here's Manse: "But the fact is that throughout humanity's existence, till indefinitely far uptime of our birth period, clans, tribes, nations normally regard the rest of mankind as booty, potential or actual – unless somebody else is sufficiently strong to be an enemy, potential or actual." Take that, Huxley! You don't need a religion to make war, just a pack mentality.

Time Patrol stories cover the full range of human history and prehistory. We get the age of mammoths, ancient Jerusalem, Tyre, Persia, Egypt, Rome, Kublai Khan, the Spanish Conquistadors, the Goths, Cro Magnons, in a total of ten stories. There have been other collections published before, such as 'Annals of the Time Patrol', 'The Guardians of Time', and 'Time Patrolman', so you have good chances of finding copies of several of the stories.

The remaining three novels on the above list may be considered as variations on the *Time Patrol* if not part of it. 'The Dancer from Atlantis' in fact shares some characters, with a contemporary man stranded in ancient Crete by a broken time ship. With his ladylove Erissa, a bull dancer, they survive the volcanic explosion that destroys Atlantis. The description of being at sea when the eruption happens could certainly be called "gritty."

'There Will Be Time' involves people with the natural ability to time shift. Secret societies form, and there is a battle in the past to protect history and avoid a terrible future war. 'The Corridors of Time' has two opposing factions, Wardens and Rangers. Their time travel technology includes an actual dimension of corridors that open into various locations. I like to imagine or pretend that these two novels (and even the Wildcat story) are part of the same *Time Patrol* series, just not yet written into the continuity, but they're clearly variations on the theme. They'd be prior or future developments after the Patrol's own "time." You may enjoy them on their own, once you've read all of the Patrol stories and just can't do without any more! - **M.L. Fringe**

God's Fires
by Patricia Anthony
Ace hardcover, 370 pp. (1997)
(easily available on Amazon in paperback)

Anthony is a fascinating author. I haven't read everything she's written but I really liked "Cold Allies" and "Brother Termite," both novels dealing with alien/human contact on Earth.

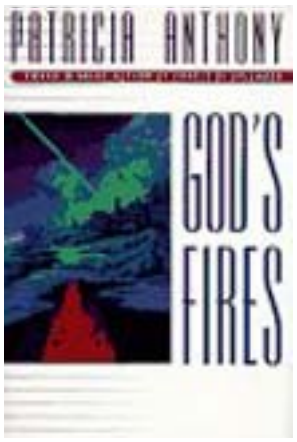
"God's Fires" is no different. But this time, it is set during the Inquisition in Portugal. The mentally challenged child-like King Afonso sits on the Portuguese throne while his brother Pedro works to remove him (to eventual exile) without committing regicide. (This is all based, roughly, on fact).

In the village of Quintas, strange things are happening. Falling stars and strange lights are seen in the skies. "Angels" visit the women of the village and supposedly lie with them, getting one young girl pregnant. A field of huge potatoes is discovered, apparently spurred to over-sized growth by a beam of light from an alien ship.

And then, a large silver "acorn" crashes into a field and two small, silver clad beings with huge dark eyes and no discernible speech are taken into custody, along with one dead companion.

Since 17th Century Portugal (and the world in general) had no word for extraterrestrials, they call the beings "angels" and the villagers not only look to them for God's Word but for miracles as well. Of course, the beings are silent. But are they? Some people feel the visitors communicate with them "spiritually" (mentally). Of course, some of the villagers see them as spawn of the devil.

And thus is brought in the Inquisition,



in the form of a wandering Inquisitor-at-large, a Jesuit named Manoel Pessoa, to untangle the facts from the mysteries. His village counterpart, a sweet Franciscan friar named Luis Soares who feeds the village's feral cats is confused by all the stories.

Anthony weaves a complex layer of events and people. King Afonso following the strange lights, comes to Quintas on a quest, emulating his hero Don Quixote. He finds the fallen acorn and enters it where he finds what he thinks is God, who tells him that heretical Galileo was correct and the Earth revolves around the sun. Manoel Pessoa, though a priest, has been in love with the village herbalist (a converted Jewess) named Berenice Pinheiro for some time.

Father Soares and Father Pessoa try to sort out the strange events in the village, but their efforts are further compounded by the arrival of an Inquisitor General, a Monsignor Gomes who is suffering from gallstones I believe (this disease/illness makes him rather irascible throughout) and feels an *auto de fe* will settle everything. He has a scribe in his train, a Father Bernardo who struggles with ecstasy/lust and is one of the many heartbreaking subsidiary characters.

The whole story is just a juggernaut of tragedy and ends, as one can imagine with such circumstances and in such a time, very unhappily.

