# ConNotations

**Volume 18, Issue 1**
**February / March**
**2008**

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

## An Interview with John Ringo

by Chris Paige

*At TusCon, John Ringo was the guest of honor. After a reading aloud from one of his upcoming books, he took questions from his audience, and this segued into our ConNotations interview. Part of the Q&A happened the next day at a table outside with several other veterans. We talked military shop for hours. What follows is only a small part of those conversations, which were punctuated by a great deal of laughing.*

**Q:** Are you going to write any more Price Roger books?

**JR:** That's David's series. The way it works is David sends me an outline and I write the book. It takes about two years, one for sitting on it and writing and one for publishing, and I haven't gotten an outline. I have a few ideas for a story, but it's not my series. For **Ghost**, I have enough in mind for about 14 to 20 books total. I have started the next Mike O'Neill book – actually, I have *finished* the next Mike O'Neill book; that'll be coming out sometime in 2008. The books that are coming out between now and then are two more Vorpal Blade books, and a stand alone called **The Last Centurion** which is going to be marketed as fiction. It is set in the future and it is a very weird book. It reads like a blog. The first third of the book is one continuous rant. People who've read it ask me, "Where did this come from?" And I say, I have no idea. It's like this guy talked to me through a time machine and I wrote it in 9, 10 days, 120,000 words. I've also got the third Cally book coming out.

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# SF Tube Talk

## TV News & Previews
## By Lee Whiteside

With the writer's strike still on, the number of new genre shows to watch has been dropping. With most of the shows that started the fall season no longer having any episodes left, we're down to British imports and the few shows that were planned to air in mid-season. Once we get through those shows, there won't be much left until the strike is resolved. As of press time, there hasn't been much progress made and even if things do get settled soon, it will pretty much mean that there likely won't be much new stuff until late summer or early fall in the way of scripted drama series. There will still be a few new things in the next couple of months, so enjoy it while it lasts.

For cable networks, SciFi still has some first run drama left with the remaining episodes of ***Flash Gordon*** (for those who are actually watching it), the last episodes of season four of ***Stargate Atlantis*** (which finished filming before the writer's strike started), and the first half of season four of ***Battlestar Galactica*** (which was shut down by the strike) that will start in late March. Beyond that, ***Eureka*** likely can't start filming until the strike is over and other than ***Doctor Who***, a British import, Scifi doesn't have any other drama series in the pipeline.

***Stargate Atlantis*** will finish off its fourth season in the next two months, with the start of the fifth season somewhat in doubt due to the writer's strike. It is possible that the Canadian writers may be able to write the scripts and keep production on track. First up in February is *Outcast*, where John Sheppard and Ronon visit Earth and discover that a human-form replicator engineered by scientists is on the loose. *Midway* will feature a guest appearance by **Christopher Judge** as Teal'c when several of the Atlantis team visit the Midway space station. Teal'c has been asked to counsel Ronon, who is up for review by the I.O.A. Things get dicey when some Wraith show up at the station. *Trio* finds McKay, Carter, and Dr. Keller trapped in an underground chamber with no apparent means of escape or rescue. **Jewel Staite's** Dr. Keller really comes into her own in this episode. In the two-parter, *The Kindred*, a mysterious illness sweeps through the Galaxy, afflicting a good number of the Atlantis crew. It also features the return of a thought dead comrade, Dr. Beckett, as well as **Connor Trineer** as the Wraith Michael. For the season finale, *The Last Man*, Sheppard returns from a mission only to find Atlantis deserted and sitting in a desert. In a post on his blog, Executive producer **Joseph Mallozzi** had this to say about the season finale: "I joined Marty G. and Paul for a special screening of '*The Last Man*' director's cut. A great season-ender (and a bit of a tearjerker -- I defy you not to cry or feel sad or pity or slightly dizzy) with a final shot that will have fandom buzzing from final fade to the opening shot of season five."

The final episodes of ***Flash Gordon*** will see Flash getting involved with a revolution on Mongo as Ming getting more treacherous and evil. Flash works to destroy the rift generator to sever ties between Mongo and Earth, while Zarkov is seduced by the dark side, and Dale wants to tell the world about what is going on. The series will end with a big cliffhanger, which, based on the ratings the show has gotten so far, will likely never be resolved.

Coming back in late March on SciFi will be ***Battlestar Galactica*** for the first half of its final season. In *He That Believeth in Me*, the season opener, we pick up where the last season left off, with Lee greeting Starbuck and realizing she

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## CASFS Business Report

**November**…….
*CopperCon 26 is closed.
*CopperCon 27, no wrap up meeting is set yet.
*CopperCon 28 Guests are lined up, conformations will happen when the date and site are finalized.
*CopperCon 29 is looking for a hotel site.
*HexaCon 18 No date set until hotel set.
*HexaCon 19 is hotel searching. Sponsors are set.
*Database is just over 711 addresses. More data for ConCom and staff are needed to keep their addresses on the list.
*ConNotations is at the printers, label next Friday.
*Quartermaster has paperwork to place into shed.
*ConNotations funding approved for one more year in the current format for 2008.
*UFP receives $75 for Christmas Angel purchases.
*Nomination for officers opens with incumbents'' re-nominated for current positions.

**December** ……..
*CopperCon 27 wrap up meeting this Sunday at Bookmans, Phoenix.
*CopperCon 28, CopperCon 29, HexaCon 18 and, HexaCon 19 are looking for a hotel sites together.
*Database and Website are current and active.
*Report of Christmas Angel purchases by UFP. 3 children will receive "scifi" presents this year.
*ConNotations Staff will have their next meeting on Tuesday Feb 5th at Bookmans Phoenix 7pm.
*Book discussions 7pm at Bent Cover Books:
Tuesday Jan 17 ***Restoree*** by Anne McCaffrey.
Tuesday Feb 19 ***Eye of the World*** by Robert Jordan.
*Election results:

| | |
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# 24 Frames

## Movie News
## By Lee Whiteside

The on-going writer's strike has slowed down movie development in Hollywood; but there's still a lot of movies in the pipeline for now.

Filming is well underway for the **J.J. Abrams** directed remake of ***Star Trek***, with the teaser trailer having been released with the debut of ***Cloverfield*** (after press time) Various online sites have been reporting on location filming (especially www.trekmovie.com) and the rest of the cast as well as a number of the guest stars are now known. Here's a rundown of the entire cast as is known so far. **Chris Pine** is James T. Kirk, **Zachary Quinto** is young Spock (with **Leonard Nimoy** as a not-so-young Spock), **Karl Urban** as Leonard McCoy, **John Cho** as Sulu, **Simon Pegg** as Scotty, **Anton Yelchin** as Pavel Chekov, **Zoe Saldana** as Uhura, **Bruce Greenwood** as Christopher Pike, **Winona Ryder** as Amanda Grayson (Spock's mother), **Ben Cross** as Sarek, **Eric Bana** as the major villain Nero, and **Tyler Perry** as the head of Starfleet Academy. There will likely be others announced as they are signed up for small roles including a likely cameo by **J.J. Abrams** co-hort **Greg Grunberg** and maybe even **Jennifer Garner** what has said she'd love to play a Klingon in the movie (assuming there are any Klingons). Various rumors have been going around in regards to the plot of movie and until Paramount releases an official plot summary, it is all just speculation.

Filming has just started next (currently untitled) James Bond movie, with **Daniel Craig** returning as James Bond. The "Bond Girl" for the new movie is Ukranian model **Olga Kurylenko** who plays the "dangerously alluring Camille." Also appearing is British actress **Gemma Arterton** as MI6 agent Fields and **Mathieu Amarilic** as villain Dominic Greene, a leader in the evil organization revealed in Casino Royale. Returning to the series will be **Judi Dench** as "M" and **Jeffery Wright** as CIA agent Felix Leiter.

***Solomon Kane,*** based on the pulp novels of **Robert E. Howard** is getting ready to film. **James Purefoy** stars in the movie which has started filming in Prague. Also starring are **Max Von Sydow, Pete Postlethwaite, Rachel Hurd-Wood, Alice Krige** and **Mackenzie Crook. Michael J. Bassett** will direct his own script about a 16th century soldier seeking redemption for his past deeds by fighting a sinister threat to the kingdom. They have a trilogy planned if the first one does well.

**Upcoming Movies for February & March.**

We've got the usual horror/thriller movies including a couple of Hong Kong remakes, several YA novel adaptations, a ghost comedy, a superhero spoof, and a few other original movies to partake in this spring.

***The Eye*** (Feb 1) In a remake of the Hong Kong film "***Jian Gui,***" **Jessica Alba** plays Sidney Wells, an accomplished concert violinist despite having been blind since a childhood accident. When she gets a double corneal transplant and gets her sight back, she starts seeing shadowy and frightening things that may or may not be real. As she sees more and more horrific images, she and her family start to doubt her sanity, or did the anonymous eye donor open her vision to a terrifying world? Directed by **David Moreau** and **Xavier Palud**, it also stars **Parker Posey, Alessandro Nivola,** and **Tamlyn Tomita.**

***Over Her Dead Body*** (Feb 1) Taking a lighter tone in the horror genre, **Eva Longoria** stars as Kate, who is crushed and killed by an ice sculpture on her wedding day. Her fiancé, Henry (**Paul Rudd**) consults with a psychic, Ashley (**Lake Bell**), and he begins to fall in love with her. However, Kate is still around as a ghost and haunts Ashley because she doesn't want to see her fiancé rebound with the psychic.

***Jumper*** (Feb 15) **Hayden Christopher** stars as Davey in this adaptation of **Stephen Gould's** novel of the same name. When Davey discovers he has the ability to jump anywhere he wants to, he discovers others have the ability as well and that there are those trying to hunt them down and kill them. Also stars **Samuel L. Jackson, Jamie Bell, Diane Lane,** and **Rachel Bilson** as Davey's girlfriend Millie Palmer. Directed by **Doug Liman** from a screenplay by **David S. Goyer, Jim Uhls,** and **Simon Kinberg**.

***The Spiderwick Chronicles*** (Feb 15) Doubling up that weekend on adaptations of YA novels is this adaptation of the **Holly Black & Toni DiTerlizzi's *The Spiderwick Chronicles*** series of kids novels. When they move into the Spiderwick Estate, twin brothers Jared and Simon Grace find a book left behind by their great uncle, Arthur Spiderwick, that opens the door to a world of fairies and other creatures not so nice. Along with their sister Mallory they must fight to keep the book out of the hands of the ogre Mulgrath (voice of **Nick Nolte**). **Freddie Highmore** plays both brothers and **Sarah Bolger** plays Mallory. Also starring is **Mary-Louise Parker** as their mother, Helen, **David Strathaim** as Arthur Spiderwick with **Seth Rogen,** and **Martin Short** providing voices for some of the creatures.

( Continued on page 5 )

## SF Tube Talk

( Continued from page 3 )

thinks she's only been gone for six hours. The four newly realized Cylons also try to find out if Kara is the fifth or determine if she can recognize them as Cylons. Coming up there will be another death or two, the beginnings of a cylon civil war, and the Cult of Baltar.

USA Network at this point appears to be done with genre shows, having officially not renewed either ***The 4400*** or ***The Dead Zone*** for next year. Of their recent announcements of shows in development, they seem to be sticking more to the private eye/spy mode than anything with a SF or fantasy element.

Over on BBC America, they are definitely getting more aggressive in the genre area having recently aired ***Jekyll, Life on Mars, Hex,*** and ***Afterlife***. With the debut of ***Torchwood*** last fall, they have their highest rated drama series ever. For the second season of ***Torchwood*** they wasted little time in airing it and at the end of January started airing season two of ***Torchwood*** on Saturday nights, only ten days after the episode airs in the UK on BBC2. The BBC in the UK will also be airing an edited version of the show more suitable for families and kids to watch. Kicking off the season is *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* with **James Marsters** guest starring as Time Agent Captain John, who has a history with Jack Harness and also has a message for him that may serve as an ongoing issue for the second season. In *Sleeper*, a burglary turns lethal and the Torchwood team investigates when it appears there is alien involvement. As they learn more, they realize there's more going on and the whole planet may be in danger. In *To the Last Man*, a soldier from World War I falls through the rift and the team must get him back to his own time. *Adam* sees a memory thief uncover secrets from the Torchwood team including some secrets from Jack's childhood. In a crossover with ***Doctor Who***, Martha Jones shows up for three episodes, starting with *Reset* in which two team members experience an alternate reality, learning what might have been if they had taken different paths. Jack calls in Martha asking for her help. Next up is *Death Comes to Torchwood* where Martha helps out when a Torchwood team member experiences a traumatic event and a series of mysterious deaths happen in Cardiff. And in *Day in the Death of...* we see an alien species taking interest in Martha because of her travels with The Doctor. In the episode *The Wedding*, Gwen and Rhys get married! Of course, things don't go very well when some dangerous wedding crashers show up.

On the broadcast networks, shows like ***Heroes, Reaper, Chuck, Pushing Daisies, Ghost Whisperer, Moonlight,*** and ***Journeyman*** are for the most part out of episodes at this point, or have a couple left that their networks are holding back. NBC did give a full season pickup for ***Chuck***, but opted not to pick up ***Journeyman*** for any additional episodes. ABC gave a full pickup for ***Pushing Daisies***, although only nine episodes were completed before the strike. The CW ordered additional scripts for ***Reaper***, but did not give it a full season pickup. They supposedly have a couple of new episodes left and The CW plans to keep running it on Tuesday nights, and then will move it to Thursday nights after ***Smallville***, which still has a number of episodes left, at the end of February. CBS ordered additional scripts for ***Moonlight***, but it looks to be done with new episodes for now. It and ***Ghost Whisperer*** will likely continue to air on Friday nights in repeats for the time being. Finally, ***Heroes*** was able to complete its initial story arc, "*Generations*", but only has parts of episodes filmed for the second half of the season, dubbed "*Villains*".

FOX debuted ***Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*** in mid-January to good ratings and has nine episodes total to air, concluding its run with a two hour finale on March 3rd. After that, FOX then has seven episodes of ***New Amsterdam*** to air that will take over the Monday night slot following the completion of ***Terminator. Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*** stars **Lena Headey** as Sarah Connor, **Thomas Dekker** as John Connor, **Summer Glau** as Cameron (a *good* terminator), and **Richard T. Jones** as FBI agent James Ellison. Following the events of the opening episode, Sarah, John and Cameron are on the run in 2007, trying to figure out how to stop Skynet from coming into being. Ellison is following them, and as he learns more about what is going on may end up helping in the end. The producers plan to focus on the core family group, Sarah, John and Cameron, with them searching to find clues about Skynet and keeping themselves safe to be able to prevent Judgement Day. There's also going to be lots of action as well.

Once the nine hours of ***Terminator*** are aired, with a two hour season finale on March 3rd, FOX will bring on ***New Amsterdam***, previewing the first two episodes on Tuesday March 4th and Thursday March 6th following ***American Idol*** and then settling into the Monday 9 pm ET/PT time slot on March 10th. **Nikola Coster-Waldau** stars as John Amsterdam, who was given the gift of immortality 400 years ago for saving a native Indian girl from death when he was a Dutch soldier in the New Amsterdam settlement. He will not age until he finds his one true love. 400 years later, he's still looking for that love and is a homicide detective in New York City. **Zuleikha Robinson** is Amsterdam's detective partner, Eva Marquez, and **Alexie Gilmore** is Dr. Sara Dillane, who is surprised when he revives after pronouncing him dead from a massive heart attack. John believes the pain he felt was because his true love is nearby and he needs to find her. Also a regular is **Stephen Henderson** as Omar, the owner of a jazz nightclub and the only person who knows John's secret. Each episode will deal with a current crime that needs solving, with John's long term knowledge of New York sometimes coming into play along with a flashback to an event from John's past. In the first episode, while dealing with a case of sexual asphyxiation at a private school, we also learn about an inter-racial relationship John had in the 1940's. In the second episode, John investigates the murder of a Park Avenue psychologist and flashes back to when he was a field doctor in the Civil War. Episode three deals with a serial rapist in the present and a rape of a woman he was involved with in 1813. Episode four's past events have John running a night club and being a drunk in the early 1960's and how he got into Alcoholics Anonymous and the present day deals with a murder mystery of someone he knows from his AA days in the 1960s. The show obviously seems to have a lot in common with ***Highlander*** and various vampire shows but intends to put its own spin on immortality in its limited run.

NBC aired the remaining couple of episodes of ***Chuck*** in late January, and has nine episodes of ***Medium*** currently airing on Monday nights that will take them to the beginning of March. ***Medium*** returned to its original Monday night time slot in early January and did well in the ratings. Introduced in the second episode of the season is Ameritips investigator Cynthia Keener, played by **Anjelica Houston**, who reportedly will be in up to six episodes of the series (possibly fewer due to the strike). Alison and Joe are left dealing with the aftermath of the last season, with Alison no longer working for the D.A. and Joe out of a job.

NBC also has a two hour pilot movie for a new ***Knight Rider*** series that will air on Sunday, February 17th at 9 pm ET/PT. **Justin Bruening** stars as Mike Tracer, **Deanna Russo** as Sarah Graiman, **Bruce Davison** as Charles Graiman, **Sydney Tamiia Poitier** as FBI Agent Carrie Rivai, and **David Hasselhoff** makes a guest appearance as Michael Knight with **Will Arnett** providing the voice of KITT. The movie follows on from the original series with the new version of KITT being developed that is capable of a lot more than the original, being able to shift shape and color and with an artificial intelligence that is ideal for fighting crime. However, certain people want to get their hands on it. When Sarah Graiman, the daughter of KITT creator Charles Graiman, escapes an attempt to abduct her, she gets a message from KITT warning her that her father is in grave danger. Sarah contacts her childhood friend, Mike Tracer, a 23-year old ex Army Ranger, and enlists his aid in finding her father and discover who is trying to steal the KITT technology. Ford is partnering with the producers to supply the Ford Mustang Shelby GT500KR Hero car that will be used for KITT.

ABC has brought back ***Lost*** for eight episodes on Thursday nights and has eight episodes of the planned sixteen finished that will air. Joining ***Lost*** on Thursday nights is ***Eli Stone***, a legal drama with a psychic bent. **Johnny Lee Miller** stars as Eli Stone, a lawyer who starts having visions, who's unsure if he is really prophetic or if it is just his brain acting up. One unique part of the series is that **George Michael** (the singer) will guest star and they will make heavy use of his music for the soundtrack, even titling the episodes after **Michael's** songs. In the episode *Father Figure,* Eli represents a mother in a child custody case who is fighting in Iraq while his visions take him to World War II. In *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go*, Eli represents a man who has just come out of a coma. However, the man keeps appearing differently to Eli.

CBS has the seven episodes they ordered of ***Jericho*** to air on Tuesday nights starting February 12. CBS is now probably wishing they had ordered more episodes but unlike most of the other shows with shortened seasons, the seven episodes of ***Jericho*** are all that were planned and they will have a short but very intense story arc for the shortened season. It picks up where the first season finale left off, showing the results of the impending battle and then picking up two weeks later. Joining the cast is **Esai Morales**, who plays Major Beck, who comes in to help Jericho rebuild after the battle. He brings in the perspective of someone who knows what happened and what has been happening in the rest of the country. According to producer **Karim Zeik**, they plan to deal a lot with the show's mythology. "Who was behind the attacks? How did they go about pulling them off? What was Hawkin's role in all this? Is he really telling the truth? What is his involvement in this town? Why Jericho?" All of those questions should be answered in the seven episodes which will provide a fast paced continuation of the series that wouldn't die.

