

ConNotations

Winter 2000
Volume 10, Issue 4

The Quarterly Science Fiction, Fantasy & Convention Newszine of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society

SF Tube Talk 24 Frames

by Lee Whiteside

The new fall season is underway with a bunch of new network and syndicated shows with a few new cable shows coming in the new year.

On the network front, we've finally got the new, Mulder-lite, season of *The X-Files* underway. We got to see Mulder in the two part season opener but won't see much more of him until near the end of the season. We did learn some about where he is and what is happening to him (and I'm sure they had lots of fun putting Duchovny through the torture scenes).

We also meet the new guy, **Robert Patrick** as John Doggett, who has trouble believing what he's seen so far. But he is now partnered with Scully working on the X-Files. Upcoming episodes have Scully investigating a murder in Utah and getting trapped in a mysterious small town when she stops for gas, leaving Doggett to try to find her. Another episode has them investigating a mysterious child abduction



in Dexter, Michigan. Scully will also find out that her pregnancy may not be a normal one when she finds out her doctor and others are handling other strange pregnancies. In *Redrum*, we'll meet Martin Wells, an old friend of Doggett, who awakens each day to find himself thrust backward in time to the previous morning. When he wakes up in a jail cell charged with the murder of his wife, he now needs to try to prevent it from happening and has to convince Scully and Doggett about what is happening to him. A later episode will find Doggett and Scully investigating two brothers with a unique exterminating business, that makes use of some special abilities of one of the brothers.

FOX's *Dark Angel* debuted to strong

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Movie News & Reviews

Or At The Movies With Lee and Margaret

By Lee Whiteside

This holiday season saw a bunch of new movies in November (*Charlie's Angels*, *The 6th Day*, *Red Planet*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *Unbreakable*), but aside from a few new releases in December, the genre film pickings are mighty slim until next summer.

Coming up in December is the long awaited *Dungeons & Dragons* movie, which tells the story of an evil wizard who is intent on overthrowing a new, young empress because she believes in equal rights for both royalty and the commoners. A young thief and a sorceress come to her aid as the three set out on a quest to find an ancient artifact that will help them defeat the evil wizard. Stars include **Jeremy Irons**, **Zoe McLellan**, **Thora Birch**, **Kristen Wilson**, **Marlon Wayans** and **Tom Baker**.

Vertical Limit stars **Chris** (*Batman's* Robin) **O'Donnell** as a mountain climber who organizes a rescue operation to rescue his sister (**Robin Tunney**) who has been trapped attempting to scale the second highest mountain in the world, K2. Other stars include **Nichola** (*The X-Files* Krychek) **Lea** and **Alexander** (*DS9's* Dr. Bashir) **Siddig**.

Disney's animated Holiday release is *The Emperor's New Groove* which is about a pretentious prince who is transformed into a llama. Voice actors include **David Spade**, **John Goodman**, **Patrick Warburton**, **Tom Jones**, and **Eartha Kitt**. *The Gift* is directed by **Sam Raimi** and stars **Cate Blanchett** as a psychic in 1950's Georgia who gets involved with the investigation into a local murder. It also stars **Hillary Swank** and **Keanu Reeves**.

Dracula 2000, a modern day version of the **Bram Stoker** novel, takes Van Helsing (**Christopher Plummer**) to America to save his daughter, Mary, from the evil Count Dracula (**Gerard Butler**), his long time nemesis. *Shadow of the Vampire* stars **Willem Dafoe** and **John Malkovich** in a fictional story about the making of **F.W. Murnau's** silent classic *Nosferatu*.

Valentine stars **David Boreanaz** (Angel) and is about a college nerd

(Cont'd on Page 11)

by Margaret Grady

Well, this year pretty much sucked at the Box Office, eh? *Gladiator* was pretty good, and due to lack of much competition, now probably actually stands a chance of getting to the Oscars. *X-Men* was pretty good, too, and remained fairly faithful to the characters I knew. The next two years look much more promising, that is, unless the now-done actor's strike or possible impending writer's strike ends up having an effect on the planned release dates. Assuming everything's just peachy, here's a quick rundown of what we can look forward to...

From Now 'Til the End of the Millennium:

Bagger Vance -- A golf movie, and, like golf, it is slow moving and without much depth. But there is a fantasy twist, and



Will Smith is as charming as ever. Worth going to see, in my opinion. Opened November 3rd.

Red Planet -- Stars Val Kilmer, Carrie-Anne Moss, Tom Sizemore, Terence Stamp and Benjamin Bratt. The first manned expedition to Mars results in disaster: the landing team is trapped on the planet without a functional escape vehicle, no shelter, and eventually no oxygen... so, they take off their helmets and breathe. No wonder NASA wouldn't get behind this movie. Actually, the reason they reportedly weren't behind it was because the Kilmer and Sizemore characters fight, and NASA says that wouldn't happen with real astronauts. This movie just opened November 3.

The Sixth Day -- Whoops, he survived,

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and he's ba-ack... Arnold returns home from a helicopter accident only to find that he's been replaced by his clone (the title is a biblical reference). When the clone's creators find out Arnold didn't die in the crash the hunt is on. Opens November 17.

How The Grinch Stole Christmas -- Stars Jim Carrey, Molly Shannon, Jeffrey Tambor, Christine Baranski, Clint Howard ('natch), Verne Troyer, and Anthony Hopkins as the narrator. Ron Howard directs, and Rick Baker does the special Grinch makeup effects. It is, of course, based on the book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, by Dr. Seuss. But the trailers make it seem kind of dark, kind of like a lame attempt at being Tim Burton-esque. The release date is November 17, 2000, so we'll see.

Dungeons & Dragons -- Based on the role-playing game, it stars Jeremy Irons as an evil wizard who faces off against a young empress, played by Thora Birch. The cast also includes Justin Whalin, Marlon Wayans, Tom Baker, and Richard O'Brien. While the release date was set for December 8, there may have been delays getting the project off the ground with TSR Inc. being bought up by Wizards of the Coast. We'll see, it may

(Cont'd on page 11)

FYI

CASFS Sponsored Book Discussion Groups

We have two monthly book discussion groups going, one at Glendale Public Library on the first Thursday of each month and another at Barnes and Noble in Metro Center on the fourth Thursday of each month. Here's a schedule of upcoming books:

GLENDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY: 1st Thursday of each month

Dec 7: Freedom's Landing by Anne McCaffrey

Jan 4, 2001: Out Of The Silent Planet by C.S. Lewis

Feb 1: The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

March 1: Cosmic Engineers by Clifford Simak

April 5: Road Marks by Roger Zelazny

May 3: Ghatti's Tale: Finder's Seekers by Gayle Greeno

June 7: Callahan's Crosstime Saloon by Spider Robinson

For information on the Glendale group contact Sue Martin at 623-939-7815

BARNES & NOBLE METRO CENTER: 4th Thursday of each month

Note: December's discussion will move

Dec 14: Carpe Jugulum by Terry Pratchett

Jan 25, 2001: Vlad Tapes by Fred Saberhagen

Feb 22: The Arkadian by Lloyd Alexander

Mar 22: Seer's Blood by Doranna Durgin

April 26: Star Wars: Rogue Planet by Mike Stackpole

May 24: Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

June 28: Cities In Flight by James Blish
For information on the Barnes & Noble

CASFS Business Report

Faithful Reader,

It's the end of the year again, and that means holidays and shifting meetings. The next two meetings are November 17th and December 8th, both at 8:00 at everyone's favorite JB's (I-17 and Indian School). Members who have attended four of the previous six meetings may vote for the three board members and two procedural officers with offices opening in December.

CopperCon 20 was a great success; everyone who came had a lot of fun. We had about 600 people on-site, including a spectacular 60 program participants. The Art Show was also the largest ever, with over 90 panels of terrific art. If you

group contact Stephanie at 602-973-2341. If you would like CASFS to sponsor a book discussion group near you, please contact Stephanie at (602)973-2341. **BORDERS FANTASY & SCI-FI BOOK DISCUSSION:** Deborah and Tanya at the Borders at 7320 W Bell Rd. are starting a SF/Fantasy Book Discussion group. For details contact them at 623-487-9110.

INFORMATION LINE: For up to date information on each month's CASFS and fan sponsored sci-fi related events call (602)973-2341 and select option 7 for a pre-recorded message. There is also a weekly email update. If you wish to receive the email update send your email address to Stephanie at leigh@casfs.org. **ARIZONAN WINS "Ig Nobel" AWARD;** Arizonan Chris Niswander was awarded one of 10 annual "Ig Nobel" prizes for his creation "PawSense, a program designed to keep cats from

missed it this year, make sure to show up next year. CopperCon 21's guests will be: Julian May as Author Guest of Honor, Mark Roland as Artist Guest of Honor, and Diana Gabaldon as Local Author Guest of Honor.

CASFS has expanded its online presence! Check out our new domains at CopperCon.org, HexaCon.org and ConNotationsOnline.org!

If you're interested in how cons are put together, or you just want to hang out with a bunch of fans, swing by a meeting sometime.

Until next time,
The Frantic Scribe

wandering across computer keyboards, deleting files and shedding between the keys. It detects their presence and emits a sound to send them scurrying. The Harvard-based spoof of the real Nobel recognizes achievements that "cannot or should not be reproduced."

What is CASFS?

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



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Submission Info: Writers and artists are encouraged to submit work for publication. While we cannot pay you for your efforts your work will be seen by over 4,000 fans across the Southwest and the country. You will retain the copyright to your work for future publication. To submit your work or for more information please write to: ConNotations; PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or contact us via Email at Editors@casfs.org
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PRO NOTES

by Daryl F. Mallet

Well, it's starting to cool off a LOT. Rainy season is upon us and the holidays are in full swing. All Hallow's Eve was a wondrous event, as always. If I didn't mention it before, CopperCon in Scottsdale, AZ was great, with **Poul** and **Karen Anderson**, **Jennifer Roberson** and **Adam Niswander** as our GoHs, **Vincent DiFate** as our AGoH, **Cecelia Eng** as our Music GoH and **Dr. David Williams** as our Scientist GoH. **John DeChancie** is getting to be a regular attendee of Arizona conventions, and it's nice to have him around. **Philip Jose Farmer** was unable to attend due to the illness of his wife, and I know I speak for many when I wish them both well and speedy recovery for her.

TusCon is approaching in November and my friend **Lubov** and her boyfriend **Marrik** moved here from Illinois (during CopperCon, as a matter of fact, which they attended). The travel season continues: I'm back from SCA events like Kingdom Collegium (Sierra Vista, AZ), Great Western War (Chino, CA) and two Baronial Championships (Queen Creek, AZ). Next, it's off to Kingdom Coronation (Sierra Vista, AZ), Southern Crusades (Sonoita, AZ), and then to Utah, California and Minneapolis for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Many people are busy with the holidays and travel, including me, so I apologize in advance for this short column.

"I have recently delivered two anthologies: *The Mammoth Book of Awesome Comic Fantasy* and *The Mammoth Book of Hearts of Oak*," reports **Mike Ashley**. The former speaks for itself. The latter is a volume of Napoleonic-era naval adventure stories. I am putting final touches to a volume of Arthurian stories by **Theodore Goodridge Roberts** for publication by GreenKnight Books under the title *The erriest Knight*. The main thing is, I am now writing the biography of **Algernon Blackwood**...something I've been working to for over 20 years!"

Beat writer **Brio Burgess** has a new book, *Wail!*, "in the tradition of **Jack Kerouac's Howl!**" coming out from Jacob's Ladder Books at the end of the year.

Paul Cook writes: "I've got, coming out sometime in December, a mainstream novel called *Thinking of You* from Xlibris, a print-on-demand publisher out of Pennsylvania. It will be available from Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble."

Kudos to long-time Arizona fan **Brian E. Gross**, who reports: "I just sold my first short story! I sold "Last Chances" (as **Earl W. Parrish**) to the *Extremes 4: Darkest Africa* anthology by Lone Wolf Publishing. This is a signed, limited edition CD-Rom due out in 2001. It's edited by Bram Stoker Award-winning author **Brian A. Hopkins**. This will be the last in a four-volume series of anthologies. The first volume is available now. See the website for more info: <<http://www.dm.net/~bahwolf/lwp.htm>>." Congratulations, Brian!

James E. Gunn says, "My new book on

fiction writing and science fiction writing, *The Science of Science Fiction Writing*, should be out any day now from Scarecrow Press. Scarecrow also is offering contracts to reprint the six-volume anthology *The Road to Science Fiction* and *Alternate Worlds: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction*."

Philip Kaveny writes: "**Jan Bogstad**, **Roz Kaveny**, **John Clute** and I will be doing a panel for the 2001 Liverpool UK Celebration of Science Fiction Conference. I continue to do my quarterly television show for *The Midwest Book Review* and have a monthly column for *The Internet Book Watch*, which gets about 10,000 hits a month and is distributed to about every U.S. library in CD form. I may be doing my own TV show in Eau Claire, WI (so let's see those review copies, folks!). As bookseller, I am off to The World's Biggest Remainder Fair (Chicago, IL) this weekend, and I hope to get lots of great stuff for my customers. I just finished a YA story called "The Bear Who Wanted to Be a Quaker" and, for the first time I can remember, I seem to have written a story that people really like. Everybody wants to now if Bruno dies, and I am not talking. **Jan Bogstad** also just got promoted to Full Professor, and just got back from a moth of Sabbatical research in the U.K."

Horror queen **Pam Keeseey** is now editing and publishing *MonsterZine*: "the classic monster movie magazine you can really sink your teeth into! Subscribe today! It's free! Send an email to: (mailto:monsterzine-subscribe@egroups.com). Just a few more weeks until the first issue of *MonsterZine* is ready. Look forward to articles on **Conrad Veidt** and "The Man Who Laughs," Monsters vs. Villains (How are they the same? How are they different?), and news and reviews from monster experts the world over. We've made a few changes as this e-magazine makes its way from fantasy to reality. Rather than a bi-monthly publication, *MonsterZine* will be a quarterly publication. We want to ensure our readers a high-quality and timely magazine, so it seemed the best solution, at least in the beginning. We've also added submission guidelines for anyone who might be interested. The website is at <<http://www.monsterzine.com>>. I also wanted to share with you our newest feature: Electronic Monster Greetings! Send your friends a *MonsterZine* e-postcard today! Visit <<http://www.monsterzine.com/postcards/card.html>>. Thanks, everyone, for subscribing. If you like what you see, please recommend *MonsterZine* to a friend or email me about putting a link or button on your page! Your feedback is welcome! Send questions or comments to: (mailto:feedback@monsterzine.com). To subscribe to *MonsterZine*: (mailto:monsterzine-subscribe@egroups.com); To unsubscribe to *MonsterZine*: (mailto:monsterzine-unsubscribe@egroups.com); To submit an article to *MonsterZine* (mailto:submissions@monsterzine.com); To advertise in *MonsterZine*: (mailto:advertise@monsterzine.com); To

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Daryl F. Mallett is "pleased to report that *Pilgrims and Pioneers: The History and Speeches of the Science Fiction Research Association Award Winners*, co-edited with **Hal W. Hall** (SFRA Press, 2000), is **finally** going to press this month and will be released at the end of this year." Also finished and on the printers by year's end will be Mallett-edited books *Wail!*, by Beat writer **Brio Burgess** (Jacob's Ladder Books, 2000) and *Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective in Paperback*, by **Gary Lovisi** (Gryphon Publications, 2000). Mallett and fellow Arizona writer **Adam Niswander** are working on the pilot and first episode of a new television series being pitched to Fox. He will be attending mostly SCA and family events through the end of the year, although he hopes to get to TusCon (Tucson, AZ) and LosCon (Burbank, CA) in November.

Louise Marley appeared on radio station KUOW-FM Seattle on November 1st "to talk about *The Glass Harmonica*." She also did a signing at The University Bookstore (Seattle, WA) and November 11th at Barnes & Noble (Woodinville, WA). December 2nd finds her at Barnes & Noble (Issaquah, WA). She will also be at Orycon in November, where, she says, "my last book, *Terrorists of Irustan*, is a finalist for The Endeavour Award. And the same book is on the preliminary Nebula ballot, available to SFWA members through me or Ace SF."

Susan Matthews reports: "My new book, *Colony Fleet*, was an October 2000 release and I don't mind saying its reviews have been pretty solid (so far...there's a new review coming up in *Locus* that I don't know anything about...). I have sold novel *Angel of Destruction* and a second novel to be named later to **Laura Anne Gilman** at ROC; that was this summer. I will be delivering *Angel of Destruction* in mid-November. This novel, set in Jurisdiction, follows the adventures of Bench Intelligence Specialist Garol Vogel as he tries to solve the problem of the Langsarik pirates--recently granted a conditional amnesty, but now showing signs of violating the terms of the settlement. It features the introduction of the Malcontent, the secret service of the Dolgorukij church, and has a tentatively projected pub date of October 2001. I will be attending Orycon (Portland, OR) in November and Rustycon (Everett, WA) in January 2001. I hope to be able to attend the Worldcon in 2001!"

"Latest News: **James A. Moore's** novel *Under the Overtree* is to go to a mass market edition in 2002, picked up by Leisure books. *Fireworks*, his latest novel, is going to a trade paperback edition in early 2001, and *Serenity Falls* is going to a trade paperback edition in 2002, both from Meisha Merlin Press. A trade paperback of the novella "Harvest Moon" is due out any day now from Dark Muse Publications, and Marietta Publishing is planning to release an as yet untitled collection of short stories in 2001. Lonewolf Publications has picked up the

story "A Place Where There is Peace" for publication in the *Extremes: The High Seas* anthology slated for July 2001, and Marietta Publishing has picked up "War Stories" for the *Weird War Stories* anthology also slated for 2001."

A newly published writer from Arizona, **Les Reese**, reports: "I've sold my first short story to a professional market. The story is titled 'The Bride and the Gazebo' and will be in the *Cemetery Sonata II* ghost story anthology [edited by **June Hubbard** (Chameleon Publishing)]. Hopefully it will be released before the end of the year. Also...hopefully we'll be hearing about a couple more first sales in the very near future..." Congratulations!

Artist **Annette Sexton-Ruiz** "will be moving my studio (at The Phoenix Center; 214 E. Moreland; Phoenix, AZ; 602/361-0496) with the new year. All my originals right now are half price." She reports that she has a few other things in the works, and we'll just have to wait to find out about them!

Will Shetterly says there is "no con-specific news for us. I just had a science fiction mystery published (*Chimera*, from Tor), and I'll have a kid's book out in December (*Thor's Hammer*, part of the "Voyage of the Basset" series)." **Emma Bull's** "War for the Oaks" will be coming back into print from Tor as both a trade paperback and a hardcover in May."

Brian Stableford says, "*The Wine of Dreams*, a new "Warhammer" novel by my alter ego **Brian Craig**, was published by Games Workshop in October. I'll be delivering a "Warhammer" novel, *Pawns of Chaos*, to GW later this month. I just returned proofs of *The Cassandra Complex*, the fourth-published (but chronologically first) novel in my Tor future history series, for publication in May. I hope to deliver *Dark Ararat*, the fifth (originally planned as the third), at the end of December. In October, I received The Dracula Society's Children of the Night Award for Best Novel of 1999, for my translation of **Paul Feval's Vampire City**. I'm sure Paul would be delighted, were he still around. I recently finished a translation of another of his supernatural novellas, *Knightshade*, which is under consideration at Sarob Press. I am now employed as a 0.25 Lecturer in Creative Writing at King Alfred's College, Winchester, teaching on an M.A. course in "Writing for Children." My new ambition is to work my way up by honest endeavour to being a 0.4 or even a 0.5 Lecturer."

That's it for now. If I've missed anybody, I'm sorry, and please pass this along to your pro colleagues (artists, writers, actors, etc.) and have them let us know what we're doing so we can publicize it! Hope you all have a great holiday season and a Happy New Year and New Millennium (which REALLY starts THIS Jan. 1st, not last!).



Videophile

DOGMA

written and directed by Kevin Smith

You might have been put off this movie by critics who didn't get it, or religious groups who found it blasphemous. Both are wrong. There is more sincere religion in this film than all the Hollywood Bible epics combined. Of course, there's also more verbal obscenity, because this film is basically a vulgar comedy which deals in religious criticism.

The plot: in contemporary America, two fallen angels (Matt Damon, Ben Affleck) are trying to get back into heaven, using a technical loophole in Catholic dogma. If they do return, the universe comes to an end. To stop them, the top angel enlists the last living relative of Jesus Christ, a great, great, etc. grand-niece (Linda Fiorentino). Her helpers are the 13th Apostle (Chris Rock), a Muse with writer's block (Salma Hayek), and two new Prophets: Jay and Silent Bob, the comedy team from the earlier movie Mallrats. The target audience for this movie is young hipsters, but it's got enough theology for any intelligent person. And it's got more than enough laughs. - **Michael Griffin**

Wallace & Gromit BBC/Warner Bro. Animated 81 minutes

For the first time Wallace and Gromit episodes are available on video. Wallace & Gromit is an academy award winning, British, animated, TV show. This video includes three shorts: "The Wrong Trousers" and "A Close Shave" which have won the Academy Award for Best Animation and "A Grand Day Out" which was nominated for Best Animation.

The show is claymation about Wallace, a middle aged Englishman who lives in his own world; and Gromit his friend who is a dog, and tries to keep Wallace out of trouble. The best guest star is the EVIL Penguin who tries to get Wallace in all kinds of trouble.

The show includes fantastic animation with British humor; any fan of either will want to own a copy of this video. This video I highly recommend adding to any video collection. **Available: November 21 - Barry Bard**

X-Men 20th Century/Fox Action

The live action X-Men comic book movie is being released on video.

Mankind is starting to change. Mutants are developing that have fantastic abilities. Some non-mutants are afraid and leading the anti-mutants is Senator Kelly (Bruce Davidson)

The Mutants have two groups, the bad guys being lead by Magneto (Ian McKellen) who think they must battle normal humans. And the good guys, the X-Men, being lead by Dr. Xavier (Patrick Stewart) who think they must learn to live with normal humans. The battle lines are draw for this action film that includes Cyclops (James Marsden), Jean Grey (Famke Janssen), Storm (Halle Berry), Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) and Rogue (Anna Paquin)

The movie tries to live up to the feeling of the X-Men comic, and I would recommend this as a definite must see (rent or buy). **Available: November 21 - Barry Bard**

Rocky Horror Picture Show The 25th Anniversary Special Collection 20th Century Fox


The Special edition of this classic is now available with interviews, the making of and the complete movie including the song "Super Heros". This is a must own for all Rocky fans. **Released October 3 - Barry Bard**

Teletubbies: Bedtime Stories and Lullabies PBS Kids/Warner Bros. video

Those loveable aliens with squiggles on their heads and televisions in their tummies and their vacuuming beast in the Hobbit-hole of a high tech home. The gently rolling hills, the bunnies, flowers and the gurgling baby-faced sun....well, you have to be 2-3 to really love these very very simple adventures that involve counting and playing and napping, with help from human children on tape (shown on one of the Teletubbie tummies). They are so very British in their simplicity and overstating the obvious...which is great for toddlers but kinda hard for the rest of us...as evidenced by Jo Martin (age 8) who used to love Po and Laa-Laa ("well, they were cute and my favorite colors!! (red and yellow)"). Her comment now on the tape? "I thought it was boring because it had nothing funny in it." - **Sue and Jo Martin**

Also Currently in Release

The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus, Universal, Animated - October 31, 00
Titans A.E., 20th Century/Fox, Animated, November 7, '00



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ConClusion

Comic-Con International Review

By Shane Shellenbarger

If roaming among nearly 49,000 people, laying down shoe leather to cover the 250,000 square foot Exhibit Hall, trying to attend over 225 separate panels, and paying \$5.00 for a soft pretzel isn't your idea of a good time then you probably didn't show up for the 31st annual four day event now known as Comic-Con International: San Diego. But if any of the above sounds good to you (sans the \$5.00 pretzel) maybe you should consider attending next year on July 19-22, 2001. What's that you say? You need to be convinced? Okay, then listen up.

After checking into my hotel, I waded through pre-registration and found a place to peruse the Events Guide and decide which panels I'd attend. "Robotech", nope, eBay, may-be, Marvel 2000, the week after "X-Men" opens? I think not. Humm, that Web Animation Workshop looks good but it's up against Behind The Scenes of *Shadow of the Vampire*. Well, I'll check out the Workshop and drop in for part of the *Vampire*. That's always my problem: what panel do I want to attend more than the other? And it's not just this panel or that panel. I've been faced with which of four panels I've wanted to attend most. Sheesh!

On Thursday, Harry Knowles of aint-it-cool-news.com gave an interesting talk on

films and the internet and what he said tied in with the Caught in the Net: Movie Webmasters panel that took place on Saturday, but this is still Thursday, so let's stay focused. I wanted to attend The Surreal World: Tatoonie Episode 1.5, but instead opted for the Spotlight on Forrest J. Ackerman. I've been one of those lucky people to tour the 18 rooms containing his collection at the Ackermansion. If you don't know about 4E's museum in Hollyweird, Karlofornia, check out <http://www.best.com/~4forry/>, or get your hands on the 4 CD-ROMs of "Forrest J. Ackerman's Museum of Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy."

After my first meal of the day, I attended, and I quote, "Hong Kong's over-the-top answer to *Phantom of the Opera*": *The Phantom Lover*." Not really my cup of tea (if you'll excuse the pun) as the film doesn't have enough action or acting to keep my interest. I ducked out after an hour. Other films such as *The Crow: Salvation*, *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps*, and *The Specials* (the worlds 7th best superhero team get their own action figures and all hell breaks loose) continued until well after Midnight, but they did so without me. I was bushed!

Friday dawned and I made it to Jeff Rector's talk on How to Break into Hollywood. Rector seemed knowledgeable and the attendees were receptive. I left early to catch the second showing of actor, Richard Hatch's *Moby Dick*, I mean obsession, the trailer for the *Battlestar: Galactica* movie. I grant you

that he doesn't own the rights to the property, there isn't a film even being proposed, and other actors have moved on with their careers (William Shatner, Priceline.Com, nuff said), but you have to admire his single-mindedness, don't you?

Next, it was on to Cartoon Network Presents: Toonami Exclusives with showings of Gundam Wing and DragonballZ. During the panel it was indicated that Toonami might get a larger portion of the Cartoon Networks air time.

At 1:00, I headed over to see the *Star Wars* documentary, *Millennium's End: The Fandom Menace*. Filmmaker, Jeff Cioletti, attempted to show the excitement and anticipation that fans possessed in the two years leading up to the release of *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*. Cioletti covers everything from the commercial aspects (shuttling from one Toys "R" Us to another) to the personal aspects (SW fans getting married). Unfortunately, the film deals mostly with the anticipation and almost entirely ignores the letdown many fans suffered. It's an interesting film to watch in light of all that's happened and it reminds me that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.

At 3:00, the spotlight turned onto J. Michael Straczynski who did his usual great job of entertaining and enlightening the audience by fielding questions, talking about the Sci Fi Channels plans to show *Babylon 5* in wide screen, and his own comics publishing imprint through Top Cow/Image, *Joe's Comics*. At 4:00, I

attended Superhero Movies: Why Can't They Be Like the Comics? The panelists included Harry Knowles, Paul Dini, Roger Avary, and David Hayter (writer of *The X-Men* movie). Discussion focused on why Hollywood can't seem to quite meet the fans expectations and balance that with a film that can be marketed to the mass audience. *The X-Men* movie seems to have changed that premise and the talk moved toward what could be done for future projects so that they don't end up like *Howard the Duck* and *Swamp Thing*. At 5:00, Prime Time Animation with panelists Jerry Beck, Anne Bernstein, and Scott Hyman explained the increase of animation on network and cable in the evening hours. *The Simpsons's*, *Daria*, and *South Park* and owe more than a small debt for their existence to *The Flintstones*, *The Adventures of Jonny Quest*, and *Top Cat*.

When 7:00 rolled around you can bet I had secured a great seat for The Return of the Kung Fu Superhero Extravaganza hosted by Ric Meyers, an expert in the field of martial arts filmography. Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung, Jet Li, Michelle Yeoh, Chow Yun-fat all paraded their individual talents before an appreciative audience with Meyers giving the attendees the back story and backstage pass on the best and worst fight films to explode from Hong Kong. This three hour flickering slugfest is not to be missed!

Saturday dawned with a fog enshrouding the city and after a workout in the gym and a soak in the spa; I headed back

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All About Books & Comics - 1/2 page

ConClusion (Cont'd from page 6)

to the convention center. First up was Caught in the Net: Movie Webmasters on Hollywood, the Internet and the Future of Their Bastard Child. The panel consisted of Chris Gore (*Filmthreat.com*), Harry Knowles (AICN.com), Nick Nunzitta (*CHUD* and *Fetal Film Report*), David Poland (*Roughcut.com*), Patrick Sauriol (Coming Attractions) Kevin Smith (writer/director/producer) and moderator, Den Shewman (IGN Movies). The panelists started by talking about the influence of film on the Internet and vice versa, but it quickly became an attack on Harry Knowles ethics, journalistic integrity, and choice of minions. The audience could smell blood in the water.

At Noon, Kevin Smith gave a fascinating 90-minute talk filled with four letter words that seemed to energize the predominantly 15something crowd. The writer/director/producer of *Chasing Amy*, *Clerks*, *Dogma*, and *Mallrats* also entertained the audience with unaired episodes of the animated *Clerks* along with a few choice words about the folks at ABC/Disney. I found a more sedate crowd at the How to Pitch and Write for Star Trek panel. Classic *Star Trek* writer, D.C. Fontana was joined by Jimmy Diggs, intern on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and story contributor on *ST: Deep Space Nine*, along with Dr. Joseph Di Lella, who is marketing his own *Trek works*. Fontana has been there and done that successfully for decades, so she is always worth listening to. Diggs was dynamic and obviously thankful for the mentoring he's received from Fontana. Dr. Lella was more academically minded and less enlightening or entertaining.

The 2:00 *Futurama*-Fest showcased Matt Groening and a brand new episode along with the animators, directors, writers and voice talents from the show. If the reaction of the 300-plus audience members is any indication, *Futurama*, will have as long a run as *The Simpson's*. While checking out the New Line Cinema and IGN.com featurettes, I was pressed against the wall looking for a spot to stand in the cavernous convention hall that comprised the single largest event excluding the Masquerade. I missed the clips from the Winona Ryder and Ben Chaplin film, *Lost Souls*, but I did catch most of Jennifer Lopez's film, *The Cell*, which I would describe as *Silence of the Lambs* meets *Mefisto in Onyx*. *The Cell* intrigued the audience, but they were ecstatic when the *Lord of the Rings* featurette was shown and they went absolutely wild when Sir Ian McKellen made an unannounced appearance. Sir Ian spoke briefly about playing Magneto in *The X-Men* movie, how appreciative he was of the fans support, and how much he looked forward to playing *Gandalf in Lord of the Rings*. He was warmly received and rightfully appreciated by the audience.