The book, even so very depressing, is worth the read because Anthony is an excellent writer, able to handle the diverse characters and blend them all seamlessly into a grandly tragic tale. The way she constructs the struggles of the Jesuit trying to come to terms with the unfathomable is really gripping.

Throughout, the aliens remain mysteries. We never really find out what they had come to earth for and what they were doing. They are more focus points for the drama than characters, per se.

When you want something different, this is your book. - **Sue Martin**

I Am Legend
by Richard Matheson
Ace Books, $7.99, 151 pp

Aaron Neville is the last man on Earth. Sure, a few of his neighbors are still around and show up every night in an attempt to lure him out of his fortified abode so they can suck him dry of blood. Because that's what vampires do. But it's not a one sided affair, Neville comes out during the day and once he's finished repairing the damage done the night before he hunts down the undead ex-members of the PTA and puts them down for good.

Shortly before the book starts, the United States has won a war by dropping enough bombs on their enemy to alter the

Earth's atmosphere. Dust storms raged for months and even a year later they appear frequently. Then came the plague. People died. The only problem is that they came back to life as vampires.

I Am Legend is the story of the Aaron Neville's life after everyone around him has died. At a hundred and fifty one pages this is a short read, but I think Matheson's minimalist style here serves the story well. It is a classic tale that has been the catalyst for three movies: 1964 The Last Man On Earth with Vincent Price, 1974 The Omega Man with Chuck Heston, and I Am Legend coming out this month starring Will Smith.

This is a good read. If you haven't read it before I recommend that you do, and if you have already - why not read it again? Then go see the movie. - **Randy Lindsay**

Club Listings

ACROSS PLUS - So you live in North Phoenix and are interested in anime? Well there is a club out there available for you people.
Across Plus is a social club that discuses anime, video games, manga, other animation, and the Japanese culture. We meet at Bookman's on 19th Ave and Northern On Sundays at 7:00pm until 9:00pm.
In general, we explore anime, manga, and other styles of animation, creative educative demonstrations, participate in interactive discussions, attend local Arizona conventions, and make cosplay.
We are willing to gain any new members out there who are interested. Dues are only $2 per month. Our members are very friendly, respectful, and fun. We welcome any and all. For more information, contact Shane Bryner at ninjakittyofdoom@gmail.com

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

ARIZONA PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS We are a highly trained, non-profit paranormal investigation group, registered with the state of Arizona, providing service to Arizona and the Southwest since 1994. Having served the public for 12 years, we are one of the oldest, most respected paranormal investigation groups in Arizona. We are primarily science based and don't go on an investigation looking for ghosts, we go looking for answers. There is never a charge for an investigation. Contact us at by e-mail at info@arizonaparanormalinvestigations.com or visit our website at: http://www.arizonaparanormalinvestigations.com/

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. For information: write PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or email info@casfs.org 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

A GATHERING OF PLAYERS-Find Your Adventure
Our club is running into our fourth year. Join us for games and adventure set in the Dungeons and Dragons realm. We offer Living Greyhawk and Xen'drik Expeditions. Visit http://www.warhorn.net/gathering, to see what we have coming up.
We will have character creation sessions to get you started and answer all questions. Our group has been together, and growing, for four years. We're a good group of friends that believe in gaming fun first. Our member group's ages range from 13 to 49.
We welcome both new and experienced players.
10:00 a.m. Character Creation - We will have a session to create characters for all of the campaigns we run. AGoP will have all books available for reference. We encourage you to purchase the books if you like the game. All character materials are provided; character sheets, master item logs, adventure records, etc. Dice will be loaned to you if you don't have any yet. In other words, all that is needed for the first day is for you to join us and have fun.
If you have any questions email us at agatheringofplayers@gmail.com.

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/

MVD GHOSTCHASERS—The MVD Ghostchasers are a paranormal team established in 1995. This band of ghost hunters conducts regular investigations of haunted, historical locations throughout Arizona. They also research and investigate "house call" hauntings for the public. The MVD Ghostchasers lead Spirit Photo Workshops/Tours to various haunted locations across Arizona. These workshops give ghost hunters, paranormal team members and folks wanting to learn the art of ghost hunting a chance to work and learn techniques together. The MVD Ghostchasers team are guest speakers at many venues and have appeared on TV news reports and the subject of several newspaper stories. For more information contact:
MVD Ghostchasers—Debe Branning, Director—480-969-4049 Web page: www.mvdghostchasers.com or Nazanaza@aol.com

ORANGE COUNTY SCIENCE FICTION CLUB meets last Wednesday of every month (except Dec.) in Fullerton. The meetings are built around guest speakers. We've had authors such as Octavia Butler and Greg Benford. Non-members are welcome. For details of current events and location see our website www.ocsfc.org or email info@ocsfc.org

PAReX is a non profit organization dedicated to building and promoting Autonomous robotics. The club has been in existance since 1998. Meetings are currently conducted twice a month at two different Phoenix, Arizona locations., http://www.parex.org/meetings.shtml. Club dues are on an annual basis: Regular members $20 Student members $15 Of course visitors are always welcome because we know you will eventually become a member anyway Web page: http://www.parex.org/ E-mail Contact: John Kittelsrud, parexteam@cox.net

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 12noon-5pm (except during conventions and other special events). Open to new members - call (623) 849-9515.

