

ConNotations

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April / May
2008

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

An Interview with Scott Lynch by Nadine Armstrong

Scott Lynch burst onto the fantasy scene in 2006 with his outstanding debut novel *The Lies of Locke Lamora*, first book in The Gentlemen Bastard Sequence. This wonderful book, about a con artist named Locke Lamora, garnered a ton of buzz at its release, several major award nominations, and a boatload of praise. Since then, Scott has gone on to publish the second book, *Red Seas Under Red Skies*, another strong entry in the series. In October of this year, *The Republic of Thieves* will be released in the U.S.

Scott is from Minnesota, and before becoming a published author, was a freelance writer, and also did web design, among other things. These days, along with writing, he works as a volunteer firefighter in Wisconsin where he lives with his wife, two dogs, and three cats.

Recently, I sat down with Scott to talk about life, his career, and what's going to happen in that third book.

Scott, tell me the story of how the book came to be published. I know Gollancz saw it on the website, was it finished at that point?

No, it was completely unfinished. Mostly bits and pieces and fragments and it was completely worthless. Some friends



© Lee Whiteside

of mine who I'd been hanging around with wanted to see the novel, wanted to see what I'd been working on, and not just hear about it in the abstract. I put up three segments on a web journal that I set up for that purpose. Unbeknownst to me, one of them was on friendly terms with Simon Spanton from Gollancz and told Simon he should take a look at it. So, from out of the blue, I got an email

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**FOR UP TO DATE INFO AND MOVIE
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SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

With the writer's strike settled, things are picking up again in the TV world as the networks head towards the end of the strike afflicted season. We've also got a fresh set of shows on SciFi Friday to help you get through the next couple of months.

NBC has opted to not bring their genre shows back for the spring, letting them gear up for the fall season. NBC has renewed **Chuck** for a second season and **Heroes** will also be back for its third season. Both shows are expected to start production on a new season as early as May. A decision on **Medium** will likely be made around the time of the May sweeps. NBC has picked up the horror anthology series, **Fear Itself**, and will start airing it on Thursday nights beginning May 29th. It is essentially a reworking of **Masters of Horror**, with many of

CASFS Business Report

January.....

*CopperCon 27 Hotel paid, Charity Auction paid.

*CopperCon 28 will be on Labor day weekend

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, not Monday. The hotel contract is being discussed with Embassy Suites at Paradise Valley, near PV Mall.

*CopperCon 29 is looking for a hotel site.

*HexaCon 18 hotel search in progress.

*HexaCon 19 hotel search is considering the same hotel and is checking dates.

*ConNotations, remember the publication is also sold as a subscription.

*A question to the treasurer about future needs for ConNotations reflected in the CASFS budget. The convention surplus funds fill CASFS main and supplements ConNotations. The balance is covered by advertising. The 2,000+ copies distributed also announce convention information.

February.....

*CopperCon 27 is being closed.

*CopperCon 28 will be on Labor day weekend

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, not Monday. The hotel contract was signed with the Embassy Suites at Paradise Valley, near PV Mall.

*CopperCon 29 is considering a one year date change due to DiscWorld on Labor Day weekend, and Darkcon in August. Look at Memorial Day?

*HexaCon 18 hotel search in progress, a date in October is being considered.

*HexaCon 19 hotel details in progress with the Embassy Suites at Paradise Valley, near PV Mall. October 30, 31 Nov 1 is being considered.

*Website difficulties have been solved. Better security at host site is now in place.

*ConNotations submissions deadlines announced.

the same producers, directors, and writers, with scary stories toned down for broadcast television. Noted directors include **John Landis, Darren Bousman, Ronny Yu, Brad Anderson, Breck Eisner, Mary Harron, Stuart Gordon and Ernest Dickerson**. Starring in the episodes will be **Brandon Routh, Shiri Appleby, Elisabeth Moss, Cynthia Watros, Eric Roberts and John Billingsley** along with **Russell Hornsby, Pablo Schreiber, Stephen Lee, Stephen R. Hart, Jack Noseworthy and Larry**

Gilliard Jr. Writers for the series will include **Joe Gangemi, Steve Niles, Dan Knauf, Lem Dobbs, Matt Venne, Richard Chizmar & Johnathan Schaech, Victor Salva, Mick Garris, Drew McWeeny and Scott Swan, Kelly Kennemer and Max Landis**. Expect similar stories to what was seen in **Masters of Horror** with less gore and less nudity (which will likely be put back in for the DVD release).

ABC has done well with airing **Lost** on Thursday nights and has seen **Eli Stone** do well in the post-**Lost** time slot, seeing it go up in ratings for the most recent episodes. After concluding the initial eight episode run of the season for **Lost**, ABC will bring it back in late April for five additional episodes, airing it in the Thursday 10 pm ET/PT time slot following new episodes of **Grey's Anatomy**. **Lost** was originally planned to do sixteen episodes in the current season but has trimmed the second half of the season due to the strike. ABC will continue airing **Eli Stone** episodes until new episodes of **Lost** start on April 24th.

FOX has opted not to have **Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles** complete its full episode order of 13 (they finished 9 before the strike) and a decision on if the show will be back may not be announced until the May up-front presentations. Having left the show on a fairly nasty cliffhanger, fans of the series are hoping to get

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24 Frames

Movie News

By Lee Whiteside

With the writer's strike over, there's lots of activity going on in the genre movie front with lots of new productions in the works as well as a few that were stalled now getting back on track.

One of the biggest bits of news following the strike was the announcement by Paramount Pictures that the **Star Trek** movie would be moved back to May 2009 from a Christmas release. Paramount CEO **Brad Grey** has decided that the movie can do much better kicking off the summer season than being a holiday release. According to producer **Damon Lindelof** in a www.Trekmovie.com interview, he indicated that "based on the

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SF Tube Talk

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some sort of resolution to it aside from knowing that John Connor does grow up to lead the rebels. FOX has also opted to hold the current season of **24** until next year, with production resuming on the seventh following the strike. They are looking into doing a two hour movie to air in the fall that would fill in some of the time between the seasons.

CBS will have new episodes of both ***Ghost Whisperer*** and ***Moonlight*** with ***Ghost Whisperer*** starting in early April and ***Moonlight*** at the end of the month. Joining ***Moonlight*** for a recurring role will be Eric Winter who will be playing Assistant District Attorney Benjamin Talbot, who gets in the way of Beth and Mick relationship when he takes a liking to Beth, making Mick a not-so-happy vampire.

The CW will have more episodes of ***Smallville***, ***Supernatural*** and ***Reaper*** to finish out the season starting in late April. The CW has already given out new season renewals for both ***Smallville*** and ***Supernatural*** with ***Reaper***'s fate still to be determined. There's little information on the post-strike episodes for any of the series. On ***Smallville***, expect threads started in *Traveler* and *Veritas* to continue and build to the season finale with possibly a character or two not making it to the end of the season. The first new ***Supernatural*** will bring back the ghost chasers from the first season and will be done in documentary style and is essentially presented as a pilot for a cable show called ***Ghostfacers!***. For the season finale, it will be Dean's last day and we'll find out if he is able to change his fate or not. ***Reaper*** will be back for five more episodes on Tuesday nights starting April 22nd, but there's no advance information available for them.

With the end of the strike, there's a good amount of development news to report with several shows having their scripts locked down for a pilot to be filmed during the strike while others on hold due to the strike have started moving forward again now that the scripts can be written.

In the works as an independent production is a new version of ***The Saint***, with **James Purefoy** (Mark Antony in ***Rome***) in the lead role as Simon Templar, the international thief known as The Saint. It is being produced by **Barry Levinson**, **Tom Fontana**, **Bill MacDonald**, **Jorge Zamacona** (who is also writing the script), and **Roger Moore**, the original actor in the role. A two-hour pilot movie is being produced and it is being shopped around to the networks.

Joss Whedon is back to the TV world with a pilot named ***Dollhouse***. **Eliza Dusku** is in the lead role as Echo, who is part of a group of people known as "Dolls" who have had their personalities erased and are then imprinted with a new, temporary, persona so that they can take on various jobs. In between jobs, they are mind-wiped and exist in a child like state. Echo, however, begins to become self-aware. The regular cast will include the people who run the "dollhouse", several

of Echo's partners, and a federal agent who is trying to uncover the center's secrets. It is being developed by FOX Television.

Also in development for FOX is ***Fringe***, a new series from **J. J. Abrams**, **Roberto Orci**, **Alex Kurtzman**, **Bryan Burke**, and **Alex Graves**. It is a drama about a young FBI agent, Olivia Warren (played by **Anna Tory**), who is exposed to the spread of powerful and unexplained phenomena. She must work with an institutionalized scientist, Dr. Walter Bishop (played by **John Noble**) whose work may be behind the threats. Also starring are **Joshua Jackson** as Peter Bishop, Dr. Bishop's estranged (but brilliant) son, **Blair Brown** as Nina Cord, a 16-year veteran at the cutting edge research facility Prometheus Corp., **Jasika Nicole** as federal assistant Astrid Farnsworth, **Lance Reddick** as Phillip Broyles, a special agent for Homeland Security who heads the special Fringe division, and **Kirk Acevedo** and **Mark Valley** are FBI agents.

True Blood, the HBO series based on **Charlaine Harris**' *Southern Vampire* books is moving ahead with production on its first series. **Alan Ball** is executive producing with **Anna Paquin** in the lead as Sookie Stackhouse, the waitress who can read minds. Also starring is **Stephen Moyer** as vampire and Sookie's love interest Bill Compton, **Brook Kerr** as Tara Thornton, **Carrie Preston** as Arlene Fowler, **Sam Trammell** as Sam Merlotte, **Ryan Kwanten** as Jason, and **Alexander Skarsgard** will play a thousand-year-old vampire/Viking.

ABC Family has picked up ***The Middleman***, a series created by **Javier Grillo-Marxuach**. The series is about an art school graduate, Wendy Watson (played by **Natalie Morales**) who joins with a superhero, The Middleman (played by **Matt Keeslar**), to fight extranormal threats. They are the only two operatives for "the worlds most absurdly secretive organization." It was originally developed as a TV series a few years back and then turned into a comic book at Viper Comics when that didn't sell. Now it has come full circle and has been turned back into a TV series.

BBC America will be finishing up the current season of ***Torchwood*** the first few Saturdays in April. First up is *Adrift*, where Gwen learns of a darker side of Torchwood when she is investigating the disappearances of hundreds of people. Jack is obstructing attempts to find them and the answer may lie in the rift. After that is *Fragments*, which looks to be a flashback episode, showing us how most of the Torchwood crew became involved with the organization including Jack's initiation into Torchwood in 1899, Toshiko's trading of alien technology to save her mother's life, Owen having a medical revelation, and Ianto wooing Jack with coffee and flirting in order to get access to Torchwood. For the season finale, *Exit Wounds*, **James Marsters** is back as Captain John and he takes Jack prisoner and sends him back in time for a reunion. In the meantime, Cardiff is overrun by Weevils and the remaining Torchwood crew must decide if they can

trust Captain John to help them save the city and themselves. Expect some surprises and shocks before the episode is over.

BBC America will be bringing back ***Robin Hood*** for its second series starting April 26th. Opening up the season is *Sister Hood* where Robin and company are setting up a new camp when Knighton is burned to the ground and Marion and her father are taken captive. Robin works to free Marion as well as some other women only to have one of his men turn traitor as the Sheriff's trap for Robin is sprung. *The Booby and the Beast* sees Robin trying to break into the Sheriff's Strong Room, where he has stockpiled money and treasure to fund his Shah Mat campaign to overthrow King Richard. *Child Hood* finds some young boys discovering a new suit of indestructible armor under test by the Sheriff, who catches them and plans to execute them. One of the boys escapes and warns Robin who sets out to rescue the other boys and destroy the armor. *The Angel of Death* has the Sheriff unleashing a chemical weapon on Nottingham that is blamed on the Pestilence. When Will Scarlett's father unearths the truth and Robin and crew set out to help those afflicted by the chemicals and stop it from being used again. In *Ducking and Diving*, Robin suspects that there is a spy in his camp when an attempt to capture The Sheriff's spy goes awry. When Robin infiltrates the castle to silence the spy, he puts the life of the wise-woman Matilda in danger. *For England...* sees The Black Knights gather at the castle for a feast, Robin sets forth a plan to kill them all but is double crossed by the Sheriff of Winchester and faces the Black Knights alone.

SciFi Channel's SciFi Friday heats up in April with the return of ***Battlestar Galactica***, ***Doctor Who*** and the debut of ***The Sarah Jane Adventures***. First up is the return of ***Battlestar Galactica*** on Friday, April 4th where they pick up immediately after the events of the third season finale, *Crossroads* (which SciFi is airing right before the new episode). In *He That Believeth in Me*, they will deal with the return of Kara Starbuck which is complicated by Kara thinking she has been gone for a few hours when she's been presumed dead for two months. Also, the newly aware cylons start working to find out some answers about themselves including Tigh getting friendly with Caprica Six. There's also a lot of fighting and such with the Cylons that are about to decimate the Galactica fleet. In *Six of One*, the Cylons are fighting with each other while trying to solve the mystery of the final five while the humans are dealing with their attempts to find Earth and likely what Starbuck has told them about it. We also get a look at Baltar's harem. In *The Ties that Bind*, Kara takes a freighter in search of Earth, the Galactica crew deals with both political and marital issues, the Cylons have their solidarity challenged, and someone dies. *Escape Velocity* find the Cylons heading towards civil war when they realize that some of the final five are with the Galactica fleet and some question whether they should keep

attacking it and risk destroying the other models. This will be an ongoing arc through several episodes with some of the existing cylon models not surviving. In *The Road Less Travelled*, Kara and the crew of the Demetrius (an old sewage ship) are reaching a deadline in their search for Earth and becoming at odds with each other, which leads to Kara being in the brig and threatening Roslin when she escapes. The episode *Faith* sees President Roslin in the hospital for cancer treatment where she bonds with fellow cancer patient, Emily Kowlski (played by **Nana Visitor**), who is also a Baltar follower. In *Guess What's Coming to Dinner*, Kara faces mutiny on the Demetrius and receives help from some unlikely allies. Wrapping up May should be *Sine Qua Non* which sees the return of a character "who's undergone something of a crisis since we last touched base with him" according to episode writer **Michael Taylor**. That leads into the last two episodes of this run, which will culminate in the usual mid-season cliffhanger. Look for a return appearance by **Lucy Lawless** as well as **Kate Vernon** as Ellen Tigh in a flashback/dream sequence.

Starting on April 11th, SciFi will begin airing the ***Doctor Who*** spinoff series ***The Sarah Jane Adventures***, starring **Elisabeth Sladen** as Sarah Jane Smith. In the series, Sarah is back home and alone once again following her recent reunion with The Doctor. K9 is not around either (he's on a mission), but Sarah does have a supercomputer called "Mr. Smith" to use for help and reference. In the opening special, *Invasion of the Bane*, Sarah meets the new neighbor girl, Maria Jackson (**Yasmin Paige**) who has just moved in across the street with her recently divorced dad, Alan, (**Joseph Millson**) with occasional visits from her mother Chrissie (**Juliet Cowan**). Maria and her annoying friend, Kelsey Harper (**Porsha Lawrence Mavour**), stumble across a plot by aliens when they visit the Bubble Shock! drink factory, which Sarah Jane has been investigating. Before it is all over, Sarah and the kids have defeated Miss Wormwood and the Bane, thwarted an alien invasion, and freed a young boy that the Bane had created as an Archetype with Sarah adopting him and naming him Luke. Next up is the regular series with consists of two half-hour episodes for each story. Maria's annoying friend Kelsey is nowhere to be seen but Luke and Maria end up bringing Clyde Langer (played by **Daniel Anthony**) into their circle and joining them on their adventures. In *Revenge of the Slitheen*, Maria and Luke start the new year at school and soon learn that things are not what they seem. The Slitheen are back and have developed a scheme to once again devastate the Earth by turning off the sun. Next up in *Eye of the Gorgon*, they investigate spooky goings on at a Nursing home where they discover a group of nuns hiding an ancient Gorgon and a lot of realistic looking statues. They discover that the Gorgon is trying to re-open a portal to its home world to bring about an invasion of Earth. In *Warriors of Kudlak*,

(Continued on page 5)

Volume 18 Issue 2

SF Tube Talk (Continued from page 4)

a new laser tag center, Combat 3000, has recently opened up and soon there are a few disappearances. Luke and Clyde are captured when they play the game and are slated to be shipped off to be warriors in a long running battle between the Uvodni and Malakh races. Sarah and Maria investigate and discover the truth and work to save their friends and other children that have been taken. In *Whatever Happened to Sarah Jane*, Sarah has set up Mr. Smith to divert a meteor headed towards Earth but when Maria wakes up the next morning, no one remembers Sarah Jane and another woman, Andrea Yates, is living in Sarah's home. Maria discovers a plot by a mysterious visitor dubbed "The Trickster" with a Grasko to eliminate Sarah Jane from history so that the meteor devastates the Earth and The Trickster can then move on to take care of The Doctor. To end the first series is *The Lost Boy*, where a family claims that Luke is their lost son and take him from Sarah Jane. Luke soon discovers that the family is actually the Slitheen who have gained custody of him to learn more about him and make use of his abilities.

Starting on April 18th, SciFi begins airing the fourth season of *Doctor Who*, just a couple of weeks behind the BBC. Kicking things off is this year's Christmas special, *Voyage of the Damned*, where The Doctor finds himself on an alien cruise ship that is a spacefaring replica of the Titanic with an assortment of aliens and a cute waitress named Astrid (played by singer/actress **Kylie Minogue**). In true disaster movie fashion, when a meteor storm hits the ship, the Doctor, Astrid, and a group of fellow passengers must traverse the ship to try to save their lives and to stop it from crashing into the Earth. To kick off the regular season following the Christmas special is *Partners in Crime*, where Donna Noble (played by **Catherine Tate**) tracks down The Doctor when she comes across an alien problem in modern-day London. The alien threat is the Adipose, aliens who grow in human fat tissue. After this adventure, Donna decides to continue with the Doctor after having originally said no after their first encounter. Their next stop is Pompeii in *The Fires of Pompeii*, where they arrive a few days before Mount Vesuvius destroys the city. As might be expected, there are aliens behind the eruption (from Pyrovillia), rock monsters, and an attempted human sacrifice of Donna. A large part of the episode was filmed on sets in Rome to represent ancient Pompeii. Next up is *Planet of the Ood* where Donna and The Doctor visit the icy home world of the Ood. It is set before the events in *The Impossible Planet* and reveals how The Ood came to be in their subservient position. After that is a two-parter starting with *The Sontaran Strategem* that features the return of another classic series villain, The Sontarans. Martha Jones in her capacity with UNIT (Unified Intelligence Taskforce) contacts the Doctor for help when Sontarans are discovered. The next

episode sees the Doctor taking Donna and Martha with him to visit an alien planet where they get involved with a battle between soldiers and an alien race called The Haff where The Doctor faces a dilemma like he has never seen before. Coming up in the rest of the season we'll meet Agatha Christie, have the discovery of a mysterious library, a trip to an alien leisure planet with something sinister going on, an episode where The Doctor has been removed from time and his current (and former) companions must work together to save him and the Earth, and a big finale that will supposedly feature the return of many of the people we have seen over the first four years of the new series and possibly the return of Davros.

Just aired in the UK on Sky One is the latest *Discworld* adaptation, *The Colour of Magic*. It combines the first two books in **Terry Pratchett's** *Discworld* series and follows the adventures of the inept wizard Rincewind (**David Jason**) and the *Discworld's* first tourist, Twoflower (**Sean Astin**). Rincewind accidentally has acquired a powerful spell and it holds the key to saving the *Discworld* from disaster, but the evil wizard Trymon (**Tim Curry**) is trying to gain control of it. It features dragons, sentient luggage, Cohen the Barbarian, and Death (voice by **Christopher Lee**) and a cameo by **Jeremy Irons** as Lord Ventenari, Ankh-Morpork's Patrician. At the premier screening, director **Vadim Jean** announced that the next adaptation would be for the more recent novel *Going Postal*, featuring a con man named Moist Lipwig being given control of the postal system. Look for the miniseries to turn up on Ion TV as part of the RHI movie weekend later in the year.

On the *Star Wars* front, they've officially announced the CGI animated *Clone Wars* series and are still progressing on the live action series. *The Clone Wars* will debut with a theatrical release in August with the weekly series to follow in the fall on The Cartoon Network and TNT. The series will be set between episodes Two and Three and will tell in detail what happened during the Clone Wars. According to **George Lucas**, "I felt there were a lot more *Star Wars* stories left to tell. I was eager to start telling some of them through animation and, at the same time, push the art of animation forward." It will follow the adventures of Anakin Skywalker,

Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Padme Amidala along with new characters such as Anakin's padawan trainee, Ahsoka. Villains will include Darth Sidious, Count Dooku and General Grievous. As for the live action series, it is proceeding in its development but is still pretty much under wraps. Reports are that it is set between episodes Three and Four and will feature pretty much all new characters. It is currently being shopped around and may end up on a pay cable network such as Showtime or HBO.

The BBC announced they have started filming the new series *Merlin*, in a co-production with Shine Limited for broadcast this fall. The series will focus on a young Merlin and Arthur and their ongoing clashes in Camelot. Merlin is being played by **Colin Morgan** and Arthur is being played by **Bradley James**. **Richard Wilson** will be Gaius and **Anthony Stewart Head** will be Uther. It is being produced by **Julian Murphy, Johnny Capps, Jake Michie**, and **Julian Jones**, who have been involved in the series *Hex* and *Sugar Rush*.

The BBC has other series in the works including a remake of the **Terry Nation** series *Survivors* and *Apparitions*. *Survivors* is about the survivors of a post-apocalyptic world set in the present day after 99% of the world's population has been wiped out by a devastating plague. It will be written by **Adrian Hodges** who told the BBC that "Its themes remain as relevant as ever and while we will be staying faithful to many aspects of the original, we will also be bringing the story into the 21st Century and make it accessible to contemporary audiences." *Apparitions* stars **Martin Shaw** as Father Jacob, a priest working to promote candidates for sainthood who discovers a dark battle between good and evil when he becomes involved with an exorcism. A two-part special was produced originally intended to air early in the year but the BBC liked what they saw enough to turn it into a full series. The opening parts were written and directed by **Joe**

Ahearne (Doctor Who) with **Carolyn Reynolds** and **Tony Wood** executive producing.

Disney/ABC Domestic Television has announced that a series based on **Terry Goodkind's** epic fantasy *Sword of Truth* series called *Wizard's First Rule* has been given the go-ahead and will be seen in first run syndication this fall. It is being produced by **Sam Raimi, Rob Tapert** and **Josh Donen**. The series will follow the "extraordinary transformation of woodsman Richard Cypher into a magical leader who joins with a mysterious, beautiful woman to stop a blood-thirsty, sinister tyrant." No casting has been announced, as of yet.

On the animated front, Warner Bros. Animation has confirmed that the current season of the *Legion of Superheroes* cartoon will be its last and it is also the end for *The Batman*. With programming on Kids WB switching to being done by 4 Kids, the future of Warner Bros. shows on the channel is uncertain. In the works by Warner Bros. is a new animated series *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, which will feature Batman teaming up with a different superhero in each episode, much like the original *Brave and the Bold* comic series in the 60's and 70's. As of now, where it will be seen is still to be determined. Next up in the Direct to DVD market from Warner Bros. is *Batman: Gotham Knight* which will consist of six interweaving stories written by **Josh Olson, Alan Burnett, David S. Goyer, Jordan Goldberg, Greg Rucka** and **Brian Azarello**. Stories will feature the Scarecrow, Killer Croc, and Deadshot. It will be released in July, shortly after the release of the new live action Batman movie, *The Dark Knight*.

Marvel Comics is getting back into animation in a big way. *The Spectacular Spider-Man* debuted on Kids WB in March and is already working on a second season according to producer **Greg Weisman**. Marvel just announced two new series to be aired on Nicktoons starting early next year, *Wolverine* and

(Continued on page 6)



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SF Tube Talk (Continued from page 5)

the X-Men and *Iron Man: The Animated* series. *Wolverine and the X-Men* will focus on Wolverine and the core X-Men team as they recover from an explosive event that takes away their mentor, Professor X, and work to prevent the world's destruction. In *Iron Man: The Animated series*, it follows Tony Stark as a teenager when his father is killed and Tony is injured and becomes dependent on his technology to survive. In addition to surviving the pressures of being a teenager, Tony also takes on the mantle of Iron Man.

24 Frames (Continued from page 3)

dailies they have been seeing and hanging out on the set and seeing and beginning to understand what the movie is, I think that they are starting to look at it as a big summer crowd-pleaser as opposed to a very sci-fi, not-as-accessible-to-a-wider-audience Christmas release." The initial trailer and some special footage of the NCC-1701 under construction can be seen at the movies official website at <http://www.startrekmovie.com> and at <http://www.ncc-1701.com>. With **J.J. Abrams** and his team involved, expect to see a lot of online activities related to the film over the next year.

Elsewhere in the TV show into a movie category, the second *X-Files* movie has wrapped filming and is slated to be released on July 25th. The biggest news out of the filming of the movie was a big kiss between Mulder and Scully that was caught on camera and film by paparazzi and posted all over the internet. In a post-filming press conference, **David Duchovny** revealed that the kiss was staged by him and **Gillian Anderson** with the crew participating. They'd been followed by fans and paparazzi all during filming and decided to stage a big kiss to set them off. As for any details on the plot for the film, they are keeping it very secret and about all they have said is that it will be a stand-alone story.

When the *Get Smart* movie hits the theatres in June, there will also be a direct to DVD spinoff featuring the supporting characters of Bruce (**Masi Oka**) and Lloyd (**Nate Torrence**) called *Get Smart's Bruce and Lloyd Out of Control*. According to *Get Smart* director **Peter Segal**, the direct to DVD movie is an experiment by Warner Bros. to do a companion release in conjunction with a movie in the theatres. They really liked the two characters in the movie and shot the second film simultaneously with the main movie.

Paramount has started work on a new *Heavy Metal* movie, inspired by the original animated film from 1981 based on the magazine. Director **David Fincher** is in charge of it and will direct one of the eight or nine planned segments. Also directing are **Kevin Eastman** (creator of

the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and now owner of the *Heavy Metal* magazine) and **Tim Miller** of *Blur Studios* (who will also be handling the animation).

Warner Bros. has announced that the final Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* will be split into two films to be able to accommodate everything that happens in the series finale and to do it justice. They are currently filming the sixth movie, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* which is slated for release on November 21st this year. Part one of the finale should hit theatres as a holiday release in 2010 with the eighth and final installment in early summer, 2011.

Terry Gilliam had shut down production on *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* following the death of star **Heath Ledger**. **Johnny Depp**, **Colin Farrell** and **Jude Law** are all replacing **Ledger's** character in the movie. In the film, characters pass through a magic mirror into parallel worlds and **Ledger** had completed filming on the segments in the real world and the three actors will play a transformed version of **Ledger's** character when they pass into the other realities.

On the comics front, Warner Bros. has obtained the rights to make a movie based on **Jeff Smith's Bone** comic, describing it as "Bugs Bunny meets Lord of the Rings." They are developing it as an animated film but haven't yet ruled out the possibility it could end up as a live action adaptation. Warner Bros. also has the *Justice League* movie back into pre-production after putting it on hold during the writer's strike. Warner did allow the cast options to expire but has advised them that they should continue training for their roles. Once the script polishing has been done, expect a formal announcement by Warner Bros. The *Shazam* movie from director **Pete Segal** also was delayed by the writer's strike and **Segal** is hoping to get it back on track for production soon. In interviews during press sessions for *Get Smart*, **Segal** indicated the movie's title is now *Billy Batson and the Legend of Shazam* and that he wants to make sure he has a good script before proceeding with production. The new comic *Locke & Key* by **Joe Hill** has been picked up for a movie version by Dimension Films and is being developed for a potential franchise. It centers around a trio of children who become the caretakers of a magical mansion in New England called the Keyhouse that has doors that take them to different places and give them powers.

Remakes in the works includes *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* (with **Kent Nichols** directing from a script he co-wrote with **Douglas Sarine**), *Rosemary's Baby* with **Michael Bay** producing, and *Hellraiser* with *Feast* writers **Patrick Melton** and **Marcus Dunstan** writing a

new script for Dimension Films.

For movies in the next couple of months, we've got a slow April in store (a good time to catch up on your DVDs) but once the calendar turns over to May, there's a major genre film out each weekend over the next month.

Nim's Island (April 4) is based on the novel by **Wendy Orr** and **Kerry Millard** about a young girl named Nim (**Abigail Breslin**) whose island is a magical place that is only bounded by her imagination. Her favorite literary character, Alex Rover (**Gerard Butler**), is the world's greatest adventurer. When her dad goes missing (also played by **Butler**), she enlists the help of the Alexandra (**Jodie Foster**), the author of the Alex Rover books and Rover himself.

The Ruins (April 4) is an adaptation of the novel of the same name by **Scott Smith**. When a group of friends visit a remote archeological dig in the Mexican jungle, they find something deadly among the ruins there. They must fight their way out and survive. Stars **Jonathan Tucker** as Jeff, **Jena Malorie** as Amy, **Shawn Ashmore** as Eric, **Laura Ramsey** as Stacy, and **Joe Anderson** as Mathias.

Prom Night (April 11) is yet another "classic" horror film remake for the new century. It's prom night and there's a killer on the loose! Stars **Brittany Snow**, **Johnathon Schaech**, **Brianne Davis**, **Kelly Blatz**, and **Jana Kramer**. *The Forbidden Kingdom* (April 18) stars **Jet Li** and **Jackie Chan** in an adventure about a young fighter from the present day, Jason (**Michael Angarano**), who is transported back in time to ancient China while on a quest for bootleg kung fu movies in Chinatown. Jason is tasked with freeing the Monkey King (**Jet Li**) who has been imprisoned by the evil Jade Warlord. He must work with a wise king fu master, Lu Yan (**Jackie Chan**), and a band of misfits to accomplish the task and find a way to return home.

Iron Man (May 2) kicks off the summer of 2008 with the origin story of how arrogant businessman and inventor Tony Stark (**Robert Downey, Jr.**) becomes the superhero Iron Man. When Stark is kidnapped and imprisoned and forced to build a deadly weapon, he instead creates an iron suit of armor that he is able to use to defeat his captors. When he later comes across a plot that threatens the world, he goes into action in his advanced outfit as Iron Man to save the world. The film is directed by **Jon Favreau** and stars **Gweneth Paltrow** as Stark's secretary and love interest **Virginia Potts** and **Jeff Bridges** as the evil Obidiah Stane (aka the Iron Monger). Expectations are high for this adaptation and it looks like it might meet them.

Speed Racer (May 9) is next up in the May box office race. This adaptation of the sixties Japanese cartoon series was written and directed by the **Wachowski**

brothers with **Joel Silver** producing. **Emile Hirsch** is Speed Racer, who is a young racer who wants to win the cross country race, The Crucible, during which his older brother Rex Racer (**Scott Porter**) lost his life. Speed's dad, Pops (**John Goodman**), has designed the ultimate racing car in the Mach 5 and when Speed rejects an offer from the owner of Royalton Industries (**Roger Allam**) to join his team, Speed becomes a target. With support from his parents, his girlfriend Trixie (**Christina Ricci**), he enters into a partnership with his former rival, Racer X (**Matthew Fox**) to with The Crucible and save his family business.

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (May 16) takes us back to the land of Narnia in the second film based on **C.S. Lewis's** Narnia series. A year after their adventures, the four Pevensie children return to Narnia where 1,300 years have passed. Prince Caspian (**Ben Barnes**) is prevented from taking his rightful place on the throne by his villainous uncle King Miraz (**Sergio Castellitto**). Caspian uses Susan Pevensie's magic horn to summon the children back to Narnia and help him to organize an army of Narnians to help him reclaim his throne. Reprising their roles from the first movie as the Pevensie children are **William Moseley** (Peter), **Georgie Henley** (Lucy), **Anna Popplewell** (Susan), and **Skandar Keynes** (Edmund) with **Liam Neeson** once again providing the voice for Aslan and **Tilda Swinton** making a brief re-appearance as the White Witch.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (May 22) brings back **Harrison Ford** as Indiana Jones for the long-awaited fourth film in the series. It is set in 1957 where Indiana Jones has retired to a quiet life of teaching when he is thrust back into action in and adventure with the Soviet Union and the quest for the Crystal Skull. **Karen Allen** will reprise her role as Marion Ravenwood with **Shia LeBeouf** as Indiana's new sidekick, Mutt Williams, **Ray Winstone** as Mac, a friend and competitor with Jones, **Cate Blanchett** as Russian agent Irina Spalko, with **John Hurt**, **Jim Broadbent**, and **Alan Dale** also appearing. **Steven Spielberg** is directing from a screenplay by **David Koepp** based on a story by **George Lucas** and **Jeff Nathanson**. Plot details have been very tight so far with the most information about the movie being revealed in the trailer. Expect a non-stop roller coast ride that may live up to expectations, which are pretty high.

FYI

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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.

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.

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL SCREENPLAY COMPETITION:

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May 15, 2008

ENTRY POSTMARKED LATE
DEADLINE: June 1, 2008

Austin Film Festival is searching for the best Sci-Fi script containing one or more of the following elements: fantasy, myth/legend, horror, science fiction, surrealism and fantastical storytelling. Enter your script into either Drama or Comedy category, and you may also choose to be considered for the Sci-Fi Award. Winner will receive \$2500, and much more. Please email alex@austinfilmfestival.com

or check out our site at

www.austinfilmfestival.com

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

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

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

Sci-Fi Fantasy Book Club
"A Dirty Job" by Christopher Moore.
April 10, 7pm
Changing Hands/Wildflower Bread Company

Manga Bookclub
1st Tuesdays, 7pm
Borders, Chandler

Manga Bookclub
April 19, 7pm
May 17, 7pm
Barnes & Noble, Goodyear

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

Science Fiction Book Group
Mar 11, 7:30pm
Apr 8, 7:30pm

**Barnes & Noble,
Eastside Tucson**

AUTHOR SIGNINGS

Jim Butcher
Apr 2, 2pm
Poisoned Pen
bookstore

Charlaine Harris
May 9, 7pm
Poisoned Pen
bookstore

SPECIAL BOOK RELEASES

Subterranean Press
"Skeleton in the Closet" by Robert Block, illustrated by Gahan Wilson.
"The Jack Vance Reader"

"Kilimanjaro: a Fable of Utopia" by Mike Resnick, signed.
"Yellow Dog" chapbook by Charles deLint, illustrated by deLint.

"Skeleton" chapbook by Ray Bradbury, signed.
"Conversation Hearts" chapbook by John Crowley, signed.

Wildside Press
"Dancing with Werewolves" by Carole Nelson Douglas.
"An Exchange of Gifts" by Anne McCaffrey
"Treasures of Tartary" by Robert E. Howard

GAMING EVENTS

BOOKMANS, MESA
Dungeons & Dragons Night.
Mondays, 6pm

**BOOKMANS,
SPEEDWAY
TUCSON**
Rteam Gamers Family Game Day

Apr 5, 12pm. May 3,
12pm. Jun 7, 12pm

DRAWN TO COMICS

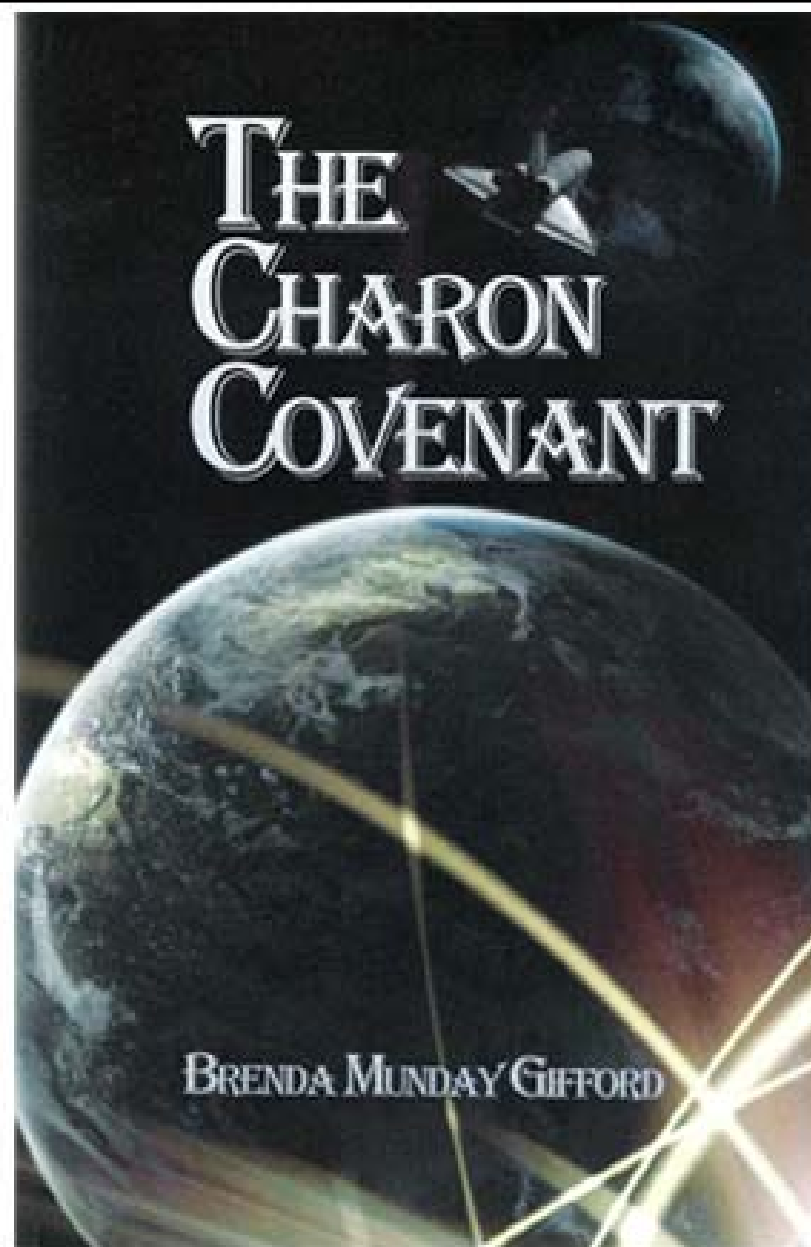
Free Comic Day. May 3
Special Event: Appearances by illustrator Bryce Lee and writer Jeff Aden to promote the 2009 release of "The Fix". Also, illustrator Jenn Lee for this year's release of Marvel Masterpiece Trading Cards; and Jesse Guitterez, creator of Banditos Studio Productions.
Heroclix. Saturdays, 2p
MechWarrior Tournaments. Sundays, 1pm

GAME DEPOT

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

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES
Warhammer Fantasy Tournament.
April 19, 10am
Privateer Press & Iron Kingdom Hobby Day. May 1, all day

(Continued on page 8)



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SCIENCE EVENTS

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER
Lecture Series:
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:
"Nanotechnology." Apr 4, 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 SCHOOL OF EARTH & SPACE EXPLORATION
Colloquia schedule, Wednesdays, 3:40pm
Plate Tectonics & Ice Ages in Western N. America. April 2
Low Mass Star Formation in the Taurus Molecular Cloud. Apr 9
A Virtual Journey to the Earth's Deep Interior. April 16
Tectonics, Climate Change and a Slow and Steady Rise of the Andes. Apr 23

BOOKMANS, SPEEDWAY, TUCSON
Tucson Astrology Guild
Apr 11, 7pm. Jun 13, 7pm

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.
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MOON SOCIETY MEETING
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For more info contact Craig Porter at portercd@msn.com

PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, TUCSON
New Volunteer Orientation
Apr 12, 9:30am-11:30am

Pima Air & Space Museum, 30th Anniversary, 2:30pm
Titan Missile Museum, 20th Anniversary, 10:30am
April 13
Check website for locations
Flying Thunder. Vietnam-era Hueys.
Jun 5-6
SR-71 Symposium. SR-1 pilots & ground crew. Huge event. Nov 15-16

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.
Apr 26, May 24, and more

PIMA LIBRARY: SOLAR POWER LECTURE SERIES
Apr 16, 6pm-8pm,
Nanini Branch Library, Tucson
May 14, 6pm-8pm,
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BOOKMANS, MESA
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Thursdays, 7pm

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Metaphysics Group
2nd & 4th Mondays, 7pm

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Conversation (Continued from page 1)

from a guy who said "Hi, you don't know me, I'm an editor with this publishing house in England. I've read your excerpts, I like what I see. Would you care to send me more?" Trick question? Sure! I took the prologue, worked on it and polished it, and did the very best I could, and three or four days later, sent him the prologue, about 30 odd pages. Three days later, I got an email saying "Scott, I want to buy this, however, I need to make a pitch to my buying committee. I have a meeting next week and I'll get back to you after it." So, the next day, I got a phone call and he said "I had an impromptu meeting with my buying committee and they said to go for it. How about if I buy it from you now?" Again, trick question. I said yes and it happened just that fast. It was one of the most exhilarating things to happen to me.

Once I'd sold it on the prologue, all that was left was to write the actual novel itself. During the course of writing the first novel, I had to learn how to *Write a Novel*. I was being careless and fast and loose while writing the first book, and my editors came to me and said "this will annoy readers, it annoys us, and we're your editors." Don't do this and it helped me tighten up in that regard, solidifying the points of view I was going to use and the tenses, and so forth. The novel did get turned in later than they hoped. I couldn't get it in for January, so they had to move it back to summer of 2006.

So where did Locke come from?
Locke was originally a character in a Star Wars role playing game. I only got to play for one session. The original conception was that he came from a planet that did not have a standing military. A very, very out-of-the-way world. They stayed out of the way of all these galactic conflicts because they had a very small elite corps of somewhat force-sensitive con artists, spies, saboteurs, etc. It just so happened that whenever trouble was brewing, it skipped this world because these men and women were out there, sort of tipping the scales and fiddling with galactic events to keep their planet off the map and unmolested. That was the character I briefly played in that one gaming session. The idea of that character stuck with me after that. That was in 2000 or so and it was in about 9 or 10 months later that I began to conceive and seriously started to design what would eventually become *The Lies of Locke Lamora* and decided that the con artist was going to be the main character.

Let's talk about Red Seas under Red Skies a bit. We actually see a lot more of Locke's thought processes in this one.

You've got more page space to fill up with something interesting. When you're on a ship staring at the walls, you don't want to overdo the whole "we're on a ship, staring at the bulkheads" thing. You

have to open up the character's brains and reveal a little more of their mental clockwork. When I say that the characterization of Locke in the first book is regarded as a little thin, a little shallow, it's because I did that. To use a very self-aggrandizing term, it's a more literary approach to *not* reveal his internal dialogue, to show everything through his actions and their consequences. For a great many readers, characterization equates to internal dialogue "revelation – Locke felt this because this – His puppy died and he was sad". They expect that if you're saying psychological – the omniscient intrusion – to find out what the characters thoughts and they expect that telepathy and that's pretty much a standard in the genre.

It's not always a personal flaw. For me, reading is a lot like writing, it's a trade skill. It's something you train up over the course of a few years of reading. You don't start out at 8 or 9, reading Dostoyevsky, reading Nabokov, and grokking all the implications of all this. You train yourself up and some people stay with what they're comfortable with and some people eventually learn to move on and grapple with a more reader participatory sort of character revelation. I discovered this pretty much the hard way that for a lot of very dedicated and knowledgeable fantasy readers, characterization equals psychological intrusion. The more telepathic you make the narration, the more characterization there is and some people feel very uncomfortable with the absence of that and they turn upon the author and say "well you didn't provide any characterization notes."

So we're going to see Locke differently and more different sides of Locke throughout the book.

It's just that I've always known that I have seven books to work with in the first series and I've always intended to build him to a point of very deep characterization over the course of seven books. That's my luxury. He's alive in my mind so I can reveal him shade by shade, piece by piece, book by book.

You're going to get two different answers because you're going to have the books feature major flashbacks so you are going to see his psychological progress and his adjustments and his changes through his adult life because the first seven books are going to take him to about age 40 or so. He's 24 or 25 in the main thread of the first book, they're going to cover the course of about 15 or 16 years. You're also going to see flashbacks to when he was a little kid in the first book and to when he was a teenager in the third book. You're gonna get it both ways, basically. I get to cheat, as it were.

Are you being surprised yourself?
Hell yeah! Not just by stuff that I do and not just by stuff that they do but by

(Continued on page 9)

Conversation (Continued from page 8) reader reactions to it. I suppose its natural in hindsight but Jean Tannen has become a sex symbol to a certain percentage of my female readership that I just didn't expect. I didn't write him as such, but as it turns out, to a fairly sizable contingent of particularly female readers, the big, strong, burly, capable, wears glasses, reads a lot, faultlessly loyal, the rock to Locke's antics, it makes him a very attractive character. It just happens and you just have to roll with it. I'm not going to be deliberately tarding him up from now on as a result of that but it probably would not have happened if I had written him as a sex symbol. I was pleasantly surprised for Jean's sake.

So, at some point in character building, they become real to you, in a sense?

You have to build a strong enough and consistent enough mental model of these imaginary people to the point that they can effectively respond with "this plot point makes no sense, why the hell would I do that?" It's not as though they take the story and run with it, but they put checks and blocks on plot points that are wildly inappropriate for their characterization. That's the major intrusion. I work very firmly from an outline and I have a lot of deep inlaid plans and that is the major adjustment when I get to a certain point I will sometimes discover that it's just totally wrong for a certain character to behave this way or to not behave this way. That is their assertion of control over the process. If you create them well enough, they can talk back. It's easy to mystify the process and say "well, the characters do as the characters want", but I write the book, I'm in charge. You get the impression that the characters cannot really be alive and the characters cannot really be real to you or your readers unless they occasionally fight back against your plans for them.

Is that difficult to deal with? Do you dislike it?

It's not an imposition. It often affords you an opportunity to take the plot in directions you previously would not conceive. The not fun part is realizing that the beautiful plot point is going to have to be discarded. The fun part is when it offers you an opportunity you may not have previously realized that you could use. It tends to balance out, at least in my experience. It gives you the added attraction of having a puzzle to solve in the middle of your perfectly beautifully laid plot where all of a sudden you've got something to do, again, you've got a problem that needs to be fixed. It's like doing a crossword puzzle or a sudoku, you have to find the solution. The character only says "I can't do this" but they don't necessarily tell you "here's what I can do!" They just say "fix this. We'll be back when you find a solution, author boy," and they walk off and leave you to

it. I'm against mystifying the whole process of "oh well, I just channeled the characters..."

There are times when you get something totally awesome and you are hit upside the head with the brick of inspiration and you have no idea where the hell it came from. You're grateful for wherever the hell it came from. It's not a constant, magical, uniform process of "the story reveals itself in my fingers" but there's a very healthful level of rebellion from properly constructed characters and they will tell you whether or not if what you're doing is appropriate for them. The readers can tell. Even though they are your characters and your characterizations, wildly out of character actions stick out like neon lights and flashing warning signs and readers pick up on that and go "oh god, what the hell."

Then it's all over LiveJournal.

Oh yeah, people are pretty vicious about it. It's cheating, it's "let's all check out the haunted house and split up separately" or let's have somebody who knows there's a murderer in this house go into a darkened room all by their lonesome. It's the "for god's sake, give us a break" cheat.

Let's talk about process a bit. Do you outline very much?

I'm a deep outliner, a very deep outliner. Sometimes I just fly with it and improvise and so forth. The beginning of the story is always very strongly known, and the end of every book and every story in the sequence is firm and set and solidly known.

But not necessarily the whole point A to D?

Sometimes points B and C can be a little nebulous. I've written the last scene of book seven and I know how every book ends and where the story must end and where every character goes. Getting there can stay a little nebulous for those reasons that I talked about. I learned not to outline quite so firmly in the middle of the book because the characters are going to do what the characters are going to do. Your tightly plotted outline is probably not going to mean much. No battle plan survives contact with the enemy and in some cases the characters and the plot are your enemy. So, I'm a very strong outliner at the extremes of the story. I try to maintain firm outlines throughout. I learned to deal with the fact that it's just going to be more squishy and malleable in the middle of the story. You're not going to be able to get away with the anal-retentive, graphpaper-type outlines.

Your books seem really organic, though, not at all like a death march through to the end of the plot.

I favor intricate plots in what I read and what I write and I want them to be so elaborate and so multi-layered and so recursive and folding in upon themselves so I outline to sort of lay it all out to total

it up there and to make sure I'm aware at all times that "just remember, the consequences of A is going to rebound on B and then there's C". It's like having a second brain on display. I can be very absent-minded and scatterbrained and that can be very fatal in the middle of writing a critical scene or plotting your structure out. You can't let the outline drive the story and you do get that quality and I do see that quality in certain books where obviously the writer had the outline and he said "stick to the outline, that's the plan, don't change anything, don't improvise, stick to the outline, get it done." Sometimes it's very easy to tell.

Without getting spoilery, can we talk a bit about the third book? What's going to be happening with Locke in it?

The title is the *Republic of Thieves*. It's a split book, being an odd-numbered book. It's going to flash back to him as a teenager and it continues on from the end of *Red Seas, Red Skies*. The gap is only going to be two and a half to three months from the last book. It will take place later the same year but further north, finding out what's going to happen with Locke. This is the book that introduces Sabetha, finally. I've been specifically avoiding showing her for two books now, but this is the book where she gets revealed in full as a child and as an adult. All the flashbacks center around Locke's interaction with her as a child when he was in his teenage years and she enters

the main plot once again in the present. It's her book, this is the book where she's finally brought on stage, not just bit by bit and piece by piece, but she's all there. Sabetha is a freakishly important character to Locke. She's a very special character in that Locke's tag line is that he's the greatest con artist in the world where con artists are generally not known. He's actually not the best con artist on his planet, he's the second best con artist. And he's madly in love with the first best con artist on his world. She deserves a spotlight, she deserves a book of her own, she deserves a revelation.

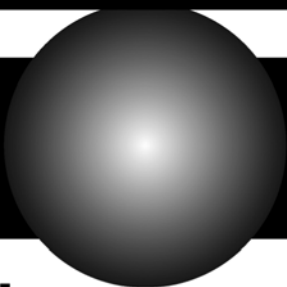
You can tell something about her through Locke's view of her, but how reliable is Locke's point of view?

How reliable is Locke about anything? Without saying too much, there is a major perception gap between how Locke sees Locke and Sabetha and how Sabetha sees Locke and Sabetha and how they both look at the Gentlemen Bastards and how they were and might become. Yes, there are some differences of opinion.

I'd like to thank Scott for taking the time for this interview.



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In Memory

Sir Arthur C. Clarke
Ernest Gary Gygax
Joseph Weizenbaum

Sir Arthur C. Clarke
1917-2008

Sir Arthur C. Clarke died on March 19, 2008 of respiratory problems in Sri Lanka where he had lived since the 1950s. In recent years he had been confined to a wheelchair by post-polio syndrome.

While he was probably best known as a science fiction writer (*2001, Childhood's End*) he also developed the concept of the geosynchronous communications satellite. During World War II, he volunteered for the Royal Air Force, where he worked in the then highly-secretive development of radar, and foresaw the concept of communication satellites. In the 1940s, he predicted that man would land on the moon by the year 2000; an idea that was soundly dismissed as impossible.

He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1998.

Ernest Gary Gygax
1938 - 2008

Ernest Gary Gygax died March 4th 2008. His most well-known accomplishment was to marry wargames to fantasy. Along with Dave Arneson, he created what would become the most-played fantasy role-playing game of all time, *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gary was married twice and had six children and seven grandchildren. While he didn't invent the polyhedra commonly used in gaming, he did show us all how to use them for gaming.

I have played many other systems but like in all things you always remember your first. I remember getting "Eldritch Wizardry" as a gift for my tenth birthday. I remember buying my first set of dice at the Tin Soldier. My first character was a dwarf; for those of you that didn't know: dwarf was both a race and a class in the original.

In a very real way, much of the last thirty plus years of my life were made better through gaming. My wife of twenty years was a guest of another gamer at our Saturday night game when I first met her. My best man I met at a D&D game, my friends are mostly gamers. I became involved in conventions and CASFS because of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Gary: if we ever meet in the afterlife, I'd love to sit in a game with you. Hey, if you can read this and can manifest, stop by our Sunday game. - Bob LaPierre

"A Ward for A Wizard"
(Tribute to Gary Gygax)
by Jeffrey Lu

Roll the dice
To play someone else
In world of dragons
And mazes.

Roll the dice
To see the tale
Built on folly
And entertainment.

Roll the dice
With a group
Of adventurers
From a mundane life.

Roll the dice
In many sided
And many ways
To see what serve the person.

Roll the dice
To honor a wizard
Who died too soon
Without a healing potion.

Roll the dice
To note a passing
From his ward
To the endless editions in tomes of D&D
and AD&D.

Roll the dice
And realize Gary Gygax
Is gone
But forever immortal in one fantasy game
of dice.

Gary Gygax Gone
by Jeffrey Lu

I've been playing fantasy games since 1970's. I remember in a chess tournament, I saw two friends playing a strange game with a few different sided dice, a

screen, pencils, papers, and a few books. This was my introduction to AD&D.

Usually, I let Bob and others write about games while I do book reviews related to Warhammer and other Black Library Publication. But hearing that Gary Gygax, co-creator of AD&D, passed away, I've decided to throw in my two-cents worth.

To sum it all, I've enjoyed AD&D. This helped me expand my reading

into history, cultures, mythology, and literature. I had been a player for a long time and even helped as a DM (Dungeon Master). Sadly, I never met the guy.

I stopped playing due to the endless revisions of the rules and the bottomless costs of the game. I had a life and needed to focus on friends and families.
Enough

Joseph Weizenbaum
1923 - 2008

Joseph Weizenbaum, a computer programmer who helped advance artificial intelligence only to become a critic of the technology later in his life, has died of stomach cancer at the age of 85.

In the mid-1960s while he was a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he developed ELIZA which became his best-known contribution to computer programming. The program allowed a person to have a conversation with a computer, with the computer using what the person said to create its reply. When Weizenbaum discovered that many users were taking his program seriously and were opening their hearts to it, he was shocked and he began to think philosophically about the implications of artificial intelligence, leading him to later become a critic of it.

He is survived by his four daughters.

An American in Australia Part Two- Melbourne Hike to You Yangs to Me, Sing?
By Jeffrey Lu

A Melbourne friend named Onelia guided a group including me to an extinct volcano in You Yangs Park. The hike was long but the view was amazing.

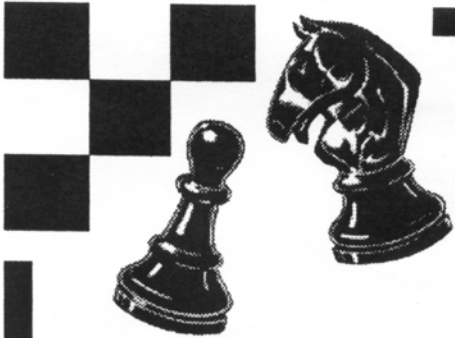
There were at least two hundred small flags over one field. I've been told that there was a fire there, a year before. The flags were where the new seeds planted for a future forest.

One time, I almost gave up in climbing the long dirt roads. A lady friend from San Diego came and sat down next to me. We were rested for a few minutes. She then told me she was giving up. Instead of us both quitting, I had the nerve to say since we're up here and close to the top, why not give it go? We both made it up there.

Later, Onelia brought the group to a Serendip Wildlife Preserve. This was a place of my first encounter of another group- kangaroos. Comically, they were asleep at a distance. When we approached, they suddenly got up and hopped away into the bushes. Oh, well.

I saw more wildlife in this place. Birds, mostly. I wondered if I will ever see a kangaroo, up close?

We'll see.
Next in Part 3: Chocolate Factory, Honey Farm, and A Date With Two Devils in Tasmania.



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Hands On Apple's iPod Touch

By Shane Shellenbarger

On June 11th, 2007, Apple released their much anticipated iPhone, and the universe of Smartphones (or nearly smart phones) never will be the same. After the initial flush of excitement, the public began to wonder: when will Apple introduce a touch-screen-based portable music player? The answer was September 5th, 2007 with the introduction of the 8GB unit priced at \$299, the 16GB unit priced at \$399, and on February 5th, 2008 Apple released the 32GB iPod Touch for \$499.

Apple's 1.1.4 firmware update for the iPhone and iPod Touch was propagated, courtesy of iTunes 7.6.1.9. The Touch now has many of the features of the iPhone, including Calendar, Mail, Stocks, Maps, Weather, Notes, Safari, Contacts, and YouTube. With built-in wi-fi, you can access the iTunes Wi-Fi Music Store and download music. The next time you sync your Touch, the music you've purchased will download to your iTunes library. Video and movies might require too lengthy a download to be practical, although interrupted downloads seem to resume once a wi-fi signal is reestablished. You can also use wi-fi with Safari to browse the internet, with Google or Yahoo as your search engines. The YouTube button connects to the site where you can watch and bookmark your favorite videos.

Apple and Starbucks are rolling out another wi-fi service that allows you to purchase a song you hear playing in

Starbucks. You can also see and buy the last ten songs played in Starbucks. The service is currently available in Seattle, New York, the San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Check Apple.com/Starbucks for rollout details.

The first accessory needed for the Touch is a protective case or skin, such as invisibleSHIELD. Apple loves the bright and shiny chromed back, but that coating will show every ridge of a fingerprint and it scratches easily. Like the iPhone, the Touch has a glass front which won't scratch as easily, but will break if treated roughly enough. TAKE CARE! The Touch is slender, measuring 4.3 inches by 2.4 inches by 0.31 inch thick, its weight 120 grams or 4.2 ounces. The screen is 3.5 inches with a resolution of 480 by 320 pixels or 163 pixels per inch.

While the key interface is the multi-touch-screen, there are two exterior buttons. First is the Sleep/Wait button on the top edge to turn the unit on, off and sleep (to conserve power.) The other button is located bottom-center and it acts as a menu-home switch. Unlike the iPhone recessed earphone jack, the Touch uses a standard 3.5 mm jack which is located along the lower right edge near the docking plug. Also unlike the iPhone, the Touch will allow you to output your photos, videos and music to a television equipped with A/V inputs via the earphone jack, but don't count on the cable you bought for an older iPod Video to work with the Touch, because it probably won't. A new A/V cable will be your second accessory purchase. The Touch comes supplied with the standard Apple earbuds, a USB 2.0-to-Apple Dock

Connector, and a clear plastic stand to hold the Touch at a reasonable viewing angle.

The three best features of the Touch are the orientation acclimation, the pinch



zoom, and the inertia glide flick. Shifting perspective of photos or videos is as easy moving from vertical to horizontal or vice versa. Do you want to get a closer look? Touch the area of interest with your thumb and forefinger (or any two fingers), spread them apart, and you've zoomed in. Reverse the process and you've zoomed out. Touch and move and the area you've touched will follow your finger. If you want to see photos you've loaded, touch the photo icon located at the bottom of the main screen, select the folder you want, scan the thumbnails, tap the photo you want and it zooms to fill the screen. Flicking your finger left or right across the screen brings up a previous or next photo. Related to this action is Cover Flow which allows you to scan your albums by cover art slowly or quickly.

Battery life for audio play is roughly twenty-two hours with video play at about five hours. By plane, that will let

you listen to tunes to most destinations on the planet or watch video most of the way across the U.S. of A.

At nearly \$500, the Touch requires some serious consideration before purchasing (unless your name is Bill Gates, then you'd have other considerations.) For all of the goshgollygeewhiz features, the Touch has its downside. The battery isn't easily replaceable, there is no FM radio feature, and no SD memory card slot to expand the 32GB storage capacity. Unlike previous Shuffles, Nanos, and iPod Videos, the Touch does not currently allow itself to be used as a generic USB storage device. If these limitations don't

bother you and you've got the dough to blow, have at it and enjoy one of the coolest portable music/video players under the sun.

By the way, if you already own the iPhone, the Touch will hold no interest for you. At best, the Touch is iPhone Lite. You'd be better off saving up your money for the end of your contract with AT&T. By that time, Apple will probably have a 32, 64, 128, or 256GB iPhone with third party applications and a new service provider. Plus, if the form and function really catch on other cell phone manufacturers might have a better phone for less money. It's possible, but I doubt that Steve Jobs or Apple will rest on their laurels.

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Running Time: 105 min

Rated: R for strong bloody violence, language and some sexual content/nudity.

Crystal Sky Pictures

Release Date: March 14th, 2008

This was incredible escapism. I was impressed with the amount of careful thought that went into this plot. The politicians were completely believable in their slimy-ness. The erection of a wall to quarantine large quantities of the population is right out of the emergency fieldbook. I also noted that the truism that *the charismatic man in a situation of chaos rules* was obviously followed.

Now for the movie itself: I enjoyed it. The movie opens with a virus dubbed *doomsday* breaking out in Scotland. It was one hundred percent fatal so the Prime Minister had the whole of Scotland quarantined by means of a thirty foot high wall, a blockade of the coast and a strict no-fly zone. A woman manages to convince some soldiers to take her toddler child Eden in the last helicopter out. Jump to twenty-seven years later. The toddler is now an extremely competent officer. There is a breakout of the doomsday virus in London, and there is evidence that there are survivors in Scotland. Eden is to lead a team to find the cure and bring it back to save London. The story follows her through the course of finding and returning the cure. It of course is not as simple as all that, but if I told you then you wouldn't have any fun.

It was a cross between "Escape from New York" and "Mad Max2". The fact that humans tend toward punk when anarchy reigns must be a cultural phenomenon. The violence is on a par with a typical slasher film but isn't as prevalent. I thought the cannibalistic tendencies were in a word "stupid". Early in the movie there is a collision with a cow in the midst of a herd, if there are that many cows, why eat people? But enough nit-picking.

Four and a half out of five. - **Bob LaPierre**

Jumper

Starring: Hayden Christensen, Jamie Bell, Diane Lane, Samuel L. Jackson

Director: Doug Liman

Runtime: 88 minutes

Rated: PG-13

Release Date: February 14th, 2008

Reviewed by: Len Berger (ConNotations Film Editor)

Imagine you can teleport anywhere you wish at any time. What fun ! Well I

guess it wouldn't be too much fun if you ended up teleporting into the middle of a brick wall so let's hope your aim is really good. Anyway, David Rice (played by Hayden Christensen – yup Anakin Skywalker) discovers early in his life that he can do just that.

David runs into Griffin (played by Jamie Bell who was Jimmy in the latest *King Kong* film) and is told about a group known as the Paladins who track down jumpers. Griffin has managed to stay alive by turning the tables on the Paladins.

Agent Roland (played by Samuel L. Jackson - *Snakes on a Plane*, 1408) who is a leader in the Paladin organization does his best to track down and eliminate jumpers. The viewers of the film would like to know more about the Paladin organization and why they pursue their deadly course (other than just thinking the jumpers have too much power).

Director Doug Liman (*Mr. and Mrs. Smith* and *The Bourne Ultimatum*) gives us some pretty impressive action sequences – jumpers can do some pretty cool things. The film is based on the novel *Jumper* by Steven Gould. The book answers many questions that the film goers are left to guess about.

The film is entertaining, has some great special effects but the story has some holes so I rate the film a B-.

The Other Boleyn Girl

Sony Pictures,

Directed by Justin Chadwick

Running Time: 1 hr. 55 min.

Rated: PG-13

Release Date: February 29th, 2008

This film is a Soap Opera. It is a Historical "Days of Our Lives" brought to the screen with wonderful pageantry and costumes to die for. The outlines of the historical facts are embroidered with outrageous speculation and downright lies. I was reminded of the way the *DaVinci Code* built itself around a narrow group of historical facts and wild interpretations with an insidious interpolation of untruths.

As a costume drama it excels. The queen's costumes were chosen to enhance her character of beleaguered virtue. Anne's were chosen to project deceit and licentiousness. Her sister Jane's projected innocence and later fallen virtue. The male costumes showed of the sartorial peacockery of the age.

The backdrop of court pageantry was superb with the milling nobles, the furniture, the wall hangings and vast ceilings. All of the glories of the period were set out. It is an experience not to be missed.

I recommend this film unreservedly. Just remember to take its history with about eight grains of salt. — **Gary Swaty**
(Cast: Natalie Portman — Anne Boleyn, Eric Bana — King Henry VIII, Scarlett Johansson — Mary Boleyn, Rue McClanahan — Lady Jane Rochford, Kristin Scott Thomas — Lady Elizabeth, Jim Sturgess — George Boleyn. Costume design was by Academy Award winner Sandy Powell, whose credits include

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Shakespeare in Love, Gangs of New York, The Aviator, Mrs Henderson Presents and The Departed.)

The Jane Austen Book Club
Robin Swicord, writer/director

Running Time: 1 hr. 46 min.

Rated: PG-13

Release Date: September 21st, 2007 (limited)

Why is this chick flick getting a mention in *ConNotations*? Because two of the main characters meet at a hotel which is simultaneously hosting dog breeders' and a **science fiction convention**. In an elevator, Maria Bello says to a goth LARPer, "My dog has the same exact collar!" She is puzzled when she gets a null response, until helpful stranger Hugh Dancy explains a few SF convention pointers to her. In another scene, he tells her how he first came to read SF, as a way of escaping a household overrun by females; but, ironically, many of his favorite writers proved to be women.

While some ensemble chick flicks are contrived and emotionally manipulative, with a bunch of divas swanning around histrionically, **The Jane Austen Book Club** is deft, funny, and refreshing. The only diva is Lynn Redgrave, and she plays a hippy pothead mother named Momma Sky, so instead of swanning, she staggers. Oh, be sure to check out the deleted scenes. — **Chris Paige**

MangaZone

Hayate The Combat Butler Volume 1
by Kenjiro Hata
Viz Media, \$9.99, 208 pps

Hayate, a young boy whose parents left him with their enormous debt, makes a promise on Christmas Eve to kidnap a young girl, Nagi, and hold her ransom. Like everything in Hayate's life, this too fails as he ends up saving the girl from kidnappers. After almost dying to save Nagi's life, Hayate wakes up in a bed at a mansion. Hayate, thinking he is dead, goes and takes a bath in the huge indoor bathtub where he runs into Nagi's fresh 17-year-old maid, Maria. Maria tells him that Nagi is the mansion's mistress. So he then asks her for a job. Nagi accepts his offer and Hayate starts down the path to become a combat butler. This is a great and fun book. I was hooked with the first page. Now, after reading this so far, must add in that, while he tried to kidnap Nagi, she thought he was confessing his love for her. This twisted romance, comedy, action-story parodies just about everything out there. The first volume alone has cameos by Detective Conan and L from Death Note; just to name a few. I so can't wait for the anime to come out here. - **Ninjakittyofdoom**

(Continued on page 14)

Ral & Grad

by Tsuneo Takano and Takeshi Obata
Viz Media, \$7.99, 216 pps

Ral Grad comes from the mind of Tsuneo Takano and the artistry of the award winning Takeshi Obata. Following the dark style from his previous work, *DeathNote*, Obata's style compliments the story of Ral, a fifteen year-old boy that has been locked in a sphere of darkness since birth. In a world where your shadow is a monster that can take over your body and end your life Ral makes friends with the shadow that lives within him, a dragon named Grad. After being released to save a kingdom in trouble Ral and Grad take on the quest to return all the shadows back to the two-dimensional world from whence they came. With a strong starting plot and very comedic protagonist, this manga will have you wanting more. - **Kyla Mills**

"Japan Ai: a Tall Girl's Adventure in Japan"

by Aimee Major Steinberger
Go! Media Entertainment, \$16.99, 186 pp

The book is about a fan that goes to Japan. She loves not only manga, anime, and costume contests but is also a Volks collector (dolls). She has the means but there is one problem... she's six-foot tall.

Enjoyable. Her adventures in Japan are well worth reading. She brings some points in the culture clash between the Rising Sun and U.S. Recommend to fans and dreamers of Japanese culture. - **Jeffrey Lu**

DRAMACON 3

by Svetlana Chmakova
Tokyo Pop, \$9.99, 216 pp

This is a comedy romance between two people, Matt and Christie, at a yearly anime/manga convention. This is the third installment of the series.

Loved it. Definitely for anime and manga people who have been to these conventions. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Gamer's Corner

Super Smash Brothers Brawl
Platform - Nintendo Wii
Suggested Price: \$49.99

Third in the series of Super Smash Brothers video game series. This game was great; the single player co-op story mode is over 6hrs long with a great in-depth storyline bringing all of the characters in a brawl together. The brawl modes are great with new added characters like Sonic, Pokemon Trainer, and Solid Snake. It also has an online mode to battle people in other countries and you can bet on them, also. With fun, colorful, final smash attacks it makes for a great party game. I did 2 mega-brawl days with my friends and everyone enjoyed it. With the option of using either Classic, Game Cube, or Wii remote; it makes it easy for everyone. This game is great for all ages and can keep you going well into the night. - **Ninjakittyofdoom**

Neverwinter Nights 2 Expansion
Mask of the Betrayer
Forgotten Realms
Role-Playing Game for the PC
\$29.95, Atari/Obsidian

This expansion allows you to run "Epic Level" characters. I like some of the possibilities but it is too heavy-handed for my tastes. I don't like to be told what my character does; I want to choose for myself. The feats are mostly cool and the Epic spells are supposed to be earth-shattering (I'm not running a spell-caster so I don't know from personal experience). I like the new item creation system and have already experimented. Some of the potential items are, it's fair to say, overpowered. You start with a problem and it runs you. I've yet to decide whether I even want to finish it. I don't recommend it. - **Bob LaPierre**

Witch Hunter: The Invisible World
Tabletop RPG
\$39.95/ [Paradigm Concepts](#) 274pp

Paradigm Concepts gives us this new take on the 17th century. You are alive in a time (1689) when the veil between the worlds is thin and witches are cavorting with demons. Your job is to stop them and send the spirits back through the veil. Backgrounds are included for all major European political forces, and information on Catholicism, Judaism, almost all major Protestant sects, major monastic orders and all kinds of splinter groups are available. If your character originates from a country that was a major Christian sea power or from the colonized New World, you are covered. "...Right now, the game is strongest in its New World usage, but we have plans for books

detailing Europe, Africa, and the Near East. Islam is not heavily detailed because the focus is on the Western European colonial powers and the native peoples of the New World. I can recommend and excellent resource on Historical Islam with our Tales of the Caliphate Nights release..." Direct quote from: Eric Wiener, Chief Financial Officer, Paradigm Concepts, Inc.

The system uses a dynamic d10 dice pool. While the game system is different from the "Story Teller" system of White Wolf it uses similar amounts of 10-siders. Having just recently been immersed in that system I'm glad to be able to use those dice for another system.

Paradigm has also opened up a living campaign, it is called Dark Providence, and is primarily set in the New World. At this time, there are 11 adventures released and available for play.

I'm having fun, buy it (when there is one available). - **Bob LaPierre**
See you next time.

Warhammer Blackhearts
The Omnibus
by Nathan Long
Black Library Productions, \$11.99, pp. 766.

Reiner Hetzau is a leader of a fantasy "Dirty Dozen" that have to fight the evil of the empire: ratmen, Chaos cultists, rogue commanders and more, themselves- there is a spy among them.

This tome contains the novels "Valnir's Bane," "The Broken Lance," and "Tainted Blood." There are two short stories "Hetzau's Follies" and "Rotten Fruit."

Enjoyable and entertaining. Recommended to dark fantasy readers and Warhammer fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000
His Last Command
by Dan Abnett
Black Library Productions, \$7.99, pp. 413.

Ibram Gaunt and his crew came back alive from a tainted enemy planet. His old command, The Tainith First-and-Only is now divided into a new group. Unfortunately, not only does Gaunt have to fight his own people but the new group is also fighting the veterans Chaos forces.

This is the book two of The Lost sequence.

Surprised in finding out one character killed. Recommended to dark war sci-fi readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

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Gamers (Continued from page 14)

Warhammer 40,000
The Armour of Contempt
by Dan Abnett
Black Library Productions, \$19.99,
315 pages.

Commissar Ibram Gaunt and the Tainith First-and-Only are back in liberating Gereon, a Chaos-held planet. What will be the costs for this war besides death and destruction? This is the book three in The Lost series.

Loved it. The cure for a tainted planet can be worse than the disease. Recommended to dark war sci-fi readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - Jeffrey Lu

Musty Tomes

Tom Robbins,
Speculative Fiction Writer:
Another Roadside Attraction, 1971
Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, 1976
Still Life With Woodpecker, 1980
Jitterbug Perfume, 1984
skinny legs and all, 1990
Half Asleep In Frog Pajamas, 1994
Fierce Invalids Home From Hot
Climates, 2000
Villa Incognito, 2003
Wild Ducks Flying Backward, col-
lected short writings, 2005
All in print from Bantam Books.

Why should that old hippy, Tom Robbins, be reviewed as a speculative fiction writer? Does he write fantasy or science fiction, or some kind of speculation? If we define low fantasy as: that not concerned with ultimate good-versus-evil and saving the world, then we can say yes. Each of his eight novels is based upon fantastic speculation and its consequences. I will list them in order: 1 – the mummy of Jesus Christ, 2 – a hitchhiker girl with very big thumbs, 3 – pyramid power (also has a real flying saucer), 4 – the quest for immortality and the ultimate perfume, 5 – Salome’s dance of the seven veils, 6 – a cure for cancer, and the mystical secret university of Timbuktu, 7 – an Amazon shaman’s curse (also has golden gods in another dimension), and 8 – awol Vietnam War MIA’s hiding in Laos.

Consider his fourth novel, *Jitterbug Perfume*. A tribal chieftain of prehistoric Russia and a couple of women are mutants who don’t age. Wishing to live forever, they journey to Tibet to learn from the secret immortals. Along the way, the god Pan and his wood nymphs befriend them. They set up a perfume shop in Paris, and there is competition with other perfumers. Eventually the story ends up in our mundane, contemporary world just like all of the other novels. This is why Robbins is labeled

mainstream lit, along with the profound observations on religion, sex, politics, and humanity.

Problem is, he’s just too FUNNY to be really mainstream. Yes, there’s that moral outrage at the state of the world and the insane taboos of our own uptight society, which most “quality” writers evince. But then he’ll swing from outrage to outrageous humor, if only in the defiance of social conformity. Critics blame him as therefore only fit for college kids who question all authority, so often writing on explicit sex and religious hypocrisy. What childish limitations these critics have! See what unfettered grownups can do with fantasy speculation. Oh yes, one more thing: be prepared for lots of laughs. - M.L. FRINGE

In Our Book

Crashing Paradise
by Christopher Golden &
Thomas E. Sniegowski
\$7.99, Ace Dark Fantasy, 278pp

This is a novel of the Menagerie. I discovered this was part of a series after I’d already gotten into it. It was good enough that I’ll go back and read the preceding stories. And this was good enough to stand alone.

The Menagerie are a mixed group of creatures – none of which are human...anymore. They collaborate to combat real evil and are led by a charismatic but enigmatic fellow by the name of Doyle. Doyle and his love, a Faerie Princess, plus a demon-teenager, a hobgoblin who would rather not be a hero, and a ghost are brought together when they are all threatened by otherworldly forces for unknown reasons. The reasons become more clear when some very heavy-hitting evil guys kidnap Eve – the mother of all humanity and of all vampires. When Eve was thrown out of the Garden of Eden, she was captured by a nasty demon who made her into a vampire and insane. Many eons later, by an accident, Eve regained her sanity and memory at which time she declared merciless war on all her vampire children.

A really big evil is coming to our plane of existence and, for some reason, the local nasties have a plan that involves getting Eve back into the Garden of Eden. She can’t imagine how that’s possible since she’s tainted and there’s no way God is letting her back in. But the hope for redemption that suddenly springs up in her heart overshadows her natural caution. Meanwhile, the Menagerie, fearing the worst, are coming to save her; just as soon as they can save themselves first. And if the evil ones succeed, the Garden of Eden may be lost forever.

The characters are marvelous. I am fascinated by their back history and I love the idea of these people working together. I missed mentioning the most fascinating of all – Clay – who was the template God used to create all life, and then abandoned.

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The plot was well done and the pacing good. A very engrossing read. - Catherine Book

A Magic of Twilight
by S.L. Farrell
DAW Books, 546pps; \$24.95

An intriguing beginning to a fantasy cycle, “A Magic of Twilight,” is well worth the cover price.

I have not read any of Farrell’s ‘Cloudmage’ series, but this a compelling story about a complacent civilization embroiled in violent change. There is war, religious upheaval and a shift in leadership.

The tale focuses on the growth and maturation of a fascinating religious acolyte named Ana cu’Seranta a follower of the god Cenzi and the faith that surrounds him call Concenzia. Magic is involved, and what’s interesting, instead of being anathema as it so frequently is when religion is in charge, it is the foundation of this faith which is the state religion of the city of Nessantico (sort of a ‘Rome.’). But of course, only if you perform it the right way, according to their religious texts.

Use it the wrong way and you are unclean, a “Numetodo” and depending on who is controlling the religious tenor of the city, you might be worth hanging and quartering.

At the beginning of the book, Farrell

lists books and inspirations for this tale such as a history of the Medicis, and the landscape of the Loire Valley in France. The names he has created for this story are real creative but mouth-crunchers, and for me, are a bit of a weakness since not until the end do you get a pronunciation guide. Visually, they are bit of a stumble. The ruler of Nessantico is called the Kraljica or Kraljiki. Other names of prominent characters are Karl ci’Vliomanti, Sergei ca’Rudka and Dhosti ca’Millac. Sort of a combination of French and Italian and maybe some German?

But once past these jawbreakers, the story is riveting. Ana cu’Seranta is a rather naïve acolyte who feels her mastery of magic called the Ilmodo or the Scath Cumhacht or the X’in Ka (depending on where you are from and what form of religion you follow) is unreliable.

But of course, that’s not really the case, and through an injudicious use of the Ilmodo she becomes the focus of the Archigos (like the Pope), Dhosti ca’Millac and she is called to the temple to attend him.

And then things really fall apart as the current Kraljica, who has espoused peace and negotiation throughout her long reign, is celebrating her Jubilee, in the midst of which she is poisoned and eventually dies. Her handsome but pig-headed son becomes the Kraljiki—and

(Continued on page 16)

In Our Book (Continued from page 15)

the peace dissolves into chaos as the Hirzg of Firenzcia decides to invade Nessantico and his pet A'Teni (sort of an archbishop) decides he wants Dhosti ca'Millac's position as head of the faith and...well, everyone has an agenda or two. Get the book. Find out what happens to this riveting set of characters and the fate of this extremely well-drawn world.

You won't be disappointed. And like me, will undoubtedly want more. - Sue Martin

Death's Head

by David Gunn

Del Rey Ballantine Books 343 p, \$24.95

This is hardcore military SF, with the emphasis firmly on the military, but the SF is sharp, original, and intriguing. David Gunn is writing from a mixture of experience and imagination, and I would bet that the strangest scenes derive from experience. His descriptions of politicking at all levels, within units, within prison, social, governmental, and galactic, indicate that he is observant and no fool. The writing style struck me as a cross between *Jarhead* and Melville's satire *The Confidence-Man*. Gunn writes in a high testosterone voice, but articulately and with a vastly greater vocabulary than say, Hemingway.

The protagonist, Sven, besides having a metal arm that replaced the one he lost in a fight, is 98.2% human and 1.8%

some unspecified *other*, and he proves to be capable of pain-induced telepathy, at least with the telepathic alien ferox. He has another, crucial genetic gift: regeneration. With these 3 advantages, he is equipped to survive situations that spell death to others, and that makes him ... useful.

The ferox are desert dwelling telepathic nomads, and since humans are not ordinarily telepathic, they regard humans much the way we regard cows with guns. When ferox overrun a desert fort, they find wet-behind-the-ears soldiers who die quickly, and Sven, tied up to a whipping post for execution, because he and the NCO in charge didn't exactly get along. Sven responds to their mental queries, so they take him along; and he becomes a sort of mascot, until near starvation and a flamethrower attack destroy the ferox base. Sven is rescued by the elite fighting force known as the Death's Head, but being the sole survivor of a ferox attack makes him smell like a traitor, so he is sent to a prison planet.

What is really going on is that he is being assessed for possible recruitment by none other than Emperor OctoV himself. As a prisoner, Sven leads his group of political prisoners and derelicts to a position of relative power within the system. In the process, he comes to genuinely respect two of the prisoners, and when one of them asks him for a favor, he makes a promise that will supersede all subsequent mere orders by officers or emperors. On his first assign-

ment, these conflicting loyalties are put to the test.

As he proves his worth to the Death's Head chain of command, his missions become increasingly galactic in scope, as the Emperor sends his cannon fodder to grab planets held by the Uplifted, a civilization of humans ruled by cyborgs. These wars are overseen, and occasionally mediated, by the U/Free civilization, which has sufficiently advanced technology that neither the Emperor nor the Uplifted will openly defy it. As Sven observes, the U/Free carry such a big stick they can afford to speak very softly.

Along the way Sven forms his own indispensable cadre of Death's Head auxiliaries, who are as irreverent as he and almost as focused on getting the job done, in spite of being young, or borderline psychotic, or infected by the Uplift virus. He also acquires the best sidekick since the Carrie/Robin character in Frank Miller's mind-blowing Batman mini-series *The Dark Knight*: a smart handgun that imprints on Sven and then responds empathically to his read of a situation, making snide commentaries. Yes, the sidearm is the sidekick.

Here's a small quote, so you can get a sense of the writing. This is from page 13 (advanced reader's copy), when Sven is still tied to the whipping post and a ferox is folding him by the throat.

"The ferox follows my glance. Then his other hand moves to the broken flesh of my back as he dips his fingers into my blood and carries it to his mouth. Seconds later, he spits and keeps spitting. I could have told him. Bad blood, my father always said." - Chris Paige

Eternal Nights

By Patti O'Shea

Lovespell, New York, 2006, Mass Market Paperback, 355 Pages, \$6.99

Set on Jarved Nine, where an Earth expedition is studying an intact city built in ancient times by an unknown race. The city, protected by a mysterious energy field, has survived the centuries even though no sign of its builders remains.

Our protagonists are Captain Kendall Thomas, a military archaeologist who keeps track of artifacts found by the civilian researchers and Special Ops Captain Wyatt Montgomery. Kendall discovers that some of the archaeologists are diverting artifacts into the illegal antiquities market. Worse, in order to ship them out they must have help from somewhere very high in the military command structure.

She doesn't know where to turn. She trusts a friend of Wyatt's in Wyatt's absence, but he is killed. She goes to the ancient temple to check artifacts and is trapped there. Coming back, Wyatt joins her there and they are lost in the ancient maze. It is only their emerging memories of a past life where she was chief priestess of the temple and he was her lover that save them. They play tag with

the tomb robbers and emerge. They still must evade the enemy, trace the thefts to the top of the hierarchy emerge alive to reap the love they have found for each other.

The book is quite readable though it is obviously derivative. Jane Ann Krentz does it a little better. Fans of SF Romance will love this. — Gary Swaty

Garden Spells

by Sarah Addison Allen

\$20.00, Bantam Books, 286pp

Not my usual fare but a totally charming story. Claire Waverly lives in her family's home in a small town. Claire lives alone and likes it that way. Her sister, Sydney, left many years earlier and the sisters were never close. Claire is controlled and alone. Sydney lives on the road as their mother did, sleeping with loads of men and living life on the edge...until she got pregnant. Trapped by her daughter's father, an angry, controlling man, she lived in misery until she had an opportunity to escape. And the only place to go to - was home.

The Waverly women have always had a reputation for being a bit different - the story never calls them witches but that's the idea. Claire uses the special herbs and flowers in her garden to cause specific effects and has developed a very successful catering business. Her aunt, Evanelle, is known for her peculiar tendency to have to give things to people. And the things she gives are always something that the person will need at a critical time. Claire and Sydney's grandmother, now passed, had said their mother had a particular affinity for the apple tree in the garden. Now, the apple tree has a reputation, as well. It's said that if you eat one of its apples, you'll see the most important event in your life. So... here's Claire who has a quiet, lonely life that she feels most comfortable with. Along comes her wild, unpredictable sister with small daughter in tow to unset her routine. And, on top of all that, she has a new neighbor right next door. A very attractive neighbor. And the apple tree seems to like him as well since it keeps throwing apples over his wall.

When Claire has to make room in her life for her sister and niece, she discovers it's not so bad. But when her sister forces her to make room for the attractive neighbor, that's too much and Claire fights back...with her herbs and flowers. Meanwhile, Sydney is discovering that she, too, has the Waverly gift. Her daughter, Bay, has always had the gift and known how to use it. Her mother and aunt just don't know it yet.

This is a gentle story of discovery and moving on. A romantic story of several people's lives and how they deal with disappointment and recover. With just a hint of magic...

A nicely plotted story. Interesting characters and good development. - Catherine Book

(Continued on page 17)



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In Our Book (Continued from page 16)

Small Favor - A Novel of the Dresden Files by Jim Butcher Roc Hardback \$23.95

Small Favor, the tenth installment of the Dresden Files series by Jim Butcher, deals primarily with the faerie side of things. Harry Dresden is called upon to return a favor owed to Mab, the Winter Queen, while the forces of the Summer Queen try to prevent him from accomplishing his mission. Along the way, Harry has to deal with multiple Denarians, an escalating procession of Billy Goat Gruffs, and other faerie creatures. On Harry's side is a good number of returning and recurring characters including The Knights of the Cross, Kincaid, The Archive, Toot Toot, his half brother Thomas, Bob, Murphy, and his apprentice Molly. Throw Johnny Marcone and some gangsters into the mix and Jim Butcher provides another fun and exciting adventure in his long-running series.

As you would expect in a Dresden Files novel, once things start happening it goes pretty much non-stop until you reach the end of the book. While putting his apprentice Molly through a shield practice session (having her younger siblings throw snowballs at her), Harry and the kids are attacked by faerie equivalents to the Billy Goat Gruffs, getting his nose broken during the fight. He soon learns that the Summer Court has him on a hit list now because he is being recruited by the Winter Queen, Mab, to find and recover gangster Johnny Marcone, who has been kidnapped by powerful forces. As Harry works to uncover what's really going on, he learns of a plot by Nicodemus, one of the most powerful of the Denarians, to recruit another big player into their cause in addition to continuing to try to turn Harry into one of them. By the time Harry realizes his true plan, it may be too late. In terms of the bigger story arcs that have been surfacing in the series, there's not much moving forward on the ongoing White Council versus the vampire Red Court activities. Harry does get a bit more knowledge in regards to the secretive Black Council that has been behind some of the happenings going on and Harry may have found an unlikely ally in trying to learn more about the Black Court.

Butcher has a couple of big set pieces, one set in the Shedd Aquarium and another set in a remote island in the middle of Lake Michigan, both of which are major skirmishes between the forces of good and evil. Other events and encounters that lead up to those bigger events are well-plotted and make sense in within the Dresden universe. Even though things get serious at times, Butcher keeps a light touch with occasional bits of humor and inventive courses of action on the part of Harry. His use of his cat, Mister, and some catnip in a sock to

sidetrack the Summer Court's attempts to track him is a good example.

Readers who have come into the series via the recent television series may find the much expanded cast of characters a bit daunting, but as he has done throughout the series, Butcher provides enough background on the characters and situations so that a new reader won't be lost. If you are a fan of the novels you won't be disappointed with the latest installment and will be ready to start anticipating the next one a year from now. - **Lee Whiteside**

Ysabel by Guy Gavriel Kay ROC books, 421 pp, \$15.

This is new ground for Kay as this novel is a contemporary fantasy set in and around Aix-in-Provence in France.

It's just wonderful.

I so enjoy getting on my small soapbox and telling all you fine readers again what an intelligent, erudite, literate adult writer Kay is. No pandering to the lowest common denominator (not that there's anything wrong with that when it's wanted). But here you have to pay attention and you *want* to pay attention because what you get to savor is lyrical writing and a look at a really fine imagination at the top of its ability.

The story involves two students Ned, a Canadian, and Kate, an American, who meet up while Ned's father, a famous photographer, is going to take photos of Saint-Sauveur Cathedral for a fancy coffee table art book.

The two explore the ancient site. First they come across a dark unfriendly stranger deep in the bowels of the church (which had been built on the site of the Roman forum) where no one should be. They then come across a compelling carving of a woman heavily eroded by time hidden in the church cloister outside identified as the "Queen of Sheba." Whoever she really was, the two find her fascinating.

Aix-in-Provence is a site where the ancient Celt-Ligurians and the Romans clashed in a huge battle beneath Mont Saint-Victoire and both of their histories are laid thickly throughout the area.

So while Ned's father and his team set up for photographs, the two students get pulled into an ancient struggle between two men and the "Queen of Sheba" who is named Ysabel.

There are horned gods and people who turn into wolves and owls. An ancient creepy bull-sacrifice in the ruins near Entremont—where Ned with his Gaelic background can kind of 'slide' between *now* and *then* seeing events happening as they did centuries ago. And take his friend Kate with him.

This a compelling look at the clash of civilizations and more importantly a very obsessive love triangle that spans centuries and the repercussions of such deep emotion on the paths of history.

The landscape of Provence is a

marvelous place to set the tale. And all the characters are well-drawn.

A real pleasure. - **Sue Martin**

Empyre by Josh Conviser Del Rey trade paperback 14.95

This is Conviser's second novel, a loose sequel to Echelon, and is very much in the same mold, though you don't need to read the first one to get the second. This is less science fiction than it is futuristic thriller-it has far more in common with Robert Ludlum's Jason Bourne novels than it does anything SF.

In the near distant future, Ryan Laing is a trained assassin and former secret agent-and is full of nanites, (called drones here) that render him nigh-invincible. He has to stop an international bioterrorist named Alfred Krueger, who has unleashed a deadly virus on the world, numbering his girlfriend Sarah, ex-secret

agent and hacker extraordinaire among its victims, while foiling a world-wide conspiracy and sorting out his personal life into the bargain.

This is a good(ish) book, it's a fast read, the plot moves, and the politics are plausible. As SF, it fails - Conviser clearly does not know how the science in his world works, nor is that important to him; which makes it hard to take him seriously. I know not all hard SF writers, or even most, are working scientists, but a little homework would be nice.

However, Conviser is a screenwriter by trade; most recently he worked on HBO's Rome. But, the whole time I was reading it, I could see the studio pitch underlying it - *made for Paul Greengrass, lots of action, good chase scenes, exotic locales, Brad Pitt and Scarlett Johansson'll love it, etc. This has the potential to be a solid summer film in 2010.*

(Continued on page 18)



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In Our Book (Continued from page 17)

If you're looking for a fast-paced thriller with a futuristic bent, you could do worse, but I'd recommend Greg Bear's *Quantico*, or the weather novels by Kim Stanley Robinson before I'd recommend this. – **Nadine Armstrong**

Goblin Hero

by **Jim C. Hines**

Daw Books, Inc. 343 p, \$6.99

This sequel to **Goblin Quest** continues to develop a theme of underdog-as-unlikely-hero by widening the focus to include new underdogs as companions and rivals for Jig, the goblin who just wants to be left in peace instead of pieces. But now he is famous as Jig Dragonslayer – there is an underground hit “The Song of Jig” summarizing his heroics (thoughtfully provided as a preface) – and everybody wants a piece of him. Kralk, the current goblin chief, wants him conveniently dead. A jealous goblin named Veka wants Jig to teach her how to be a hero, and if he won't, she wants to usurp his glory on her own. Injured goblins want him to heal their wounds, since he has that ability by way of a minor deity named Tymalous Shadowstar. Tymalous wants Jig to save the goblins from extinction, whether self-inflicted or from such menaces as hobgoblins, ogres, or ... invading pixies? Yes, in keeping with the level one threat goblins pose to would-be heroic adventurers, such as the ones who kidnapped Jig in the first book and forced him to confront a necromancer and a dragon, Jig and the other denizens of the mountain are now under attack by an infestation of powerful pixies who seek a new home for their banished queen; and pixies do not like goblins, hobgoblins, or ogres, except as temporary slaves.

Jig is small, even by the pitiful standards of goblins; who are lowest on the totem pole among the creatures of the mountain. A near-sighted runt whose survival skills consist of running away and avoiding conflict, he is now joined by other misfits: a dumb-as-a-rock goblin fighter who drops his weapon, a goblin crone who has to hobble along with the help of two sticks, and a hobgoblin who faints at the sight of blood. Veka is another misfit: she wants to be a wizard-hero, but like Rodney Dangerfeld she gets no respect. She is desperate to master the spells set forth in a scorched tome she salvaged from the dragon's hoard, and since Jig refuses to promote her aspirations, all her mentoring comes from another book: *The Path of the Hero*, by Josca. (Get it? *Joseph Campbell*? Campbell was a second-string academic who got famous by peddling pieces he filched from Carl Jung's psychological work, so he is ripe for lampooning, and I salute Mr. Hines for doing so.) Passages from *The Path of the Hero* appear as chapter headings, as do goblin proverbs and quotes from adventurers, gossips, and

cooks. Here are a few delectable selections:

“A lot of fledgling heroes have asked me to teach them, but I tell them to take a hike. Mentor a newbie, and the next thing you know you're getting slaughtered by some demon from the depths while your student escapes. Sure, the Hero eventually avenges the poor Mentor, but I'd rather be the avenger than the avengee any day.” – Nisu Graybottom

“Great power carries a great cost. But there's no rule that says you have to be the one to pay it.” – Grensley Shadowmaster

Here's my favorite: *The Reluctant Hero wants nothing more than to be left alone, but such is not the fate of the Hero. The Hero is destined for great things, and destiny is not easily fooled. Destiny uses a variety of prods to push the Hero into adventure, the destruction of his village being one of the most common. The murder of his friends and/or family is also popular. If you feel you may be a Reluctant Hero, you are advised to go forth into the world as soon as you can. It may be your only chance to protect your loved ones from the cruel, crushing hand of destiny.*

As a follow-up, there is a really fine elliptic reference to Reluctant Hero Harry Potter on page 338. There are also bits of verse scattered throughout the story. With his talent for parody and songwriting, if Jim Hines isn't already a filker, we need to recruit him. – **Chris Paige**

Dead To Me

by **Anton Strout**

Roc Paperback \$7.99

Dead to Me is the first novel by Anton Strout and is a somewhat humorous and light-hearted take on the Urban Fantasy genre. Set in New York City (you can't get any more urban), it is told from the point of view of Simon Canderous, a reformed (for the most part) thief with the power of psychometry who has recently joined up with the Department of Extraordinary Affairs, a New York City agency that is secret and underfunded. When Simon touches an object, he has the capability to experience events from the past related to the object, usually seeing it from the point of view of a person associated with it. He's still learning to use his power and his boss, Connor, will occasionally test him on it, much to Simon's annoyance. In the end, it pays off though, with Simon using his power to help him get through some tight situations near the end of the adventure.

Simon's power causes difficulties with the opposite sex and even when a ghost turns up that seems to take a liking to him, he can still get himself into trouble. The overall story deals with cultists making use of the souls of the recently departed for getting people high with Simon and Connor trying to find out what's really going on and following various leads. Along the way, Simon develops a relationship with the ghost as

well as the assistant to the head cultist while dealing with departmental and government politics and various threats to his life and the department.

The novel reads quick and takes a lighter approach to the goings-on than some of the more serious books in the genre. Some deaths and events seem to be taken a bit too lightly, though, and at times Simon seems a bit too naive for his own good. Comparisons to early Dresden Files novels can be made, but it doesn't have nearly the depth or plotting of later books in that series. It also makes use of some common plot elements such as an occult bookstore with magical books and bookshelves as the most prominent. One nit to pick, however, is how Strout handles Simon's dealing with the after-effects of using his power. Simon's blood sugar drops when he uses his power and he refuels by popping Life Savers candies. In real life that isn't as effective for a diabetic to bring themselves back up. But, it is a fantasy, so I'll cut him some slack.

For a first novel, it does set up the situation and characters well and doesn't get bogged down in too much exposition. It also tells its story without much in the way of sex or gore, which makes for a good change of pace from some authors in the genre. As long as you go into it expecting a more light-hearted adventure, you should be entertained and will have a tough time putting it down. – **Lee Whiteside**

Night Rising: Vampire Babylon Book One by **Chris Marie Green** **Ace Books, 325 pages, \$14**

This popped up to the top of the “to read” pile and I could only wish it has shown up sooner. Not your typical vampire hunter novel, this one is populated with rich, nuanced characters on both sides, indeed it is somewhat difficult to be sure which side is actually the “bad guys”.

Dawn Madison reluctantly returns to LA to look for her missing father. Once there she meets his co-workers, Kiko, a psychic who is also an aspiring actor (and, oh yes, a little person) and Breisi, a gadget wizard and former actress, both of whom work for the investigative agency Limpet and Assoc, owned and run by the mysterious Jonah Limpet, heard but never seen. Dawn finds herself drawn into the same investigation her father was following when he disappeared - the mysterious sighting on film of a long dead child actor.

The path of the investigation shows Dawn a side of LA she never knew existed, vampires and psychics, and, as she delves deeper into the sordid underside of Hollywood she begins to wonder just what she has let herself in for.

The story moves swiftly, I read it in one sitting. The bad guys are not clearly evil and the good guys, at least Jonah

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Paraworld Zero

by **Matthew Peterson**



"Truly original... Read it. Trust me, you'll have a terrific time." - Douglas Hill
"The exciting action of Star Wars." - Diana Pharaoh Francis
"Funny and imaginative." - Maria V. Snyder

www.ParaWorlds.com/connotations ISBN: 978-1-59092-491-4

In Our Book (Continued from page 18)

Limpet, are mysterious and evasive enough to make one wonder about their real motives in searching for the vampires. I got a bit tired of Dawn’s constant inner struggle to deal with not being as beautiful as her dead movie star mother but that was a minor irritation in a book that overall was an excellent read. There are two sexually suggestive scenes which did nothing to advance the story but seem to be required these days. Parents may wish to read the book first to determine suitability for their teenage readers. As for me, I will now be on the look out for the rest of the books in this series. Recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Midnight Reign:
Vampire Babylon Book Two
by Chris Marie Green
Ace Books, 326 pp; \$14**

When I started reading this, I thought “here we go with another book on stylish vampires running amuck in L.A.” And I almost put it down.

I am really glad I didn’t because the book, for me anyway, has an unusual feature: who’s on the good side and who’s on the bad side is very, very murky. It isn’t a cut and dried look at vampires fighting it out in a power play, manipulating humans and/or using them for food. Unless I am really missing the point!

It’s kind of a dark, twisted, but... bittersweet tale. A four-hundred-year-old Master Vampire named Benedikte has established what he calls an “Underground” (which it is) as a refuge for several echelons of vampiric folk in Los Angeles. And even more interesting, are the Elites—humans who have been turned to vampires because they didn’t want their youth (and because we are in L.A./Hollywood) and fame to disappear. They hunker down in the Underground indulging in all kinds of sensual pleasures, kept young by drinking the blood of the Master Vampire and waiting for the right moment for a comeback when they can be resurrected as it were and be a “new” star who kind of reminds people of the original star they actually were before they turned.

And I am hoping this is what the author wants, but I am not sure exactly where the “wrong” part is. As far as I can tell, the Master Vampire does not take humans willy-nilly in the night except those who ask to be changed. Who want the “eternal” youth he can give. But to be honest—it is not clear where all the blood the others drink from goblets is coming from...and I haven’t read her previous book “Night Rising.”

But there is this group, the “good” guys I guess who work for a mysterious stranger (who sounds obviously vampiric to me) named Jonah Limpet. The organization does PI work and is called Limpet and Associates. They call Jonah “The Voice” because mostly that’s what he is

for them, not a physical presence. And the three main characters are Dawn (whose famous movie star mother died horribly and who is also on an obsessive hunt for her missing dad), Kiko who is a psychic and Breisi Montoya who is a gadget wiz. These three take orders from Jonah, go out and hunt the undead.

The initiating story here is a nasty murderer dubbed the “Vampire Killer,” who has stalked a few women and ripped their throats out. But what is really behind these murders is pretty interesting.

Of course there is way, way more to this tale than simply staking those “that hunt the night” among the film industry elite of Hollywood.

And that’s what makes this book a really good paranormal offering. There are lots of layers and mysteries and when I was finished—I was NOT quite sure who I should be rooting for. I know who I felt sorry for, but not who should “win.”

For me, this is the sign of really good book and a clever author.

I really will hunt down her first book “Night Rising” as maybe it will be a bit clearer who is doing what to whom and why. But this, as a stand alone book, is a really compelling vampire hunter tale. - **Sue Martin**

**The Orphan’s Tales: In the Cities of
Coin and Spice
By Catherynne M. Valente
Spectra Trade Paperback 14.00**

Disclaimer: I flat-out loved this book. This is the second book in a loosely-linked duology called *The Orphan’s Tales*. The orphan is a nameless little girl who, because of the strange markings around her eyes, has been abandoned by her parents to live in the garden of the sultan’s palace living off the land, until, one day, a little boy finds her. He learns that the strange black circles around her eyes are stories, and she must tell all of them to be free.

So it begins.

The second volume is structurally like the first - the boy and girl meet in the garden and she tells the stories, which wind around and around like a nautilus shell. The stories, however, move from the forest and wilderness to the cities referred to in the title, with djinns and a phoenix - a more Arabic feel than the first volume. Valente is a poet, and it shows. The prose is lush and dense and beautiful, without being overwritten or purple, much like the sultan’s garden itself: the stories themselves worthy of the original 1001 Nights – if, that is, the Arabian Nights had a better attitude to women. It was, in general, a pleasure to read on all levels. The book itself, with illustrations by Michael William Kaluta, is lovely to look at. A caveat: I do think, in order to really enjoy it you do need to read the first one. While it is mostly stand-alone, I think you get a better flavor for the relationship of the boy and the girl and their world that way. This book is going to be on a lot of Hugo ballots. The first one was a World

Fantasy Award nominee, and this one is a strong contender for the ballot also. No, there is not a linear plot, and no one is collecting plot coupons, but if you are looking for a beautifully written fantasy that is something different, this book is for you. Fans of McKillip, Kushner, and modern fairy tales in general will love this. Highly recommended. - **Nadine Armstrong**

**Inside Job
by Connie Willis
Subterranean Press 99 p \$35.00**

Willis has several distinct writing styles: subdued and exquisite, evident in *Lincoln’s Dreams* and *Remake*; deeply tragic, as with *Doomsday Book* or that ghastly story about the boarding school; and then there is her high humor. This is the Connie Willis I read and reread: *Bellwether*, *To Say Nothing of the Dog*, and *Even the Queen*. These are the books and stories I include in my class reading lists, because I like to hear my students laugh. *Inside Job* belongs to this latter category of humorous story-telling that is character-based with a touch of the ridiculous.

The story is narrated in the first voice by Rob, who publishes *The Jaundiced Eye*, a small press paper that debunks fake psychics of all flavors. He is ably assisted by a gorgeous actress named Kildy Ross, who is able to use her La La Land connections to get info and invitations to the posh, high-yield scams. Rob keeps waiting for her to give up on expose work, abandon him, and go back to acting; but whenever he asks her why she doesn’t, she points out that her Hollywood options would be to star in *Hulk III* or to pose outside of rehab centers. Kildy would rather shell out \$4000 to help expose a channeler called Ariaura who gives a voice to the ‘as-cended entity’ Isus.

In *Bellwether*, Connie Willis provided a PhD’s worth of data about fads through history; in *Inside Job*, she names real names of people in the psychic trade, both the con artists and the debunkers. Her main characters are fictional, but the context is genuine. Her explanations of the uses of sex and snob appeal to bamboozle gulls is Connie Willis at her best – she is dead-on in her descriptions and critiques of merchandising and the gobbledygook spouted by self-styled channelers.

The SF component of the story is that Ariaura seems to also be channeling the voice of H. L. Mencken, the original debunker himself, the reporter who covered the Scopes Monkey Trial in the nineteen twenties. He interrupts her ungrammatical maunderings with diatribes and insults directed at the audience. Kildy is convinced that it is indeed the spirit of Mencken interrupting Ariaura’s sweetness and light shows and blowing away her smoke; Rob thinks that’s impossible and Ariaura is being clever to generate notoriety. To determine

the truth, they compare the outbreaks to Mencken’s published writings and devise questions that only Mencken could possibly answer. Their confrontations with both Ariaura and the Mencken persona become increasingly intense, building to a climactic public showdown and a satisfying denouement.

No matter where you live on the skeptical-gullible-enlightened spectrum, this is a fun and informative book.

Truth isn’t something you believe; it’s something you recognize. – **Chris Paige**

**Iron Kissed
by Patricia Briggs
Ace, 287 pps, \$7.99**

This is the third book in the Mercy Thompson series following *Moon Called* and *Blood Bound*.

Mercy is a VW mechanic with her own shop and a secret: she is a shapeshifter and can shift into a coyote when she wishes to. Her roommate, Sam, and her neighbor Adam, are werewolves and her former boss, Zee, the friend from whom she purchased the garage, is a fae.

To repay a favor she owes Zee (see *Blood Bound*), Mercy agrees to go with him to the Fae Reservation and investigate several murders. When she identifies a suspect, things go horribly wrong and her friend Zee ends up accused of murdering the man. Even though Zee tells her to mind her own business, Mercy can’t rest until she clears Zee’s name. This brings her to the attention of some powerful, and not too friendly, fae who send an executioner after her as well as the real murderer.... and it is not clear which is more dangerous to Mercy. As if this didn’t provide enough problems, Mercy can no longer procrastinate - she must choose between Sam and Adam as her mate.

I really enjoy the Mercy books, the interaction between the characters and the plots are well written and hold the reader’s interest. The characters, even the secondary ones, are fully fleshed, from Warren, the gay werewolf, to Jesse, Adam’s daughter, who is treading the dangers of being a teenage daughter of an alpha werewolf.... talk about scaring away potential boyfriends. I recommend this series and eagerly await the next book in the series. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Marseguro
by Edward Willett
DAW Books, \$7.99, 392pps**

Yes, the title means “safe sea” in Spanish. And this is critical to one half of the main characters in this tale because they are humans whose DNA has been modified and for all intents and purposes are now merpeople (without the fish tails). They left Earth along with normal land dwelling humans in a colony ship and found the world they named Marseguro. All has been pretty hunky dory, though of course they are a bit

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In Our Book (Continued from page 19)
behind on some technological levels. Happily, they lost contact with Earth because they were way off their projected route through the stars and came upon the planet unexpectedly.

Which was really a good thing.
Earth at the time of their departure was consumed by religious fanaticism that looked upon the “selkies,” as they are called, as abominations that should be eradicated. The selkies and their human supporters lit out for the great unknown with the selkie creator Victor Hansen.
Luckily they are far, far away; right?