The CW has a handful of ***Supernatural*** and ***Smallville*** episodes left that will take them through February sweeps. Following the events in *Gemini*, Lex is now in charge of the planet, the Daily Planet editor is a clone, Braniac's back, and Bizarro Clark has been impersonating the real Clark, who is imprisoned in the Fortress of Solitude. Coming up on ***Smallville*** is *Persona*, where another Kryptonian turns up, Dax-Ur, played by **Marc McClure** (Jimmy Olsen in ***Superman Returns).*** Dax-Ur has been turned human, not unlike The Doctor no longer being a Time Lord. It isn't long before people notice that "Clark" is acting a bit strange, though. Next up is *Siren*, which

( Continued on page 5 )

## SF Tube Talk ( Continued from page 4 )

brings back **Justin Hartley** as Oliver Queen/Green Arrow and also introduces **Alaina Huffman** as Black Canary (aka Dinah Lance). Dinah has been working as a vigilante for Lex and the Justice League has been thwarting her and Lex's plans. Needless to say, the Canary and the Arrow meet up when Lex gives her the task of capturing the Green Arrow. In *Fracture*, Lex is shot (again) and we get to journey once again into his psyche, with Lex's mother Lillian playing a role. We also see an amnesiac Kara, who goes by the name of Linda. In *Hero*, **Sam Jones III** returns as Pete Ross, who has developed the power of stretching (Holy Elastic Lad). However, he doesn't really like the changes that have happened since he left Smallville, especially how many other people know about Clark's secret. For the last two episodes of the season (assuming there's no quick resolution to the writer's strike), *Traveler* and *Veritas*, look for a lot of the Smallville mythology to come into play. In *Traveler*, **Gina Holden** plays Patricia Swann, the daughter of Dr. Swann who has kept in touch with Clark since Dr. Swann's death. However, an alien-phobe named Pierce (played by **Aaron Douglas** of ***Battlestar Galactica***) captures Clark and holds him in a special prison. In *Veritas*, we get Braniac, Genevieve Teague, the Luthors, Patricia Swann, and Oliver Queen all involved with a story revealing past history between all of them.

Coming up on ***Supernatural*** is *Witch Hunt*, where when the brothers investigate a group of witches, they find out one is really a demon. Ruby joins in with helping them out and we learn a lot about her backstory and motives. In *Dream a Little Dream* Sam and Dean investigate the death of a university professor that had been doing a sleep study and find a student with the power to enter people's dreams and find themselves trapped in their own nightmares. *Jus in Bello* sees FBI Agent Henriksen capture Sam and Dean, locking them up in a small town jail. When they are attacked by Demons, the boys are blamed for it and it's up to Ruby to save them. Also in the works, but possibly not finished before the strike, is *Mystery Spot*, which is ***a Groundhog Day-***like episode where Sam keeps waking up and it's the same day and Dean keeps getting killed at the end of it for something like 150 days in a row!

Getting back to the British front, the BBC is likely to start airing the new season of ***Doctor Who*** in late March or early April. There's been lots of rumors and speculation about the new season with only a limited amount of official news from the BBC. Kicking off the season, **Catherine Tate**, Donna from *The Runaway Bride*, will join up with the Doctor, running into The Ood and the Sontarrans for returning villains. At some point they will also meet up with Agatha Christie and visit Pompeii. At mid-season, Martha Jones will come back into the Doctor's orbit, we'll have some interaction with U.N.I.T. and before the end of the season we may see some other familiar faces back in the TARDIS.

On the animated front, Kids WB still has a number of ***The Batman*** and ***Legion of Superheroes*** episodes to air. ***The Batman*** will continue to feature other superheroes building to a big season finale. Kids WB will also have ***The Spectacular Spider-Man*** series as well, debuting in early March. This new series will take place during Peter Parker's junior year in high school, after he's spent the summer practicing with his newfound powers. Expect to see a lot of familiar Spider-Man villains and cohorts in the series.

On the Direct to DVD front, the first of two ***Stargate*** DVD Movies, *The Ark of Truth*, is released on March 11th. It finishes up the Ori storyline that was left unresolved in ***Stargate SG-1's*** final season. The first ***Futurama*** direct to DVD movie, *Bender's Big Score*, was released late last year with three more in production. Their titles are *Futurama: The Beast with a Billion Backs, Futurama: Bender's Game*, and *Futurama: The Wild Green Yonder.* Look for the second one to come out later this year. In the DC Comics direct to DVD line, the next release is ***Justice League: The New Frontier*** being released on February 26th. It takes the Darwyn Cooke series from a couple of years ago that sets the beginnings of the Justice League during the Cold War. They have an interesting voice cast for this film, including **Kyle MacLachlan** as Superman, **Jeremy Sisto** as Batman, **Lucy Lawless** as Wonder Woman, **Neil Patrick Harris** as The Flash and **David Boreanaz** as Green Lantern.

## 24 Frames ( Continued from page 3 )

***George Romero's Diary of the Dead*** (Feb 15) For the older crowd is the latest **George Romero** zombie movie. A group of students are making a horror movie in the woods when they encounter real zombies! **George Romero** directs with **Shawn Roberts, Joshua Close, Scott Wentworth, Michelle Morgan**, and **Joe Dinicol**. Making cameos as newsreaders (or at least their voices) are **Wes Craven, Simon Pegg, Stephen King, Quentin Tarantino,** and **Guillermo del Toro.**

***The Signal*** (Feb 22) A mysterious transmission takes over TV, radio, and cell phones, turning ordinary people into killers. The film is told from three different perspectives with three different directors (**David Bruckner, Dan Bush,** and **Jacob Gentry**) who each wrote their own segments. Stars **AJ Bowen, Scott Poythress, Anessa Ramsey, Justin Welborn,** and **Michael Sahr Ngaujah** along with a large cast of random bodies and dead people.

***Penelope*** (Feb 29) **Christina Ricci** stars as Penelope, a young woman who has been stricken by a family curse decides to fight it so she can find love and her true self. **Richard E. Grant** and **Catherine O'Hara** are her parents, who are trying to find her the right, true-blood, suitor (i.e. "of her own kind"). Also starring are **James MacAvoy** as Max, **Reese Witherspoon** as Annie, and **Peter Dinklage** as Lemon. Originally announced for last August, it is finally turning up in February.

***10,000 B.C.*** (March 7) **Roland Emmerich** directs this tale of the early days of man as seen from the perspective of a young mammoth hunter (**Steven Strait**) fighting for the survival of his tribe. Also stars **Camilla Belle, Marco Khanlian, Cliff Curtis, Timothy Barlow, Omar Sharif**, and some CGI woolly mammoths and saber tooth tigers.

***Doomsday*** (March 14) After the deadly "Reaper Virus" devastates Great Britain and the infected area is walled off and quarantined for 30 years, the virus appears to be resurfacing and a team of operatives journey into the quarantined area in the hopes of finding a cure. Stars **Rhonda Mitra** as Eden Sinclair, **Bob Hoskins** as Bill Nelson with **Adrian Lester, Alexander Siddig, Sean Pertwee, Adrian Lester,** and **Emma Cleasby**.

***Horton Hears a Who*** (March 14) The new adaptation of the classic Dr. Seuss tale is being done in CGI instead of live action. Guest voices include **Jim Carrey** as the voice of Horton, **Steve Carell** as the voice of the Mayor of Who-ville. Others providing voices include **Carol Burnett, Seth Rogan, Will Arnett, Laura Ortiz** (Jessica), and **Selena Gomez** (Mayor's Daughter).

***Funny Games*** (March 14) Director/writer **Michael Haneke** remakes his own 1998 horror/thriller movie about a middle-class family on a vacation that runs into a pair of psychopaths. Stars **Naomi Watts, Tim Roth, Brady Corbet, Devon Gearhart,** and **Michael Pitt**.

***Shutter*** (March 21) Another Hong Kong film remake (the original also named *Shutter*) sees a young photographer finding ghostly images in his pictures as he and his new wife honeymoon in Tokyo following an accident in which a young girl is killed. Stars **Rachel Taylor, Joshua Jackson, David Denman, James Kyson Lee,** and **Maya Hazen.**

***Superhero***! (March 28) **David Zucker** (***Airplane***!) directs this spoof on recent superhero movies. Expect to see recent movies such as ***Batman Begins*** and ***The Fantastic Four*** lampooned. Stars include **Leslie Nielsen** (of course), **Sara Paxton, Drake Bell, Brent Spiner, Jeffrey**

( Continued on page 6 )

## 24 Frames ( Continued from page 5 )

**Tambor, Marion Ross** and many more. What you can look forward to for the rest of the year now that the major studios have announced their planned release dates (as always, subject to change).

**April** has a remake of ***Prom Night*** (Apr 11) and not much else.

**May** will see ***Iron Man*** (May 2), ***Speed Racer*** (May 9), ***The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*** (May 16), ***Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull*** (May 21), and ***Starship Dave*** (Nov 30).

**June** unleashes ***The Incredible Hulk*** (June 13), ***Get Smart*** (June 20), and the latest Pixar movie for Disney, ***Wall-E*** (June 27).

**July** sees ***Hellboy II: The Golden Army*** (July 11), ***The Dark Night*** (July 18), and the second ***X-Files*** movie (July 25)

**August** kicks off with ***The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*** (Aug 1) and continues with ***Dragonball*** (Aug 15) and ***Babylon A.D.*** (Aug 29).

**September** has ***Clive Barker Presents: Hellraiser*** (Sept 5)***, Punisher: War Zone*** (Sept 12), ***Death Race*** (Sept 26), and ***Nowhereland*** (Sept 26).

**October** wouldn't be complete without a couple of horror remakes with ***Scanners*** (Oct 17) and ***Motel Hell*** (Oct 31) as well as another ***Saw*** movie (#5 on Oct 24).

**November** has ***Madagascar: The Crate Escape*** (Nov 7). *James Bond #22* (Nov 7), ***Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*** (Nov 21), and ***The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*** (Nov 26)

**December** sees a likely release of ***Coraline*** (date unknown), a remake of ***The Day the Earth Stood Still*** (Dec 12), ***The Tale of Despereaux*** (Dec 19), and ***Star Trek*** will be delivered on Christmas day.

# FYI

### CASFS Book DiscussionBent 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.

**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.

## 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**
Feb 16, 7pm
Mar 15, 7pm
**Barnes & Noble, Goodyear**

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

**Science Fiction Book Group**
Feb 12, 730pm
Mar 11, 7:30pm
Apr 8, 7:30pm
**Barnes & Noble, Eastside Tucson**

## AUTHOR SIGNINGS

**Dana Stabenow**, hosted by **Diana Gabaldon**
**Feb 15**, 7pm
Poisoned Pen bookstore
**Feb 16**, 10am
Peoria Public Library

**Orson Scott Card** and **Michael A. Stackpole** will be doing a reading/signing at the ASU Writers Conference on **Friday, Feb 22n**at 7:30 pm. Tickets are $10. More details at http://www.asu.edu/piper/conference/2008

**Jim Butcher**
**Apr 2**, 2pm
Poisoned Pen bookstore

**Charlaine Harris**
**May 9**, 7pm
Poisoned Pen bookstore

## SPECIAL BOOK RELEASES

"Coraline"
by **Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean**
Signed, ltd edition
Subterranean Press

"Backup" by **Jim Butcher**
Signed, ltd edition
A new Dresden Files story
Subterranean Press

**Tim Powers'** Fisher King Trilogy
Signed, ltd edition
Subterranean Press

"Memorare" by **Gene Wolfe**
new novella, Signed, Ltd edition
Wyrm Publishing or Camelot Books

"Future Fantasia" by **Ray Bradbury**
Ray's first published work, collected in hardcover
Camelot Books

"Masks" by **Ray Bradbury**
5 never-before-published stories plus "Masks"
Ltd edition, possibly signed
Camelot Books

"Worlds of Weber: Ms. Midshipwoman Harrington and Other Stories"
by **David Weber**
Signed, Ltd edition
Subterranean Press or Camelot Books

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# FYI

( Continued from page 6 )

"Shadow Kingdoms"
by **Robert E. Howard**
1st vol of collected work from pulp magazine *Weird Tales*
Wildside Press

## GAMING EVENTS

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

**BOOKMANS, PHOENIX**
***Dungeons & Dragons Night***
1st & 3rd Mondays, 5pm

**BOOKMANS, SPEEDWAY TUCSON**
***Rteam Gamers Family Game Day***
Feb 2, 12pm
Mar 1, 12pm
Apr 5, 12pm

**DRAWN TO COMICS**
**Comic Release Party for *Superworld Presents***, a new comic premiere
Prizes, original artwork, the creators will be on hand for signings
Feb 23
***Heroclix, open play***
Every Saturday, 2pm-5pm
***MechWarrior Tournaments***
Sundays, 1pm

**GAME DEPOT**
***Heroclix Tournament***
Every Wednesday, 5:30pm-7pm
***UFS***
Thursdays, 6p-9p

**IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES**
***Federation Commander***
2nd Saturdays, noon
***RPG***
1st & 3rd Sundays
***Boardgames & Demo Nite***
Thursdays, 6pm

## SCIENCE EVENTS

**ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER**
"**Dinosaurs: Giants in the Desert" exhibition**
Feb 2 opening
**Arizona Science Center IMAX movie theatre**
**'Titanica"**
Mar 14 only
**"Sea Monsters 3D: A Prehistoric Adventure"**
Mar 14 only
**"Grand Canyon Adventure 3D"**
March 22 opening

**Lecture Series:**
***Evolution and Faith: Room for Both***
A biologist, a philosopher and a devout physicist will discuss how religious faith does not exclude one from believing in evolution.
Feb 15
***Women in Science: Various Issues and Viewpoints***
A mathematician and the director of the Kovalevskaia Fund will discuss issues surrounding the attraction and retention of women in science and technology fields. The Kovalevskaia Fund is a non-profit foundation for the encouragement of women and girls in science, technology and medicine in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
Mar 21
***What Do You Think About a Technology You Can't Even See?***
Enjoy an informal sit-down with natural and social scientist, and understand why it's so hard for people to know what "nanotechnology" really is. Then discuss what citizens want versus what scientists want from it.
Apr 18**Global Climate Change, free lectures series:**
**"Disease and Society" plus the film "Breathless in L.A."**
Feb 13, 7pm
**"What's Ahead" plus the film "Oil on Ice"**
Mar 5, 7pm
**"Designing Policy Responses" plus the films "Power Shift" and "The Climate of Change"**
Apr 9, 7pm
**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

**ASU**
**BEYOND, a pioneering internat'l center at ASU presents free lectures:**
***Scientific Revolutions that Shaped History***
Feb 21, 7:30pm, Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law, ASU Tempe
*The God Delusion*
Mar 6, 7:30pm, Gammage Auditorium, ASU Tempe
**Workshop on SETI "*The Sound of Silence*"**
Feb 5-7
***ET, Where Are You?***
Feb 7, 7:30pm, Galvin Playhouse, ASU Tempe

**CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER, PEORIA**
***Stargazing***
***Starlab Planetarium***
***Check website for dates and times***

***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
*Jupiter – Space Foods*, Feb 18
**"Wings to Fly"**
A program to encourage young women aged 11-19 to pursue careers in aviation and aerospace.
Mar 8, 8am-5p

**MOON SOCIETY MEETING**
Chompies on University, East of Rural Road 3: PM
For more info contact Craig Porter at portercd@msn.com

**PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, TUCSON**
New Volunteer Orientation
Feb 9, 9:30am-11:30am
Mar 8, 9:30am-11:30am
Apr 12, 9:30am-11:30am
**Lecture: "Shadow Craft-A World of Secret Flight"**
Feb 21, 5p-7:30pm
**Space Shuttle *Endeavour* Crew Lands**
Mar 1
**Easter Bunny Lands…**
Mar 23, 1pm—4pm
**Pima Air & Space Museum, 30th Anniversary, 2:30pm**
**Titan Missile Museum, 20th Anniversary, 10:30am**
Apr 13
Check website for locations

**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.
**Feb 23, Mar 22, Apr 26, May 24**, and more

**PIMA LIBRARY: SOLAR POWER LECTURE SERIES**
Mar 13, 6pm-8pm, Valencia Branch Library, Tucson
Apr 16, 6pm-8pm, Nanini Branch Library, Tucson
May 14, 6pm-8pm, Joel D. Valdez Main Library, Tucson
http://www.library.pima.gov

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

## OTHER GENRE-RELATED EVENTS

**"The Big Lebowski" movie screening**
Feb 8 & 9, 10pm
**"Eraserhead" movie screening**
Feb 15 & 16, 10pm
**"The Who's Tommy" movie screening**
Feb 22 & 23, 10pm
**"Army of Darkness" movie screening**
Feb 29 & Mar 1, 10pm
**Loft Theatre, Tucson**
**Free tickets at Bookmans, Speedway & Grant locations, Tucson**

**BOOKMANS, MESA**

***Psychic Saturdays*, 1230pm**

***Beginner Bellydancing***
Thursdays, 7pm

**BOOKMANS, PHOENIX**
***Across plus Anime Club***
Sundays, 7pm

***Arizona Browncoats Shindig***
1st Saturday, 7pm

***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

***Bellydance lessons with Morgiana***
Sundays except the first Sunday, 1pm

***Beginner Bellydancing***
2nd & 4th Fridays, 5pm

**BOOKMANS TUCSON - GRANT**
***Arizona Browncoats Get-together***
Feb 23, 1pm

**BOOKMANS TUCSON - SPEEDWAY**
***Metaphysics Group***
2nd & 4th Mondays, 7pm

**BORDERS AVONDALE**
***Metaphysical Wednesdays Discussion***
Wednesdays, 7pm

**BORDERS GLENDALE**
***Metaphysical Mondays Discussion***
Mondays, 7pm

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

## Conversation ( Continued from page 1 )

**Q:** Why is Cally such a ditz, pining for some guy to love her?

**JR:** I don't think Cally is a ditz. She has some issues. Lot's of smart people do – look at Bill Clinton. But we should have done a better job with the end of **Cally's War**. At the end of the book the guy in the bar is Stewart. He's alive, he faked his own death. So Cally is not bereft; it was Stewart, but apparently we did not make that clear enough.

**Q:** I liked the book **Hero**, but there are discrepancies between it and other books in the series. Can you explain these?

**JR: Hero** is officially non-canon now. I had particular ideas for the Mike O'Neill books that just didn't work any more.

**CP:** How do you write?

**JR:** Usually I use a laptop, but sometimes I use a desktop. I have actually dictated then transcribed, but generally I use a laptop.

**CP:** Do you have a favorite time for writing?

**JR:** Primarily in the winter. I write better when it's cold. I write best between 54 degrees and 24. I 've written in as low as minus 6. I have a condition called hypergraphia, which just means writing a lot, but when I am working, I actually feel the region of my right cerebrum heating up.

**CP:** Do you work outside?

**JR:** Yes I do, and that minus 6 was in New Hampshire. The truth is, I kind of take late spring, summer, and early fall off and have a life. Once the writing kicks in, there are periods, month, month-and-a-half periods, where I write, sleep, eat, write. I was talking to my kids a while back, and I told them, you may have dreams, and it may turn out you really suck at them. But it may turn out that you're very, very good at something else. I had my overall plan: I was going to be a colonel – I was going to go back to school and get a Ph.D. – and I was going to die in combat. Instead, I've written over 100 books. My brother has the Ph.D.

**CP:** Do you agree with Asimov that there is an aesthetic to writing, do you enjoy the actual process?

**JR:** No, God, no! Hell no. I'm a control freak and I like to make my characters do things and go through stuff. I like to mess with people's brains. I know people are going to read it and go through the emotions I am pouring into the book. But I hate doing the freaking trim on the books. It's one of their weaknesses, actually. I do not write artistically. I write purely to tell the story.

**CP:** What's your favorite Rudyard Kipling?

**JR:** God, there are so many good ones! One of my favorites is "M.I." - it's about the Mounted Infantry in the Boer War. My favorite that I just kind of roll out is the "Ballad of Bo Da Thone." It is hilarious. [*Recites large swatches thereof.*] Another one would be "Chant Pagan;" that's the one I always think about with my dad.

**CP:** Have you any unpublished stories, juvenalia?

**JR:** The only thing of mine that hasn't been published in **The Voyages of King, Arthur**. There are actually references to him in **There Will be Dragons**. I have multiple ideas for unwritten stuff. I only write when the story is driving me, but when I write, I write very fast. I have 15,000 word days. One time I did 25,000.

**CP:** Do you like collaborating?

**JR:** Yes. Collaboration is a lot of fun. There are as many different ways to collaborate as there are collaborators, and I have done most of the different ways that you can do. David Weber sends me 30,000 word 'outlines.' Some of the stuff I've done with Kratman is Kratman from beginning to end, and the only thing I've done is a certain amount of tweaking, and I really don't feel my name should be on there. Kratman is okay with it; I'm not, particularly. With Julie Cochrane, for **Honor of the Clan,** we sat down and sort of talked about what we wanted to do. I had certain themes that I wanted in there and she had certain things she wanted to do and we worked out a plot together. Julie is more character development oriented and I'm more plot oriented, but we both contribute to both aspects. In **Von Neuman's War** with Doc Travis it was Doc's idea; it was about half his writing and half my writing. He wrote about 5000 words and I went in and did a lot of editing and went in and added stuff and rearranged stuff and sent it back to him, and he had at it, and sent it back, which is actually a very difficult way of working and that's why we haven't done a sequel. In the Blades books we are doing I pretty much write the whole book and leave spaces and Doc goes in and adds pure science and I go back and edit.

**CP:** When you write, it is more plot driven or character driven, or what?

**JR:** They are thematically driven. Theme, then plot, then character. Actually, theme, then story, then character, plot will come out by itself. You've got to have it significantly character-driven, because that's what readers get attached to. So main characters cannot be static. Main characters have to change in the course of the story. In fact, I think that is the problem I have with **Princess of Wands**, because I haven't figured out how to change her effectively. I'd written 40,000 words of **Queen of Wands** and then went back and got rid of 20,000, because I hated it.

**CP:** Chris Claremont, writing **The X-Men**, once said that his approach to writing is to ask himself, "What is the worst thing that can happen to this character?" and then make that happen. Do you ever do that?

**JR:** Yes. I think Bujold does that too. I do that when I think about it. Generally I just write by the seat of my pants and generally it's all there: story is there, pathos is there, tragedy is there, humor is there. But every now and again I have to sit down and go, "Okay, what am I going to do here?"

**CP:** Do you prefer to write fantasy or sci-fi?

**JR:** I write what I want to write. It's never hard for me to write - whatever it is. I always have ideas for new series and I have to force myself to stay with the old ones. I do fantasy with the Dragon series, I do techno-thriller and I do science fiction. They all have similar themes, but they are very different genres. I would never have written **Ghost** as science fiction, because the triple X would offend a lot of my readers – which it did.

**CP:** What do you think of e-publishing?

**JR:** (Laughs) First of all, all of my books are released as e-books in addition to hard cover. They come out in various ways as e-books. Sometimes I finish a section and send it to my publishers, and they post it as an unproofed advanced copy. I have no issues with e-books at all. Jim Baen, once he started to realize what was going on with e-books, was kind of funny. One day we were talking and he said, "Johnny, it's like watching sheep try to fleece themselves!"

Jim loved science fiction, he loved the industry, but he was very much a business man. Any way that he could find to make more money, as long as it wasn't too much more work for Jim, he'd go with it. We'd come out with CDs for my books, for free. When they came out sales on all my titles jumped, because people could listen to them on their computer, and they'd say, "Wow, this is a really great book!" and they'd go down to their library which would be out of them. I think science fiction writers who have issues with e-books are kind of like doctors who don't believe in MRIs. For SF authors, this is a technology that just happens to impact them; you ought to be able to get over it. It's a wave. I spent a lot of time growing up in Florida and I did body surfing and I learned something about waves. You can fight them, and they'll destroy you. You can let them go by, but then you're just bobbing on the ocean. Or you can try to ride them. If you ride them just right they carry you to shore. And e-books are the same way. How it is going to pan out is not exactly clear. I have a lot of readers who are e-book pure. I make a fair chunk of change off of e-books. Do I make as much as I make on hard covers? No, but e-books have the feel of becoming the wave of the future, and I'm not going to let that wave pass me by.

**CP:** Have you read the **1632** books by Eric Flint and company?

**JR:** I read **1632**. It's great, I loved it, but I haven't read anything else in that universe. I don't actually read a lot of science fiction now. For one thing, I am too afraid of stealing stuff. Mostly I read Terry Pratchett. I read non-fiction.

**CP:** In Emma Bull's new book, **Territory**, there is a character named John Ringo who is at odds with Wyatt Earp. Any relation?

**JR:** Yes! And yes, he was a cattle rustler. Meanwhile, his cousin, another Ringo, was a lawman.

**CP:** Do you get mail from soldiers saying, "Thank you for writing this, it really meant a lot to me"?

**JR:** All the time. I was a mediocre soldier, I was never great, I was never a super-soldier. And these guys who contact me just amaze me, and I feel very honored but I feel more humbled than anything.

People tell me, "Dude, I've read your stuff and I like it more than Heinlein," and I'm just… I've been reading this stuff since I was a kid. Just people mentioning my name in the same breath as Heinlein or Asimov, it's incredible. I see myself more as H. B. Piper or Poul Anderson.

**Q:** You've done female characters that I've really enjoyed and female characters that I just wanted to strangle –

**JR:** And in some cases it's the same character. A lot of female readers tell me I write great female characters. A lot of female writers tell me I don't!

**CP:** Is that because they haven't been in the military?

**JR:** That's a big part of it. I got into it with Janny Wurts a few years ago about writing females in combat. One of the interesting things I have noticed is that now that we have no s..t combat, and now that we have females in non-combat positions who just happen to get stuck in combat, truck drivers, MPs, female pilots, etcetera etcetera, is that there are females in the military who have low self-esteem who become human mattresses. But I have found females in the army who are real in your face fighters are very sexual, but they are sexual like soldiers. They are warriors. Writing women characters... I know a lot of women. I just cheat. I file off the serial numbers and suddenly I have my character.

**CP:** A lot of the guys in my unit hated that there were females in the army, and gave them a very hard time. Do your stories help change the perspectives of soldiers who are fighting with females?

**JR:** There's a book coming out called **The Politically Incorrect Guide to the College Campus**, and one of the things it talks about is that guys give guys a hard time, *all* the time. So when women first got in to the work force, and still today, there's a lot of "This is a hostile working environment." Well, this is what guys are like *all the time*. They're not being particularly hostile to *you*, they're just freaking hostile. And one of the problems of females in the military is that there are so many human mattresses, or girls who use sex as a weapon, making false accusations, using sex to get ahead –

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## Conversation ( Continued from page 8 )

**CP:** In our unit, girls would be told, "If you want to take this class you have to sleep with me before I'll sign off your paperwork."

**JR:** That sort of thing happens too, yes, definitely. The problem is that so many guys who are straight arrows, and they're not going to do that, have had so many experiences with girls that are an issue, that when they do run across a female who is a soldier, they have a huge time accepting that. Not because of stereotyping, because of past experiences. The smartest thing is to just not have women in the military. The second choice is Tom Kratman's choice. He wrote a story about that called "The Amazon's Right Breast." The third choice is what we are doing, which is muddling through. A lady of my acquaintance who was in Panama was able to overcome the resistance… She actually said there should be no women in the army. There can be *females*, but no *women*.

There are some characters I can't write. For example, I know there are intelligent liberals. I do. I can carry on a conversation with them and they are functional and they have some points, okay. But I can't write the character. I try, but I can't write the freaking character. And I can't write really weak women. Most of the women in my life have had significant issues, but nevertheless have been strong people.

**CP:** If you could go to Iraq, would you?

**JR:** If I were 20 years younger.

**CP:** I meant with the USO, to meet troops.

**JR:** Oh, in a heartbeat. I've been trying to arrange it, but the USO doesn't know who John Ringo is. I do sign books that get sent to soldiers.

**JR:** If you open up to gays in the military… first of all, if the military was drawn primarily from California liberals there would be no issue with gays at all. It's not. It's drawn primarily from rural areas, especially in combat arms. Those kids are just not acculturated to accepting gays. They weren't acculturated to accepting blacks either – blacks or women – but, with blacks, you've got a potential 25%, at one time even 35% increase in potential force level. With women, we're working with a 12% increase; arguably 15%. With gays, you have a much smaller increase for the morale problem.

It's the same argument against females in the infantry. There are certain segments of the military which are quietly very homosexual-friendly. I am not a racist, I am not a homophobe, I'm not even a xenophobe; I *am* a culturalist. I believe in basic tenets of western society. Some of the alternatives are terrible.

*I would include more of Ringo's military anecdotes, but there are two reasons I refrain. Most of them involve other people as well, and I do not have their permission. Secondly, they may yet appear in novels – with the serial number filed off. But if you want to hear more, and you ever go to a Con he is attending, set aside a couple of hours for conversation, and be sure to attend his panels too. He is one of the most accessible, down-to-earth GOHs it has ever been my pleasure to meet.* **– Chris Paige**

# Pro Notes

Hello from sunny *(always!)* Arizona. We're past the holiday frenzy and it all looks calm on the horizon. Our next convention in Arizona is LepreCon in May – look for an ad elsewhere in this publication.

Responses were still slow this month, I guess our authors who were swept up in the holiday craziness are back at work – at least we all hope so.

One new face this month, but we'll start off right here in Arizona with **Jennifer Roberson** who is currently working on the third volume in the KARAVANS universe, titled "The Wild Road." (The second, "Deepwood," appeared in hardcover in April '07). She sold a fourth in the universe to DAW a while back, and also recently made a deal with DAW for two more novels in the SWORD-DANCER series, though these will focus on the children of Tiger and Del. In November of 2008 a collection of twenty of her short stories, called "Guinevere's Truth and Other Tales," will be released by Five Star Books. Her three historicals, two based on the Robin Hood legend, and one set in 17th-Century Scotland, have been reissued by Kensington with new covers. In October of 2008, she will be a member of the faculty for a 1-week workshop on speculative fiction writing in Anchorage, sponsored by the Alaska Writers Guild. On March 15th, Jennifer will be a participant in the Sedona Symphony League's annual Authors' Luncheon at the Sedona Radisson. And our own **Diana Gabaldon** has announced that she has a working title for the next Jaime & Claire novel which will probably publish in 2009. It is "An Echo in the Bone." She is also excited about the graphic novel she's working on for Del Rey. It is, *potentially*, told from Murtagh's point of view while he's waiting for Jaime to return to Scotland, and the fulfillment of a vow made years before. *{I saw an advance drawing of Claire and she's beautiful and perfect!}* The graphic novel is scheduled for 2009, as well.

**Tim Powers**, who lives in California, is working on a new novel for Harper Collins which will take place in Victorian England, and a story for Charnal House which will take place during the Greek Revolution in 1825. Subterranean Press is reprinting lots of his older stuff. They have a beautiful package of his Fisher King stories: "Last Call," "Expiration Date" and "Earthquake Weather." Moving up the coast to Washington, **Elizabeth Ann Scarborough** says that "Maelstrom," the second in the TWINS OF PETAYBEE series, will be released in paperback in Feb 2008, and in April 2008 "Deluge," the third in the TWINS series, will be released in hardback. Meanwhile, via Teknobooks, she's sold several short stories for online publication through Sony for their new reading machine. She's looking into converting her backlist titles to digital form for ebooks too. She and Anne McCaffrey have turned over "Barque Cats," the first in a new proposed series they've been working on, to their agents for marketing and Elizabeth Ann is currently working (solo) on a sort of fantasy mystery.

Then, all the way over to the Midwest to **Charlaine Harris** in Arkansas. She told me that the next Sookie Stackhouse novel, "From Dead to Worse," will be out in May 2008. She just completed a novella for Ace, which will appear at some point in a three-in-one called "Must Love Hellhounds" which features two of her more interesting subsidiary characters from the Sookie story: Clovache and Batanya. No pub date on that yet. She has contributed a short story to a Kevin Anderson-edited anthology for HWA; the story's called "An Evening with Al Gore." She and Toni Kelner have a new anthology, "Wolfsbane and Mistletoe," which will feature a Sookie story. And she's about to start the next Sookie novel. She'd hoped to be able to give us a start date for "True Blood," the HBO series based on the Sookie Stackhouse books, but the writers' strike has called filming to a halt. Charlaine is deeply disappointed and hopes to have better news soon.

**Jacqueline Carey** in chilly Michigan reports that "Kushiel's Mercy," the last volume in the IMRIEL trilogy, comes out in June 2008. She's hard at work in the first volume of a new yet-untitled D'ANGELINE trilogy. This story will take place a few generations later – no details yet until after "Kushiel's Mercy" is published. She will be a guest of honor at LunaCon in Rye Brook, New York in March. Shortly afterward, she leaves for a trip to China and Tibet, which will include a good deal of research. And continuing east to Maine, I heard from **James Hetley**. "Dragon's Teeth" *{see the review in our Issue 17.3}* came out on schedule (now available in mass-market) to good reviews, but the sales figures haven't entranced his publisher into buying either "Ghost Point" or "Signatures." Those manu-

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## Pro Notes ( Continued from page 9 )

scripts are making the rounds of other publishers, via his agent. They sold French language rights to "Winter Oak," and the French publisher made a sub-rights sale for a mass-market French edition of "Summer Country." James is now working on "Powers," another contemporary fantasy about amnesiac gods and an ancient Solomon's Seal tied to the decline of miracles. *{Good luck – I sure I hope to see more of your work soon.}*

**Christopher Golden** who resides in Massachusetts, is a very busy man. *{Much thanks for his input.}* He has several reprints coming out. In January, Bantam will publish a mass market edition of "The Borderkind, the Second Book of the Veil." *{See the review in our Issue 17.6}* In February, they'll bring out mass market editions of "The Boys Are Back in Town" and "Wildwood Road," both never before available in that format. In March, the Third Book of the Veil, "The Lost Ones," arrives in trade paperback, completing the trilogy. In May, he and Tim Lebbon have their first collaborative effort, "Mind the Gap: A Novel of the Hidden Cities." Then, later in the year, he's returning to young adult fiction for the first time in a while. Delacorte will publish "Poison Ink" in July, and MTV Books will publish "Soulless" in October, just in time for Halloween. Also in the fall, Roc will be publishing a brand new trade paperback edition bringing back into print "The Ferryman," with a brand new introduction by Charles de Lint. Early 2008 will also see the publication of a new comic book series with his friend Tom Sniegoski called THE SISTERHOOD. It's a three issue miniseries from Archaia Studios Press, and the film version is in development now, with Sniegoski and Christopher producing. Once the WGA strike is over, he and Mike Mignola will be completing work on their screenplay for BALTIMORE, OR, THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER AND THE VAMPIRE for New Regency Pictures. In limited editions, 2008 will see a number of them, though several he can't talk about just yet. They include his first short story collection and the Earthling Modern Classics edition of "Strangewood," with an introduction by Graham Joyce and a Foreword by Bentley Little. Christopher and James A. Moore have made a new deal for the two novella sequels to "Bloodstained Oz," though when they'll get started on those is still up in the air. All of those things are already complete, of course. As to what the future holds beyond those things...he is working with Tim Lebbon on "The Map of Moments," the second HIDDEN CITIES novel, and starting his next solo novel for Bantam, "The Ocean Dark." There are already plans in place for other things to keep him busy all through 2008, and into 2009, including a second collaboration with Mike Mignola, and some things that might surprise longtime readers.

And, our new face this month is **Catherine Asaro** from Maryland ... *frigid* Maryland. Catherine's been keeping warm by working on lots of books, both science fiction and fantasy. This January saw the publication of "The Ruby Dice," the latest of her SKOLIAN EMIRE novels. It's a science fiction adventure about two warring empires and the struggles of their leaders to come to terms with the centuries of antagonism. Also just out is her SF novella, "The Space-Time Pool," which is the cover story of the March 2008 Analog. Due out in July from Luna Books is "The Night Bird," a fantasy novel with a big scope, adventure, a sensual young mage who is swept away from her home. In February, the anthology LACE AND BLADE from the Leda imprint of Norilana Books will include a short fantasy romance of hers called "The Topaz Desert" that takes place in the LOST CONTINENT universe for Luna Books. Between now and then, Catherine will be doing appearances at cons, possibly a signing or two, and at home, coaching the Howard Area Homeschoolers, a dynamite group of math students, in competitions. She invites all her readers to come by her email group and say hello. It's at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asaro/

Almost finally, is news from **Jody Lynn Nye**. Back in June, she published the first half of an epic fantasy duology from TOR Books entitled "An Unexpected Apprentice." It's a beautiful hardcover book with a really special cover (see her website, www.jodynye.com.) The second part is at TOR Books right now and expected to publish in December 2008. The title is yet undetermined. "Myth Chief," the fifth novel she and Bob Asprin have collaborated on in the MYTH ADVENTURES series, is being turned in in the next couple of days (how's that for recent news?). It will be available from Wildside Press in trade and hardcover editions by March 26th. The cover is by Phil Foglio. "Myth-Gotten Gains," the fourth collab, comes out in mass-market paperback this spring from Ace Books. She and Bob will be the literary guests of honor at MarCon in Columbus, OH, over Memorial Day weekend in May. They are also planning to attend DragonCon.

And, finally, news from those **DragonPage** folks: FarPoint Media has grown to include 70 current and in-development podcasts, with an impressive array of talent in both audio and video formats. Notable additions include the hit video series "Calls for Cthulhu" (special video guest at the 2007 HP Lovecraft Film Festival), independent musician George Hrab's "Geologic Podcast", popular webcomics podcast "Gigcast", and X-Files/Lone Gunmen alum Dean Haglund's podcast about an indie filmmaker's perspective on Hollywood, "From the Heart of Hollywood". It's a small sample of FarPoint Media's commitment to quality entertainment, and just one small feature of why FPM is The Indie Podcast Network... and is still growing. FarPoint Media's "Zombie Channel" project made a splash at the International Horror and SciFi Film Festival in November, and our XM Satellite Radio flagship show, "Slice of SciFi", will be at the Phoenix Comicon at the end of January, gathering interviews and fan feedback and other news. Local AZ podcasters who have joined FarPoint Media are "Game Zone Radio" (video games), "Love Long and Prosper" (love, living and Star Trek), and "The Pulp Gamer" (board games, card games, role-playing games) In the Friends of FarPoint Media department: Mur Lafferty's "Geek Fu Morning" and "I Should Be Writing" shows are amongst the most popular in the FarPoint Media network, but another separate project she's launched is a podcast novel. "Playing for Keeps" is a look at the lives of the regular and underpowered folk who get caught in the crossfire between superheros and supervillains. It's gotten a lot of attention with the podcasting crowd, and the novel has a print edition that's available from Lulu.com. See relevant links below.

That's it for this month. I hope you enjoyed yourselves. And, as always - if anyone wants to contribute or knows someone who knows someone…please write to ConNotations or email me at Editor@casfs.org – **Catherine Book.**

DragonPage links:
http://www.farpointmedia.net
http://www.callsforcthulhu.com
http://www.geologicpodcast.com
http://www.thegigcast.com
http://www.fromtheheartofhollywood.com
http://www.zombiechannel.com
http://www.sliceofscifi.com
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# 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 Fiction Society, the ConNotations editor or staff.)*

**Editors Note** - Last issue we neglected to attach the name of the person who wrote the editorial "No more CopperCons..". The editorial opinion was written by Michael Contos. We regret the omission.

### A Response to the Opinion in Volume 17 Issue 6
### by Mark Boniece

I can't agree more with Mr. Contos' sentiments expressed in his letter to the editor in the last edition of ConNotations. He correctly points out that a large source of the problems that CASFS has are related to a lack of people willing to help out running the conventions. He was absolutely correct in his assertions that nobody wants to chair the conventions any more because of the literally nightmarish quality of doing that. I have chaired nine conventions in the Phoenix area, and I can only agree that problems with staffing have gotten orders of magnitude worse in the last few years.

The entire body of what has been traditionally referred to as "fandom", has decreased substantially in the past ten years. The people who run the conventions, are simply a segment of the group of people that enjoy and attend the conventions. The model has been that we take turns running the conventions, so everyone can enjoy them. This model has broken down.

My feeling is that the main force of change that has caused the marked decrease in the size in the fan community is Al Gore's invention: The Internet. People say we have been unable to recruit younger people into the fan community. The fact is that the younger people don't want to be in the fan community. Traditionally, conventions have a main purpose of providing a venue for fans to network with other fans. The Internet allows this to be done with much greater efficiency, over a much wider area than a local convention can do. If someone is enamored with something that only six other people in the world like, they now have the ability to target this area directly, and network with their six buddies, and dispense with all the other crap they don't like. Plus they don't have to spend money and (spasm of fear) interact with people face-to-face.

Large conventions are on a different plane entirely, and have the money and influence to get prominent guests, and have gigantic dealers rooms that have the feel of street bazaars in New Delhi. Attendees like being swallowed up in the

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## Editorial ( Continued from page 10 )

enormity of it all, and experiencing anonymity that comes with the masses. Small local conventions cannot manage this type of scale, and so the potential customer goes onto the Internet, and gets what they want, either from discussion groups, or items from Ebay or specialty sites.

Since Contos' piece came out in ConNotations, I have spoken to several fans that have told me why they or their friends don't get involved in running the conventions. The basis appears to be some misconceptions that break roughly into five categories:

**1. Myth:** There seems to be a perception out there that CASFS destroys everything it touches, and they point to the recent failure of Anizona as a prime example.

**Fact:** CASFS has nothing to do with Anizona. I was surprised to hear this from a very prominent individual in for-profit convention circles, as well as others that had obviously heard this "on the grapevine". The organizations are completely separate corporations with separate missions, and separate groups of people involved, with the only exception being a small handful of people that overlap involvement in both. The failure of Anizona, is entirely a result of lack of follow-through from individuals that have nothing to do with CASFS whatsoever.

The recent failure of HexaCon is an unrelated issue, but sometimes comes up in this discussion. This happened because of some very poor decisions that were made a few years ago, that precipitated an early launch of Con Games, which took place at a date proximity to HexaCon that effectively put it out of business. This was a failure of individuals, not the group as a whole.

**2.Myth:** There is perception that a small group of "Uber Fans" run CASFS, and won't listen to any new ideas, won't let anyone else get into the decision making loops, and quash any new ideas that may laboriously struggle to the surface.

**Fact:** Anyone that feels they can inject new ideas, wants to run a convention, or even remake the entire organization into something new and different is welcome to "come on down" and do it. There is, of course a board of directors, but they function only to make sure IRS and non-profit organization requirements are being followed, and to make sure the business processes flow smoothly, they are NOT in the business of censuring ideas.

A few years ago, a group of people came into the organization from the Renaissance Festival, and had lots of new ideas, new people and volunteers to do the legwork. They wanted to virtually take over the organization, and they were allowed to! There were a couple of real dynamos in this group, and we all had very high hopes about what they could accomplish. They ended up dropping out a few at a time over the following several years, because they had personal problems, relationship problems, or found out how much thankless work was involved, and decided to quit, or go off and do their own thing. Ivan was the last of these people. On several occasions the group has voted to dispense with rules, procedures and processes to allow someone new to try what they will. My point is that the notion of a small inner group of "Uber Fans" not allowing things to change is nonsense. Budgetary constraints and legality are the only limitations. If you want to change things, come down and do it!

**3. Myth:** Some people feel that there is no need for two local sci-fi conventions in the valley. They think that one 900 person convention would beat two 450 person conventions.

**Fact**: There is no logic to this assertion. The fact is the attendance for CopperCon and Leprecon has been in rough parity for the past few years, with mostly the same people attending both. If one of the conventions were not to occur, there is considerable evidence that indicates we would just end up with one 450 person convention. Why eliminate half of the fun?

I've also heard an argument that goes roughly, "Well, just let CASFS fail, and if there is a place for another convention organization in this area, one will arise out of the dust with new people and new vigor". I don't think this approach would accomplish anything. There are considerable difficulties in starting up a new organization to run conventions, even if you disregard the lack of experience issue. For example, the hotels will not deal with an organization that does not have a track record (especially now), and getting the 501(c)3 tax status is much harder to get than it used to be. Also if CopperCon would cease, someone else would snap up that date slot in an already congested calendar (since hotel rates go up dramatically after Labor Day) and put any new convention in the position of having problems finding a date. As stated in #2 above, anyone that wants to run a new or re-invented convention is free to do it within CASFS.

**4. Myth:** There is a perception that certain individuals in the fan community are in extreme conflict with each other, and that long-term grudges have formed, and closed off communication channels. This has supposedly created large groups of people who won't get involved because of their animosity towards one person or another. The thought goes "Well, just get rid of certain individuals, and everything would be fine again, and the fans would stream back to volunteering, and all of our staffing problems would be solved.."

**Fact:** This simply lacks credibility. In any community, there are always people who don't get along, this is a fact of life. If the "trouble" individuals were to quit or be forced out, and the hypothetical rush back to volunteering doesn't occur, we're in worse trouble than ever. All of the conventions have a labor pool problem, with the possible exception of DarkCon which has a built-in pool of committed volunteers that few organizations can match. It is simply much harder than it used to be to find reliable people that will actually do what they promised to do. Existing people are tired and burning out.

**5. Myth**: If we gave free memberships up front for volunteers like Phoenix Comicon does, it would fix the volunteer problem.

**Fact:** Our non-profit business model is different, and our most critical lack are the committee level people that usually get in free anyway. Comicon usually manages to get what they need to run the convention with only a very small core staff that are paid. We can't offer monetary compensation to committee members. Most fans are only vaguely aware of the people that are actually running the conventions. They don't realize that there is a big distinction between the committee level volunteer that has to spend two years planning their activities, and the at-con volunteer that helps only with the execution phase. Previous efforts show that at-con volunteering can be stimulated by offering various non-monetary incentives like raffle tickets for donated prizes.

We need to solve our staffing problems, yes. But there are larger problems of getting into areas where we can get new people involved. People don't read books as much as they used to; people can see artwork online or other places. What are the hot areas? Anime' is very popular in the United States, although it seems to be waning a bit in Japan. Manga (graphic Novels) and comic books have had a resurgence in recent years. TV stars and media-related guests are big, but require big money, unless you are very lucky. LAN (networked computing) parties where the participants bring their own computers and play games are huge. Non-Computer gaming is still big if done correctly. So-called "fringe" areas like UFOs, paranormal phenomena, conspiracy theories, etc. have had a gigantic upswing in the past few years. Narrowly

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## Editorial

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targeted conventions such as Dr. Who, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, etc. are successful. Hard science and technology, biotechnology, etc., if done right has worked well. Film festivals are big. And of course get-rich-quick schemes (just kidding).

Attempts to regroup after the failure of HexaCon have so far been unsuccessful. This is very unfortunate. If we still had those revenues, we would not be in the mess we are in, and we would have a lot more time to solve any problems. Our current large difficulties in finding suitable hotels does not help things either, but this problem is showing signs of abating in the near future, when hotel capacities are at an excess again as a result of all the new hotels being built.. To give us more time to regroup under the present circumstances, we may need to restructure or cancel some events in addition to re-addressing the ConNotations funding issue.

In conclusion, our problems can be solved by branching out into some new areas that will not replace, but supplement our current activities, coming up with new ways to motivate volunteers, and restructuring ourselves past the hotel crises. This will put us onto a road into the future that will be filled with possibilities, instead of disinterest, conflict, misconceptions and "small" thinking. We just need to survive 2008, and 2009. 2010 will offer new opportunities. We will need to make some difficult decisions to survive. Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE needs to help. This all talk, and no action stuff must end NOW. We can do this!

# Screening Room

**Cloverfield -**
**Release Date: January 18, 2008**
**Sweeney Todd -**
**Release Date: December 21, 2007**
**I Am Legend -**
**Release Date: December 14, 2007**
**The Golden Compass -**
**Release Date: December 7, 2007**
**Enchanted -**
**Release Date: November 21, 2007**
**Beowulf -**
**Release Date: November 16, 2007**

**Cloverfield**
**Runtime: 84 minutes**
**Rated: PG-13 for violence and terror**
**Starring: Lizzy Caplan, Jessica Lucas, T.J. Miller, Michael Stahl-David, Mike Vogal, Odette Yustman**
**Director: Matt Reeves**
**Reviewed by: Len Berger**
**(ConNotations Film Editor)**

*Cloverfield* is the long anticipated New York City monster movie produced by J.J. Abrams. The movie was shot documentary-style which helps bring the audience into the action and horror.

The film begins with the US Government reviewing a tape from a camcorder found in NYC's Central Park after the attack. The tape begins with a surprise party for Rob Hawkins (played by Michael Stahl-David). Rob is leaving for Japan and his friends want to wish him good luck and goodbye. Lily (played by Jessica Lucas) wants the event captured on tape and asks Jason, Rob's brother, (played by Mike Vogal) to tape testimonials from all the attendees "like a wedding". Jason could care less about this but he convinces Hud (played by T.J. Miller) to take the camera. Hud starts filming with a dedication to the task without which there would be no *Cloverfield* film. Rob has a thing for Beth (played by Odette Yustman) – in fact they slept together recently. Because of Rob's impending trip to Japan he really didn't want to get too involved, but his love for Beth was strong.

The attack starts with a loud series of rumbles and the scene (shown in the trailer) with the Statue of Liberty's head rolling down the street near the party. Hud keeps rolling to document the events. Nobody quite knows what has happened but everyone is afraid.

We see glimpses of the petite, pretty and friendly monster (oops for some reason Casper just popped into my head) – anyway this guy (person to be politically correct) is huge, ugly as hell and about as friendly as a shark in search of a meal. Our group wants to get the hell out of the city but it's not that simple as a call from Beth to Rob interrupts their escape.

The overriding friendship, love and dedication to one another are what made the film so enjoyable. Hud's dedication to the job of taping the going away party continued through the most horrific events he and his friends encounter. Most horror / terror films do not have this level of interaction between the characters.

Just sit back, grab your significant other and enjoy the attack on NYC.

Please note that it appears no tripods or steady-cams were used during the shooting of the film – if you are prone to sea-sickness I would not sit in the front row.

This film is what J.J. Abrams fans expect. During the lulls in the attack, the film has the viewers waiting with anticipation. Once again, the emotions and dedication of the characters help make this film stand out. I rate the film a "B".

**Cloverfield**
**Running Time: 90 minutes**
**Rated: PG-13**
**Starring: Lizzy Caplan, Jessica Lucas, T.J. Miller, Michael Stahl-David**
**Director: Matt Reeves**
**Produced by J.J. Abrams and Bad Robot**
**Distributed by: Paramount Pictures**

Wow. What can I say about this movie that wouldn't give away any plot points? I saw ***Cloverfield*** on the big screen (Cine Capri) and can say definitively that it needs that screen to give it enough room to be appreciated. If you have read any of the hype then the ending won't be a surprise.

The premise is well thought out and fairly well executed. The movie was an interesting take on the traditional monster movie. I liked the view from the position of the poor sap running from the monster (yelling "***Gojira***!!!") but filming just in case. I imagine that if the military hadn't gotten their hands on it several of the shots could have been sold for huge amounts of money. Given that this won't be seen until early February I will say the monster reminded me of the bugs in ***Starship Troopers***.

Minor problems abounded, such as distances traveled in the dark including over fifty flights of stairs up and down in less than seven hours, unlikely to be successful, especially given that these people were drinking heavily at the beginning of the film. The head of the statue of liberty is thrown down a street by a creature with limbs that look incapable of gripping. The camera has a lens that only seems to attract blood never dust despite the amount all over still falling.

I would have liked a small report from the military tacked on to explain the circumstances in which the film was found and the current state of affairs in NYC and the rest of the country. The movie was short enough that a fifteen minute epilogue would have been appropriate and appreciated.

Four Stars out of five - **Bob LaPierre**

**Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**
**Running Time: 117 minutes**
**Rated: R**
**Dir. Tim Burton;**
**Starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman, Jamie Campbell Bower, Jayne Wisener, Ed Sanders**

*Sweeney Todd* is an operetta by Stephen Sondheim, the writer of *A Little Night Music*, *Assassins*, and *Into the Woods*. He also wrote the lyrics to *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. He is strong on clever lyric-writing if not traditionally melodic in his

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## Screening

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compositions.

The movie opens with a ship sailing into a London harbor, and a sweet-voiced young sailor singing about how wonderful London is. Then another voice cuts in, quieter, lower, venomously describing London in harsher terms. This singer thanks the young Anthony (Jamie Campbell Bower) for rescuing him and names himself Sweeney Todd (Todd is the German word for *death*) before he sets off down familiar streets. He comes to a shop that sells "The Worst Meat Pies in London" according to the proprietress Mrs. Lovett, a widow, who serves Sweeney inedible slop while she sings. Todd asks her about the history of the building and its former tenants. She tells a sad, sad story about a handsome young barber, his pretty wife and their baby daughter. They were happy together until the powerful Judge Turpin (played by Alan Rickman) saw and coveted his neighbor's wife and had the barber brought up on false charges and deported to an Australian penal colony. Once he was out of the way, Turpin raped and abandoned the wife, and appointed himself guardian of the baby girl Johanna. Overcome by grief, the wife took arsenic, "Poor Thing," Mrs. Lovett sings, but her sympathy is somewhat dismissive. Todd, who is, of course, the returned husband, arranges to rent the upstairs space to open a barber shop. His original set of barber's razors is still there, and he swears vengeance as he holds them. Mrs. Lovett had been carrying a torch for the handsome young barber for years; she is all to glad too assist him and comfort him for the loss of his wife.

First he has to make a name for himself as a barber to attract high custom, so he challenges a local mountebank to a shaving competition which he wins handily, using his silver razors. Unfortunately, the mountebank recognizes the razors and stops by the next day to indulge in a spot of blackmail. Sweeney turns the business end of his razors on his tormentor instead, which presents a problem: what to do with the body? Mrs. Lovett remarks that what with the price of meat these days, it seems a shame to let it go to waste.

And so it begins. Todd dispatches his clients, who become grist for the pie-maker's wares. Her meat pies become famous. They are assisted by the mountebank's former assistant Toby. Todd almost fulfills his revenge early, but an untimely interruption sets other events in motion. Anthony has fallen in love with the judge's pretty ward, and wants to elope with her, but tells his plans to Sweeney in the judge's hearing. When Johanna refuses to marry her guardian, she is sent to an insane asylum. Observing and commenting on all this is a beggar woman. In the original play, it is crudely obvious she is a prostitute; Hollywood tones this down, although the pox marks on her face tell the story.

This marks the sixth outing for Tim Burton and Johnny Depp, and a reunion with Helena Bonham Carter from *The Corpse Bride*. Neither Depp nor Carter has operatic pipes, but they don't need them here. Their duet as they sing of serving the lords of London is the lyrical high point for anyone who enjoys word play, puns, and double-entendres. Johnny Depp wielding razors is like seeing Edward Scissorshands finally corrupted by the ugliest of emotions. When Depp is on screen, the sets are in shades of black and grey, except for the colorful competition scene, so that the splashes of arterial blood are vivid contrast. The younger characters occasionally enjoy slightly brighter backgrounds, although Joanna's lyrics suggest that she is too blighted to live a happy life.

Alan Rickman is always good; Carter is whimsical, Wisener is haunting as Johanna; and young Ed Sanders almost steals the show as the urchin Toby. I was put off by Bower's pouty lips and pretty boy looks – I wouldn't want to elope with him myself, but I'm not 16.

*Sweeney Todd* is either Aristotelian tragedy or the blackest of comedies, depending on your sensibilities. Todd's strongest emotions, despair and fury, lead to irrevocable violence. The few survivors are burned as if by acid by his passing. We, the audience, get to enjoy the catharsis, or the bloodbath. If you are wondering if this is suitable for under seventeen, my observation is that kids who play videogames or RPGs involving death, or who wear shirts from Hot Topics, have prepared themselves to enjoy the macabre. **– Chris Paige**

**Sweeney Todd:**
**The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**
**Running Time: 117 minutes**
**Rated: R**
**Directed by Tim Burton**
**Starring Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Rickman, Timothy Spall, Jamie Campbell Bower, Jayne Wisener and Sacha Baron.**

The movie production of *Sweeney Todd* is interesting in two unexpected ways. First the closeness and narrowness of the view presented to the audience and secondly the choice of players none of whom are noted as musical stars.

The view presented to the audience was a sharp contrast to the broad brush required by a musical stage presentation. Most musical movie versions of Broadway Plays attempt to duplicate this and thus do not take full advantage of the film medium. In *Sweeney Todd* Tim Burton chose to defy tradition, thus taking advantage of the broad brush when needed and the closeups allowed by the different medium.

The stars were a surprise and a stroke of genius. Johnny Depp was astounding. Given the current sound technology his somewhat weak voice worked well. Helena Bonham Carter was astonishing as the mad keeper of the pie shop. The two of them made you believe in the story.

The wonderful Gritty Fleet Street set was London as we knew it from descriptions in Dickens. The opening scene in the pie shop with the rats and roaches sets the tone wonderfully.

Burton built up the horror of the situation without causing the audience to lose their supper. Nevertheless please note that the film is not for the tender of stomach nor for the faint of heart.

Recommended – **Gary Swaty**

**I Am Legend**
**Runtime: 100 minutes**
**Rated: PG-13**
**Starring: Will Smith, Alice Braga, Charlie Tahan, Dash Mihok**
**Director: Francis Lawrence**
**(Constantine)**

Last issue I wrote a review on the novel, I Am Legend by Richard Matheson. I wanted to read the original prior to the movie coming so that I could compare the two. Lawrence has given us an updated version of the story, which originally took place in the mid 50's, and blended in elements from The Omega Man – an earlier film based on the same book.

In my mind Lawrence has taken the best elements of both the book and the previous film to give us something more satisfying than either.

The film opens with a series of television interviews in which the cure for cancer is announced. By turning viruses to mankind's benefit they have had a 100% effectiveness in treating those affected with cancer. The celebration is short-lived as they discover that virus eventually mutates the host, killing those who are infected 90% of the time. Worst yet, the virus has started affecting those not treated for cancer and is spreading unchecked. (One assumes that it has mutated in some aspect, but if this is explained in the film I missed it.)

Robert Neville (Will Smith) is the last man on Earth. Or so he thinks. He wanders the streets of New York by day, searching for food, searching for a cure for the disease so that he can reverse its effects in those already mutated by it, and playing golf on the docks while he waits for anyone to respond to his distress signal.

Smith does an adequate job of showing a man too long absent from human contact. As this is a pivotal aspect of the early portions of this story I think it could have been done better, but the writing and directing are probably more responsible for this short-coming than Smith's acting.

I had a few problems with the film, such as the state in which we find New York city only three years after the catastrophe. Already much of the city has been reclaimed by nature, giving it a wonderful post-apocalyptic feel to it, but doing nothing to explain why there are huge herds of deer running through Central Park. And if the city streets are in such a state of disrepair, why do we still have buildings covered in canvas where the material is still in good shape? Or abandoned vehicles with fully aired tires and dust free windshields.

However, these criticisms are minor. The action in interesting. Smith is interesting. The story line is interesting. I recommend the movie. And when you finish watching it, run down to your local video store and rent The Omega Man and The Last Man On Earth and see how they compare. - **Randy Lindsay**

**The Golden Compass**
**Running Time: 118 minutes**
**Rated: PG-13**
**Director: Chris Weitz**
**Starring: Nicole Kidman, Dakota Blue Richards, Daniel Craig**

Instead of a cast of thousands, **The Golden Compass** has a crew of thousands. I know because I sat through the roster to verify that it was indeed Kate Bush singing the song "Lyra." The film is gorgeous: wonderful graphics, particularly with the cityscapes, the daemons, and the *panserbjorne*, the armored ice bears. Some of the acting is also quite good. That being said, I did *not* enjoy the film thoroughly, because decisions were made to keep things nice for a kid friendly rating, and these PC moments palpably weakened the story. Worse, numerous portions of the book's storyline were changed, sometimes radically, sometimes chronologically, and sometimes pointlessly for unnecessary 'heightened drama.'

I hadn't read the book when I saw the film, so I was unaware of these sins of omission and commission until I asked the young persons in attendance with me their opinions. I was expecting paeans and eulogies, and was surprised by their reactions. They were outspoken and loud in their displeasure. They supplied me with explanations of how very, very bad the movie was compared to the book. In full cry they detailed the enormity of the discrepancies for me. I inferred that they felt about this movie the way I felt about **The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe** movie: every departure from the book jarred and felt like a betrayal. I was intrigued to find out that all the moments that I thought were weak were instances of departure.

So now I am reading the book, and I love it. I still recommend the movie, but

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## Screening (Continued from page 13 )

it seems to me that filmmakers should really consult a group of avid kids who have actually read and loved a book before deciding to 'improve' on it. - **Chris Paige**

**Enchanted**
**Running Time: 108 minutes**
**Rated: PG**
**Starring: Amy Adams, Patrick Dempsey, James Marsden, Timothy Small, Susan Sarandon, Idina Mendez, with voice over by Julie Andrews**
**Director: Kevin Lima**
**Words and Music: Stephen Schwartz & Alan Menken**

No studio does self-referencing humor as well as Disney, and *Enchanted* has one inside joke after another for the delectation of its older audience members; for the younglings, of course, it is all new and fresh and straightforward. The movie theatre was packed for the preview in Tucson, mostly families with a mean average of 2.3 children, whose ages ranged from drooling infant to sulky teen, and everybody seemed to have a good time.

The story goes as follows, competent but wicked step-mother queen of cartoon Andalasia wants to prevent Prince Edward from marrying and taking over the throne. Prince Edward is kept busy hunting ogres under the watchful eye of the queen's henchman, and this activity keeps him away from the company of ladies, until an ogre he is apprehending menaces a beautiful forest maiden. She has the red hair of Ariel, the sewing skill of Cinderella, the winsome ways of Snow White, Princess Aurora's ability to dream true, Belle's confidence, and the social circle of adorable creatures that all Disney heroines enjoy. After he rescues her, maiden Giselle and Prince Edward sing a charming duet to show how in love with love they truly are, and arrange to wed the very next day. But step-mother queen is devious and subtle. Wearing a disguise, she lures Giselle from the path to the palace to a magic fountain, and sends Giselle to "a place where there is no happily ever after" – New York City.

Fortunately for Giselle, her faithful companion, the chipmunk Pip, sees this and tells Prince Edward, so he sets off to rescue her again. Pip follows, and then the queen sends her henchman to New York, promising him the reward of her favor if he does away with Giselle. Pip, who could speak in Andalasia, is reduced to chittering and pantomiming in New York, but he does his valiant best to thwart the henchman and guide the clueless Prince. Marsden, who was the brooding Cyclops in the X-Men movies, plays Prince Edward with wonderful abandon, like a dark-haired Cary Elwes.

Meanwhile, Giselle is having adventures. Patrick Dempsey plays Robert, a divorce lawyer with a six-year old daughter. They are taking a taxi home when they see a girl in a poofy white wedding dress hanging from a fire escape ladder outside a casino with a castle decal. He is reluctant to have anything to do with her once she has her feet back on the ground – strictly in a literal sense. But she ends up asleep on their couch before he quite knows what is happening.

No good deed goes unpunished in the big, bad city. Giselle's presence is understandably misconstrued by Robert's girlfriend, Nancy; and later on her well-meaning interference gets him in trouble at work. As for what she does in his apartment, I am not going to spoil it – it is toooo good. The previews give you a glimpse – 'nuff said.

*Enchanted* is about the discrepancy between romance and happily ever after, expectation and reality. In some ways, the most interesting character is the queen's henchman. Robert has to get over his emotional deep freeze; Giselle and Edward have to get over their naiveté; but the henchman has to get over being a stooge and a pawn and a patsy. Some of the cleverest scripting is the set up for his epiphany.

The script writers also deserve commendation for how well they justify the song and dance numbers. This is not the era of big musicals when a song was its own *raison d'etre*. Ordinary New Yorkers do not usually sing and dance, but for this film we need to believe they can and will. So one song is set in a park, where it is possible for street musicians to riff on a songline from Andalasia. The resulting big number does demand suspension of incredulity, but it's enchanting. The other occasion is entirely legitimate: a costume ball is the perfect setting for the partners: Robert with Nancy, Giselle with Edward, respectively representing Mundania and Andalasia in a kind of cultural cross-pollination. Darn that old queen for coming and spoiling it all with a poisoned apple. Susan Sarandon has so much fun being bad, and she has such great lines, she deserves her own tee-shirt promo.

Another point in this movie's favor: the daughter is portrayed as a kid. She is not annoyingly precocious; she is not wise beyond her years; she is a sympathetic, nice kid who loves her father and is puzzled by the adult machinations all about her. But she understands cutting up curtains to make clothes. **– Chris Paige**

**Beowulf**
**Running Time: 113 minutes**
**Rating: PG-13**
**Starring: John Malkovich, Anthony Hopkins, Robin Wright Penn, Angelina Jolie**

What a year Neil Gaiman is having, first *Stardust*, now *Beowulf*. I hope he gets an Oscar, maybe two – one for best original, one for best adapted screenplay. Start looking up superlatives, because you'll want them for this film. It is dark, twisty, sexy, and the 3-D version had the audience gasping as spears, branches, blood, and bodies seemed to approach, pass, and even pierce us. There is boasting and bellowing, a bawdy song for which I want the lyrics, and a gentle Dane woman harp song for contrast.

If you are a Gaiman reader, or if you read the Datlow & Windling anthologies of fantasy and horror, you can guess where the movie goes when it skips off the path of the original poem. Even with these variations, this movie is much truer to its source than the usual Hollywood fare. It follows the entire course of the epic, from the slaughter in the hall and Beowulf's arrival, through his fight with Grendel, the revelation of Grendel's vengeful mother, on to an aged Beowulf's final confrontation with a devastating dragon. The only issue I had with the tweaks to the storyline is that now it is harder to recognize *Beowulf*'s dragon as the source for Smaug in *The Hobbit*.

The c-g animation is mesmerizing, with gorgeous storms and golden sunsets and wavelets over pebbles, plus a humorously tantalizing sequence when Beowulf opts to fight Grendel naked. Some movies entertain superficially; this one gets inside and changes you. Highly recommended. **– Chris Paige**

## The Digital TV Cometh
## By Shane Shellenbarger

You have probably seen them by now, the propaganda pieces in public-service-announcement-clothing touting the coming of the golden age of digital television and ringing the death knell for analog television. The news is good, bad, and ugly and just over one year away. I will attempt to clarify the details of the transition.

First, a bit of history. In 1996, Congress authorized the allocation of an additional broadcast channel to each full-power broadcast TV station so that they could start a digital broadcast channel while simultaneously continuing their analog broadcast channel. The federal government proposed the shift to digital television in mid-2005 as a way of freeing up the VHF frequencies of 54-216 MHz and the UHF frequencies of 470-890 MHz. This will allow the government to use a portion of the spectrum for emergency responders and sell the remainder to the highest bidder for an estimated $15 billion dollars to offset the government's deficit. Many broadcasters have been simulcasting in analog and digital for the past year. As of March 2007, manufacturers of televisions, VHS recorders, DVR/PVR (TiVo, etc.) were required to discontinue placing analog tunes in sets. However, they were not required to implement digital tuners so many consumers were surprised to find that their new DVD/VHS recorders had NO tuner and needed to be connected to a satellite/VDSL/cable tuner box.

So, what are consumers gaining from this transition? Digital television can mean sharper pictures with less ghosting (multi-images) and cleaner sound with less distortion. Unfortunately, while analog signals degrade linearly from a clear signal all the way to snowy, digital signals can go from sharp to a midpoint where the sound is intermittent and the picture develops blocky errors. The final degradation is no sound and usually a blue screen. In addition, digital television does not necessarily mean HDTV. DTV comes in many flavors: Instead of a single analog channel, a broadcaster may have one High Definition (HD) channel, a couple Enhanced Definition (ED) channels, or multiple Standard Definition (SD) channels making use of the same spectrum space once used by the single analog channel. This allows the broadcasting station, for example, to digitally transmit SD versions of the news on channel 13.0, the weather on channel 13.1, sports on channel 13.2, etc. This can also mean that DTV can allow for data services and interactive video previously unavailable with analog technology.

Now for some Good news/Bad news. If you are currently paying a subscription to a satellite/VDSL/cable, you will not need any new equipment because your service provider has done the work for you and will not be required to transition until 2011, at the earliest. However, if you are receiving your television as a free, over-the-air broadcast, the party is over. Since the government is requiring this program be implemented the government has provided a coupon program to defray the cost of eligible digital-to-analog converters. Each household can request two $40.00 coupons. Manufacturers estimate the costs at between $50-$70. Once the coupon has been issued, the coupon holder will have 90 days to utilize the coupon or it will expire. More information is available at the FCC's special website, www.dtv.gov, or call 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322).

There are likely to be a few hiccups and stumbles as the United States transitions to the digital format, but it probably will not be as bad as many of us initially feared. Do you remember the computer transition terrors of Y2K?

https://www.dtv2009.gov/
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## To BLU-RAY or not to BLU-RAY
## That is the Question

**Blu-ray demo review by: Len Berger**

ConNotations was invited to attend a Blu-ray demonstration booth and interviewed one of their experts, John Grantham. Personally, I was a Betaphile and yes, I still have a Beta VCR and a few tapes so this was surely an eye opener for me.

The Disney Blu-ray tour (sponsored by Panasonic) was showing *Pirates of the Caribbean* clips as well as some Disney animation clips on a large screen plasma TV. There were also demos showing the interactive nature of Blu-ray such as Liar's Dice (from Pirates).

I was blown away by the Blu-ray picture quality from both afar and close-up. The colors were amazing as was the clarity. The picture was extremely stable and I did not notice any breakups or pixel issues during the several playbacks I watched. John indicated during the interview that he had not seen any stability issues with the playback during the entire six month tour.

We now break for some Blu-ray technical information. On a 1080P TV the picture quality is up to 6 times the resolution of a standard DVD. Blu-ray's disk capacity is 50 GB which is 5 times the capacity of a DVD and 66 % more than HD-DVD. Blu-ray releases may contain several related movies on the same disk saving storage space. Blu-ray players are downward compatible with DVD's (actually improving the quality of the playback) but will not play my Beta tapes. Lastly Blu-ray disks have a special hardcoat layer that helps protect the disks from damage.

When a decision is made to upgrade from DVD there will be some significant costs. To get the most out of Blu-ray you will need a 1080P plasma TV for screens over 42". However, when shopping I would certainly test the various TV technologies available to determine which works best for you based on cost and quality. A very good sound system will be required to get the full home theatre experience. Blu-ray supports up to 7.1 channels of surround sound. You must use a HDMI cable to keep the interface digital all the way. Blu-ray movies generally run around $25 to $30 but there are often 2 for 1 sales, etc. so check your Sunday paper ads.

And lastly you will need a Blu-ray player. Sony Playstation 3 includes the capability to play Blu-ray movies so if you have one you are well on your way to a quality home theatre system.

Concerning the future of Blu-ray, phase-2 will allow gaming while watching a movie which might prove taxing for a baby boomer like myself but would be a breeze for the gaming generation of today.

There are two competing technologies for the home theatre customer who desires the best home theatre experience available: Blu-Ray and HD-DVD. Both will give you outstanding picture and sound but at this time Blu-ray costs a bit more. Twice as many Blu-ray players are sold vs. HD-DVD and 75 % of the movies purchases are Blu-ray. Blu-ray has over 170 companies supporting the format and of the eight major Hollywood studios six support Blu-ray (Disney, Fox, Lionsgate, MGM, Sony and Warner).

We all have to make our own decisions on when to purchase the "next" generation of technology. If you are looking to upgrade your home theatre, Blu-ray will not disappoint you.

### A Second Opinion
### by Bob LaPierre

High Definition DVDs are beginning to make their presence known and as with every advance in video technology there are two choices Blu-Ray and HD DVD.

I was invited to a demonstration of Blu-Ray. They have been running a demo kiosk in malls throughout the country. The quality is incredible and even on a non-HD television the difference is remarkable. The displays were showing various Disney and Pixar titles. Talking to several of the people gathered around the displays, I was told that the difference was visible without even seeing a non-high definition display to compare it to. After watching for ten or so minutes, I have to agree.

On a high definition TV the picture is almost like looking through a window rather than looking at an image. The sound is better also. The colors are truer, the blacks are deeper, and the whites look freshly bleached (provided you remember to keep your screen clean).

Currently the offerings seem to be limited to recent releases and special editions. However a look at the upcoming releases shows some older materials being released. The best news is that the units are backward compatible. I don't know about anyone else but I can't afford to replace everything I own.

Hopefully now that there are a large number of companies producing them the cost of both the units and the DVDs will come down. Current prices and the extremely limited offerings are not the only reason I haven't invested in either format.

Blu-Ray has a decided advantage in the high definition wars. Several studios including Disney and HBO have signed exclusive contracts to put out movies on Blu-Ray Discs. As of the writing of this article Warner had announced for Blu-Ray, Paramount is the largest studio still supporting HD-DVD.

I own a Betamax. If I buy one unit, then without fail, the other will be the new standard. I'm looking forward to seeing some of the special effects in many of the new SF movies and the details in anime. But until a decision is made I will hold off on buying. Check out the format and start saving money, in five years you won't know how you got along without it.

## An American in Australia Part One: Hello, Sydney at Darling Harbor

By Jeffrey Lu

Sydney was wet. Natives have told me that this was odd. Sydney was going through a drought like Phoenix, Arizona. (Ironic, but true.)

Hard to believe, I thought this place had a harbor. Let alone, an ocean.

So, I went to Darling Harbor and looked at three boats: HMB Endeavour, the destroyer HMAS Vampire, and submarine HMAS Onslow.

First, I looked at the wooden ship, HMB Endeavour. To sum it up, the brochure said, "This beautiful constructed ship is hailed as one of the world's most accurate maritime reproductions.

James Cook sailed the original Endeavour into history when he navigated the converted English collier to Tahiti then continued on to circumnavigate New Zealand and explore the east coast of Australia.

The replica, owned and managed by the Australian National Maritime Museum, is maintained in the peak of condition and ready to put to sea at any time." I went through this ship and smacked my head against the ship's beam, a few times. To say the least, the place was cramped even at my size of around 5 ft 9 inches.

Second, I went aboard HMAS Vampire destroyer. This was a gun ship built between 1952 and 1956. This was commissioned in Royal Australian Navy from 1959 to 1986. I enjoyed sitting in the captain's seat.

Last, I had to go down a ladder by backing first down in HMAS Onslow. This had WWII and wire-guided prop torpedoes. What was interesting that this diesel submarine had two periscopes. Also, this was used in the first Gulf war.

After the ships, the rain began to pick up. I ship-shaped back to my hotel. The next day, I saw the famous opera house. No fat lady was singing…

Next in American in Australia Part Two: A Volcano in Melbourne


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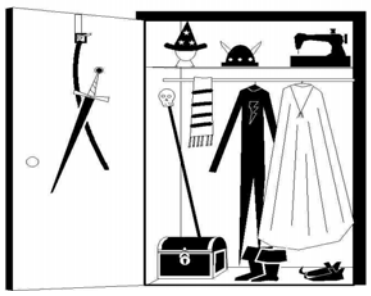
# The Costume Closet



**Exploring Steampunk**
**by Randall Whitlock**
**with special thanks to Mike Contos, Libby Bulloff, Mike Elliot and Kevin Roche**

Imagine alternate worlds where the industrial revolution played out a bit differently. Perhaps our sciences of electronics and internal combustion were outpaced by steam power and clockwork taken to their ultimate expression. Queen Victoria may or may not rule, but her influence is felt strongly in the culture. Fair and foul, these are the worlds of "steampunk".

According to Wikipedia, the term "steampunk" was coined by author K.W. Jeter in 1987 to describe contemporary novels by himself, James Blaylock and Tim Powers. The roots of steampunk, however, go much further back. Steampunk stories are arguably the logical extension or reinvention of the works of 19th and early 20th century masters such as Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, Mary Shelley, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Arthur Conan-Doyle, told with the kind of perspective available only in hindsight.

Ancestral steampunk imagery can be seen in films based on these works, such as Disney's rendition of "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea" and George Pal's "The Time Machine." The idea of retrofitting modern tech into the 19th century was well established by the 1960s TV series "The Wild Wild West" and continued to develop in more recent years with "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" (Personally, I liked the comic better than the film). "Briscoe County Junior" and "Legend" (featuring a pre-Stargate Richard Dean Anderson) may have been ahead of their time. The recent film "The Golden Compass" contains some of the visual elements of steampunk, but puts more story emphasis on metaphysics and fantasy.

Once you become attuned to it, you begin to see steampunk manifestations in the most unlikely places. I've particularly noticed them in classic children's stories. Tik Tok the clockwork man from the Oz books is a prime example. Think of the improbable musical instruments found in Whoville or the wonky machinery in Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. Corporate steampunk? Cereal spokesmonster "Frankenberry," with his skull-mounted steam whistle, pressure gage, and riveted eye guards, could be a considered a steampunk creation. My fevered imagination now sees Planters trademark "Mr. Peanut" as a mad science collaboration between Doctor Moreau and George Washington Carver.

Steampunk, best described as an aesthetic rather than just a fiction genre, is a rich and rising field for sculptors, prop-makers and home decorators. Steampunk is particularly well-suited to SF convention costumes.

How do you build a steampunk costume? First off, imagine a persona or character. You can re-create a character from your favorite film/comic/prose story or build an original character. Libby Bulloff (Steampunk Issue 2, linked below) describes four basic steampunk character archetypes: the inventor/tinkerer, the street urchin/chimney sweep, the explorer, and the dandy/aesthete. These names are well chosen and I can think of at least one literary or film character to fit each. Mix and match or disregard these archetypes as your imagination guides you.

Your base clothing should suggest the nineteenth century in some way, but does not have to be completely governed by it. This is an alternate timeline, perhaps an alternate future. The most nitpicking authenticity maven in the world can't say your clothing isn't period for a period that never existed (though some may try).

Good historical pieces for your costume might include top hats, bowlers or flowery bonnets up top; frock coats, double-breasted vests, ruffled shirts, corsets, or riding habits in the middle; high-waisted trousers with suspenders, knickerbockers, jodhpurs or full skirts and bustles lower down; and riding boots, granny boots or spats at ground level. Influences from other cultures, such as turbans, saris or mandarin caps could add some spice.

This is one of those problems you really can solve by throwing money at it. Here in Arizona, wild west reenactment is very popular. You can walk into Wild West Mercantile or stroll the sutlers' row at a western festival to purchase a complete outfit.

If you're on a budget, there is a wealth of sewing patterns available to build your costume from scratch. Duster coats are easy to make. Out of style, too-big suits or prom dresses from a thrift store can be altered to emulate Victorian lines. A simple operation can convert almost any suit coat into a swallowtail coat. Cut the pointy bit off the front of a men's vest to give it a more 1890-ish waistline. Buy the vest a few sizes too big and you can reset the neckline to make it double-breasted.

The real fun begins when you accessorize your semi-historical duds with some retro technology. Here are some possibilities:

Goggles are practically the universal badge of steampunk. It's no accident that one of the most popular steampunk web sites is named www.brassgoggles.co.uk. Wear your goggles around your hat, across your forehead, around your neck, hanging from a pocket, or (if you're really daring) over your eyes.

My grandfather had a pair of safety goggles from when he worked in a farm machinery plant converted to defense work during World War II. These had screw-in hardened glass lenses, steel mesh sides, black rubber eye cups, a ball chain bridge and a rubber strap. I played with them a lot when I was a kid. Gads, but I wish I knew what became of them!

Goggles can be modified with additional swing-in lenses and other doodads to imply they are some kind of sophisticated scientific instrument or night-vision device. Alternate eyewear might be built around wire-rimmed or pince nez spectacles. Historical reproductions that can be fitted with your prescription are available.

Brass and bronze, especially with lots of protruding rivets or bolt heads, work well in the aesthetic. If actual metal isn't practical for your project, its luster can be simulated with painted papier mache or plastics.

Clockwork. Put gear trains and springs wherever they would look cool. If not actual gears, these can be gear shapes embroidered or appliqued onto garments.

Hardwood. Victorian furniture was lavishly carved into scrolls, flowers and those unforgettable clawed feet. Why not work this kind of carving into the handles and flat areas of your tools and props? Walk through an antique store for inspiration.

Tools. If your costumed persona is an inventor, he'll certainly have tools at hand in a pocket vest, a leather or rubber apron, a shop coat, a tool belt, etc. Those brass tools used in the gas industry would look particularly cool in your pockets if you can find them.

Armor. Ceremonial swords, helmets and gorgets were part of military dress uniforms through the Victorian period. Why not take these features and gin them up a bit with strange technologies? Pith helmets were standard gear for explorers. Gauntlets, vambraces and pauldrons could be used to suggest a cyborg arm. Perhaps you've been hired to test Professor Invulnerable's nearly bullet-proof vest?

Weapons. I've seen some fantastic things done by altering soft dart guns and water guns, or by merging various recycled parts. Please be careful not to frighten the muggles if your results are too real-looking. I strongly suggest leaving the orange muzzle ring in place on any altered toy. It's there to signal the difference between a prop and a deadly weapon.

Disguises for Personal Accessories. How would Alexander Graham Bell have designed a cell phone? If the TV commercials are to be believed, it has been fashionable to apply rhinestones to cell phone casings. Why not take the same idea and use classic steampunk materials? A PDA case could become a brass and hardwood cigar case. A backpack might be made to look as though it is about to fly away under its own power. How about an MP3 player decorated with a tiny needle and turntable or a player piano roll? My digital camera is carried in a vest pocket on a chain and watch fob. My camera monopod becomes a walking stick when not in use. Someday I may mount one of those chrome skull gear shift knobs on its top.

Larger Props. Some of the most beautiful steampunk sculpture involves reworking functional modern appliances into the aesthetic, such as Richard Nagy's rebuilt keyboards, flat-panel monitors, and laptop computer casings seen at http://datamancer.net.

Perhaps life is now imitating art? The laudable One Laptop Per Child (http://laptop.org) project's computer designs can incorporate a crank, pedal or pull-cord so they can be used where electricity is not available.

Links. In conclusion, here are a few links to explore with the autotelegraphical capabilities of your personal electrodynamic computational engine:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steampunk
This is an excellent overview of the literary genre, with many more links.

www.brassgoggles.co.uk
"The Lighter Side of Steampunk," this site features FAQs, blogs, forums, news and images of many steampunk-related art projects and events.

www.steampunkmagazine.com
This is an entire magazine dedicated to steampunk. Three issues have been produced so far. You can purchase paper editions or download free Acrobat editions in several layout formats. Of particular interest to costumers is Libby Bulloff's "Steam Gear: A Fashionable Approach to the Lifestyle" in Issue 2. Issue 2 also includes Rachel E. Pollock's pattern for a Lady Artisan's Apron, useful around the lab, forge, or barbecue. Issue 3 includes Rachel A. Pollack's pattern for Spats and Juli's pattern for an Aviator Cap.

http://etheremporium.pbwiki.com
This site includes an eclectic mix of links, wiki, interviews, etc for the steampunk community.

http://datamancer.net
This is Richard R. Nagy's showcase of beautiful steampunk-inspired gadgetry and art projects, including customized

(Continued on page 17)

## Costume ( Continued from page 16 )

computer screens, keyboards and a clockwork electric guitar.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gg7fVMiwCvY
Youtube video of a Wall Street Journal article on Mr. Nagy and his inventions.

http://steampunkworkshop.com
Hieronymus Isambard "Jake" von Slatt – Proprietor
Here are many more how-to projects which involve creating useful gadgetry from common materials. His piece on electrolytic etching of brass and copper is particularly useful. Gotta love the computer monitor with claw feet.

www.girlgeniusonline.com
This is Phil and Kaja Foglio's massively entertaining online comic following the adventures of "Girl Genius" Agatha Heterodyne in an alternate world overrun with mad inventor "sparks". You can view the entire series online for free. You can purchase the comics on paper or as downloadable acrobat files through DriveThru Comics at http://comics.drivethrustuff.com. The Girl Genius web site includes a photo gallery of fan-made costumes. There's even an audio podcast of Girl Genius plays performed at SF conventions.

http://pics.livejournal.com/kproche/pic/0009z0z3/g79
Kevin Roche documents his project to create a costume of Vanamonde Heliotrope, a character from Girl Genius. Kevin is an International Costume Guild Lifetime Achievement Award winner and Chair of Costume-Con 26, to be held in San Jose, California on April 25-28, 2008. www.cc26.info

## Non Genre by Genre
## Anne Rice

Three years ago Anne Rice stunned the world with a novel of the Life of Christ. So far as I can tell this is her only major departure from the World of Fantasy. Her web site says of the book:
"Having completed the two cycles of legend to which she has devoted her career so far, Anne Rice gives us now her most ambitious and courageous book, a novel about the life of Christ the Lord based on the gospels and on the most respected New Testament scholarship."
**CHRIST THE LORD: Out of Egypt**
**Knopf | Fiction, November 2005, Hardcover, $25.95**
**– Gary Swaty**

# In Our Book

**Coyote Road – Trickster Tales**
**edited by Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling**
**Viking, 517 pp, $19.99**

One of the highlights of TusCon was listening to Will Shetterly read aloud "Black Rock Blues," one of the 26 tales in this anthology. This is a collection of new fantasy by such writers as Pat Murphy (author of *There and Back Again*), Charles de Lint, Patricia McKillip, Ellen Kushner, Jeffrey Ford, Holly Black, and Kij Johnson, with tricksters from around the world gifting and testing and tormenting mortals – and immortals. Coyote is well represented, as several contributors are residents of the Southwest. Hermes gets some good coverage as well, most directly in Nina Kiriki Hoffman's "The Listeners." In addition to the stories, the volume includes an erudite introductory essay by Windling, lists of recommended reading, and gorgeous illustrations by Charles Vess.

In "Wagers of Gold Mountain," by Steve Berman, the Chinese trickster goddess squares off with a deified P. T. Barnum, but they both get outwitted by a young human. Monsieur Brumeux is the disciple-descendant of Daedalus and maker of "The Other Labyrinth" in the story by Jedediah Berry. A kitsune helps an American teenager come to terms with his alien status in Japan in the story "Realer than You" by Christopher Berzak. Delia Sherman's "The Fiddler of Bayou Teche" concerns an albino girl whose companions are the loup garous, the werewolves of Cajun story-telling. Against her will she is involved in a bet between Murderes Petitpas, the dangerous fiddler, and his five sons. One of the most original stories is "A Tale for the Short Days" in which a trickster god tries to reverse the industrial surges that encroach on his bailiwick. Richard Bowes wrote of his story, "Thinking about old gods in godless times, I wondered if they had lost their powers or were just less and less able to understand the modern world and its technology." This is one of the most refreshing anthologies I have read in a donkey's age. Please go buy a copy, so that all these nice writers will receive royalties and more anthologies will be printed. Perhaps there will be sequels. - **Chris Paige**

**High Deryni**
**by Katherine Kurtz**
**Ace Books, $24.95; 449pp**

This is the final book in a series that has remained one of my all time favorites. I just LOVE the whole world of the Deryni. And this book, expanded and revised from the original 1973 version is the smashing conclusion to the first three books of this ongoing saga; Deryni Rising and Deryni Checkmate.

I have always been in love with Alaric Morgan, the Duke of Corwyn, the King's Champion and all around blond hottie! (and I usually go for brunets!) (Once the film came out, I have always sort of pictured Morgan looking a lot like Sting in the film "The Bride.") He usually wears black, is skilled in many areas and urbane and just well—very swoonable!

So the tale so far is the young king Kelson, just barely 15 or so, has to take on an evil Deryni king from the East who covets Gwynedd, Wencit of Torenth. The book opens with the aftermath of a treacherous raid on loyalists by members of a ragtag army of a religious zealot who feels that Deryni are the spawn of the Devil and should be eradicated (and anyone supporting them, of course, should be, too). Just to complicate things.

Morgan and his cousin the Deryni-priest Duncan McLain on an errand for the king, come upon a young wounded rebel with a broken sword in his thigh. In the last book, Morgan found he has the gift of healing; a Deryni power long thought disappeared. So he and Duncan take care of the soldier without revealing who they actually are.

Don't you just love them?

Anyway—of course the war-mongering and battles escalate. In the midst of this, Morgan's aide Lord Sean Derry is kidnapped by Wencit and one of Kelson's previous loyal baron's defects to the other side, leaving his wife and young son at the mercy of what have now become his enemies.

Ahh—it's a wonderful collage of tense confrontations and nastiness from the bad guys; with the good guys manfully working against terrible odds.

And best of all, Morgan finds he loves Richenda, the wife of the traitorous baron. But they do nothing about it but share their feelings.

The book, impossible to put down, moves along at a spanking pace with lots of treachery, magic and Deryni yumminess from Alaric—as well as Duncan and Kelson and members of the mysterious Camberian Council—a Deryni regulating body.

The ending is good and well thought out.

(To be honest—I am not sure what all has been 'revised and expanded.' The small essay by Lin Carter in the original 1973 version is gone and in its place Ms. Kurtz has written an "Interlude." The flyleaf does not say—but heck—who cares!!)

Now—all Ms. Kurtz has to do is write the story of Morgan and Richenda which I have waited years and years for! - **Sue Martin**

( Continued on page 18 )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## In Our Book (Continued from page 17)

**Dreamsongs Volume I &**
**Dreamsongs Volume II**
**by George R. R. Martin**
**Spectra Hardcover $27.00 per volume**

This two volume set was originally published in a single-volume limited edition from Subterranean Press as GRRM: A Retrospective. If you missed out on that edition but still want to have a good career retrospective for George R. R. Martin, you'll want to give this two volume collection a good look. Before Martin had his big success with the "Song of Ice and Fire" fantasy series, he was a very successful, award winning author with his short fiction, having success in science fiction, fantasy, horror, and as a TV writer. The stories collected in these volumes are grouped under different topics and each topic has a lengthy introduction and commentary by Martin, talking about his career at that time and about the stories collected. Sprinkled throughout the introductions are many anecdotes about things that happened to Martin, some funny, some sad, but all of them interesting, especially when Gardner Dozois is involved (who also wrote the introduction to the set). Each story also has an illustration done by Michael Kulata that helps to make the collection more special.

The first volume collects stories from the early part of his career starting with some examples of his earliest work writing for comic fanzines in the late 60's. In this section's introduction, Martin tells of how he got into writing and how it all started because of a fan letter he had published in issue #20 of Marvel's Fantastic Four comic. The next section covers his earliest published work and in the introduction details how he got started as a professional author and how his earliest sales almost didn't happen, especially his first sale to Galaxy. Once he was established and became a regular in Analog and other magazines (including a hilarious anecdote involving Gardner Dozois about what happens when you become a member of the Analog Mafia), he started to garner awards including his first major award, a Hugo for the *A Song For Lya* novella, included in section three, for which Gardner Dozois threw Martin out of the Hugo Losers Club. Martin recounts his inspiration for his early fantasy stories, a turtle castle he had as a kid, in the fourth section, and samples stories like *The Ice Dragon* and *In the Lost Lands*. However, in the 1970's there wasn't much of a market for fantasy-tinged fiction, so he stuck to science fiction for the most part. To close out the first volume, he details his excursions into horror-tinged work including *Meathouse Man*, *The Pear-Shaped Man*, and the Hugo and Nebula winning *Sandkings*. Volume two starts off with a section about his various attempts to start a series and how the only one that really got going were his stories about Haviland Tuf, the ecological engineer, and the series of stories that were collected in *Tuf Voyaging*, two of which he includes here including the original version of "A Beast For Norn" which was revised for the collection. He also talks about his novels as well, *Fevre Dream*, and *The Armageddon Rag*, which did not sell as well as was expected and led to a third novel that was never sold. The introduction to the section on his foray into Hollywood tells a tale of a writer drawn into Hollywood's vortex and how he managed to escape from it. Surprisingly, it was his novel *Armageddon Rag* which opened the door to Hollywood, having been read by producer Phil DeGuere and optioned for a film which never happened. However, when Phil was putting together the new Twilight Zone he invited George to submit a script for it and that lead to a staff writing job on The Twilight Zone, a showrunner gig on Beauty and the Beast and the chance to create his own series, Doorways, which was not picked up and ended his stint in Hollywood. He includes one of his Twilight Zone teleplays, *The Road Less Traveled*, and tells how the episode ended up ruined as The New Twilight Zone's run on CBS was ending. He also includes the first draft of the pilot episode for Doorways, a different version than what was filmed as a pilot. The next to last section details his Wild Card anthology series and how it came to be, how it has been resurrected a couple of times, and includes a couple of examples of Martin's work in that anthology series. The final section of the collection has as its introduction an essay on writing fantasy and science fiction and it collects various stories that he classifies as "Weird Stuff" along with *The Hedge Knight*, a prequel novella to his Song of Ice and Fire series.

Overall, these two volumes serve as an expansive (over 1400 pages total) sampling of Martin's career over the years, including many of his award winning and nominated stories along with a wealth of autobiographical information giving the reader insight on Martin's life and career so far. But what really makes the collection stand out are the introductions and commentaries that go with the stories. - **Lee Whiteside**

**Cybermancy**
**by Kelly McCullough**
**Ace/Roc Paperback $6.99**

*Cybermancy* is the second book in an urban fantasy series about Ravirn Lacher - computer hacker, systems engineering student, magician, and descendant of Lachesis, one of the Three fates from Greek mythology. Ravirn is in trouble with his family for various reasons that are explained in book one. Magic is used by accessing an otherworldly analogue to the internet, using devices that are both technological and have magical personae, called Webgoblins. This book centers around Ravirn's determination to rescue his friend and cousin Cerice's webgoblin Shara from Hades, complete with Cerberus and Charon, before her Ph.D dissertation is due. Assorted shenanigans happen. Urban fantasy is pretty ubiquitous these days, but this, mercifully, was a different take on it, utilizing various mythologies, mainly Greek rather than the standard vampires or demons. Don't be put off by the computer references - you definitely do not need to be well-versed in computer science to enjoy this. It's an easy read that would be great for a time when you want to read an enjoyable story that's fast-paced and fun. Teens would enjoy this as well. The book read well as a stand-alone, although I would have liked to have read the first one to find out in greater detail about the specifics of Ravirn's problems with his family. Book 3 in the series will be out in May. - **Nadine Armstrong**

**Deadstock**
**by Jeffrey Thomas**
**Ace Books, $7.99, 414 pp**

This is the sixth book in the Punktown setting. As far as I can tell, the other books deal with different characters and situations.

In Deadstock, Jeremy Stake is a private detective who has the ability to change his shape to mimic anyone he looks at long enough. He has no control over this ability making it both a blessing and a curse.

He is hired by Mr. Fukuda to find his daughter's doll. However, this is no ordinary doll; it is a bio-engineered life form. It is unique and quite valuable, making the suspect list fairly large. Number one on the list is Krimson Tableau. Besides a petty teen-age rivalry between the girls, their fathers are competitors in the Deadstock industry. Deadstock being the term for bio-engineered food animals that exist without heads or legs – just the meaty goodness the customers want.

Of course, it isn't a simple matter of talking to Krimson and finding out if she took the doll, because she is missing too. And according to her friends they have heard her over their Ouija phones. The Ouija phones are popular with the kids in Punktown as they are reputed to allow one to talk with the dead. As it turns out, Krimson's friends have been in contact with her since shortly after her disappearance.

Running concurrently with this plot line we follow the Folger Street Snarlers; a local gang. One of their members is killed in the opening chapter and the gang sets out to find out what happened to him and get revenge, if necessary. They are able to track him down to a set of abandoned luxury apartments and are immediately set upon by what appears to be statues that occupy a space along side each apartment. Now they are trapped and must find a way to escape.

Both story-lines are connected in a way that doesn't become clear until much later in the novel. There are also flashbacks to Stake's days in the military and a love affair he had with one of the enemy. This is connected to his current affair and pays off in an interesting observation into the main character.