SHIELD OF ALMOR The Shield of Almor is a RPGA club located in the greater Phoenix area. If you are interested in Living Greyhawk catch one of our meetings the 1st Sunday of every month at Imperial Outpost Games (www.imperialoutpost.com) in Glendale. If you are interested in Living Arcanis or Living Spycraft catch us on the 3rd Sunday of every month also at Imperial Outpost Games. The Shield of Almor hosts RPGA events at the local Phoenix conventions. For more information visit us at games.groups.yahoo.com/group/AZ_RPG/ or you can sign up for games at www.nyrond.org. Or you can just stop by the 1st Sunday of the month. Meeting starts at 10am. Hope to see you there.

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 contact the Kingdom Seneschal. Email: seneschal@atenveldt.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

(Continued on page 24)

Club Listings (Continued from page 23)

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/tardisaz/tardis.html

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

What is CASFS?

What is really behind putting on a convention? What are 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 prorated for the amount of the year remaining. For more info: Webpage: www.casfs.org Email: info@casfs.org

TUCSON FAN ALLIANCE E-Mail Address is Bkoehler@Juno.com or DMitchel1@Juno.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 30 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

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 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

WESTERN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION (WesternSFA) A non-profit corporation that sponsors AniZona, 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 Anime, 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, at the Bookmans located at 19th Ave. and Northern in Phoenix Guests are welcome. For more info contact Craig Dyer at WesternSFA, PO Box 67457, Phoenix AZ 85082 Email: craig@westernsfa.org Webpage: www.westernsfa.org

Convention Listings

Anime Los Angeles (January 4-6, 2008) Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel, **Burbank CA** Memberships $50 at the door Info: www.animelosangeles.org/ala/

Phoenix Cactus Comicon (January 26-27, 2008) Mesa Convention Center **Mesa AZ** Cost: $25 Dance, AMV, Karaoke, Cosplay. For more info: www.phoenixcomicon.com/

AniZona 4 (March 21-23, 2008) Wigwam Resort **Litchfield Park AZ.** AMV contest, Karaoke, Dances, Panels, Cosplay. Guests: Richard Epcar, Chris Hazelton, Trish Ledoux, Ellyn Stern, David Vincent, Toshifumi Yoshida. Music guests Toybox and Natz. Memberships $40 thru Feb 29, 2008. $55 at the door (if available. Membership capped at 1600. For more info www.anizona.org

World Horror Convention (March 27-30, 2008) Radisson Hotel, downtown **Salt Lake City, Utah**. Guests include: Dennis Etchison, John Jude Palencar, Simon R. Green, Dr. Michael R. Collings, Mort Castle and Jeff Strand. Website: www.whc2008.org

LepreCon 34 (May 9-11, 2008) Francisco Grande Hotel & Golf Resort, **Casa Grande, AZ** Artist Guest: Howard Tayler; Author Guests: Emily & Ernest Hogan; Local Artist Guest: Liz Danforth; Special FX/Makeup Guest: David Ayres Memberships: $25 thru 8/31/07, $30 thru 10/31/07 Info: LepreCon 34 PO Box 26665, Tempe, AZ 85285 (480) 945-6890 Email: lep34@leprecon.org web: http://www.leprecon.org

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

HELP WANTED

Do you enjoy CopperCon? HexaCon? Any of the other local volunteer, fan-run conventions? CopperCon and HexaCon and the others are staffed completely by unpaid volunteers, from the chair person to the volunteer that helps for only one hour.

If you enjoy our events and want them to continue then please consider helping any or all of Arizona's fan run events.

For information on available CopperCon positions please contact us at cu28@coppercon.org or www.coppercon.org

For information on available HexaCon positions or to volunteer to run a game please contact us at hex18@hexacon.org or www.hexacon.org

Our parent organization, the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society (CASFS) is also looking for new members. Check our web site at www.casfs.org for information on meetings and upcoming events or contact us at info@casfs.org

Mailing/Subscription Information

ConNotations is sent free of charge to those who have attended a CASFS sponsored convention in the past calendar year (currently 2006). Attendees of CopperCon 26 or HexaCon 16 will receive ConNotations Volume 17 Issues 1 thru 6.

ConNotations updates it's mailing list each December.

Individual subscriptions are available for $20 for 6 issues beginning January 1, 2007.

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: