

ConNotations

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FREE

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

A Chat with Connie Willis by Lee Whiteside

Connie Willis has acquired ten Hugo Awards, six Nebula Awards and many other honors. Lee Whiteside had a chance to chat with her while she was in Scottsdale for a signing in late October.

LW: *All Clear* has just been published. How many years have you been working on it?

CW: Eight years for the two books, which were once three. Originally it was one and it kind of expanded to three, then I managed to get it squashed back down to two. It's really only one book, but it had to be published in

two parts because it's too fat to be published as one. So the whole shebang took eight years.

LW and a lot of angst.

CW: Yes, a lot of angst and I probably took eight years off my life, too. But it's done now and I feel so much better and taller. I feel taller now that I don't have this giant albatross hanging around my neck.



LW What made you want to delve so deep into World War II?

CW: I fell in love with the Blitz and St. Paul's and everything when I wrote *Fire Watch*. I'd gone to St. Paul's and I fell in love with the idea of the fire watch, I wanted to write that story and did all this research about The Blitz for it and then of course there

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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 Denny's Restaurant at 2360 W Northern Ave 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

SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

It's the end of the year and, as usual, there's not much new coming up on the broadcast airwaves or cable, but we do have some news about things in the works to help tide you over.

Syfy has done a quick shuffle, having pulled the plug early on **Caprica** (leaving five episodes to air "sometime in 2011") with their first attempt to do first run drama on Tuesday night competing against the broadcast networks draw much less than stellar ratings now that Friday night has been given over to **WWE's Smackdown**. The only bright spot in that is that **Sanctuary** has had decent ratings in the 10 pm ET/PT slot following **Smackdown**.

Coming up on Syfy in December will be Christmas themed episodes of **Eureka** and **Warehouse 13** on Tuesday, Dec 7th. Per Syfy Press release: On **Eureka**, as the Global Dynamics employees celebrate the season at the company holiday party, staff member Dr. Noah Drummer (guest star **Chris Parnell**) nearly absconds with a volatile experiment. The halls get seriously decked when Dr. Drummer's unstable hydrogen crystal starts to grow at a frightening rate. Carter (**Colin Ferguson**) and Henry (**Joe Morton**) attempt to deal with the potentially explosive crystal, but before long the true scope of the problem is revealed, and it will take more than tinsel and carolers to save Christmas and Eureka. Former series regular **Matt Frewer** also returns as Taggart.

On **Warehouse 13**, as the Warehouse team prepares to celebrate the holidays in snowy South Dakota, Pete (**Eddie McClintock**) and Myka (**Joanne Kelly**) are called upon to hunt down a malevolent Santa Claus. Meanwhile, in time for Hanukkah, Artie and his estranged father, Isadore Weisfelt reunite after 30 years. Award-winning actor **Judd Hirsch** guest stars as Artie's father. **Paul Blackthorne** also guest stars as a harried workaholic who becomes terrorized by a strange series of robberies committed by a thief dressed as "jolly old Saint Nick!"

Early January sees the debut of the American **Being Human** on Syfy. It is a re-imagining of the acclaimed UK series created by **Toby Whithouse** and follows three paranormal, 20-something roommates living in Boston - vampire Aidan (**Sam Witwer**), werewolf Josh (**Sam Huntington**)

and ghost Sally (**Meaghan Rath**) - as they struggle to hide their dark secrets from the world, while helping each other navigate the complexities of living double lives and trying to be human. **Mark Pellegrino** plays Aidan's charismatic but menacing vampire mentor Bishop. Executive Producers/Writers are **Jeremy Carver** (**Supernatural**) and **Anna Fricke** (**Men in Trees**, **Everwood**) with Executive Producer **Michael Prupas** (**The Kennedys**, **Pillars of the Earth**). **Adam Kane** (**The Mentalist**, **Heroes**) is Director and Co-Executive Producer.

It is possible that **Eureka** may return with new episodes for the second half of season four in January, but nothing has been formally announced by Syfy, so it may not return until March. Taking a major role in the second half of season four will be **Wil Wheaton** and **Felicia Day**. **Wheaton** will return as Dr. Isaac Parrish and **Felicia Day** will be appearing as Dr. Holly Marten in most of the episodes in the second half of the season. **Felicia Day** talked a bit about her character in an interview at io9.com "All I can say is she's a very eccentric scientist who comes to Eureka to work on a secret project, and that's all I can tell you about what she does. I can tell you that she has an antagonist relationship with Fargo and **Wil Wheaton**, who plays Dr. Isaac Parrish, so there's definitely a lot there. I've been working with those two a lot, and it's really been a fun ride. Every single episode, when I read a script, I'm just so excited to get on set and read those words because that show in particular is driven by geeks. Those guys know what they are doing and they are passionate about their show, the fans, and the subject matter. It definitely translates from the page onto the screen for me. That and everyone there is wonderful to work with."

Elsewhere in the cable universe, the debut of **The Walking Dead** on AMC on October 31st drew outstanding numbers for the network and cable in general. By the time you read this, AMC will likely have officially placed an order for a second season. Starz is moving forward with the BBC co-production of **Torchwood**, which is still in the process of casting the new roles in the series. Indications are filming is supposed to start early in 2011 for a summer debut.

Upcoming episodes on **Smallville** will bring viewers closer to the end of the series and will start to ramp things up. First up in early December is the episode **Luthor**, which will bring back

Lionel Luthor. Later in January expect to see **Icarus** with the return of **Michael Hogan** as Slade Wilson and **Michael Shanks** as Carter Hall/Hawkman while Lois and Clark's relationship "takes an unexpected turn." Expect to see a few more returning DC Universe characters as well as ramping up of the Darkseid arc as they move towards the SERIES finale in May.

On the broadcast TV front, the new genre shows have held up OK for the most part, many of them having gotten full season orders. **The Event**, **No Ordinary Family**, and **Nikita** have all been given full season orders. Returning series **Chuck** has also performed consistently and NBC has given them a full season pickup as well. Things aren't as rosy for **V** on ABC, which had its second season debut pushed back to January 4th and it's order cut to 10 episodes from 13. According to ABC "Season Two will feature more character and lizard reveals, more details about the V's mythology, while along the way featuring even more action and more plot twists. Viewers can expect a roller coaster ride week to week."

There's been lots of activity in the development area for genre shows. Reports are that **David E. Kelley** is developing a new **Wonder Woman** TV series for Warner Bros. and that Marvel television is developing a new **Incredible Hulk** series for ABC and a **Cloak & Dagger** series for ABC Family, both with **Jeph Loeb** leading the development. The CW is looking for something new in the supernatural genre to fill in the gap left by **Smallville**. They are looking at **The Secret Circle**, based on the novels by **Vampire Diaries** creator **L.J. Smith**. It is about a California teen who moves to her mom's hometown of New Salem and learns that she is a witch. Writers **Elizabeth Craft** and **Sarah Fain** are adapting this one with a pilot script coming from **Andrew Miller**, who will also be an executive producer. Also in the works is **Chloe**, from **Marti Noxon** and **Dawn Parouse**. It is about a young con artist who dies and comes back to earth as a "Divine Covert Operator," or an angel.

Doctor Who will be back for this year's yet-to-be-titled Christmas special, airing on Christmas Day on the BBC in the UK and likely shortly after on BBC America. It is based on **Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol** and will feature **Matt Smith** as The Doctor, **Karen Gillan** as Amy Pond, and **Arthur Darvill** as Rory Williams as well as guest starring **Katherine Jenkins** and

Michael Gambon. As with the most recent series, **Steven Moffat** has kept the lid pretty tight on specifics. Filming is underway on the next full series, with the opening two-parter being partly filmed in the United States for the first time. According to a BBC press release "In the special two-parter co-produced with BBC AMERICA, key scenes will be filmed in Utah for a story set in the late '60s in which the Doctor, Amy and Rory find themselves on a secret summons that takes them on an adventure from the desert in Utah - right to the Oval Office itself. Production on episodes one and two of the new season starts in Cardiff in October and **Matt Smith**, **Karen Gillan** and **Arthur Darvill** will then travel to America in mid-November to shoot pivotal scenes. They will also be joined by **Alex Kingston** who reprises her role as River Song."

Showrunner and lead writer, **Steven Moffat**, said: "The Doctor has visited every weird and wonderful planet you can imagine, so he was bound get round to America eventually! And of course every Doctor Who fan will be jumping up and down and saying he's been in America before. But not for real, not on location - and not with a story like this one! Oh, you wait!"

Piers Wenger, Head of Drama BBC Wales and Executive Producer, added: "**Steven's** scripts generally inspire us to go that extra mile - this time we're going that extra four thousand. Thanks to our friends at BBC AMERICA and to the continuing ambition of our lead writer and production team, the first two episodes of **Matt Smith's** second season as the Doctor are going global and look set to become Doctor Who's most action-packed and ambitious season opener yet."

Coming up in January, the fourth series of **Primeval** should hit the airwaves in the UK, to be followed by BBC America shortly. New characters for series four and five (both being filmed back to back) are scientist Philip Burton, to be played by **Alexander Siddig**, Matt, the new field leader, to be played by **Ciarán McMenamin** and Jess, played by **Ruth Kearney**, who will run operations from the ARC Control Centre.

A Conversation

(Cont'd from page 1)

was all this stuff I couldn't use. All these different aspects of the war I was interested in further exploring, because research is sort of addicting. It's kind of one thing leads to another and "that's really interesting" and that leads to another thing and that's really interesting... I tried to deal with my addiction with writing other stories. There was Jack, which is a story about a body sniffer in The Blitz, which dealt with some of the issues I wanted to deal with. Then I wrote *The Winds of Marble Arch* which has references to The Blitz, and then when I wrote *To Say Nothing of the Dog* I wrote about Coventry and stuff, but I wasn't getting it out of my system at all. So I decided I really need to write about World War II and The Blitz. I started with Polly as my character, and she's existed at least fifteen years, the idea of telling her story and then the others came along afterwards.

LW: When you had to trim back to two volumes, where there any characters that got cut?

CW: Nothing got cut. People are always saying "When are we going to see the director's cut, with all the good stuff you left out?" It isn't like that, it's a paragraph here, a paragraph there, and its two lines here and squashing down a scene to a slightly shorter scene. There's nothing extra. I refused to cut anything because all of my characters were essential to telling the story. In fact over the period of time I worked on it several people suggested I cut this or cut that and I'd respond "That's the most important thing in the story!" I had it clearly in mind what the story had to have. I wish I could have spent more time on all the segments. I could have told more stories about the evacuated kids, could have gotten more in depth about The Blitz and Lila and Viv and all the people who lived in London and stuff. But, you know, that's a law of diminishing returns. Tighter is better, shorter is better, and it's better to have 1200 pages of rip-roaring, can't put it down, have to read it straight through, than 1800 pages of pretty boring sections. I feel like, now looking at the finished project, which nearly killed me getting there, it's as good as I can make it. I didn't feel like I made any compromises that I was unhappy with. I told the story I really wanted to tell and that I did it justice. It's not a story

that can be told in couple of three characters, because the nature of it is that all the interconnections between all these different characters and how each one plays a part. I'm happy now that I'm done.

LW: In regards to the two volumes, *Blackout* and *All Clear*, you've been pretty strongly telling people it is all one book.

CW: Yes, it is all one book. Do not read *All Clear* if you haven't read *Blackout*. If you are the kind of person who can't stand cliffhangers, you need to buy them both and read them both together. I feel so sorry, I keep trying to tell bookstore clerks that if you see them buying *All Clear*, make sure they know that *Blackout* came first and they need to read that first. They'll be completely lost if they just read *All Clear*.

LW: What are you working on next, or are you ready to start writing again?

CW: I am. I have been writing. Actually I've been working on a non-fiction piece about romantic comedy because the next couple of projects I have in mind have romantic comedy plots and romantic comedy is my favorite thing. I read so much nonsense about it. I go to see each romantic comedy as it comes out hoping that it will be good and most of them are terrible. When people write reviews, they say all this nonsense about them. I thought that nobody has really done an analysis of romantic comedy and treated it seriously as an art form. To me, it's an art form. It's like the sonnet, a highly structured art form with lots of conventions and rules. But within that space, by following all these conventions and rules, you can create something charming and interesting and different. That's the real challenge, to work in this highly structured art form. To me, romantic comedy is not about romance, romantic comedy is like all great literature about the finding of the soul. The finding of the soul occurs because you can't do it by yourself, you and another person do it and you redeem each other. You make each other become what the best of the two of you can become. It's a really serious art form. I've been working at creating this long essay or this short craft book about how to write romantic comedies that will not be one of those "how to write romantic comedy in four easy steps" but will really analyze

the art form. At the same time, all this research is really helping me on my next couple of projects. The more I know about what I'm doing, the better I can do it.

CW: The big project I'm starting work on is the UFO novel, my Roswell, alien abduction, cattle mutilation, crop circle, Area 51, Las Vegas, romantic comedy! That will just be fun. I've always wanted to do a book that has the sort of structure of a road picture where you throw a bunch of people into a van together and take off across the Southwest and have adventures and interesting things happen and stuff. I think the whole UFO thing is the most hilarious thing that has happened in this country, so that's what I want to do. But I had my heart broken the other day. I'm going to have to totally rethink my plot now because the Liberace Museum closed in Las Vegas. It, of course, was going to play a major part in my book because it's such a cool place. I'll have to come up with an answer to what I was going to do. Maybe someone will buy up a bunch of the stuff and put it on display in one of the casinos or something. That's currently what I'm working on. I'm also writing several short stories. I'm attempting to have a Christmas short story in next year's Asimov's 'cause I used to write one every year. I'm working on one as well as several other short stories. Then I have a couple of other projects I don't want to talk about yet because I don't want people to say "When is that coming out?" I'm not quite ready to see if they will really turn into anything. You work on these things and part of its working, but you're missing an essential piece and you won't know what that essential piece is until you find it. It could take two weeks, or it could take five years. I have several of those stories where I've got two of the three, or three of the four, or four of the five essential pieces and I'm still trying to see if they're going to gel together and cook. I am working, but mostly I've been doing publicity for the book, and revisions for the book, galleys for the book, and now I've sold the British edition [To Gollancz] and I have to work with the editor, who may want some additional changes to make sure no one in England kills me for making mistakes. I've already found some and corrected those in the second edition, so I'm not really free of *All Clear* and *Blackout* yet. I'm getting close.