The first couple of chapters gave me some trouble, I found the text a little awkward at times, but Thomas tightens it up and the rest of the book really hooked me and prodded me to keep reading.

What really stood out for me was the feel of the book which reminded me of Bladerunner. That is not to be mistaken as a charge that this story is a copy of the Bladerunner plot or even necessarily the world described there, but its essence is the same. We have a futuristic setting, heavily influenced by Asian culture, dark and gritty, corrupt, and dealing with manufactured life forms. Whereas Bladerunner is the tale of the humans left back on a decaying Earth, this story is about that portion of humanity that has fled to the stars. But make no mistake, Thomas has injected so much more of his own invention into the milieu - the Ouija phones for instance.

This was more than a good read, it was a story that I wanted to keep on reading until I was done. It made me interested in reading more of the

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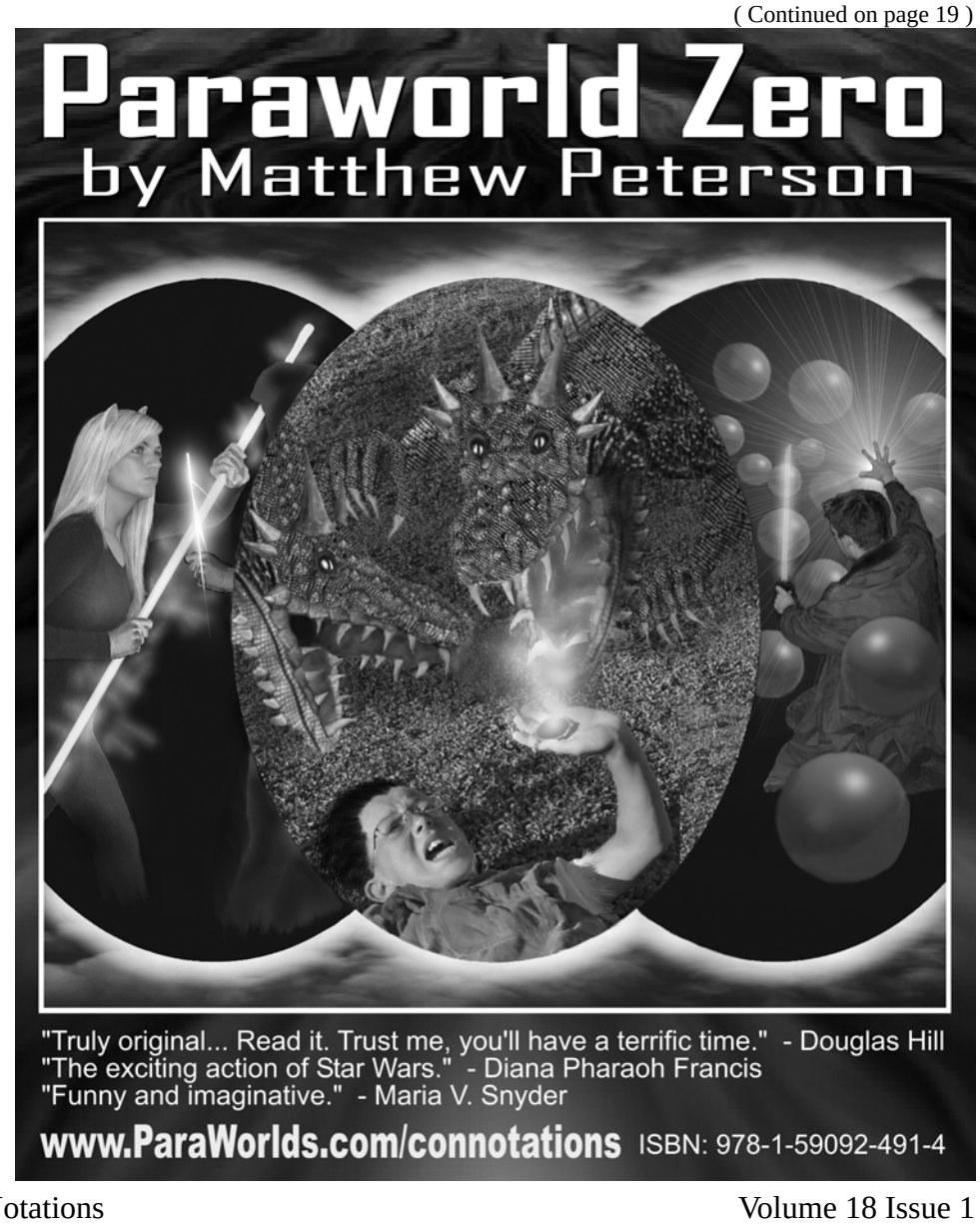

## In Our Book ( Continued from page 18 )

Punktown novels and I believe I will. I highly recommend this book. - **Randy Lindsay**

**Dancing With Werewolves**
**by Carole Nelson Douglas**
**Juno, $6.99, 394 pages**

This is the first book in a new paranormal series set in a 21st century Earth that is just a tad off from ours.

Y2K brought the revelation that vampires and all sorts of other things that go bump in the night are actually real. Delilah Street is an investigative reporter in Kansas. In rapid order she loses her job, her dog dies and her house gets flattened by a weather witch. With nothing to hold her in Kansas, Delilah packs up and heads to Las Vegas to investigate why a corpse on CSI Las Vegas, the latest entry in the long running franchise, is her exact double, down to the topaz stud in her nose.

Once in Las Vegas Delilah manages, in short order, to find a body, get hooked up with a mysterious ex-FBI agent, acquire a wolf-hound, move into an enchanted cottage owned by a mysterious movie mogul and, oh yes, she goes on a date to see werewolves dance.

This is an exciting new world filled with a host of fascinating supernatural creatures from the familiar vampires, zombies and werewolves to new, CinSims which are basically characters ripped from old black and white films and brought to "life". I almost put the book aside when Delilah's small dog died and, while I am glad I finished the book I find the current habit of so many authors to introduce a pet just to kill it in order to show how alone and sad our protagonist is to be unnecessary and distasteful. While there is enough closure of events in this book to make it a satisfying read, there are also enough loose ends to make for a second and third entry in the series. Recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

**The Parrish Plessis series**
**by Marianne de Pierres:**
**Nylon Angel,**
**2005, ROC Pub, 297 pp., $6.99**
**Code Noir,**
**2006, ROC Pub, 308 pp., $6.99**

Two cover blurbs describe this series perfectly: "blend of Mad Max and Dark Angel" and "a kick-ass cyberpunk heroine." The scene is future Australia, an outlaw zone called The Tert, as in tertiary, a toxic outskirts connected by train line to the less polluted Vivacity. While super-city governments still exist, with their law and order, the net media dominates the world. Their own helicopter gunships and killer robots support journalists, making the news to get higher ratings. The Tert is perfect cannon fodder for this, especially when a celebrity anchorwoman is killed and the suspects flee there. Enter the bodyguard Parrish Plessis, who sees it as an opportunity to free herself from a Tert crime boss.

In Code Noir, she is trying to free herself of an alien virus that infected her in Nylon Angel. A cabal of shamans, deformed mutant children, and spirit guide animals help her in a war against an evil voodoo woman and various human-machine monsters. The story continues to an amazing battle as part of the polluted Tert grows out of control, biowaste and nanotech combining into a lethal mix of blob and glass spires. At story's end, Parrish is still not cured of her infection. She has a deeper mission, to stop media factions that are secretly working The Tert. Part three will surely follow.

If you like Dark Angel, Aeon Flux, Tomb Raider, or Resident Evil, here's another action babe for you, with story told in the first person. You know, I've watched all of those shows but had no interest in reading their books or playing their games. In contrast, I want to read about Parrish, and would follow her in other media, too. - **M.L. Fringe**

**Reserved for the Cat:**
**An Elemental Masters Novel**
**by Mercedes Lackey**
**DAW Books, 328 pp $25.95**

I have quite enjoyed this series of novels about protective wizards and elementals, pixies and brownies and those with partial magical abilities set in an alternate world, usually England. This is the fifth book in the series and takes place during Edwardian times and is set mostly in the port of Blackpool, England.

And even more fun, it concerns a ballerina named Ninette Dupond who starts off as a talented coryphée at the Paris Opera.

And in grand melodramatic fashion, the prima ballerina injures herself right before her afternoon matinee of La Sylphide. And it just so happens that little Ninette has been an understudy.

Of course she is a great success and even the critic of Le Figaro notices.

So, this is Ninette's big chance to advance---but no—to assuage La Augustine, the prima ballerina Ninette replaced—the coryphée gets fired.

But instead of starving or becoming a member of the demi-monde (a prostitute) her…cat helps her to England, to Blackpool. And how does the cat tell her of his plans—why he speaks to her mentally, of course.

Having survived on the edges of poverty, Ninette is no fool. So despite her understandable misgivings, she LISTENS to the cat and takes his advice.

And sails off to Blackpool

And there her adventures really begin, because the cat decides to give Ninette a boost to her career. She needs to pretend she is a Russian ballerina who is the only survivor of a yacht-wreck. And the local elemental mages rescue her. Among them is a local theater owner who is delighted to have a Russian ballerina named Nina Tchereslavsky to add to his performers. And Ninette, thrilled with the theater owner's generous offer of her own apartment and new clothes, decides to go along with the feline's scheme.

The cat's plans prove fruitful and Ninette, now Nina becomes a big favorite and both she and the theater thrive.

Well, of course all is not that simple!

You see, there is a REAL Nina Tchereslavsky who was absorbed by a rogue troll. A troll wh,o over a couple of centuries, has enjoyed "absorbing" people (kind of a physical vampire. Not blood so much but well, the whole person/animal) and has no intention of being caught by any mage.

So Ninette's masquerade as Nina is threatened by the troll who eventually finds out that she's being impersonated and comes to Blackpool to confront the "imposter."

So the bulk of the novel concerns the troll/Nina trying to kill off or absorb the masquerading Ninette. The mages surrounding Ninette do their best to thwart the troll.

And the cat proves to be not only a valuable ally but much more than he seems. For Ninette finds she is not just merely mortal but has a touch of magic in her veins as well.

A really delightful tale. - **Sue Martin**

**Parallel Worlds Book1:**
**Paraworld Zero**
**By Matthew Peterson**
**Blue Works: The Young Adult Division of Windstorm Creative, Port Orchard Washington, 2008, 251 Pages, Trade Paperback, $16.95.**

As this book came to me directly from the author, I took a look at the publisher at HTTP://www.windstormcreative.com to see if they were a substantial publisher. Their web site was fascinating. They have an extensive booklist in SF, Fantasy, Shared world SF, Mysteries, Historicals, Non-fiction, Music, Gaming etc. They seem well worth checking out.

The book takes a slightly different tack on how to travel to the various parallel universes. The heroine arrives on Earth using a para-transmitter powered by Electro-Magical Energy. Electro-Magical Energy and Spells are utilized throughout the Paraverse to accomplish most tasks. The energy is used to power nearly everything. A traveler can become trapped if he or she lands in an EMless universe.

Tonya, a native of Paraworld 4329, is a beginning student at The School of Magical Learning. She arrives on Earth accidentally blundering into the troubles Simon Kent, an orphan of unknown origins, is having with bullies from his High School. She saves him and they both flee into the Para-stream dragging with them one of the bullies who takes Tonya's Para-transmitter and vanishes leaving them to fall blindly through para-stream until they emerge into a high-tech world entirely lacking electro-magical energy.

Once established on the planet Pud, Tonya and Simon find evidence linking a past catastrophe with the onset of new danger to the planet. The planet has built a social system involving enslavement of the formerly magical Big Puds by the Small Puds. Oddly the catastrophe also seems to be linked to Simon. Since arriving on the planet he finds he can perform Magic in spite the lack of EM. Saving the planet seems to be impossible. Only a concerted effort of all and Simon's Magic has any chance of success.

And there is more. It seems that Simon may be important to the survival of the entire Para-Verse. But more about that in future books. Look for *Parallel Worlds Book 2: The School of Magical Learning* in January of 2009 – **Gary Swaty**

**Infinite Space Infinite God**
**Edited by Karina and Robert Fabian**
**Twilight Times Books; $18.95; 280pp.**

This volume of short stories shows the incredible influence of the Catholic Church in and on Science Fiction. The stories are divided into sections based on different aspects of the church. I was intrigued by the prospect of having the various doctrines of the church expounded upon by these authors. At the beginning of each section is a brief explanation of the doctrine and a blurb of the story or stories within and how they apply.

The stories are uplifting and enlighten the spirit. I was unfamiliar with all of the authors but one; however she is familiar to me as a "Filker" not an author. The tales are well written and the message is clear. I would have liked the message to have been delivered a little less heavy handed; my priest used parables that relied less on the obviousness of the church and more on the basic goodness of the lesson.

If you want your science fiction with a heavy dose of morality this book is definitely for you. I will watch to see what else these authors do. - **Bob LaPierre**

**When All Seems Lost**
**by William D. Dietz**
**Ace Books, $24.95, 342 pp.**

Dietz's new book furthers along his Legion of the Damned series about our favorite type of military unit: the unit that's expendable, unorthodox, and resourceful, the one that gets sent unofficially to accomplish the impossible, whose soldiers know that neither glory nor recompense await them if they survive, and the politicians will piss away any advantage they manage to buy with their blood. But that's better than taking orders from yahoos and having to say "Yes, Sir!" "No, Sir!" "Oh, Sir!" and "Please, Sir!" This time Antonio Santana and his team have to rescue the President of the Confederacy himself, who has been captured by Ramanthians in the ongoing galactic war. The Ramanthians don't know he's the president, and he wants to preserve his anonymity to deprive them of leverage. So along with the "lucky" thousands who weren't killed in the attack or the subsequent purges, President Namkool is sent to a hard labor prison planet. His bodyguard, Christine Vanderveen, happens to be Santana's former girlfriend, so Santana has a strong personal motivation for winning this one. The major obstacle to this mission is that, oddly enough, the Vice President seems less than anxious to recover the man who sits in the big seat and calls the shots.

I have a lot or respect for Dietz; he was active duty himself as a medic with the Navy and the Marines, so he knows whereof he writes. I can see this as a book to have a strong following with the fellowship of active duty and prior service personnel. From a sheerly literary point of view, I found the writing clunky; but I loved the chapter headings, a mixture of historical and novel quotations that set the tone for the action that follows. **– Chris Paige**

**The High King's Tomb**
**by Kristen Britain**
**DAW Books, 679pp, $25.95**

Well, I dove into this, knowing full well it was the third book in the series (with more to come). I was told I'd get it because it was a stand-alone tale.

Well, not exactly. There is a *load* of material, characters, events and places that are alluded to in this novel that I have no clue about, so it did make understanding the whys and wherefores a bit difficult. But nevertheless, I was able to read this in about three days.

Basically, we have the extremely plucky heroine Karigan G'ladheon who from humble origins has become a Green Rider—a member of an elite (and slightly magical) troop of King's Messengers who

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## In Our Book ( Continued from page 19 )

fulfill assignments and errands above and beyond what a simple messenger or soldier would handle.

Karigan is sent hither and yon throughout Sacoridia (the land in which all this takes place) in search of a magical book which will hopefully make clear the nature of the D'Yer Wall—a barrier that fundamentally keeps evil out of the lands ruled by King Zachary. And behind which a very evil king/sorcerer's spirit named Mornhavon is bound. And the D'Yer Wall is falling apart.

Karigan was the one who facilitated Mornhavon's binding, saving the land from being overwhelmed by evil and darkness.

Because this is such a big book, there are three major story threads to follow: Karigan and apprentice Green Rider Fergal and their adventures, Grandmother (shudder!) and her band of secret supporters of the Second Empire (bad, bad, bad) and Alton, Dale and Merdigen who are dealing with the breaches in the D'Yer Wall. There are a few subsidiary characters storylines: Lord Amberwell (and his alter-ego The Raven Mask), Lady Estora (soon to be Queen) and King Zachary and Green Rider Beryl and her capture and torture by Grandmother.

So, be forewarned. You really should start at the beginning of this series so all the players and events are clear in your head. The other thing you should know--- it might be some years until the next book because book one "Green Rider" was published in 1998 and book two "First Rider's Call" was published in 2003 (these are the hardback pub dates)!

With all THAT said: the story was pretty darn interesting, convoluted, but compelling. Britain has created some interesting evils, gods and her version of elves called Eletians. The land of Sacoridia is very well-thought out and the details are fascinating.

If I can find a copy of the earlier books, used, I shall probably read them. - **Sue Martin**

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**Territory**
**by Emma Bull**
**Tor Books/Tom Doherty Associates, 318 pp, $24.95**

*Territory* is set in Tombstone, but not only has that title been used more than once, the point of the title here is not to specify a location but to tell the reader what's at stake, what people are laying claim to, fighting for, and shaping by their desires that some ways run together but more often clash.

Emma Bull's IQ must be several standard deviations above the 100 point average. (Is 'standard deviation' an oxymoron?) It's not just that she checked her facts and did her research; she brings Tombstone to life again, and anyone interested in this pocket of history, or comparable ones, such as Deadwood fans, have a treat in store. Here they are: the tubercular Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp and his three brothers, Katie Elder, John Ringo, rustlers, stagecoach robbers, salon keepers and kept ladies, settlers, drifters, and the denizens of a small Chinatown. Of course there's a twist. Silver ore was the underlying wealth of Tombstone; the silver that underlies and runs through this story and transfigures it is sorcery, available to some, used by a few, comprehended by even fewer. The real story here is, who has the power, how well do they understand it, and how do they use it? Doc Holliday has power but he is one who will not or cannot use it; he will nevertheless attract and be attracted to holders and wielders of power. Katie Elder has it; she recognizes it in others and her own forms a glamour about her. Wyatt Earp is a sorcerer, self-made; he mines it in others and uses it as a currency for buying power for his family.

Then there is Jesse Fox, who is on his way through Tombstone until he meets up with his sometime friend and mentor Chow Lung, who is a physician in Tombstone's Chinatown. Jessie has strange dreams and experiences he can't explain, and he doesn't want to hear what Chow Lung has to say about it. Another sorcerer is in competition with Wyatt Earp, and Jessie Fox ends up tangled in their threads. Even his friendship with Chow Lung wouldn't be enough to slow him in his tracks if his wishes were all that mattered, but newspaper woman and widow Mildred Benjamin exerts a different pull, and he stays.

This book is the first of several about this time and place and these people. There was one point of slight confusion for me, but it would be a spoiler to explain it here, and the author says that it will be spelled out in the next book. Emma is clearly enjoying this new series: her face lights up when she gets to discuss it; and my enjoyment as a reader lit up mine. There were moments when I was laughing out loud, and people nearby asked me what I was reading. I love the moment of utter jolt when Wyatt Earp acts like a sorcerer, departing from the familiar script. The other aspects of this book that render it truly novel are Emma Bull's consideration of the women in the territory, particularly the Earp wives, and the world of the Chinese immigrants. I have never read a book that so clearly showed the differences between the men and the women, even in books when those differences are the focus of the story. (Ursula LeGuin, Sherri Tepper, take note.)