Wrong. A “landing,” a human who does not live in the Marseguro seas, is resentful of the selkies and feels that they are becoming a “superior” race and the land-hugging humans are becoming second-class citizens. And so Chris Keating goes to the initial landing site, where the remains of the original colony ship are preserved as a museum. He activates a distress beacon that still functions.
And calls forth the hounds of Earth, rabid to not only find the “selkies” but of course, eradicate them. The invasion force brings with them an observer for the religious leaders, Richard Hansen,

grandson of the selkies creator. Hansen wants to prove to those in charge on Earth, despite his heritage, just how behind their program he is.
Of course, everything changes when he reaches Marseguro.
The novel is a great combination of political and religious chicanery by the powers on Earth and the struggles of the selkies (who can also remain on land for some time) to assert their rights to live and maintain Marseguro as their home.
The characters are fascinating and the story is great. All around this is a compelling and fast read. - **Sue Martin**

the first book to make sense out of many of the plot points. And, you need to see Venera’s actions and the reasons for them to make sense of her behavior here. But that said: this was a solid read. The plot stands on its own, the characters well-drawn, and the science interesting. It’s also topical - the books are about the allocation of resources, and what powerful nations will do to keep power, versus nations which try to get it. Schroeder is an excellent hard SF writer; he doesn’t bog things down with technical explanations that would be better served in engineering manuals, but he does give the reader enough information to make the science behind the tech and other worldbuilding believable. His prose is clean and sharp, never frilly, but is always just descriptive enough. The book has a steampunk feel to it - gravity is created in the towns with the use of special bikes powered by humans.
Overall, if you’re looking for hard SF that isn’t dystopian, but well-written and exciting, you’ll like this trilogy. If series aren’t your thing, you could do worse than pick up *Lady of Mazes*, which is a standalone, and is available in paperback. Highly recommended. - **Nadine Armstrong**

Last Dragon
by J.M. McDermott
Wizards of the Coast, 388 PP. \$23.00

Last Dragon is a first novel. *Last Dragon* is a literary novel. Though set in a medieval-ish society, it is not a fantasy in the classic sense. It is highly original in voice. Told in a series of flashbacks of a dying protagonist in letters to Esumi which talk of life and changes in a voice that mixes in despair to reality. It is beautifully written. And left me with a sense of loss by the end. Worth the read. - **Pam Allan**

Worldbinder
by David Farland
Tor Fantasy, 336 PP, \$24.85

Worldbinder is the sixth book of *The Runelords Saga*.
Fallion and Jaz are hiding in their own kingdom, biding time till they can resume their rightful places as sons of the great earth king, Gaborn. Meanwhile, the invading monsters threaten to take over completely. Fallion hears the call to heal the world, but when he attempts to do so, two worlds fuse combining the best and the worst of both. Now Fallion must fight a whole new set of monsters to heal the world.
Farland writes great monsters and monstrous people {*what’s in the water of ST. George, Utah?*} and epic action. His characters are well-drawn and suffer from human flaws that make their virtue not only more believable, but more admirable. Long may he write. Fantasy lovers: this is a series to collect as well as read. - **Pam Allan**

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Volume 18 Issue 2

FARPOINT MEDIA

Audio Entertainment changed, right when you were looking at it. Portable Media expanded and exploded before you had fully grasped the meaning of the name.

iPods, Video iPods, Sony PSP, iRivers, and more... so many players to choose from, and you still have the option of burning a show to a CD to listen to in your car.

What began as The Dragon Page with Michael and Evo has evolved into something greater, reaching farther into the entertainment industry with a broader selection of shows that appeal to a wider variety of tastes and interests, from humor to high quality audio drama productions, and from fiction to the latest news and entertaining interviews, there's something here for everyone.

The New **Cover to Cover** features hosts Michael R. Mennenga and fantasy author Michael A. Stackpole, and has expanded its coverage to include occasional forays into mysteries, thrillers and the writing process, while still highlighting the newest in science fiction and fantasy.

Slice of SciFi is the favorite of SF fans hungry for the latest news and developments in upcoming films and television, featuring interviews with the cast, producers and creators of our favorite shows, films, fan films, comics and more.

Technorama, with hosts Chuck Tomasi and Kreg Steppe, takes a lighthearted look at the world of tech, science, sci-fi and all things geek, spotlighting recent tech and science news, interviews with respected industry leaders, all interspersed with original humor.

Sit back and take a listen to any of our shows. We think you'll enjoy what you hear.

www.farpointmedia.net

In Our Book (Continued from page 20)

Midnight Awakening
by Laura Adrian
Dell , 369 pp, \$6.99

Midnight Awakening appears to continue a series preceded by *Kiss of Crimson* and *Kiss of Midnight*. A fourth novel, *Midnight Rising*, is due out spring 2008.

Elise Chase is hunting rogue vampires who killed her husband and son. She tracks them with an uncontrolled psychic sense that almost overwhelms her. When Breed Warrior, Tegan, comes into an alliance with her he teaches her control of her gift; but finds romance, vampire style, to go with their mission. And now they must save the world from the Gen 1 vampires that would use humans as cattle under their rule.

This is another kind of milieu of vampires. All descended from Aliens. The Order is warrior vampires whose job is to prevent the bad vampires from coming to power. They are also not popular with the Darkhaven Enforcement vamps who think the Breeds are too violent. With the help of the Berlin Darkhaven, they pursue their goals but the Bad ones are after them. They decode an ancient volume that holds the key to the crypt of the last of the alien progenitors who can lead the other groups new world order. The cover lists the book as a paranormal romance and it is. But it also has plenty of action, and well-drawn characters to keep any vampire lovers happy. Now I have to look around for the others. Darn, I didn't need a new series to get addicted to reading. - **Pam Allan**

Troy: Fall Of Kings
by David Gemmell and Stella Gemmell
Ballantine Books, 447 PP \$25.95

Troy: Fall Of Kings is the concluding volume of a classic retelling of the *Illiad*.

Outside the walls of the golden city of Troy the armies and navies are massing. Alliances are negotiated, and the known world prepares for war. Not just a land grab: heros are seeking vengeance for families killed, assassins poise ready to strike as storm clouds gather. Waiting for the final clash, personal lives are overshadowed by events, but still define the age.

This is not a who-will-win epic but a masterful retelling of the *Illiad* through the eyes of the people involved. Masterful it is; with characters that are well-drawn on their well-researched historical canvas. It also has plenty of action. Do I like the trilogy? Yes, they deserve to be permanent residents of most readers' libraries. - **Pam Allan**

Star Wars: Death Star
by Michael Reaves & Steve Perry
Del Ray/Lucas Books, HB,384 pp,
\$25.95

Death Star is the latest in *Star Wars* novels.

Have you ever wondered how the Death Star came to be? Was the emperor a Sith Lord? How did Anakin become Darth Vader? Death Star is an inside glimpse of the inner workings of the battle station, through the eyes of those involved. And while the draftees and contractors strive to build and bring the station into being, a small band of rebels try a daring rescue from within and to destroy the ultimate weapon in the universe .

The two authors juggle a large cast of characters with panache bringing them all to a successful conclusion and make a good novel. For Star Wars fans that can't get enough. Know that Obi-wan Kenobi lives on in the force. - **Pam Allan**

The Longevity Thesis
by Jennifer Rahn
Dragon Moon, 258 PP, \$15.95

Antronos was born, and deformed by the whims of the desert. After the death of his mother, he found his way into the underground world of the Temlochti State.

Winning an education, he gets his degree as a doctor and accepts a position as graduate student of Sen Vernus, as an expert on longevity. Lord Jait has psychic power he cannot control. Vernus can use this to take over the minds and possess others in power. Antronos finds himself stealing body parts and vows to resist Vernus, and save Lord Jait.

An interesting concept, peopled by good characters and action, the book is definitely worth the read, by an author you will want to watch. - **Pam Allan.**

The Vacant Throne
by Joshua Palmantier
Daw, 532 pp, \$24.95

The Vacant Throne is the third volume of *The Throne of Amenkor*.

Amenkor has been standing for a thousand years, ruled by the Mistress of the Skewed Throne, Amenkor has survived invaders, madness, drought, famine, and disease.

Varis is the new Mistress of the throne, but the last invasion drained the throne. And the Chorl haven't given up.

The City's only hope is the twin throne hidden in Venitte, a sometime ally. But the Chorl have targeted Venitte and its throne. The Venitte council don't believe the Chorl is coming or that several members of the council are aiding them. Can Varis and her guard save the remaining throne, and Venitte from the Chorl?

Lots of action, intrigue and real characters in a well-drawn world, well worth the read {all three} You'll want it

for your library. You will want to re-read them. - **Pam Allan**

Unquiet Dreams
by Mark Del Franco
Acc, 292 pp,\$7.99

Unquiet Dreams is a sequel to *Unshapely Things*.

In a world where Fairie and human space converged, things are tense enough for everyone. When an elf diplomat and a human gang member are simultaneously murdered, it ignites the fuse of a long-simmering feud. Is Boston burning as the body count rises? What does the board-room power plays in the fey guild have to do with a new designer drug? Or a vast conspiracy that may destroy the world itself?

Call for Conner Grey, former guild investigator, now consultant to the Boston PD. The loss of most of his abilities may have him out of the Guild's employ but he is called back in; bearing the status of alternate to one of the directors. If the world is to survive, and Conner with it, he will have to work fast.

This is a fun book combining Paranormal romance, Mystery and fantasy in one fast paced volume. Good characters, and plotting make this one a winner. Look out *Dresden Files*. - **Pam Allan**

Navigator
by Stephen Baxter
Acc, 321 pp, \$24.95

Navigator is book three of *Time's Tapestry*.

When William the Conqueror worked to stamp out rebellion, a prophesy was given speaking of endless conflict armed by the engines of God.

Its truth is shown by the fearsome war between Christianity and Islam. A rogue priest finds a rent in time where agents from the future tamper with the past.

As the conflict rages across the centuries, men of vision start looking across the seas to a new land, and a mysterious weaver tries to prevent the funding of one explorers trip to the west in 1492.

Baxter produces an action packed historical epic that brings a vivid world to life and illustrate the effect of ideas can do to effect the future. Worth the read, and maybe trigger purchasing the set. - **Pam Allan**

The Sorcerer's Plague
by David B. Coe
Tor, 393 pp, \$25.95

The Sorcerer's Plague is Book one of the projected *Blood of the Southlands Series*

In a small Eandi village, Licaldi, an elderly recluse disappears. When the elders enter her home to see if she died, they find evidence that may connect her and her baskets to a Quirsi plague destroying villages overnight. Besh, one of the elders, goes to search for her.

Grinsa, a weaver of diverse magical gift, travels to the Southlands seeking peace for himself with his wife and child; but when they begin their trek across the Southlands, they are captured by the Fal'borna , a tribe of warrior horseman. Their elder holds the family hostage pitting Grinza against other weavers that want to succeed him. Grinza and his family just want peace. Grinza agrees to search for the source of the plague, to win their freedom. If he fails, everything he loves will be lost.

Coe's plotting is excellent and imaginative. His characters are well-drawn and unique. Besh is not a handsome heroic hunk, but an elderly ordinary craftsman. Grinza, for all his wisdom and powers, is a worried family man. You care about their worries, the plotting and intrigue around them. You even care about Licaldi, the person who created the plague. Place all this in a richly imagined world and you have book to treasure. If the series continues at this level, we'll have to keep the whole series. I can't wait to read the next one. - **Pam Allan**

Rise of the Blood Royal
by Robert Newcomb
Ballantine/DelRay, 524 pp, \$26.96

Rise of the Blood Royal is the third book of the *Destinies of Blood and Stone*.

On the far side of the impassable Tolencia, the endless war of attrition has reached a turning point. Vespasian, emperor of Rustannica is desperate for a victory that will turn the tides of war in his favor. In Eutracia, the wizard, Faegan and Wigg, have found a new form of magic; one that will allow passage through the mountains and change the balance to the Vigors, the good magic, and bring Prince Tristan into his full powers.

However, an ancient spell has surfaced, with monsters half human, half serpent commanded by the Viper Lord.

As Tristan departs for Rustnnica, his twin sister, Shailiha, must fight the Viper Lord and his monster hordes. To lose is unthinkable. But the cost may be unthinkably high.

This concludes this trilogy, the second of *Blood and Stone*, The final pages set us up for a third trilogy.

The Characters are well-drawn archetypes, very good or very evil; but there is plenty of action. The Epic fantasy is reminiscent of Robert Jordan in scope. I would suggest starting with the *Chronicles of Blood and Stone*, although each book will stand alone. - **Pam Allan**

The Dreaming Void
by Peter F. Hamilton
Ballantine Books, 620 PP,\$26.99

Peter F. Hamilton is also the author *Pandora's Star* and *Judas Unchained*.

The year is 3589. Centurion Station, a research facility, is built on alien ruins at the edge of the Void; a vast darkness that

(Continued on page 22)

In Our Book (Continued from page 21)

has swallowed whole planets and civilizations. But it has been quiet for millennia. Now it seems to be stirring. Dreams of a strange reality are being projected and nobody knows what is hiding within the void.

At the center of the epic, are three people: a young woman making her fortune on a planet that may be a target for a reactivated void, a young man whose telepathic talent lets him reshape his world, and a detective genetically engineered to track down her quarry.

The Dreaming Void is an epic and involved Space Opera worthy of Heinlein or Weber. Good characters, good action, and a world. This is a trilogy worth getting as well as reading. - **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 discusses 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, 1818 W Montebello 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 determined. 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 existence since 1998. Meetings are currently conducted twice a month at two different Phoenix, Arizona locations., <http://www.parex.org/meetings.shtml>. Club dues are on an annual basis: Regular members \$20 Student members \$15 Of course visitors are always welcome because we know you will eventually become a member anyway Web page: <http://www.parex.org/> E-mail Contact: John Kittelsrud, parexteam@cox.net

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

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

RAW GAMES (Role-players & Wargamers, Inc.) Role-players & Wargamers, Inc. is the Valley's oldest role-playing and wargaming club. Currently meeting at 8159 W. Weldon in Phoenix every Sunday from 12noon-5pm (except during conventions and other special events). Open to new members - call (623) 849-9515.

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

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Club Listings
(Continued from page 22)

www.nyronnd.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 DMitchell1@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, check our website for meeting location 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

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/

CopperCon 28 (Aug 29-31, 2008) Embassy Suites Paradise Valley/Scottsdale, Phoenix, AZ Author GoH MaryJanice Davidson, Media GoH Greg Weisman, Artist GoH David Hedgecock, Special GoH Anthony Alongi, Music GoH Tom smith. Memberships \$35 thru 5/31/08. \$40 thru 07/31/08. \$45 at the door. Info Coppercon 28 PO Box 62613, Phoenix AZ 85082, www.coppercon.org or nfo@coppercon.org

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

AniZona 2009 (April 10-12, 2009) Embassy Suites Paradise Valley/Scottsdale, Phoenix, AZ. Memberships \$30 thru 09/15/2008. For more info - www.anizona.org or info@anizona.org

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 1818 W Montebello in Phoenix 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

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

A Gamers Convention

Mesa Convention Center
June 12th - 15th 2008

Fathers Day Weekend
www.PhxConGames.com

Where: Mesa Convention Center
(Corner of University & Center)
263 N Center St. Mesa, AZ 85201

When: June 12th - 15th, 2008
(Gaming Starts Thu 9:00a Ends Sunday)

Costs: \$35 (thru Apr 30th) **\$40** (At the door)
Kids 6-12 are 50%, Under 5 are Free

Contact: www.ConEvents.com
480.236.4314

Hotel: The Phoenix Marriott Mesa
Rooms \$89 1-4 people per room
Group Code is: "CG8CG8A"

Special Guests:

Jess Hartley
John Wick
Michael Brand
Peter Adkison
Robert Branum
Ruth Thompson
Chris Sanders

Event Highlights:

* EGL Tea Party * Paint-N-Take * Fun
* Art Contest * Pirate LARP * Demos
* Cosplay Costume Contest * Party's
* Old Western Costumed Poker Game
* White Wolf Sanctioned Events * RPG's
* Battle Arena * Youth Events * CCGs
* RPGA: Living Greyhawk * Board Games
* Electronic Console Gaming Room * Swag!
* Harry Potter Live Action Event * Miniatures
* RPGA: Living Arcanis * One World by Night
* Cardhalla (Build Donate Destroy) * Live Music
* Free Henna Tattoos * Reality Simulations Inc
* Martial Arts & Self Defense Lessons * Play Test
* Movie Previews * Movie Giveaways * Belly Dancing
* Plus More is being added all the time!!!

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**Fathers Day
Weekend**

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Online Pre-Reg/Game Signup