After this book tour, I hope to have quite a bit of time to buckle down and work.

LW: What other things have been catching your interest of late?

CW: We went to see the Alice in Wonderland that had Johnny Depp in it and I really liked it. So we sort of had this Alice in Wonderland film festival, which consisted of all the different movies of Alice and all the related movies to Alice and re-watching my favorite movie of all time, which is Dream Child, with Ian Holm. It is my favorite movie of all time! Then a friend of mine said, "Oh, if you're doing that, you should watch the Alice that was on the Syfy channel". She kindly got me a copy and I watched it and I just was in love with it. We watched Tin Man, I loved that. I had missed these, we don't get Syfy where we live, I was just delighted to find both of them. The guy who plays Hatter in Alice, Andrew Lee Potts, he is the cutest thing on the planet. He is in a fair way to supplant Harrison Ford I'm sad to say. Plus he's a really good actor, unlike Harrison Ford sometimes. So we got Primeval through Netflix and then realized that was not going to work and bought all the episodes of Primeval. I raced through them, and I was watching them with my husband, and then he wasn't moving fast enough so I watched them all by myself and he's catching up while I'm on this book tour. I just love it, it's great writing, it's charming and it has a great romantic comedy embedded in it, even though it's mostly about dinosaurs. The plotting is like five steps ahead of me and I always pride myself, since I spend so much time on plot, of being able to figure out what they're going to do before they do it and I can't do it with this series, they keep surprising me. I've just really been excited about it. That's been fun.

CW: The other thing is I've been reading tons of just random stuff that I didn't have time to do before the book was done because I could only read research for the book. I can read anything I want now, which is really nice. I can go back and reread stuff. Mark Twain always talked about that when you write, you need to let the well fill back up from time to time; so I feel like that's partly what I'm doing right now. I may be working steadily but also admitting that the

(Cont'd on page 5)

A Conversation

(cont'd from page 4)

well needs to be filled back up and I need to be getting exciting new ideas and stuff.

LW: You were recently honored with induction into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame.

CW: I was. That was a wonderful honor. The best part of it was that Charlie Brown introduced me for that, and he died less than a month after that weekend. I've done the Locus Awards for him and been the Toastmaster for years for that. Charlie and I were really, really good friends, even though I was always threatening to throw him out of my car. And meant it. He gave my introduction for being admitted into the Hall of Fame, and that was a wonderful experience for both of us. He got tell me how he felt about me, it's not the type of relationship where you usually get sincere, you usually just banter a lot. He got to say some serious things he always wanted to say to me, and I got to say some serious things I wanted to say to him, and both got to tell each other how much we loved each other, and you can't ask for better than that. I felt so honored that he had wanted to introduce me for this. That was a great day and it was really a lovely honor to be taken into the Hall of Fame. When I was nominated for the Hugo for the first time, that was as far as my fantasy went. I couldn't imagine anything past that. I've had such wonderful experiences in the field. I've met so many fabulous people and been friends with them. And when people ask me how I feel about it, and I just can't quite absorb it. I'm still working on that first Hugo nomination. All I ever wanted to do, the highest point of my ambition, was to appear in one of those books of Hugo and Nebula nominees with the likes of Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, Asimov, and Bradbury and I've gotten to do so much more than that! I love the fact that I have been able to spend my entire life in science fiction. This is about the highest honor you can give me to put me in the Hall of Fame. It's the place I want to be in science fiction.

For more information on reference material for All Clear and Blackout, visit www.conniewillis.net.

24 Frames

by Jeffrey Lu

Comments:

Interesting movies are coming for these two months. Let's ski!

In Production:

Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (in 3D) produced by Tim Burton. Release date is June 22, 2012. (20th Century Fox)

Iron Man 3. Release date: Summer 2013.

Monsters Inc. 2 will be released on Nov. 2, 2012.

Breaking Dawn will be in two parts.

21 Jump Street. Will star Johnny Depp. Release date: May 16, 2012. (Sony Pictures)

December 2010/January 2011 Release On The Screen:

December 2010

12/3/2010

The Warrior's Way Action/Fantasy/Western Rated R

The Tourist Drama/Thriller Angelina Jolie, Johnny Depp. Not yet rated. Sony Pictures.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader Action/Family/Fantasy Rated PG

12/17/2010

TRON: Legacy Science Fiction/Action Not yet rated. Disney (Also in 3D).

Yogi Bear Action/Animation/Comedy/Family Anna Faris, Dan Aykroyd, Justin Timberlake Rated PG.

12/22/2010

Gulliver's Travels Comedy Not yet rated

January 2011
1/14/2011

The Green Hornet Action Seth Rogen, Cameron Diaz, Jay Chou, Not yet rated. Sony.

The Cabin in the Woods Comedy/Fantasy/Horror Rated R.

Hong Kong Phoo-

ey Comedy/Family/Live Action Not yet rated.

1/21/2011

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark Horror/Thriller Rated R. A horror remake by Guillermo del Toro and Matthew Robbins.

1/28/2011

The Mechanic Action Not yet rated. Remake. CBS films.

The Rite Drama Anthony Hopkins not yet rated.

Rumors:

Chris Pine (Star Trek 2009) may play a superhero- The Flash/Barry Allen.

Director James Cameron made a comment that there will be two more Avatars movies. Avatar 2 in 2014. Avatar 3 in 2015.

There is discussion in making a remake of "Footloose."

Parting Shots:

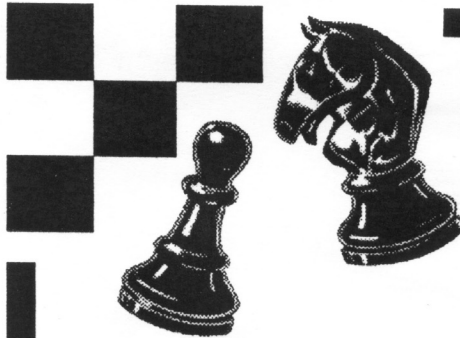
Two dates to watch: August 19, 2011 and December, 2011. In August, Conan 3D vs. Fright Night remake vs. Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World. In December, Sherlock Holmes 2 vs. Mission Impossible 4 vs. Chipmunks 3. The next title of the Batman movie will be: "The Dark Knight Rises." Rumors about Catwoman and Riddler but no confirmed villains. Emma Stone will play Gwen Stacy in the next Spiderman movie in 2012.

Happy Holidays, everyone. May you have a safe and restful two months!

Trivia Questions

1. What exactly is Mouse, Harry Dresden's pet?
2. Who said "Everything in excess! To enjoy the flavor of life, take big bites. Moderation is for monks"?
3. Who was the genetic template for the Old Republic's clonetroopers?
4. An orbiting radar instrument on the Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft identified approximately 600 million metric tons of water ice in permanently-shadowed regions in craters at the Moon's north pole. What nation launched the Chandrayaan-1 orbiter?
5. What alcoholic beverage, other than Saurian brandy, did Dr. McCoy like to drink?
6. Jake Lloyd and Hayden Christensen portrayed the young Anakin Skywalker in the Star Wars prequels. What actor portrayed Anakin in Episode 6, "Return of the Jedi"?
7. Pluto is no longer considered a member of our solar system, instead it has been reclassified as what?
8. Baen's Bar is: Quark's newest venture, an online chat group, the last known bar where Asimov had a drink, or a planetary measurement for dwarf planets?
9. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro has written more than 30 stories about what famous vampire?
10. Who wrote a 4-book series about Merlin, the first title being "The Crystal Cave"?

(Answers on back page)



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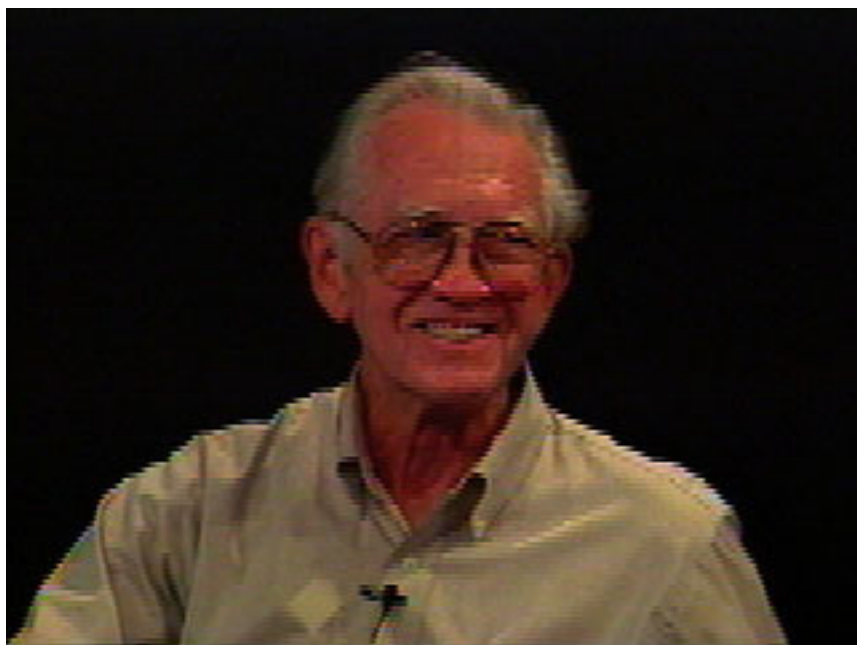
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NW Corner Southern & McClintock



“Farewell” It’s the 50th Anniversary of Rocky and Bullwinkle, Pt. 10

By Shane Shellenbarger

Alexander Anderson Jr., creator of two of the most iconic animated characters of the last half century,



died at the age of 90 on October 22, 2010. Best remembered for the plucky Rocky the flying squirrel and his goofy but lovable pal, Bullwinkle J. Moose, television pioneering cartoonist Anderson also created the duo of Crusader Rabbit and Rags the Tiger and the ever-stalwart Dudley Do-Right of the Mounties.

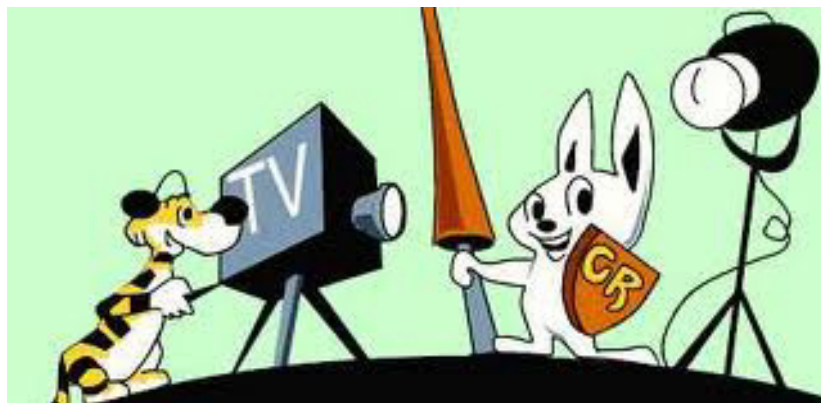
Berkeley-born Anderson apprenticed summers in a New Rochelle, N.Y. studio for his uncle, Paul Terry whose Terrytoons cartoons included “Mighty Mouse” and “Heckle and Jeckle” before attending UC Berkeley. Later, Anderson served in World War II, returning to the studio after the war in 1946.

Observing that radio’s popularity in the late 1940s was waning as television began to dominate, Anderson tried to talk his uncle into producing cartoons targeted to the new medium, without success. Paul Terry’s cartoons were distributed to movie theaters by 20th Century Fox and he feared Fox, viewing television as the enemy, would dump him if he had anything to do with TV.

However, Terry encouraged his nephew, even offering the use of the studio camera department.

Early in 1948, Anderson was visiting his childhood friend and UC Berkeley classmate, Jay Ward, who was recovering from a serious truck crash accident. He outlined for Ward his ideas for limited animation and spoke about the characters of Crusader Rabbit

and Rags the Tiger. Ward was excited and the two developed the idea to the point where they took the plunge on July 26, 1948 and began work in a temporary studio at 111 Sutter Street, Berkeley (home of NBC). With Anderson doing most of the writing, Ward



contributing story gags, a fifteen minute TV proposal began to take shape. It became apparent early on that Anderson couldn’t complete all of the animation alone, so a small staff was hired. First on board was Gerry Ray, a former Disney animator, followed by Kodak Cinecamera operator, Tom Stanford. For the voice of Crusader Rabbit, actress Lucille Bliss was hired, with Vern Loudon assuming the role of the affable Rags.

The group began work on three cartoons: “Hamhock Jones,” a wacky Sherlock Holmes spoof, “Dudley Doright of the Mounties” with character quite a bit different from the version we come to know and love, and “Crusader Rabbit.” Collectively, the cartoons were given the title *The Comic Strips of Television*.

The cartoons were finished and presented to NBC on October 1948. NBC liked what they saw, but questioned the reliability of the two untested creators. NBC brought in Jerry Fairbanks who had signed a five-year exclusive contract with NBC in January of 1948. Fairbanks became the nominal supervising producer on the project and he signed an agreement to produce 130 episodes of *Crusader Rabbit* with Television Arts, the company formed by Alex Anderson and Jay Ward. As the staff of artists and cameramen grew, the need for a permanent studio became apparent. The new facility was located in a converted garage located in the backyard behind Anderson’s parents’ house at 2733 Stuart Street in Berkeley.

The budget was meager: approximately \$2,500 per episode. By January 1949 Television Arts Productions had five episodes

completed with thirteen scripts ready to be shot. However, by February NBC had developed cold feet and instead of networking the series it was decided to spot-market the episodes to individual NBC stations with commercials already in place.

Come back next time for “Is that a rabbit in your pocket, or are you just on a crusade?” For more info go to : <http://tinyurl.com/Shane-Info-Blog>

Scanning an Emmy Arizona Web Show: PROBED signals: An Interview with Joel Cranson and Kevin Herrmann by Jeffrey Lu

Here are two local boys who done good. This is their story.

1) Both- History of each of you in AZ- i.e. where you are from, how were you selected in PROBED?

Joel: I am a native of Arizona. I was born in Mesa but have spent my entire life living in Tempe so I have quite the attachment to our great state as grounds for film making. I wrote the story for the short film, PROBED, and then asked my cinematographer friend, Webb Pickersgill, to create the film with me. Having directed a few other short film projects, I stepped in to direct.

Kevin: I had lived in Michigan for most of my life, and then moved to Arizona in 2000 while I was a senior in high school. Then I attended Mesa Community College and really enjoyed my experience in the theatre program, which must be why I hovered there for about three or four years! When I graduated in 2004, for the following year I still took a few classes part-time and performed in shows to stay active. After getting over my fears of attending a big university, I finally decided to head to ASU, where I graduated in 2008. Actually, it was my final semester at ASU that I spent writing the complete season of PROBED: signals.

2) Joel- How did you get into directing? Also, list awards for your acting/directing/scriptwriting

Joel: I received my BA in Theatre from Grand Canyon University in 2005. My emphasis was always in directing because I like working with a range of people. When you are an actor, you work primarily with other actors and a director. As the director, I get to work with all departments from actors to lighting people, costume designers to makeup artists... You really get to be involved in all aspects of the production and that’s what’s most fulfilling to me.

For my involvement in PROBED: signals, I received the Filmmaker of the Year award from the Phoenix Comicon Film Festival. And this

(Cont’d on page 7)

Probed (Cont'd from page 6)

past month received an Arizona Award of Excellence (The highest award given in the AZ theatre community) for my direction of "The Goat's Gruff" at East Valley Children's Theatre. I also received the award of best director from International Film Project Phoenix for my short film, Following Suit. Currently I am a Rocky Mountain Emmy Nominee as a producer for PROBED:signals (awards are 10/9).

3) Kevin- How did you become an actor? How did you become a screenwriter? Also, list awards for your acting/scriptwriting.

Kevin: It started in high school in Michigan my freshman year, when a member from the small drama program randomly asked me if I could fill in for a role, since they didn't have quite enough actors audition to complete the large cast. I agreed because it sounded like something fun and new, so my breakout performance was choking on a poisoned clam as the first victim in a murder mystery. After more high school productions in Arizona, I decided I wanted to test out the next level at Mesa Community College. After one week of acting class there, that's when I knew I was hooked. From there, I performed in about ten or more productions at MCC, two main stage productions at ASU, and more in the community theatre circuit with Hale Centre Theatre and Stray Cat Theatre. Through MCC, I had met Joel Cranson, worked on a number of plays with him, and was luckily cast by him in my first film project, which got us connected with cinematographer Webb Pickersgill. We continued working on more films and contests, which is where I first tried screenwriting. After having some great experiences in that realm, the opportunity to write the web series emerged, and I was excited to take the challenge. Through my acting career, I have been blessed with two Arizona nominations, an IFP/PHX Best Actor award and nomination, and most recently a Rocky Mountain Emmy award for my role in the web series.

4) Both- Are there going to be more PROBED episodes? If so, what will they be?

Joel: Naturally, we want to be able to tell more PROBED stories. I know Kevin has a skull full of ideas (some of which he's shared with me). Creating the first series



took an enormous amount of time, energy, and money; money that came from our own pockets for the most part. Our premiere sponsor, Toy Anxiety, was a big help financially but a second season of the show would definitely require more capital. We do have opportunities for the fans to help through our store on the website as well as a paypal donation link for fans of the show to help out.

Kevin: Well, there are more episodes playing inside my head, but that's the beauty and curse of being the writer. Unfortunately, getting those episodes transferred onto an actual screen for everyone to enjoy takes an enormous amount of resources, time, volunteerism, financial support, and sacrifice from a large number of people. After pouring so much into the initial season, it's difficult to keep the momentum without exhausting all you have. The most honest answer I can give is that we would need some financial support, or an incredible and steady increase in online views. That would help us continue this saga, which would delve further into the characters, and explore other sci-fi elements, such as ghosts and artificial intelligence.

5) Both- What experiences

helped you succeed in PROBED?

Joel: Having worked on a few films prior to working on PROBED was a big help. Not to mention that I had already worked with Kevin and Webb on several other projects. Working with people you

already know and trust can be a huge advantage. Kevin and Webb are very talented, and though creating the series was tough sometimes, I knew I was working with the right people.

Kevin: We've been working together as a team on film projects for several years, and that has been the greatest gift in the whole process. We're familiar with each other's talent, style, and even weaknesses. With that, each new challenge had been handled more like a family with great patience and understanding. Without that, I'm not sure if this project would have made it as far as it did.

6) Both- Are you fans of Science fiction? If so, what is your overall favorite TV, movie, and author?

Joel: In the realm of science fiction, my favorite TV show would have to be Doctor Who. It's just such an amazing concept with incredible writing. You can just see the amount of detail put into every aspect of that show. It's very easy to love in my opinion. As for movies, I would have to say the Star Wars saga has always appealed to me. Even when the prequels came out and didn't quite grab us the way the originals did, I still loved them. As for author, I haven't read as much of his work

as I would like but I am a big fan of Michael A. Stackpole. I've had the honor of working with Michael and his advice on story and characters has always stuck with me. He's HUGE in the sci-fi realm of authors but to me he's also just a really great guy.

Kevin: Immensely. I'm a big fan of Science Fiction movies in general. I mainly love how science fiction takes life as we know it and adds flair to it, either to incite a new thought or simply adrenaline. I admire the stories that develop their own lore and mythology, like The Matrix and The Terminator movies. Also, I recently revisited the Alien saga, and I loved seeing how each director, all famous for their particular styles, put their stamp on each film, even at an early stage in their respective careers. I don't watch a lot of TV, but Heroes and the new Doctor Who managed to catch my interest for a time.

7) Both- What are your future dreams? (i.e. directing/acting in a full feature film?)

Joel: I think as long as I can keep getting involved in good creative projects like PROBED, I'd be happy. I really want to see a season 2 of the show but time will tell. I'm also still directing for the stage and that love will never die. Even when I'm fed up with it, I have a feeling I'll come crawling right back.

Kevin: I would certainly love to be working in the industry for a living. Ideally, I want to work continually as both a writer and an actor – creating new stories myself while fulfilling others in

(Cont'd on page 8)

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Probed (Cont'd from page 7)
performance. I get the most joy from acting, but each area has its own rewards.

8) Both- How do you each enjoy the success of PROBED? Is this what you expected? If not, why? If so, how?
Joel: I think the show is fantastic! The writing is amazing and the acting and production quality is definitely there. I guess we really didn't know what to expect. It's a web series that's enticing but at the same time, it's a drama; something you don't see every day on the internet. That in itself should make it interesting to people but sometimes reaching your audience can be tough. Getting the word out beyond Arizona has been quite the challenge.
Kevin: I am incredibly proud of the whole series. Fantastic work was done by all and it is evident in each episode. We have received critical praise, awards, and nominations. Unfortunately, it has gone against my expectations and seen a drastically low view count over time. That's the disheartening part of this new frontier called a web series (or "New Media", if you're hip). You can't expect to upload a video online and suddenly get a million views – unless you're falling off a table or punching your friend in the crotch. The bottom line of internet success is popularity; if no one's sharing, then no one's watching, and vice versa.

9) Both- Have any of you encountered any supernatural/ UFO? If so, what is your story?
Joel: Not personally, no. Though while promoting the show at various conventions and screenings, we have gotten to hear a lot of interesting stories from other people and their encounters with UFOs. It's been interesting to say the least.
Kevin: I was neuralyzed by the Men in Black, so I can't recall anything. *(How did he know that if he can't remember...? Never mind.)*

10) Both- Any future plans in Arizona? (i.e. acting in Arizona films)
Joel: I'm taking the holiday season off to concentrate on some personal projects but I'm heading back to stage directing in January. I'm directing the children's play

"Puss 'N' Boots" with East Valley Children's Theatre. And with any luck, a season 2 of PROBED.
Kevin: Just trying to stay busy and find new projects in theatre and film, whether that's in Arizona or beckons from elsewhere.

Comments: I know both of them from college and am happy for their success. May they both continue to do great things.

Awards and nominations of PROBED:
NATAS Rocky Mountain Emmy, 4 Nominations – Photography, Audio, Lighting, Production
NATAS Rocky Mountain Emmy Award – On-Camera Talent: Kevin Herrmann
New Times Best of Phoenix 2010: Best Fiction Web Show
Phoenix Comicon 2010 – Filmmaker of the Convention: Joel Cranson

PROBED website is: <http://www.probedsignals.com/>

FYI

CASFS BOOK DISCUSSION

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

Come do some face-to-face interaction with your fellow readers and SF/Fantasy fans! Haven't read the book? Don't worry, there's no quiz or anything. You can use the rest of us as your personal book reviewers to see if it's something you'd like. We start out with the book discussion, but the conversation can go anywhere. The get-together is held in the coffee shop of Bent Cover Books near 28th Drive and Cactus Road in Phoenix. We welcome potential new friends.

December 21 - A Game of Thrones by George RR Martin
January 18 - The Invisible Ring by Anne Bishop
February 15 - Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson
March 15 - His Majesty's Dragon by Naomi Novik
April 19 - Off Armageddon Reef by David Weber
May 17 - American Gods by Neil Gaiman
June 21 - Neuromancer by William Gibson

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Oro Valley Library, Tucson
Science Fiction Book Club,
4th Tuesdays

SciFi Book Group
Barnes & Noble, Eastside, Tucson.
Dec 14, Jan 11, 730pm

SPECIAL BOOK RELEASES
This listing is to introduce you to smaller publishing houses that offer exclusive or limited edition books that you wouldn't be able to find at your local chain bookstore.

Cemetery Dance Publications
"Johnny Halloween: Tales of the Dark Season" by Norman Partridge
"Four Rode Out" by Tim Curran, Brian Keene, Tim Lebbon, Steve Vernon
"The Girl on the Glider" by Brian Keene

Edge SF & F Publishing/ Tesseract Books
"Gaslight Grotesque, Nightmare Tales of Sherlock Holmes" anthology

PS Publishing
"The One Who Disappeared" by David Herter
"The Broken Man" by Michael Byers
"Homeschooling" by Carol Guess

PYR Publishing
"The Grey Friar, Vampire Empire Book 1" by Clay & Susan Griffith
"The Horns of Ruin" by Tim Akers
"The Scar-Crow Men, Swords of Albion Book 2" by Mark Chadbourn

Subterranean Press
"The White City" by Elizabeth Bear
"Up the Bright River" by Philip Jose Farmer
"The Wolf's Hour" by Robert McCammon
"The Best of Larry Niven"
And too many more to mention....

GAMING & COMIC EVENTS

BOOKMANS - INA Rd, TUCSON

Sanctioned Magic: The Gathering league, as well as Dungeons & Dragons! Magic will be every Wednesday, with D&D adventures continuing every other week. 100% free with prizes awarded!

BOOKMANS - SPEEDWAY, TUCSON

DDMAU Workshop! This game is like UNO on steroids. A new card game created right here in Tucson! DDMAU creator Steven McCine will be on hand to teach you how to play this fast paced awesome new card game. Prizes, giveaways and fun will be included in this event! Learn how to play and get ready for the big DDMAU tournament in January 2011, 1st place \$2000!

DRAWN TO COMICS

Star Wars Miniatures , Sundays, 1pm-4pm
Sit-and-Sketch with local artists. Saturdays, 4pm-8pm
HeroClix. Sat 2pm
Check FaceBook for other events

GAME DEPOT

HeroClix. Wed, 545pm-8pm
D&D Encounters. Wed, 6pm-8pm
Magic, The Gathering. Thurs, 6pm.
Open Game Day. Fridays all day

GAMER'S INN

Check website for upcoming events

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES

Federation Commander. 2nd Saturdays, noon
RPGA. 1st Sundays
Monday Night Magic Standard Format. Mon, 7pm.
Boardgames & Demo Nite. Mondays & Thursdays, 6pm.
Magic Drafts. Tues, 7pm
War Machine. Wednesdays, 4pm
Hammerhead 40K Club Meeting. Wed & Thurs, noon
Hammerhead Club 40k tournament. 1st Wed, noon
Magic The Gathering League. Wed, 6pm
Friday Night Magic. Fridays, 7pm
Gamers Garage Sale. All day, Dec 4. Tables avail for rent.
Nightmare Before Christmas, best Zombie games avail. Dec 10, 6p-midnite. Dec 11, 11am-6pm
Mirrodin Beseiged pre-release tournament for Magic, The Gathering. Jan 30, 11am.

SAMURAI COMICS
(check website for correct store location)

Yugioh Tournament. Sundays, noon (Cmlbk) & Sat, noon (west valley)
Anime Club. Sundays, noon (west valley)
Pokemon. Sundays, 2pm (west valley), Wed 5pm (Cmlbk)
D&D Encounters. Wed, 6pm (Cmlbk)
Magic, The Gathering. Friday, 6p (both stores), Tues, 6pm (west valley), Sat 1pm (Cmlbk), Mon 6pm (Cmlbk)

SCIENCE EVENTS

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

New Exhibit: Race, Are We So Different? Through Jan 2nd.
ASU Super Computer Partnership with TGen.
The Impact of Race on Childrens Development. Nov13, 2pm.
Early Childhood Educators Series

FYI

(Cont'd from page 8)

on Race. Dec 11, 1pm.
Galaxy 2011 Gala Event. Feb 5, 2011
BioBuzz Family Series, family friendly short talks in bioscience. 3rd Saturdays
Science Caf, informal discussions with ASU Professors, see webpage for topics and dates. "You Are What You Eat," Nov 19
Galaxy 2011: Infinite Possibilities fundraiser. Feb 11, 6pm
Ongoing Exhibits:
All About Me Gallery, interactive exhibit on human body
Dorrance Planetarium
Evans Family Skycycle
My Digital Worlds
Forces of Nature
New Rock Wall for climbers aged 8 and above
Adults Night Out, 1st Fridays, check website for topics & time. No December events.

ASU

Science lectures and news
<http://asunews.asu.edu/news/science>

BOOKMANS PHOENIX

Phoenix Astronomical Society
Presents a FREE Telescope Training Workshop. Dec 12, 330pm-430pm.

CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER, PEORIA

New Exhibit: "My Solar System," interactive exhibit by PlayMotion. Stargazing. Starlab Planetarium. Check website for dates and times
Space Place events for Future Astronauts. Check website for event dates & times.
Family Fun Day. Nov 27, 10am-4pm
Understanding the Nature of Light, Fridays, 2pm.
Columbia Shuttle Memorial Display
ASU Meteorite Exhibit
Iridium Satellite Model
Atlantis Space Shuttle Model
Journey Thru the Space Program
Lowell Observatory Display

MOON SOCIETY MEETING

3:00 PM on the third Saturday at Denny's on the Southeast corner of US60 and Rural Road. For more info contact Craig Porter at portercd@msn.com

PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, TUCSON

New Event! Beads in Space (Beads of Courage nat'l charity). Nov 1 - Apr 30, 2011. Special kids activities on Nov 20-21, 10am-2pm

Physics Phun with Rockets. Nov 13, Dec 11, 1pm-230pm
Santa Cleared for Landing. Dec 4, 9am-1130am
Model Building Make-N-Take. Dec 4, 1pm-230pm
Young Flyers Fun. Jan 22, 1pm-230pm
New Volunteer Orientation. Nov 13, Dec 11, 930am-1030am.
Volunteer Presentation Series. Nov 20, Dec 11, Dec 18, 10a
Space Gallery exhibit. See an Apollo space capsule, moon rock, Phoenix Mars Mission.

SETI INSTITUTE

Calendar of events on the website.
Science Radio Program - Mondays, avail as podcast - <http://radio.seti.org> and <http://podcast.seti.org>

TITAN MISSILE MUSEUM

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.
Top to Bottom Tours: Check web site for 2010 dates
Titan Overnight Experience - spend the night in the crew quarters. Check website for details.

OTHER GENRE-RELATED EVENTS

BARNES & NOBLE, TEMPE MARKET PLACE

IFC Screenwriting Group, Wednesdays, 7pm

LOFT THEATRE, TUCSON
Screenings of movies, many SF genre. Check website for times and listings.
The Nightmare Before Christmas - Dec 24

COPPERCON 31

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An American in...Reflection

by Jeffrey Lu

This column has been going on for over six years. Thank-you. People of all sorts have told me how they enjoyed these stories in my misadventures in England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Yet, I've been asked more often than not how this column came to be. So, here it is.

First, this was meant to be a joke. Let me explain. I had came back from an England trip and wrote on a dare with an English Composition tutor named John. He said to the effect, "Why don't you write a travel piece?" Being a fan of Mark Twain's "The Innocent's Abroad," I decided to why not? I thought I would call this column, "An American in...(insert country)" as a tribute to Gene Kelly's "An American in Paris." I wrote my first piece about a Harry Potter Movie premiere that happened as I stumbled back from Chinatown. I thought this was a one-shot observation piece. Instead, I was asked to write more. Six years and still going. Wow.

Second, I traveled overseas because of a family's death. I looked at myself and wondered why not try to see some parts of the world when I'm in good health. So, I saved and looked into travel deals online. I was fortunate to visit these four countries.

Third, believe it or not, I suck at writing. Seriously. I had to repeat a lot of ENG 101 and 102 during the years. Yet, I am still here. Still working on these words for others to be amused and/or informed. Find it rewarding to see all my past teachers in English/Journalism from elementary to college surprised to see their least likely student in print.

Fourth, Harlan Ellison's lecture on reporters at Glendale Community College (2004?) made me try this for this column/reporter jig. I had, in the past, written a few articles but never this long to one newsletter/blog/newspaper. Another, I did not expect my editor, Stephanie, to be kind and publish these scribbles. I thought she was looking for a real reporter but took pity on a fan and let me in. Bless her heart and giving me a chance. I'm still here and learning.

Fifth, this is a fan column. I don't get paid. I don't get any breaks on conventions, tours, and trips. I'm just a guy who likes to travel and tell tales. Even when

truth is stranger than fiction...

Sixth, I am surprised at the wonderful people enjoying the stuff I write. Maybe I should write a book? In time...

Seventh and last, I had fortunate opportunities from going to a Nebula awards to meeting Harlan. For now, I decided to go to the Iberian Peninsula. Scared as heck but determined to spread my wings in looking at Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and Italy. Even though there are terrorist warnings and pick-pocketing places I'll be visiting, I'm going. I may not know what I'm doing but I hope to tell a few stories when I'm back.

Hopefully as one read this, I'll be home to write An American in Iberian Peninsula. Maybe I'll write about my stopovers. We'll see.

Gamers's Corner

Back to the Future Card Game from Looney Labs

Playing this required about 20-30 minutes of intense study. However, once you start playing you realize that it is time very well spent.

You play a descendant of one of the major characters from the movies. You have certain events that must happen and once you have set those properly you must stop Doc Brown from ever inventing time travel. There are five types of cards to help you achieve your goal, items (they range from a bullet proof vest to a pie pan to tomorrow's newspaper), actions (let you steal another's item, play multiple items, act during another's turn), power actions (replay discards, search for cards, counter card stealing), double backs (flip a lynchpin AND discard an item to flip a second lynchpin), and finally time machines (there are 6, all have different requirements or bonuses)

It plays more like a board game than a card game; this is because of the time line. The time line is laid out in a 4 x 6 grid with specific cards in each spot. Nine of these are lynchpins (cards you can turn as a result of play), fifteen are ripple points (these are flipped based on lynchpins being turned). Some lynchpins flip multiple ripple point so you have to watch carefully to insure that you don't work at cross purposes to yourself.

The box claims to play in about twenty to sixty minutes, I found that the times start at the longer end and progress to play

faster as the players become more comfortable and learn the cards. We played about six hours and had more fun as the game progressed. Before I got to play I asked several local gamers about the game and got positive responses from everyone who had played.

4.5 Stars out of 5

See you next time.

Bob LaPierre

Look for Looney Labs Games at your local neighborhood game store. To find a location near you visit <http://roster.looneylabs.com>

Warhammer 40,000 The Killing Ground by Graham McNeill Black Library, \$19.99, 313 pp

Ultramarine Captain Uriel and Sargent Pasanis are brought to a different world. They will find something strange with the Imperial government of the world Salinas. They are afraid of "The Killing Ground." Khaturain or "The Killing Ground" has ghosts that do not rest until revenge is served.

This is the fourth book of the *Ultramarines* series.

A bit of normal human horror in this Space Marines saga. Interesting concept. Enjoyed it. Recommended to dark sci-fi or Warhammer 40,000 fans. ~ Jeffrey Lu

Warhammer 40,000 Courage and Honor by Graham McNeill Black Library, \$19.99, 318 pp

Imperial planet Pavonis is invaded by an alien forces known as the tau. Ultramarine Captain Uriel will lead his 4th Company of Ultramarines to help the defense of the planet. Yet, there is something not right with the Imperial governor and his family. Is there a potential betrayal at hand?

This is the fifth book of the *Ultramarines*.

Interesting look at war and at tau's philosophy. Recommended to dark sci-fi or Warhammer 40,000 fans. ~ Jeffrey Lu

Warhammer 40,000 The Chapter's Due by Graham McNeill Black Library, \$24.99, 318 pp

Warsmith Honsou and his Chaos warband will be invading the Ultramarine's major worlds for revenge. Opposing will be Captain Uriel Ventriss of the Ultramarines,

Space Marines, Imperial Forces, and planetary defense forces. Who will win?

This is the sixth book of the *Ultramarines*.

Epic battles. Dark. Confusing if one does not read the past five books and short stories. Overall, great story. Recommended to dark sci-fi war readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. ~ Jeffrey Lu

Warhammer Night of the Daemon by Aaron Rosenbeg Black Library, \$7.99, 253 pp

Alaric and Dietz are again on a quest against Chaos forces. They were first planning to find ancient treasures but got more than they bargained for- Chaos artifacts. Also, will they survive another encounter with a daemon?

This is the second book of *Daemon Gates Trilogy*.

Dark. Betrayals. Recommended to dark fantasy readers and Warhammer fans. ~ Jeffrey Lu

Warhammer Riders of the Dead by Dan Abnett Black Library, \$19.99, 276 pp

This is a story of two Empire soldiers. Both were allies against the Northern Chaos invaders. Unfortunately, they are destined for a deadly duel with each other. Only one side will win.

Lots of swearing. Dark. Almost an entire army is wiped out. In the end, good story. Recommended to dark fantasy readers and Warhammer fans. ~ Jeffrey Lu

Warhammer- An Empire Army Novel- Grimblades by Nick Kyme Black Library, \$8.99, 412 pp

The Grimblades are elite scouts of Prince Wilhelm of Reiklands. In this tale, they are part of the army to counter the greenskins (orcs and goblins) invasion. Sadly, in the Empire, Prince Wilhelm and his small army are the only ones to counter this threat. The Grimblades will not only have to fight these enemies but also their own people. Will they be able to protect the prince at the cost of their lives?

This is the fourth series in the *Empire Army* novels. This novel can stand alone.

Dark. Good story. Recommended to fans of Warhammer and/or dark fantasy readers. ~ Jeffrey Lu

(Cont'd on page 12)

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hartter

Warhammer- A Thanquol & Boneripper Novel- Temple of the Serpent by C.L. Werne Black Library, \$8.99, 410 pp

Grey Seer Thanquol is again on a mission to redeem his past failures. This time, he is to go to an island named Lustria, a land of lizard folk, and kill the Prophet of Sotek. He is, unfortunately, to assist a large group of ratmen. He will find that not only the place is hostile with sharks, pirate zombies, and lizard men, but someone within his own people is trying to kill him. Will Thanquol accomplish his mission? How many Bonerippers- his bodyguard- will he use? Will Grey Seer Thanquol be the last rat standing? Will Thanquol be stranded in Lustria, forever?

This is the second book in the series.

Highly amusing. Enjoyable. Recommended to fans of Warhammer and/or dark fantasy readers. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000 Ciaphas Cain: Defender of the Imperium by Sandy Mitchell Black Library, \$15.00, 764 pp

Here are further adventures of hero commissar Ciaphas Cain as he finds more trouble than he can handle in the Imperium's wars.

This second omnibus contains the novels, "*Death or Glory*", "*Duty Calls*", and "*Cain's Last Stand*." It also includes two short stories, "*Sector Thirteen*" and "*Traitor's Gambit*."

Enjoyable. Recommended to dark sci-fi war readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer Zombieslayer by Nathan Long Black Library, \$8.99, 414 pp

Gotrek and Felix, a dwarf slayer and a human scholar, arrived at Castle Reikguard to help defend against necromancer Heinrich Kemmler's undead hoard. Will Gotrek finally find his doom or is there something more that he just can't win?

This book is the twelfth of *Gotrek and Felix* novel series.

Oh, boy. Another zombie book, this year. But seriously, this is a good read. Recommended to dark fantasy readers and Warhammer fans. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

MangaZone

Usagi Yojimbo Bridge of Tears by Stan Sakai Dark Horse Books, \$17.95, 246 pp

This is a story about a ronin (wandering samurai) rabbit named Usagi in feudal Japan. Here, he encounters Mayumi, a waitress, who wants to leave her village. She joins Usagi for adventure that she is not prepared.

This is volume 23 of the series.

Story is sad but well done. Need to read other issues to understand Usagi's friends and foes. Recommended to manga readers and anyone who love Japanese feudal era samurai stories. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

Musty Tomes

The Humanoids Trilogy by Jack Williamson With Folded Hands, 1947 novelette

The Humanoids, 1948 novel The Humanoid Touch, 1980 novel

Jack Williamson wrote that his overprotective parents inspired these stories. The other obvious source would be Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics with their highest priority to protect humans from harm. Instead of three laws, the Humanoids robots have only one law: "To serve and obey, and guard men from harm." They become the greatest foe of humanity since they interpret this prime directive to prevent people from doing anything with any element of danger in it, like driving cars, learning science, having freedom... These super-strong mechanical men claim to serve and protect, but they do so as prison guards, enslaving worlds that make the mistake of letting them in. How does this happen? The Humanoids offer to take over all labor and leave men to a life of leisure. Nations joyfully accept, only to learn later just how limited that leisure is. Dissenters can be brainwashed to accept their new paradise. The trilogy tells three stories of people who rebelled.

With Folded Hands tells of the Humanoids' arrival on a future Earth, much like our own since it had to rebuild after an atomic World War Three. Civilization is about at the 1946 level during which the story was written. A suburban husband rejects the

Humanoids, but his wife ends up accepting their brainwashing offer. The story ends on a tragic note, as the man realizes he must conform to avoid brainwashing.

The Humanoids tells of two men's quest to destroy the central computer that controls all Humanoids. How do they know to do this? Because one of them is the creator of the Humanoids. He invented them as a response to the horrors of World War Three, and thought he could bring to the human world peace and prosperity. The central computer interpreted his prime directive to suit its own agenda. That agenda now includes building a better central computer which will have telepathic mind control abilities. There will no longer be any need to brainwash anyone if the new computer is finished. All will become joined in a euphoric group mind, happy individual cogs in the great machine. And is that a bad thing after all?

The Humanoid Touch brings us to a second galaxy colonized by humanity. The Humanoids have just begun to seduce this galaxy. One star system was settled by refugees who fought and fled the Humanoids. Generations later, the Humanoids have discovered these worlds, and come in peace, denying the age-old accusations. A young man, Keth, carries on his parents' mission to develop a weapon against them.

Here the story takes on features of the movie *Avatar*. There is a special material found in the jungles that can deactivate the Humanoids. This material is concentrated in special trees worshiped by the natives. To survive, Keth must join those natives. For the rest of humanity, their fate is the same as in the first two stories. And this novel's ending is as ambiguous. The natives have a sort of group-mind with their trees, much as depicted in *Avatar* with the spirit tree. This peaceful communal life, together with the protection afforded by the trees, allows peace with the Humanoids. I suppose if anyone's skin were blue ... wait, the Humanoids' skin does reflect light as gold or blue, but their overall body color is –

Black. Which raises some interesting issues. The Humanoids, the slaves who enslave us, are quite directly a servant class of black men. They are less than human. Does any of this sound familiar? If not, then note that when the first two stories were written, America

was segregated. Slavery may have ended in 1865, but desegregation only began with an order from President Truman in 1948 to integrate the military. America has only been desegregated for one lifetime, about sixty years. One can take Williamson's trilogy as a slam at racism, a "what if" tale of what happens to nations that depend on black slavery. In his own subtle way, Williamson did his part to chip away at racism in America, mixing that in with concerns about robotics, mind control, and freedom.

I can see why *The Humanoids* is considered his best work, and I'd say read the complete trilogy. All three stories are equally good – just like the human races. ~ **M.L. Fringe**

The Man Who Fought Alone by Stephen Donaldson Forge, \$27.95, 463pp

The title format of *The [Noun] Who* has been a fortuitous one, from *The Cat Who* series to the recent Steig Larsson trilogy. Donaldson's excellent book could easily have a *The Man Who...* predecessor as well as a sequel or two; perhaps they exist in his imagination, and perhaps, now that he's wrapped up his major opus, the Thomas Covenant series, he will return to these characters. I rather hope so. (He may have even said as much at CopperCon; sadly, I was delayed and came late to the reading.)

How the book came to be written is a story in itself, one which Mr. Donaldson told us during the Q&A that followed. I cannot do justice to it; if you get the chance at a future convention, ask him to tell you. The short version is that in the wake of "the divorce from hell" he took up martial arts. In the dojo, his rage and its energy was directed into perfecting the expression of the katas. The experience was transformative. In a way, this book is an obeisance to the world, to the teachers and fellow trainees and traditions that saved his life.

The Man Who Fought Alone is a story of confronting one's demons, spiced and served up with lots of action and sharp dialogue. The protagonist, Mick Axbrewder (read, brooder with an ax-sharp chip on his shoulder), middle-aged ex-cop, ex-alcoholic, has a lot to face. As the story opens, he is recovering from a gut shot wound,

Musty (Cont'd from page 12)

got by way of crossing a crime lord in his lucrative, if illegal, dealings. His boss and partner in the PI business, Ginny, has been tending him, but Mick's rotten behavior has severed the last, tenuous bond that held them together, and she wants out of the partnership. She does, however, point him towards someone who might hire him.

Mick lands a temp job as security guard at a martial arts tournament, a very big event with international participants and some strong hostility between factions that have, shall we say, *history*. Central to the plot is a set of antique woodblocks that depict the Wing Chung martial arts fighting style. If authentic, they are priceless; as they are part of China's heritage, it is a sore point that they are currently in the possession of a Japanese master. Curiosity and an intuitive sense, which Mick alternately trusts and mistrusts, involve Mick deeper than the initial terms of hire warranted. Mick has a nose for brewing trouble; unfortunately, his involvement has a bad way of getting others dead.

But in addition to a smart mouth and a self-destructive streak, Mick has a conscience and the persistence of a wolf. Instead of biting once and holding on, like a Rottweiler or pit bull, Mick keeps backing off and coming back, backing and pushing his enemy to the point of no return. Even when he doesn't know, exactly, who his other enemy is – he is consistently his own worst. By the end of the story, however, Mick has taken enough hard looks in a clear mirror and done his best to make amends for his mis-steps that the rent and broken parts of his soul, as well as his *I save your life, you save mine* friendship with Ginny, have mended. To balance out that advance, he has taken so many beatings that he is in worse shape than he was at the start.

The characterizations and the writing are just wonderful. If I were one of those terrible people who deface first editions with underlinings and bent page corners this book would be in sorry shape. Mick's observations help you see the world with his intuition-driven intellect. Phrases like “a marquee lettered in hubris” and the absolutely riveting description of the master-level demonstrations of different fighting styles held me mesmerized. This is one of the most satisfying, yet heart-

wrenchingly poignant narratives I have ever read. Why must it be my *favorite* characters who wind up dead? For readers who like hard-boiled detective fiction and/or martial arts, this is the perfect gift, and if that means giving it to yourself, so be it. Delve into this superb book, and find treasures. You will not come up empty-handed. Or maybe, in a zen way, you will. – **Chris Paige**

In Our Book

Black Swan Rising
by Lee Carroll
TOR, 396pp, \$14.99

“Lee Carroll” is a pseudonym for Carol Goodman and Lee Slonimsky and they have created a wonderful engrossing fantasy set in contemporary New York City.

Jewelry designer Gareth James escapes an unexpectedly rainy day by entering an antique store in her neighborhood that she'd never noticed before. During a conversation with the strange proprietor she receives an old silver box that is sealed up and needs the delicate hand of a master jeweler to open. If Gareth opens the box successfully the owner will give her a thousand dollars.

And like Pandora's box—this mysterious silver box is the door to amazing chaos and adventure—and even romance.

Though her father and she own a well-respected high-end art gallery---Gareth's artistic friends have nothing on the characters she comes across in this tale. My very favorite is Obie Smith, a West Indian nurse whom she meets when her father, a shooting/robbery victim, is rushed to St. Vincent's. Obie's a character and a half! There's also the hedge fund manager Will Hughes whose wealthy lifestyle is the perfect foil for his real (night) life. Her best friends Becky and Jay whose band London Dispersion Force is on the cusp of getting a real recording deal keep her grounded in the here and now. And then there's the bakery simply named Puck.

Really, you must indulge in this. A New York under siege by an ancient evil and Gareth is the only one who can keep the darkness at bay. As the novel progresses the story becomes more astounding and eccentric. Trust me—the book has plenty of darkness and nastiness—but it's not a continual downhill run into slaughter and gore. There are delightful touches

of sparkle and wonder.

This is full of art and magic and a seemingly bottomless sack of excellent bakery goods. We follow Gareth as she discovers the connections between her French mother, Elizabethan wizardry and that portentous silver box.

The colors and details of this novel are so enticing. If you even remotely like a little magic and wonder in your stories especially when set in the contemporary world—this is your book. I can't wait for more. ~ **Sue Martin**

Dracula: the Un-Dead
by Dacre Stoker and Ian Holt
New American Library, 424 pp,
\$15.00

This novel takes place about 25 years after the events in *Dracula*. The aftermath of the first book is evident in the characters and there is a wonderful continuity from one volume to the next. I am not sure that Bram Stoker would have written a sequel but had he this would be a worthy attempt. There are minor inconsistencies in the manner of writing but the overall tone and pacing is close enough that if you enjoyed the original you will enjoy this volume.

Quincey Harker, son of Mina and Jonathan Harker, is frustrated with law school. He wants to be an actor, something his father is vehemently opposed to. He meets Basarab, an actor of great ability, and leaves school to become an actor. He meets Bram Stoker, a writer who owns a theater. And then in London he becomes involved in a stage production of *Dracula*. He is amazed to see his parents as heroes in the story and convinces Basarab to star in the play.

There are of course vampires, and the return of *Dracula*, I'm not sure I like where everyone ended but there were reasons and while not my choices they were at least logical. The story is intertwined with hidden references and background of why the men were friends in the first volume.

Very enjoyable. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Packing for Mars
by Mary Roach
W.W. Norton & Company,
\$25.95, 334pp

If you only read one non-fiction book in the next year, make it *Packing for Mars*. Mary Roach described herself as having “the mind of a 12-year-old boy” in a

recent NPR interview, so she is fascinated by the unmentionable, with a relentless curiosity that has gained her entry into some truly off-the-beaten-track places of human endeavor, all of which she describes with accuracy and wit. In other words, she is a prototype of Miles Vorkosigan. When she dies she should be canonized as the patron saint of people with Asberger's syndrome – the sheer quantity of information she packs into her chapters is jaw-droppingly impressive, while her humorous perspective holds it all together and makes it a delight to read. In this book, she describes astronauts, payload specialists, ground control personnel, animals and professors, all participating in the space programs of several nations, most notably the United States, Russia, and Japan.

Want to know about the role origami plays in how astronauts are selected in Japan? What happened the first time a crew included a woman? How Russian cosmonauts manage to have access to so much alcohol, and what happened to the onion experiment? How the two chimps in space missions affected astronaut morale? The mechanics of “zero gravity elimination” and options for processing human waste products, of which there'd be quite a lot accumulating on a Mars mission? How many g-forces a human frame can endure, for how long, and how position matters? It's all here, and more, much more. From the bizarre to the meticulous, the officious to the extraordinary, the think tanks, the simulations, the failures, and the triumphs, here are the men and women (and animals) who have contributed to the space programs, who actively promote manned missions to Mars, who are willing to go themselves, even if it's a one way ticket.

Sadly, there is no index (I guess one hazard of having the mind of a 12-year-old boy is forgetting to make one), so if you want to find a particular personage or topic you may find it difficult to do so, unless you get an e-book version and use the Find option. Technology's wonderful. In any case, *Packing for Mars* lets you know that, even if it seems that manned missions are stalled and the space program is on life support, the dream of sending human beings to Mars is still very much alive, and that some people are doing their utmost to make it so.

~ **Chris Paige**

In Our Book

(Cont'd from page 13)

Pegasus

by Robin McKinley
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 397pp,
\$18.00

Robin McKinley has a steady, warm hand at fantasy. I haven't read everything of hers, but the novels I have: "Dragonhaven," "Sunshine," "The Hero and the Crown" "The Blue Sword" as well as short story collections, have been consistently excellent stories with serious believable foundations. Well-written; well-thought-out; a joy to read.

And "Pegasus" is no exception. This is a coming-of-age tale which begins with the birthday of the twelve-year-old Princess Sylviianel (known as Sylvi) who is the fourth child of King Corone IV of Balsinland. On her twelfth birthday, per the hundreds-of-years-old ritual—she is magically bound to the younger son of the Pegasus king. The young Pegasus prince is named Ebon. And the minute he shows up for the grand ritual we know everything has changed because he and Sylvi are instantly able to communicate mind-to-mind. Naturally, in the ancient alliance of humans and pegasi this has never happened. Pegasi and human communicate awkwardly with the help of speakers utilizing an imprecise sign language with the help of magicians. And some humans can speak a few words of the pegasi language. But as two intelligent species they get along and respect each other nevertheless.

But---Sylvi and Ebon do not tell their respective parents that they can communicate easily to each other. Or that Ebon has allowed Sylvi to climb on his back and fly with him. Humans and pegasi do not touch. The humans reason it is disrespectful. Humans don't constantly touch others not their family. So hands off the pegasi—no petting, hugging or brushing fingers through silky manes. Certainly no riding.

The youngsters' friendship will fundamentally change the whole human/pegasi alliance. The alliance was begun centuries ago when the pegasi approached the humans during a huge war to ask for protection from the growing threat of an influx of fearsome beasts: taralians, wyverns, ladons—and even legendary rocs. So the pegasi allow themselves to be "bound" to human royalty as a surety of their alliance. This

includes the reigning pegasus king who remains in human lands with the human king. Funny enough—no humans ever go to the pegasi home pastures. (Another thing that will change with Sylvi and Ebon's friendship).

Eventually of course, the parents find out the children can talk (though not that Sylvi has flown with Ebon) and an unprecedented visit takes place where Sylvi is invited to visit Ebon's home (along with her father but he only spends a few days there—Sylvi spends three weeks). While she is there she is taken to visit the mythical Caves—repository of pegasi history and all their artwork in endless miles of painstakingly carved walls. You see pegasi have small "alulal" hands at the wing joint and they are actually able to do weaving, writing and carving. But their hands are smaller than humans and weak in comparison. It is no surprise that Sylvi falls in love with pegasi society.

The mounting danger under this delightful friendship between Ebon and Sylvi is not only the fact that the mythical beasts mentioned above are proliferating—but both Sylvi and Ebon begin to suspect that one of the reasons pegasi and humans have never been able to communicate smoothly has something to do with the interference of human magicians and was established at the very beginning of the alliance. And this magical manipulation may prove the downfall of both humans and pegasi as the escalating attacks by wyverns etc may be orchestrated by the rocs.

Discovering just what is really going on is the crux here: do the magicians really have it out for pegasi/human interaction; are rocs really behind the concerted swarming of the other mythical beasts? Do the magicians really not want Sylvi's ability to talk with Ebon—and we discover—with other pegasi—to be utilized?

All this is for the next book!

The glory of this novel is the intricate development of the world McKinley has created here. Humans treat pegasi with respect and deference (they are beautiful in flight, movement and looks). The human king loves his family--and they all talk informally save when court/public circumstances dictate otherwise. The king, his warrior wife and his three sons and daughter are affectionate and tight-knit. As are the members of pegasi royal families.

And this a fascinating world McKinley has created. I hope in the next book or in perhaps the finished copy of this novel there is a map and a clear description of the monsters she has created: ladons, taralians and norindours since I have no clear image of these.

But don't hesitate to dive into this: a great read for young adult and adult alike. ~ Sue Martin

The Last Page
by Anthony Huso
Tor, 430 pp, \$25.99

The Last Page is the first half of a two book series and is the debut of Mr. Huso.

The story begins in Isca, a city full of wonders in the Duchy of Stonehold. The monsters one sees are nothing compared to what lives beneath the city.

Twenty three year old Caliph Howl is the reluctant High King and inheritor of Isca's dark secrets. He now is faced with a war he is not prepared for. When his old lover suddenly reappears, he is happy but Sena is a member of the shradnae witchocracy, adept in espionage, blood magics, and sent to spy on the King. Sena secretly plots to open the Cisrym Ta requiring the key that lies in Caliph's veins. Their decisions and the bloody conflicts may stain the world forever.

Anthony Huso has dived into writing with both feet. He has written an elegant novel of unusual scope, power and imagination. It is macabre, enthralling, and full of twists as he blends technology, magics, and intrigue in a world both impossible and believable. Tor has loosed a new author and changed the playing field. Enjoy. You won't want to put it down. ~ Pam Allan

Cinco de Mayo
by Michael J. Martineck
Edge Science Fiction and
Fantasy Publications, 491 pp

Cinco de Mayo has a dynamic, original **what if...?** plot: on a year-unspecified May 5th (but it is a Thursday, so 2011 is a possibility), everyone on the planet gets a simultaneous headache that lasts 1.5 seconds, then abates, and in its wake everyone has just shared total recall with one other person on the planet. You now know every personal detail of one other person's life – and they know as much about you. Language, lifestyle, location, *skills*, the whole chimichanga.

For Alistair, this is worse than any nightmare. Alistair shares memories with John McCorely, a sociopath who, even from prison, commands a network capable of assassinating anyone John dislikes, and anyone who can inform on him is definitely a person John dislikes. It wouldn't be so scary if Alistair didn't have a wife and two little daughters – one of whom now speaks fluent German, while the other holds conversations in Chinese with his wife.

Dr. Susan Grove, an *uber*-ranking neuroscientist, interfaces with Antonio, the keeper of days in a tradition of the secret Mayan calendar. Fortunately for Susan's sanity, Antonio sounds a lot like the way her Grammy used to talk; part of her mind knows how to recognize wisdom, however archaic, when she hears it. And so she brings two minds to the table when she is tapped to head a presidential cabinet.

Brad gets the twofold surprise of his life. First up, he has complete, intimate insight into what it feels like to be gay; secondly, his wife Cindy can now defend herself from being smacked around, thanks to her Other's training in the Swiss Federal Office of Police. Once Cindy realizes there is now more to her than meets the eye, she wants her own life, and she wants to help others.

An advertising executive has his carefully contrived life derailed by the memories of a blind Chinese railway inspector. A young, privileged Muslim trades experiences with a dying man while his friend, Sultan, who has grown up with assurance and all the easy money can buy, is aghast to also be an 8 year old Hindi boy, sold into slavery. Sultan quietly coordinates his resources and then goes on a quest to find his Other, and rescue him.

Other characters are presented, but these five carry the core storylines. Experience shares with innocence, opposites become each other. Wishes are answered, and poetic justice is become the law. Truly a splendid story, AND it is well-written. Strongly recommended. ~ Chris Paige

Our Lady of Darkness
by Fritz Leiber
Orb, 220 pp, \$15.99

This is a re-release of a classic. Leiber spins a great and frightful yarn about a fictional writer who becomes obsessed with the

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 14)
writings of another author from decades past.

This author, Franz Westen, spends his time writing supernatural horror and novelizing “Weird Underground” a late night TV show. Some years ago while he was wasting his life drunk after the death of his wife due to cancer, he bought a pair of books that were tied together with a ribbon. They turned out to be Megapolisomancy; A new Science of Cities by Thibaut de Castries and the other a diary of sorts with many references to the other book.

Leiber has created a whole history for this Thibaut de Castries including interactions with some of San Francisco’s most famous residents from the turn of the century. As you read, Westen becomes further intrigued by the writings of de Castries and bit by bit the reader is drawn in.

Leiber is a lover of foreshadowing and astute readers can predict where this is going early on; however, such is the quality of the writing that you still want to follow the path, see how the characters get there.

I will always love the Lankhmar series but this may actually be a better novel.

Highly recommended. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Intrigues
by Mercedes Lackey
Ballantine Books, \$26.00, 491 pp

Intrigues is the sequel to *Foundation*, continuing the adventures of young Mags, a Herald-in-training, together with his friends Lydia, Bear, and Lena, at the newly established Collegium where Heralds, Bards, and Healers of Valdemar are trained.

Like the dragonriders of Pern, the Heralds of Valdemar and their magical Companions, who look like white horses but are considerably more, are the heroes of the realm. Like McCaffrey’s dragonriders, they are fallible. Mags is resourceful and kind-hearted, but he feels badly out of place amongst all these sons and daughters of nobles and merchants and holders, for he himself is an orphan with a dreary past, and his self-doubts undermine his confidence.

Mags is trying to find some record of his parentage in the collegium archives, assisted by another misfit – Amily, the crippled daughter of the King’s Own,

Herald Nikolas. Since she cannot even walk, let alone ride, Amily cannot be Chosen by a Companion, even though she is in every other way qualified to be a Herald.

Mags is also a spy-in-training for Nikolas and the King, going where only a self-effacing youth accustomed to scut work could go. His missions go down increasingly dark roads as he tracks first a corrupt council member, then a mysterious assassin.

Rather like another orphan-hero in a popular series, Mags wins fleeting acceptance and glory when he becomes part of the newly formed Kirball team. Kirball is, on the surface, a fun way for trainees to get exercise; its real purpose is to help prepare them for war.

Several of the storylines and plot twists in this series are strongly reminiscent of the first Valdemar trilogy, *Arrows of the Queen*. Obvious villains go unapprehended so their machinations can continue behind the scenes and reach a direful culmination. The despised outsider is the unrecognized hero and advisor to the monarch. Misunderstandings abound, words spoken in rage alienate and drive characters to the brink of suicide. Now, many of Lackey’s readers have specifically requested she write more books like *Arrows of the Queen*, so she has answered their call as completely as they could wish. Well and good. Now, Lackey, who is widely read, and whose *Elemental Masters* fantasy novels show the influence of both *The Secret Garden* and *The Screwtape Letters*, has an affinity for the stories and verses of Rudyard Kipling. (In her filk-writing days, she successfully emulated his cadences and literate rhyme schemes.) If you, Gentle Reader, detect a resemblance between the Kirball game scenes and Kipling’s story about a polo match titled “The Maltese Cat,” you are spot on. Lackey has reset that gem of a story in her world, so that a wider audience can enjoy it afresh. It’s an oversight that the story is not acknowledged as the source; this should be rectified in the next printing. ~ **Chris Paige**

Fatal Error
by F. Paul Wilson
Tor Book, \$25.99, 330 pp

This is sequentially the penultimate Repairman Jack novel that leads up to the epic events of *Nightworld*; in actuality readers can look forward to two

more of these prequels, for *Jack: Secret Vengeance*, the third in the juvenilia Jack trilogy, and *The Dark at the End* (working title) are both due out next year.

For sheer scope of and volume of writing that revealed the psychosocial conscience of the era, the 1800s had Charles Dickens; 1900s had Isaac Asimov; and for the present, F. Paul Wilson is arguably our best representative. Certainly, dark/urban fantasy is currently the strongest genre in fiction, and Wilson is one of the most successful writers in the field, with his concatenation of the supernatural, social realism, and an iconic hero who appeals to audiences from Tolkien readers and Cthulu devotees to *Dexter* fans. Wilson, compelled by forces within (conative) and without (a vociferous fan base) to expand a storyline which initially comprised just six novels – the *Adversary* cycle – and a scattering of short stories, has written the epic fantasy arc of our time, told in 36 installations.

The Secret Society calling itself the Septimus Order has readied a virus to bring down the Internet. Social disorder is fun and furthers the Society’s side objectives, but the real target behind the feint is The Lady, the embodiment of sentient life on Earth. If she can be killed a third time, things will happen which most of us would not enjoy, but which Rasolom, Director of the Society, has connived for millennia to bring about. For most of humanity’s tenure, Rasolom was opposed by a Guardian, Glaeken. But you know that warning in the *I Ching*, the one about the moment of greatest triumph simultaneously contains the potential for greatest disaster? Yeah, Glaeken found the truth of that out the hard way. Decades ago, when he finally killed Rasolom, he lost his own immortality. Rasalom was able to arrange his own rebirth, complete with all the old memories and the means to smoothly take up again the reins of power. Glaeken can’t do that. He needs a Replacement. And you know, immortal Guardians are hard to come by.

Jack has grown up with a mistrust deepening to hatred for the Septimus Order – the juvenilia trilogy tells why – and his peculiar skill set and circle of friends have made him the last, best hope for saving The Lady. On the one hand, he is so ordinary, the kind of guy no one looks at a second time; on the other, he has absolutely none of the social constraints that

make most people timid, blind, gullible, *nice*. Jack is not dead in his feelings; he loves powerfully, but he opted out of the “you just can’t *do* that sort of thing” social consensus club when he was 17. He’s the modern Robin Hood, the guy who helps *what goes around to comes around*, the hero who is outside the law only because too often the law is a broken thing in the hands of the inept, or worse, an instrument of the corrupt. ~ **Chris Paige**

Will Power
by A.J. Hartley
Tor, \$25.99, 316 pp

Will Power continues from *Act of Will*.

Will Hawthorne and his band of diverse thieves are running from the Empire troops, when they are transported to a land they cannot identify with no way to get home. WHOOPS. They land in the middle of a goblin-faery war, but nothing is what it seems as they all find themselves with roles in the midst of armed confusion, and Will’s mouth digging them in deeper and deeper. How is the merry band make things right, stay alive and get back?

To put it bluntly, the readers lands in the middle of a glorious romp that could find a willing suspension of your will causing you to become a Will fan. You’ll enjoy the well-written Elizabethanish world with the fastest talker since Robert Aspirin. Enjoy, but try to keep the chuckles down on the light rail. People keep asking what is so funny. ~ **Pam Allan**

Cryoburn
by Lois McMaster Bujold
Baen Books, \$25.00, 399 pp

Spoiler Alert- Skip this paragraph if you do not want to know too much, too soon. Synopsis begins with the second paragraph. This is the book Bujold did not want to write, so she delayed it for 8 years with not one but two intervening series, the *Chalion* trilogy and *The Sharing Knife* quartet. Her reluctance is understandable; as she explained, the next logical milestone (ouch) in the evolution of her main character, Lord Miles Vorkosigan, is to become the Count, but that entails killing off her own, and many readers’ favorite character, Aral Vorkosigan, Miles’ father. The act was so traumatic that

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In Our Book

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it had to happen off stage. The Aftermath, consisting of five 100-word “Drabbles,” recounts the actions and reactions of five central characters to the event. Told oh, so simply, they are all the more effective, and along with Ivan, you may be left wondering....

No one, absolutely no one, layers irony, counterpoint, juxtaposition, the said and the unsaid, and insight the way Bujold does. In this story, the technology of cryo-revival, the possible political and economic ramifications of its widespread use, and the fear of death that motivates people to try to dodge it are all under scrutiny. Miles is alive because a young medtech named Raven Durena pieced Miles together after emergency cryonics was the only thing that saved the little Admiral (in *Mirror Dance*). For some conditions, cryo-preservation allows science to catch up with the disease and provide a cure; maybe only a few months are all that's needed to let a replacement organ be cloned or grown. Other people want to cheat time and see the future, or maybe see their grandchildren grown up.

The unscrupulous who do not want to lose any time to the cold sleep resort to growing full clones, then transplanting their old brain into the young body, risking their own and guaranteeing the clone's brain death. That's done only on the planet Jackson's Whole, and **that** is the business that Miles' entrepreneurial brother Mark, himself a clone, wants to put **out** of business.

Cryoburn begins with a disoriented, drugged, and desperate Miles wandering lost in one of the abandoned Cryocombs of the planet Kibou-daini.

Miles had been sent, as the only Auditor with direct experience of cryonics, to this planet where cryo-storage and revival are a way of, um... life for almost everyone. The business of cryonics has gone corporate: what began as hundreds of independent businesses is now a scant handful of small independents and a few dozen major companies that control all the votes and most of the money of the planet. One company, WhiteChrys, wants to export their services to Barrayaran Empire, starting in Komar. Empress Laisa, however, who was a business mogul of Komar before she married Gregor, smelled duplicity in the offer, and was the prime

mover behind Miles' remove.

Miles being Miles, is delighted when a high ranking Cryonics company officer offers him a very subtle bribe at a huge conference – it substantiates Laisa's hunch. At the same conference is Dr. Raven Durena, presenting his cryo-revival findings. Not long after, Miles is swept up in a general hostage-taking scenario, separated from his bodyguard, Armsman Roic, and abandoned by the hostage-takers when his idiosyncratic reaction to drugs renders him fighting-maniac instead of sedated.