If this review reminded you at all of Will Shetterly's *The Gospel of the Knife*, well, Bull and Shetterly have been members of the same writer's circle of friends since forever, and collaborators on anthology projects for almost as long, so an overlap of themes is one of those occurrences that makes reading SF and fantasy literature a coherent pleasure. - **Chris Paige**

**The Search for the Red Dragon**
**(The Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica)**
**by James A. Owen**
**Simon & Schuster Childrens Publishing Hardcover $17.99**

In this sequel to Owen's first YA novel, *Here There be Dragons*, the story picks up nine years after John, Jack, and Charles had their first adventure as Caretakers of the Imaginarium Geographica. They embark on a new adventure, bringing them into contact with the Lost Boys, the Titans of Myth and other inspirations for the fantastic stories they later created. As with the first book in the series, there are many references to famous literary works and creators over the ages with a heavy emphasis on Peter Pan and what happens when you grow old. *The Search For the Red Dragon* is a well-written and fast-moving adventure that should keep a young reader interested as well as give an older reader plenty to enjoy, especially the

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## In Our Book ( Continued from page 20 )

references to other fantastic literature and their creators. I would recommend that you start with the first book if you haven't read it already since knowing what was revealed at the end of the first book adds to the enjoyment of the second. **- Lee Whiteside**

**Curse of the Werewolf**
**By Chantal Bourgault Du Corday**
**I.B Taurus, London/New York, 2006,**
**Trade Paperback, Non Fiction, 224 Pages**

*Curse of the Werewolf* is a well-written book discussing the Werewolf in mythology, literature and film. It covers the evolution of the werewolf from his folk roots to the werewolf as we know and love him today.

The flow of the book suffers from an excessive emphasis on the influence of psychoanalysis on the movies and literature. The influence existed and needed to be mentioned. The discussion of the beast within was relevant and fascinating, but she went on about it for far too long.

The most interesting thing I learned is that two things integral to our idea of the werewolf originated in the 20th century, namely the bite of the werewolf inducing lycanthropy and the vulnerability to silver. The history of the interaction between films and literature in modern times is totally gripping.

The book has an extensive bibliography which any lover of the genre will find interesting. The index is useful making possible the easy location of interesting tidbits. I loved this book and recommended. It can be gotten from ASU's Hayden Library via Interlibrary Loan. – **Gary Swaty**

**The Best of Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet**
**Kelly Link and Gavin Grant Eds.**
**Del Rey trade Paperback $14.95**

*Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet* is the Hugo-nominated 'zine published by Nebula winner and Hugo nominee Kelly Link and Gavin Grant, named for the tattoo on Winston Churchill's mother.

It's an eclectic publication, with fiction, poetry, an advice column, art, comics, essays and useful lists. The book, the first (but hopefully not last) collection, includes some of all of it. It also details the history of its creation, Gavin looking into the window of a travel agent's office, and upon seeing an advertisement for a cheap weekend in the Caribbean saying,"300 bucks? Why would I go there when I could start a 'zine!". He and Kelly proceeded to create it on the rest of the walk home. The rest is history. It's worth noting that many of the stories from LCRW have appeared in many Year's Best collections since it began publication in 1996. There are some wonderful stories including my particular favorite, the Le Guin-esque "Fishie." "Dear Aunt Gwenda" by writer Gwenda Bond provides a mix of hilarity and deep truths. "Dear Aunt Gwenda, why aren't all books as good as Geoff Ryman's 'Air"?" "Because not all books are by Geoff Ryman, therefore most suck." There are also useful lists, and a wonderful essay about Scotch and how to appreciate it by Gavin Grant. If you're looking for something slightly off beat with great writing, this is for you. By the way, subscriptions include chocolate. No, I'm not kidding. **- Nadine Armstrong**

**The Watcher**
**by Jeanne C. Stein**
**ACE, $7.99, 291 pages**

This is the third book in the Anna Strong, Vampire series. While it would add to the reader's enjoyment to have read the first two books in the series it is not necessary in order to follow this story.

Anna is a bounty hunter, as well as a vampire who moonlights as a bounty hunter/executioner for the Watchers, a group that keeps supernatural miscreants in line. This book follows Anna as she battles an evil witch who is determined to raise a demon and then there are the usual bail jumpers and drug dealers to deal with.

Overall I found the story enjoyable and engrossing up until the author decided to describe the evil witch and her demon raising, black magic wielding, human sacrificing coven as "Wiccan". This kind of inaccuracy with detail annoys me no end and spoiled what was, until then, a good book about a strong and interesting female heroine. I've taken a look at the first two books in the series and overall it seems like a promising series, I just hope there won't be more errors like the one in *The Watcher*. Recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Gravity Wells**
**by James Alan Gardner**
**EOS 2005, 344 pp; $15.95**

James Alan Gardner is one of my favorite writers, but his short speculative fiction is hard to find, since publishing venues range from *Ron Hubbard Presents* to *Amazing Stories*. Here are 14 of his stories, with one of those prefaces that is actually worth reading, in which he explains that "One of the great formative influences in my youth was the *Dangerous Visions* anthology edited by Harlan Ellison." That explains several aspects of Gardner's fiction, particularly the tendency to take a sudden turn into violence. But if Ellison was the major influence of Gardner's style, I detect an occasional ripple of LeGuin as well.

"The Children of Crèche" describes gonzo journalist visiting an artists' colony planet where no children are ever born. "The Last Day of the War, with Parrots" is an eerie blend of rock video and alien artifacts. "Reaper" anticipated – or perhaps inspired – the TV show *Dead Like Me*; "Hardware Scenario G-49" is another media-prescient story, published in 1991, years before *Matrix*, in which humans exist in a virtual reality supervised by AIs, and procreation must be attended by some analogue experience in VR for optimum results. So a hardware store clerk dons a knight's attire to rescue an Amazonian from a dastardly villain so they can be coupled; he takes as his coat of arms a hammer and screwdriver with the motto, My Iron Stands the Test. Those who have any interest in Tarot decks or persona poetry should turn to "Lesser Figures of the Greater Trumps." "The Young Person's Guide to the Organism" is the prequel story to all his galactic novels, a description of first contacts by three generations' worth of humans with an orchestral representation of their motivations and personalities.

If you aren't already familiar with Gardner, look for *Expendable*, one of the best peripheral-military SF books ever written. Most of his novels are stand alone sequels to *Expendable*, set in a future where whatever you do on your own planet is your business, but all interstellar adventuring is monitored by the League of Sentient Beings, who simply do not allow non-sentients off planet. Their definition of non-sentient includes murderers and those from whom preventable negligence allows atrocities to happen. This provides a moral accountability framework for all the stories, but what makes the series so brilliant is its historically accurate premise: morale in any unit plummets when a good-looking member dies; it is less affected if the deceased was ugly or unpopular. Since interstellar warfare is non-existent, the only dangerous line of work is performed by the Exploratory Corps; to be an Explorer, you must be born intelligent – and deformed in some purely cosmetic way. These deformities render Explorers ridiculous and unappealing, so that no one, not even a fellow Explorer, mourns when they go "Oh, sh_t!" *Expendable* is a tale of political skullduggery and the Explorer who uncovers the truth and discovers that her deformity, a wine-dark birthmark that mars her face, is also her birthright.

Most of Gardner's protagonists are strong-minded females. Some of his descriptions are like the vivid dreams you wish you could remember in perfect clarity. He wields the ironic scalpel with deftness, and he recently demonstrated a flair for Asimovian limericks in *Radiant*. The most unusual of his novels is *Commitment Hour*; a tale of gender variability. On the planet Tober Cove, every person grows up alternating male and female, changing each year on their birthday. At age 20 you get to choose, and that choice becomes your permanent form. Speculative fiction indeed! **– Chris Wozny**

**Captain's Fury (Codex Alera, Book 4)**
**by Jim Butcher**
**Ace Hardcover $24.95**

Jim Butcher is best known for the Dresden Files, but his foray into fantasy with the Codex Alera series shows that he

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www.leprecon.org/lep34

## In Our Book (Continued from page 21)

can write more than just Harry Dresden. In the fourth book of the series, Butcher picks up a couple of years after the third novel with his two main characters both thrown into difficult situations. Tavi has been in charge of the First Aleran Legion, but under an assumed name, and has been holding off an incursion by the Canim race. Politics take charge however, starting off a campaign that Tavi doesn't agree with and a new leader that wants to take Tavi out of the picture. Tavi is relieved of command, charged with treason and has to embark on a covert mission to prevent the campaign from ending in disaster. In all of this, he also finds out his true heritage as the grandson of the First Lord of Alera, which puts him in even more danger if it were known by his enemies. Meanwhile, Cursor Amara embarks on a dangerous mission with the First Lord himself and her husband, Count Bernard, in enemy territory. They have to travel and survive without using their furycrafting powers which makes things much more difficult. Butcher does a good job with his main characters, Tavi and Amara, and has a good supporting cast, both good and bad, as well as some working both sides of the fence. He's put together an interesting fantasy world with politics rooted in the Roman Legions and he keeps things moving through the whole book, not giving his characters much of a chance to catch their breath. - **Lee Whiteside**

**The Down Home Zombie Blues**
**By Linnea Sinclair**
**Bantam Books, 2007, Science Fiction Romance, Mass Market Paperback, 516 Pages, $6.99**

Alien patrol machines have malfunctioned and are traveling the Galaxy destroying any civilization they encounter. Their creators send undermanned and underfunded commandos to seek them out and destroy them. A team of Commandos under Commander Jorie Mikkalah, is sent to Earth because one of their observers has failed to report in.

Meantime, Sergeant Theo Petrakis of the Bahia Vista, Florida Police Dept. has arrived at a weird murder scene. The victim looks extremely old and is mummified. His driver's license shows a young man. They follow standard procedures, remove the body and call the cybersquad to pick up a strange laptop. They fail to show even though Petrakis waits several hours. It is late so the Sergeant takes the laptop and heads back; stopping off at home to grab a sandwich. Jorie and the Zombies arrive there simultaneously both tracking the malfunctioning T-MOD device the Sergeant was carrying. Jorie just manages to save the Sergeant and the T-MOD. She leaves a destructive trail and beams them away to her ship in a nick of time.

The fat is in the fire. Zorie must get a handle on the Zombie infestation without Earth becoming aware of them or her team. She persuades the Sergeant to help. They find each other attractive, but can there be a future for them?

The story is engrossing, the romance is steamy, the characters believable. I recommend it.
– **Gary Swaty**

**The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror 2007: 20th Annual Collection**
**Ellen Datlow, Kelly Link and Gavin Grant, Eds.**
**St. Martin's Griffin Trade Paperback $21.95**

This is the twentieth anniversary of these collections, originally edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling. Terri Windling has since retired from editing and passed the fantasy torch to Kelly Link and Gavin Grant, with Ellen still handling the horror. These collections are really the gold standard for all the other "Best of's" out there. This year's was no exception. Ellen Klages' wonderful "In the House of the Seven Librarians" is here, as is Nebula and Hugo-nominated 'Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter'. Of course, Ellen Datlow has been one of my most trusted sources for recommendations for years, and her judgment gets better with time. As for Kelly and Gavin, their 'zine 'Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet' has been an mainstay of well-written fantastic fiction for years,. Kelly has served, among other things as Ellen's reader, and Gavin has been a World Fantasy judge. What I love about these particular collections is all here-the ever-reliable judgement of the editors, the depth and breadth of them, and the essays about the best in fantastic film, music and comics from some of the best minds in the industry. This really is the best place to find the best of the year 2006 in fantastical short fiction. If you're looking for a lot of great stories in one place, or are looking for a good overview of the field in 2006, this book is your best bet. - **Nadine Armstrong**

**Breath and Bone**
**by Carol Berg**
**Roc, 447 pp, $15,00**

*Breath and Bone*, is the sequel to *Flesh and Spirit*.

Diviners have said that rebel pure-blood sorcerer Valan will find his doom in water, blood and ice... If he lives that long. It is highly probable that with everyone in the kingdom of Navronne after his hide including his family, he may not. The kingdom is at war. A murderous priestess wants his contract which is held by one of the warring princes who steals dead men's eyes. Oh yes, the Danae, guardians of the earth, hate him worst of all.

Addicted to an enchanted drug, bound by his oaths that he won't forswear, Valan risks body and soul to rescue one child, get justice for another, and bring the rightful king to the dying land even if he is not sure whether the rightful king is a monster. No one is what they seem, and his quest takes him from Abby to dungeons to alien shores and into the world of the Danae to find he isn't who he seems to be as well. Only in the heart of the world can he find the redemption of himself and his world.

This is a book that needs to be in every fantasy fan's library. Tightly plotted, the action is nonstop in a vividly drawn and populated by characters you come to know and care about. I'll be surprised if there isn't an award nomination in its future. - **Pam Allan**

**Thirteen**
**by Richard K. Morgan**
**Del Rey Hardback $24.95**

I was very ambivalent about this book to start with - the topic and themes of the novel-race, genetics, and the roles they play in society, interested me greatly, but the only other Richard Morgan book I had read, *Market Forces*, I disliked intensely. However, once I began reading it, it was obvious that Morgan had learned a lot since then. Genetic engineering is commonplace - governments use it all the time to create people to fulfill specific tasks. Carl Marsalis is one of these. Carl, in fact, is that most dreaded engineered variant type of all - a Thirteen. Thirteens are supersoldiers, created to be superstrong sociopaths, many of them, out of governmental control, have wreaked so much havoc that they have been largely exiled to Mars. Oh, and Thirteens have one other thing in common: they are all Black (the U.K. Title was Black Man). Carl Marsalis is an exception. He has been working as a hit man, quietly trying to become something other than the monster he has been labeled. When a rogue Thirteen escapes from Martian exile, he is hired to find and kill him. This novel works very well in some ways, not so well in others. Carl Marsalis' character is one of the best things about the novel; his biology has, literally been his destiny. His struggle against that is well-written and very moving at times. The book is also great at forcing the reader to examine his own prejudices and ideas. It lights up some fairly grubby corners in First World attitudes, and it does so very well. Morgan has also learned a lot about writing effective prose; the clunkiness and cliches that I remembered from Market Forces were largely gone, and the first chapter is amazing; you are sucked right in to the story from the get-go. His plotting, however, still leaves something to be desired. Effective thrillers are not easy to write, and this one bogs down at the end. It seems as though Morgan got to a certain point in the story, and just couldn't figure out how to make all the misdirection work for him. But, I still recommend this book pretty highly. It tackles some difficult issues head-on, effectively and with grace and it gets props for that. It also has some great characters, aside from Carl. The science is also quite good. If you're looking for a hard SF thriller, or for a book that takes a good look at topical issues, or you're looking for something with a different kind of main character, pick this up. - **Nadine Armstrong**

**Kitty and the Silver Bullet**
**by Carrie Vaughn**
**Grand Central Publishing, $6.99, 352 pages**

Back cover: "Kitty's radio show is as popular as ever and she has a boyfriend who actually seems to understand her. Can she finally settle down to a normal life? Not if this is just the calm before the storm. When her mother falls ill, Kitty rushes back to Denver--and right back to the abusive pack of werewolves she escaped a year ago. To make matters worse, a war is brewing between the city's two oldest vampires, threatening the whole supernatural community. Though she wants to stay neutral, Kitty is again drawn into a world of politics and violence. To protect her family, her lover, and herself, she'll have to choose sides. And maybe become what she hates--a killer."

What can I say? This fourth entry in the Kitty Norville series was well worth the wait. The characters grow and the reader grows more involved with them with each entry in the series. We learn more about Ben and Cormac's past, more about the vampires in general and the ones in Denver specifically and more about the pack members Kitty left behind when she ran from Denver. I read this in one sitting and cannot wait for book five and the promised book six to be published. Read this book. Read the whole series, it is wonderful. Buy a second set and give it to a friend. Highly recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Shadowbridge**
**by Gregory Frost**
**Del Rey Trade Paperback $14.00**

This is the first book of a duology, set on the world of Shadowbridge. Shadowbridge has no continents, or many landmasses at all. It is an ocean world; criss-crossed by huge bridges with cities built onto, into and through them. Most of the people live on them, with a few people ekeing out a living on the few small islands there are. Leodora is a young woman who has escaped from a dreary life on just such an island to follow in her father Bardsham's legendary footsteps as a puppeteer, traveling along the bridges and giving performances in the cities. These puppet shows are the means of transmitting myths and history, as well as being popular entertainments. Leodora travels with her troupe, a young musician mysteriously blessed by the gods, and her technician, who used to travel with her father, and taught her the craft. She must do so in disguise, however, as she is a woman; a very big cultural trespass, and extremely dangerous for her should she be caught in some cities. And now, the gods have gotten involved.

This book follows a recent trend in fantasy - using myths, legends and history from non-Western cultures for the background. A very welcome trend; t isn't that Western culture is uninteresting or unimportant, but it's nice to see some different stuff. Frost has used elements of Burmese and Sri Lankan folklore here to create the stories that Leodora tells so well. The descriptions of the cities, and the gods that interact with Leodora owe something to both cultures, while the puppets Leodora uses owe far more to Burmese traditions than it does to Western puppetry. More importantly, Frost uses this stuff well; it's woven in with more Western concepts, and he's blended everything in a seamless fashion.

Frost has always had well-drawn characters, and those in Shadowbridge are no exception. Leodora is funny, smart and her struggle to make a life for herself despite the handicaps of her gender and her upbringing really engages the reader. Diverus, the musician, while having a horrific early life, is never allowed to become just an object of pity for the reader. Finally, Soter, her technician and teacher, comes over as more than just a drunken caricature. We see his devotion to Leodora, and to the memories of her parents, and his determination to give her the opportunity to become even greater than her father. Finally, I really like the prose here. It's spare, rather than lush, but

( Continued on page 23 )

## In Our Book (Continued from page 22 )

the descriptions of the world, the stories Leodora tells are evocative and lovely. Even though it's early in the year, I'm fairly sure that this will be on my Hugo ballot next year. **- Nadine Armstrong**

**Child of a Dead God**
**by Barb and J.C. Hardee**
**ROC, 407 pp, $24.95**

*Child of a Dead God* is a novel of *The Noble Dead*

For many months, Magiere and Leesil have sought an artifact dating back to the earliest times. Everyone wants it and to prevent others from having it, Magiere must keep it from her murderous vampire brother who wants it for power.

Traveling with her and Leesil are Wynn, a scholar, their Canine Fay protector, Chap. And two Elven assassins sworn to them. But another group have been sent to kill them and take the artifact and kill them all. Magiere is drawn, nay, obsessed, with following the voice leading her to the icebound castle.

Westrial, the un-dead brother, and his feral Vampires follow as do a set of elves bent on taking all. And what *is* the voice leading them on?

The Hardees have put together protagonists who are conflicted and engaging, while coping with non-stop action. Their plotting keeps the excitement high and fast moving. This is vampire writing at its best. Hey, vampire fans, I hope you kept some money this Holiday season for your own gift. **- Pam Allan**

# 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. Our members are very friendly, respectful, and fun. We welcome any and all.
For more information, contact Shane Bryner at acrossplus@westernsfa.org

**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.

( Continued on page 24 )

# Club Listings

( Continued from page 23 )

**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 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

**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, Across Plus Anime Club 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

**AniZona 4** (March 21-23, 2008) **CANCELED** 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

**DENVENTION / WORLDCON 66** (Aug 6-10 2008) Colorado Convention Center, **Denver, Colorado**. Guests: Lois McMaster Bujold, Rick Sternbach, Tom Whitmore; TM Wil McCarthy. Rates, accommodations, etc: see website — http://www.denvention3.org/

**World Fantasy Convention 2008** (Oct 30-Nov 3 '08) **Calgary, Alberta, Canada.** Info: website: www.worldfantasy.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

**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 pro-rated for the amount of the year remaining. For more info: Webpage: www.casfs.org Email: info@casfs.org