Being lost affords Miles the opportunity to discover the shadow side of the bright world. Rescued by a young quasi-orphan named Jin, who collects stray animals, Miles learns more from the disenfranchised than the smooth CEOs ever wanted him to learn about the dealings and doings on Kibou. And Roic on his own proves resourceful, foiling the kidnappers handily, although now he's got another debacle on his resumé he'll never live down. Which is worse: a bug butter war or losing your liege to a snatch?

The planet is in an uproar before Miles, aided indirectly by Mark and Kareem Koudelka, finishes his ferreting investigations.

As the dust settles, Miles and Mark muse on how their own lives might be different if cryo-technology had been around to save their father's older brother. Aral Vorkosigan might never have become Count Vorkosigan; what would life as a cadet branch of the family have been like? Now maybe their father might consider the latest Durena life extension treatments for himself, to offset the wear of years and wars. Ah, irony. ~ **Chris Paige**

Out of the Dark
by David Weber
Tor; 382 pp, \$ 25.99

Earth has been visited by aliens in the past and determined to have no redeeming qualities and put on the list for colonization. The Galactic Hegemony allows the Shongairi, the only carnivores in the Hegemony, to colonize it. They use kinetic weapons to obliterate most major cities and disrupt any organized resistance.

After the initial bombardment the Shongairi expected humans to do the civilized thing and simply surrender to them. The shock and dismay when the humans don't surrender becomes better understood when it is revealed

that no race without the surrender instinct has ever made it to this stage of evolution/civilization. All the members of the Hegemony, carnivore, omnivore, or herbivore, have all been herd animals. Finding a race that isn't has caused a total failure of all their methods of persuasion.

The humans inflict ruinous casualties, and force the Shongairi to reconsider conquering the planet. This is another novel about how mankind can overcome incredible odds and persevere against any threat. The ending is unexpected and off kilter, but the joke at the end is truly atrocious.

An enjoyable read, I definitely would like to see the follow up. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Haunted Legends
edited by Ellen Datlow
and Nick Mamatas
Tor Paperback, \$15.99, 347pp

These editors have effaced themselves to mentor and make room for 20 writers of dark fantasy, tales in which style shares full honor with substance, menace and meaning are more than action, and the whys eclipse the whats. If you like your horror more imbued with thought than bloodshed, you have here a mother-lode of stories in that vein.

Here are the authors: **Richard Bowes, Kaaron Warren, Kit Reed, Steven Pries, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Ekaterina Sedia, John Mantoath, Catherynne M. Valente, Carolyn Turgeon, Carrie Laben, Jeffery Ford, Gary Braunbeck, Erzebet Yellowboy, M. K. Hobson, Stephen Dedman, Lily Hoang, Laird Barron** (would that name be counted as redundancy, specification, or oxymoron in the SCA?), **Pat Cadigan, Ramsey Campbell, and Joe R. Landsdale**. Intriguing names, some of them, no? Haven't heard of this or that one? Now's your chance to make a new acquaintance. See a few you recognize? Enjoy the new communiqués.

Here are a few titles I share for your enticement: “The Spring Heel,” “La Llorona,” “Between Heaven and Hull,” “Chucky Comes to Liverpool,” “Following Two-Face Woman,” “The Folding Man,” and “Fifteen Panels Depicting the Sadness of the Baku and the Jotai.” That last is my favorite, title and story both. Special mention goes to “Tin Cans,” a ghost story about an old security guard in the Tunisian Embassy at Moscow

who sees the ghosts of the young girls that Lavrentiy Beria, known as Stalin's butcher, rounded up, raped, and murdered. With most of these stories, there is a historical grounding, or a personal experience, that provides heart's blood to the narrative.

Reading these stories convinced me that the greatest writers are alive today, we just have to discover them. This is not to discount the wisdom or talent of past authors; but for our times, our experiences, our paradigms, it is living women and men who are our speakers of truths. ~ **Chris Paige**

Betrayer of Worlds
by Larry Niven and Edward M. Lerner
Tor, 316 pp, \$25.99

This is the link between the Puppeteer migration and Louis Wu, the human who discovered the Ringworld. The new knowledge about Puppeteers is mostly about the ones considered insane but it is delivered with the precision expected from a master of his craft.

Wu is plucked from a bad situation on Wunderland to help the Puppeteers avoid a possible attack from a race that has every reason to be annoyed with them. Much of the book involves Wu trying to outthink the Puppeteer Achilles.

The problem is that the Gw'oth have established a colony in the path of the Fleet of Worlds and Achilles is fomenting war between the colony and the home planet. The plan is to make it look like they are attacking the fleet and then he can become a hero by destroying them. He hopes this will get him the position of Hindmost.

The story is extremely engaging, well-thought-out and gives us more insight into the mind of Nessus. I'm sorry the arc is over, what is next?

Very Highly Recommended ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Grace
by Elizabeth Scott
Dutton Books, \$16.99, 200 pp

This is more Social Fiction than Science Fiction: the scenarios it describes are already with us in almost every detail; only the metaphors are more literally personified in this allegory of suicide bombers, religious and border wars, and surviving with your soul alive, if not unscathed.

Grace is the name of the

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In Our Book

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protagonist, who crosses metaphorical and physical terrains to get to a Border where she hopes to cross and begin a new life, or possibly, Afterlife.

For anyone who has suffered hard choices or horrors, this is the sort of book that can make sense of things. For the wise in spirit, it is a book that depicts the social dynamics that make hard choices and horrors inevitable, as well as the courage that make them endurable and escapable. Written in a spare, honest voice, it is a modern retelling of the parable of the good Samaritan. ~ **Chris Paige**

Harvest Moon
by Mercedes Lackey, Michelle Sagara, and Cameron Haley*
Luna Book, \$14.95, 377pp

A careful reading of the copyright page indicates that Cameron Haley is the *nom de plumage* of Greg Benage writing for the female audience; "Retribution" is a prequel for *Mob Rule*, also published by Luna. Sagara's contribution is "Cast in Moonlight," which also has sequels: "Cast in Shadow" and "Cast in Ruins." I here confess that I bought the book solely for the 500 Kingdoms story by Misty Lackey, and so far it is the only one of the three I have read.

"A Tangled Web" is a retelling of the myth of Persephone (daughter of the goddess Demeter), who is ravished away by Hades, god of the Underworld. But in this version, Persephone is in love with Hades and has agreed to a staged elopement to be with him. It's just that things go, well, wrong!

Two characters from the recently published *The Sleeping Beauty*, the hero Leopold and his wife, the Valkyrie Brunnhilde, enter the Kingdom of Olympus just in time for Brunnhilde to be mistaken for Persephone by Hades' agent, Thanatos, the god of Death. So now Persephone is in Hades' realm by choice, and Brunnhilde is there unwillingly. Demeter is in the dark and inconsolable, and in her grief brings winter for the first time to the Kingdom. That's some serious leverage. All the gods of the Greek pantheon are *verklemt*. Leopold has to find a way to rescue his wife, and Persephone and Hades need to find a way to stay together that does not call down devastating ruin upon their world.

There are moments of charm

and delight, for the author loves to present win-win solutions as if to say, 'Look, it's possible!' Persephone's compassion for the shades of the dead who have no coin to pay passage is one such moment, the trial that Leopold and Brunnhilde undergo is another. Maybe if more people read Lackey's books we could evolve past our I-win-you-lose cultural rules of engagement.

This story also ties up a dangling thread that hung from *Sleeping Beauty*'s raiment; for however much a hero, Leopold was merely mortal, Brunnhilde immortal. Talk about your mixed marriages.

Like milkweed or thistle down upon the breeze, "Tangles Web" is in keeping with the changing season and the turning of the year, and makes for pleasant fireside reading. ~ **Chris Paige**

Mercy Thompson: Homecoming
by Patricia Briggs
Del Rey, \$22.95, 112 pp

This is graphic novel about Mercy Thompson, a mechanic and a coyote shape changer. The story is the beginning of her stay as a potential teacher but ending up as a mechanic. She will meet Adam, Zee, and Stefan for the first time.

Makes sense to all Patricia Briggs' novels- *Moon Called*, *Blood Bound*, *Iron Kissed*, and *Bone Crossed*. Recommended to dark fantasy readers. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

Unholy Magic
by Stacia Kane
Del Ray, \$7.99, 360 pp

This is a sequel to *Unholy Ghosts*.

As an agent of the Church of The Real Truth, Chess Putnam debunks the false claims of hauntings, but the current job has celebrity status while she is trying to save some desperate hookers. She is sure the ghost is something very different. Someone is dealing in sex, murder and the supernatural, and Chess is in a crossfire between her lovers, pushers, and ruthless gangsters.

Lots of action, a noir world that comes alive on the page and interesting characters regardless of what they are. These books will

commandeer a place in your urban fantasy shelves. ~ **Pam Allan.**

City of Ghosts
by Stacia Kane
Del Rey, \$7.99, 408 pp

City of Ghosts is a sequel to *Unholy Magic* and a continuation of the Chess Putnam series of urban fantasies'

Chess Putnam has a lot on her plate The Church of the Real Truth have ordered her to solve the mangled corpses showing up on the streets, but questions of the veracity of her bosses are hinted and she is saddled with the daughter of the High Elder, who wants to run things her way. They put a binding spell on her, cutting her off from vital information. And meanwhile, her drug dealer wants her information. If this isn't bad enough, a mysterious street vender seems to have the information but he isn't telling or what it has to do with the vast underground City of Eternity. While Chess is navigating killer wraiths, First Elders and seriously deadly magic, she has her own issues and the only man she trusts [and loves] wants her dead.

This gets better book by book. The characters filled out and

the action even tighter. Get that collection going urban fantasy lovers. You have something to look forward to. ~ **Pam Allan**

When Blood Calls
by J.K Beck
Bantam, \$7.99, 404 pp

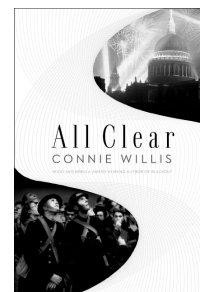
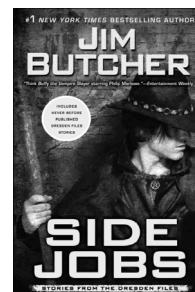
When Blood Calls is by the author of *Where Pleasure Rules* and *Where Wicked Craves*.

Attorney Sara Constantine is thrilled with being transferred to a special unit of Homeland Security until she finds she must prosecute Vampires and werewolves. She has just met Lucas Dragos and had a wonderful night of ecstasy. Now, she finds him in front of her as a vampire accused of murder. Lucas has fallen in love, but Sara now sees him as a monster. He must convince her of his innocence and catch the murderer. She must accept their love despite the brutal murder of her family by a vampire.

The case is complicated by a senior division that will do anything to see Lucas staked.

What we have is a supernatural romance with a touch of mystery, but unusually well-developed characters and developed

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In Our Book
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supernatural infrastructure. This is a must for lovers of supernatural romance. ~ **Pam Allan**

The Native Star
by M.K. Hobson
Ballantine, \$7.99, 387 pp

This is a debut novel.
The year is 1876 in a remodeled America. A patent magic dealer who sells cheap magic by mail has been running the town witch, Emily Edwards, out of business. She cares for aging and frail warlock grandfather, so attempts to catch a husband by a love spell. It backfires, but before she can fix it, an enchanted artifact falls into her hands. She must flee evil warlocks who want the artifact for themselves and her life as a perk.
Along comes Dreadnought Stanton, a New York City warlock as arrogant and abrasive as his name has been exiled to Lost Pine for mysterious reasons. He gets involved with Emily's race against time and finds the Great professor Mirabilis who alone can unlock the secret of the artifact but these two unlike individuals must contend with the magic of the human heart.
Ok, here we have a romance /mystery / historical with a brash, common-sense heroine who is a delight to share page time with on a pleasant afternoon. Be ready to enjoy and look forward to a sequel.
~ **Pam Allan**

Dragon Soul
by Jaida Jones and
Danielle Bennett
Ballantine, \$26.00, 400 pp

Dragon Soul is by the authors of *Havemercy* and *Shadow Magic*.
With the war over, the dragons destroyed, and an uneasy truce between Volstov and Ke-Han, Rook and Thom decide to take a trip together. Rook doesn't care about anything since Havemercy died, but Thom wants to reforge their relationship. When they discover that someone is buying up pieces of the fallen dragons, they follow a lead to find out what's afoot. The dragon's magic did not die and someone wants to be in control of that power. Since the revival of dragon power would shatter the peace, an agent from Ke-Han, a sorceress from Vostov, and a group of desert tribes are all in pursuit. Only Rook is there to protect the soul of Havemercy.
This a delightful fantasy with a well-fleshed world and characters

that come to life on the page. It has twists and surprises propelled by plenty of action. Fantasy lovers will have to have this one and Havemercy and Shadow Magic as well. I couldn't put it down and will try to hunt up the other two.....Cards Out. Charge! ~ **Pam Allan**

Tempting the Fire
by Sydney Croft
Bantam, \$15.00, 361 pp

Sydney Croft is the author of *Taming the Fire* and *Riding the Storm*.
In the Amazon rain forest, a team of Navy Seals have been wiped out by a creature similar to a Chupacabra, sinister and superhuman. Acro sends agents Sela Kahne and Marlena West who have their own special powers. Chance McCormack is the lone survivor and is the prisoner of Logan Mills whose father's firm wants to examine the genetic possibilities of Chance and his beast-infected body. However, so does a Russian group and they don't care who they kill to get it. Sela and Marla fall for Logan and Chance. Sex and romance bloom but they still must get away from the Russians and back to ACRO as free people.
This can be called a supernatural romance. However, despite a well-developed world and characters, both the sex and the violence became boring. If you like sex and violence, you will enjoy this. ~ **Pam Allan**

A Star Shall Fall
by Marie Brennan
Tor, \$15.99, 491 pp

Marie Brennan is the author of *The Onyx Court* series.
The Royal Society of London plays home to the greatest minds of great Britain.
Unbeknown to them lies the secret City of immortal Fae, Onyx court. Unhappy with the eroding place of Magic in the world, the Fae face the return of Halley's Comet wherein was banished the great Dragon, a fire elemental who almost destroyed London in 1666. This time the Dragon rages and is very hungry. Only the Fae know the destruction the world faces and has no way to stop it.
Sir Edmund Halley's calculations have predicted the come'ts return close enough to return. It will take both Magic and science to save London but trying to reconcile the two have

their dangers. Galen St. Clair is the British gentleman who is also a prince of the Onyx court, and the person who must reconcile the two perspectives. But can he do it in time and take of family needs.
This is an intriguing book, a page-turner steeped in thorough research and great fantasy. I couldn't put it down. The writing and characterization are exemplary. If you like fantasy, or mystery or Sherlock Holmes, you are gonna have to get this one. I will be looking for more by this author, hopefully sooner than Halley's comet. ~ **Pam Allan**

The Ocean Dark
by Jack Rogan
Ballantine, \$7.99, 438 pp

The Ocean Dark is a debut novel.
In the uncharted waters of the Caribbean is a ship graveyard so isolated it made a perfect smuggler's drop. When the Antoinette goes to accomplish their drop, and pick up they find something scarier than smugglers and even the FBI. Maybe Washington can save them, maybe. If Antoinette survives a creature virtually unknown to man. Their songs like the sirens of old leave

no survivors and they are hungry. Just think what they can do with a shipload of modern arms.
This is a thriller mixed with suspense and speculative fiction. Might give you a nightmare wondering what might be eying your Caribbean cruise, but you won't be able to put it down. Enjoy! ~ **Pam Allan**

Antiphon
by Ken Scholes
Tor, \$25.99, 377 pp

Antiphon is the third volume of the *Psalms of Isaak*.
The past is not dead. The boy who watched the destruction of Windwir now rules the deserts of the world. He seeks the Androfrancine hidden library and his own destiny while being hunted by strange women warriors. The queen of the Ninefold Forest guards her son against murderous attacks and the usurper queen who claims her son is the promised one of their gospel. And in a hidden place the Androfrancines plan their response to a song pouring from a silver cross.
The named lands are in chaos, war [s] loom and the mystery expands.
(Cont'd on page 19)

www.leprecon.org/lep37

LepreCon 37

May 6-8, 2011

Tempe Mission Palms in downtown Tempe, AZ

Artist Guest of Honor: John Picacio

Author Guests of Honor: Elizabeth Bear and Sarah Monette

Music Guest: Seanan McGuire

Confirmed Participants include Emma Bull, Sarah Clemens, Gilead, Larry Hammer, Ellen Klages, Gini Koch, Will Shetterly, Janni Lee Simner, Michael A. Stackpole, Sam Sykes, Ian Tregillis, John Vornholt & more.

shadow unit Mini-Con

As part of LepreCon 37, we will be having a 'con within a con' focusing on **Shadow Unit**, the best TV series never made. **Shadow Unit** creators Emma Bull, Will Shetterly, our author GoHs and others will be taking part.
For more information on Shadow Unit, visit shadowunit.org .

LepreCon 37 will have an art show, charity auction, expanded gaming, hospitality suite, filk & music, and more. We'll be at the Tempe Mission Palms in downtown Tempe with many nearby restaurants and easy access via Light Rail.

Membership Rates

\$35 thru 12/31/10,
\$40 thru 3/31/11, more later
Kids 7-12 half price, Kids 6 and under Free*
*with Adult Membership

Tempe Mission Palms Hotel
60 E. Fifth St., Tempe, Arizona

Room Rates: \$109.00 per night
S/D/T/Q + tax (including hospitality fee)
Call 800-547-8705 or 480-894-1400

LepreCon 37 Contact Information

Write: LepreCon 37, PO Box 26665, Tempe, AZ 85285

Phone: (480) 945-6890

Email: lep37@leprecon.org

In Our Book (Cont'd from page 18)

A fabulous world builder, Scholes adds new layers while drawing you in with enthralling well fleshed characters. This is a true epic fantasy. You'll love it. ~
Pam Allan

The Eye of Icarus
by Michael d'Ambrosio
Helm Publishing, 314 pp, \$15.00

This is book one of the *Space Frontiers Series* by the author of *Fractured Time Trilogy*.

"Will Saris, a young officer in the space Fleet wages his own war with the alien alliance which kills his parents. He finds the Fleet has contributed to their deaths and has a history of forms of genocide. In disobeying his commander's orders, he is thrust into a fast lane of adventure, romance honor and horror, as he comes into the paranormal powers of himself and his wife-to-be.

This is rip-roaring adventure with a touch of humor. We have a master storyteller combining sci-fi and fantasy into a fun read. You'll love this. ~ **Pam Allan**

The Classics
by Caroline Taggart
Reader's Digest, \$14.95, 169 pp

This book is generally about the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. This is a refresher to those who want to know more about the Western influence from these countries.

Overall, enjoyed it. This helped clarified not only the history, religion, myths, and legends but also a little bit of languages- Latin and Greek. Recommended to those who need a reference for role playing games (i.e. AD&D) or interested in the Western myths in the Greek and Romans. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**

Easy As Pi- The Countless Ways We Use Numbers Every Day
by Jamie Buchan
Reader's Digest, \$14.95, 174 pp

This is a book on mathematics. Yet, the tome is not just numbers in math and science. They are numbers in language, in fiction, in culture, and in mythology and religion. Math is more than just counting...

On page 42, one can find the meaning of 42. (Seriously.)

Enjoyable. Highly recommended to people who love numbers or want to find how numbers can be humorous and cool. ~ **Jeffrey Lu**
Volume 20 Issue 6

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 Todd Miles 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.

The ARIZONA BROWNCOATS are a social group and state non-profit devoted to continuing the spirit of Joss Whedon's inspired series Firefly through charity events, a presence at local conventions, and social events. We are all over Arizona with monthly shindigs in Phoenix and Tucson. In September, both cities will be hosting screenings of Serenity to benefit Equality Now. For more details, visit our website at <http://azbrowncoats.org> and follow our twitter @azbrowncoats.

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

AZCorsairs "Founded in 1971 as a branch of the Society for Creative Anachronisms, or SCA, our primary focus is 16th - 18th century European culture and the pirate lifestyle of the time. The Corsairs will extend pirate portrayals as far back as Phoenician, Roman Era or to future Space, Science Fiction genre, and more publicly recognizable Hollywood styled pirate. Corsair membership is largely volunteer-oriented, gathered together for fun and while helping others out. Members of the Arizona Corsairs are, much like their historical counterparts, masters of their own destiny. Creation of characters, complete with backstory with correlation to history, period costume, and emulation of pirate traditions and arts, rests on each performer, creating varied storylines and deep, interesting characters. For more information, please contact Captain Max - Ambassador, AZCorsairs cptmax@myway.com 602-799-6184"

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 Denny's, 2360 W Northern Ave 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 sixth year. Join us for games and adventure set in the Dungeons and Dragons realm. We offer Living Forgotten Realms and Pathfinder Society. We welcome both new and experienced players. Visit <http://www.gatheringofplayers.com>

www.warhorn.net/gathering, to see what we have coming up. If you have any questions email us at agatheringofplayers@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

PAREx is a non profit organization dedicated to building and promoting Autonomous robotics. The club has been in 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: parexteam@cox.net

THE PHOENIX FANTASY FILM SOCIETY A Phoenix based club interested 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

(Cont'd on page 20)

Club Listings
(Cont'd from page 19)
Place #2025, Mesa AZ 85202-3144 or warlok@aztec.asu.edu

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

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

THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM The kingdom of Atenveldt doth lie in the state of Arizona. Within the fair kingdom can be found six Baronies: Atenveldt, Mons Tonitrus, Twin Moons, SunDragon, Tir Ysgithr and Ered Sul. For more information on any of these or for general information on contact the Kingdom Seneschal. Email: seneschal@atenveldt.com Web www.atenveldt.com

SOUTHWEST COSTUMER'S GUILD The Southwest Costumers Guild is a loose organization of persons interested in all facets of historical, cultural, science fiction, fantasy, and humor costume. Members are often seen on stage and behind the scenes at local and regional Science Fiction Convention masquerades. They meet on the last Sunday of each month at various members' homes in the greater Phoenix area. For details. Southwest 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 LEONIDAS The Leonidas is a member of Region IV of STARFLEET International. The chapter is an opportunity for those that share a love of Star Trek to have fun and help the community at the same time. The Leonidas stresses uniforms or other costumes to have the ability to participate actively in various events as they present themselves but they are not required. In an effort to expand membership the USS Leonidas has assisted in the formation of a High School Star Trek club called the STARFLEET Science and Tactical Academy. Students participate in a wide range of activities with the hope that they will become interested in Star Trek and join STARFLEET as officers. The USS Leonidas has a crew of 30. Starfleet

Science and Tactical Academy has 52 cadets. Members age from 14-65 years old. Average age is 20-25. Club meeting locations vary due to scheduled away missions and such, but usually meet in a classroom at Apache Junction High School. Membership with Starfleet International is required. www.sfi.org Upon joining STARFLEET a member is a Cadet. Upon passing the Officer's Training School Exam at the Online Academy, the member becomes a Commissioned Officer aboard the Leonidas. The chapter does not have dues as of yet. The dues to be a member of STARFLEET International are \$15 a year. No newsletter, but members do receive an activities E-mail update. No web site yet. Contact : Jonathan Krieger, 480-677-0269, LAHCommander@mchsi.com

USS STORMBRINGER The Stormbringer is a correspondence Star Trek fan club chapter of Starfleet, Intl. based out of Tucson AZ. The chapter was commissioned as the USS Stormbringer NCC-74213, attached to Division 31, Starfleet Covert Operations, on 10/31/98. As of 11/29/98 there were 32 members. There are no dues other than the \$15 for joining Starfleet 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

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

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

Convention Listings

MythosCon (January 6-9, 2011) **Tempe, AZ** This is a convention honoring H.P. Lovecraft and his works. There are over 60 mythos authors and other professionals participating in programming as well as a hospitality suite, dealer's room, art show, music, video and gaming tracks. Located at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, 60 E. 5th St. Tempe, AZ 85281 - Phone:(800)547-8705 - Web: www.missionpalms.com - The hotel's room rate is \$165.95/night (single/double/triple/quad) - Alternate hotels available. Memberships are \$75 until 10/31/2010. Special "minion" rate available for helpers. Don't miss the Cthulhu Prayer Breakfast! Please check the web site at www.mythoscon.org. Contact us via the web site for more info.

Amazing Arizona Comic Con (January 8-9, 2011) **Mesa Convention Center**, 263 N. Center St., Mesa, AZ 85211. Guests: Robert Kirkman (Walking Dead), Rob Liefeld (creator & artist Deadpool, Youngblood), Jeph Loeb (Hulk, Ultimate Comics). TWO DAY Weekend passes are \$25, with Sunday Only passes for \$15 Web: <http://amazingarizonacomicon.com/>

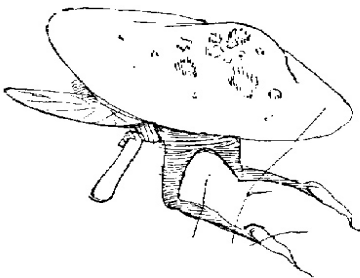
LepreCon 37 (May 6-8, 2011) Tempe Mission Palms, 60 E. 5th St, **Tempe, AZ** Ph: 480-894-1400 , Room Rates \$109 S/D/T/Q + tax. www.missionpalms.com Artist GoH John Picacio, Author GoHs: Elizabeth Bear & Sarah Monette, plus > Shadow Unit mini-con with Emma Bull, Will Shetterly & more. Memberships rates:\$25 until August 31, 2010, \$30 Sept 1 thru Oct 31, 2010 Web site at www.leprecon.org/lep37 or email lep37@leprecon.org for more information

CASFS Business Report

CopperCon 30 did not do as well financially as we had hoped. All external bills were paid. We did well in all ways except total number of members. We had 231 room nights making the second break for function space cost discount..We did not cover the cost of necessary insurance, nor the pass thru costs nor the seed money for the next convention nor the printing costs for ConNotations. We must do better if we are to continue. The publicity staff provided enormous improvements in the variety and quantity of publicity. If we duplicate this effort it should pay off for CopperCon 31. Charity Auction was popular netting \$1262 to be split between Children First Academy and The Challenger Space Center. In programming the R2D2 Robots were popular. The high school group's aquatic robot was a hit. People enjoyed the various literary and Scientific Panels. Gaming was sparsely attended.

CopperCon 31 has the Hilton Garden Inn (Avondale Blvd and I-10) as its hotel. Carrie Vaughn is the Author Guest. The facilities at the Hilton Garden Inn are Smaller but adequate for our current membership numbers. The committee is fully formed. Check with Nyki Robertson about open staff positions.

ConNotations – The membership voted to continue the print edition of ConNotations for one more year with the expectation that we will transition to a web based publication in February 2011. --Gary Swaty



Trivia Answers

1. A Temple Dog
2. Lazarus Long, a fictional character invented by Robert Heinlein
3. The bounty hunter, Jango Fett
4. India (although the radar was American)
5. Mint Julep
6. Sebastian Shaw
7. A dwarf planet in the Kuiper Belt
8. An online chat group at Baen's Books
9. The Count Saint-Germain
10. Mary Stewart