Since the Warner Brothers Film and Animation exhibition remained in the same series of rooms that had just been vacated by some of the New Line Cinema people, I was able to acquire a seat. Samples of upcoming animation projects

like *Static Shock*, *The Zeta Project*, *Osmosis Jones*, and the bizarre series, *The Oblongs*, were shown along with Internet animated adventures featuring *Lobo* and *The Gotham Girls*. The true crowd pleaser was the announcement and clips of the direct-to-video feature *Return of the Joker*, starring Mark Hamill. Hamill was present and entertained the audience with stories and voices before leaving for a signing at the Warner Bros. Store in nearby Horton Plaza. Free t-shirts were forced on the crowds as they filed out of the doors. One to a person, we were told. With lines forming two hours before The Masquerade, I opted out and went to dinner, to breath air I didn't have to share with nearly 50,000 people. While at dinner, I over heard a woman describe to her companion how she had bypassed security at the convention and was able to procure all of the different t-shirts without being detected.

Sunday came and I prepared to leave San Diego, checking out of the hotel and checking my luggage with the Bellman. I attended the Roughnecks: Starship Troopers Chronicles panel marveling how different *Roughnecks* was from other Computer Generated Image programs like *Reboot* and *Beast Wars*. I came in late for *The New Movie Show with Chris Gore LIVE!* but I did get to enjoy the give and take between the host and his guests Susannah Breslin (*Roughcut.com*), Andy Jones (*E! Online*) and Ron Wells (*Film Threat*). *The New Movie Show with Chris Gore* was on the FX Network for a short time (too short in some peoples opinion) and I would liken it to *Politically Incorrect with Bill Mahar*. The films that the panelists either exalted or eschewed included *Dinosaur*, *Gladiator*, *Titan AE*, and *X-Men*. Gore and crew were entertaining and generally informative.

If you're a fan of animation like I am you're willing to check out the short subjects that push the envelope and the was what I had in store for me when I went to Spike & Mike's Classic Festival of Animation. This film program contained award-winning films compiled from 23 years of the Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation, including *At the Ends of the Earth*, *Hum Drum*, *One Day a Man Bought a House*, *Three Misses*, and *When the Day Breaks*. It's always interesting to note the differences in animation and story telling styles when you see films from all over the globe.

My final stop was the Masquerade Playback; a rough-cut edited version of the previous night's show. The crowd was much smaller and you could see and hear almost all of what took place in halls 6ABCDEF. It also affords Masquerade contestants the opportunity to critique their costume and performance.

Besides the panels, films, and Exhibitor Hall, Comic-Con has an Art Show, Artist Alley, Autograph Area, Blood Drive, the Eisner Awards, Japanimation, Portfolio Reviews, and Gaming. There is something for everyone if you don't mind the crowd. One thing more, Comic-Con's website, www.comic-con.org, needs to be revised, updated, and debugged. Their e-mail address is cciweb@aol.com.

Worldcon 2000 Review by Mike Willmoth

Worldcon, the World Science Fiction Convention, was held in Chicago, Illinois, this year over Labor Day Weekend (August 31 - September 4, 2000). This was the 58th annual Worldcon which started in New York City in 1939. Due to World War II there were a few years where Worldcon wasn't held. Since then it's been held in Chicago 6 times now, with ChiCon 2000 really being ChiCon 6 (or VI if you prefer). The Author Guest-of-Honor (GoH) this year was Ben Bova, Artist GoH was Bob Eggleton, Editor GoH Jim Baen (Baen Books), Fan GoHs Anne & Bob Passovoy, and Toastmaster Harry Turtledove. This year's Chair was Tom Veal and Program Director Steve Silver. Originally, Ross Pavlac was slated to run programming, but he passed away shortly after Chicago won the bid in 1997. The remaining list of folks who worked on this con fill three pages in the Program Book. If you'd like more details, please send me email or give me a call and I'll do what I can to quench your thirst for detail. This was the first Worldcon since we've been attending (starting in 1988 at NoLaCon II, New Orleans, Louisiana) that my wife, Jean, couldn't attend. Her mother doesn't travel well nowadays being 87, so I got to bachelor this trip. I made sure of this before booking airfare and found very affordable options at United Airlines web site. Ultimately, the non-stop flight from Phoenix, Arizona, cost just over US\$200. Shortly after I booked it that airlines started having major problems with pilots not working overtime under no contract. So, as the news talked about United's problems in Chicago and elsewhere, I sweated whether I'd even make it to the city in time for Worldcon.

As it turned out it was a wasted effort as the flight left a little late but arrived early. I flew in the day before con (Wed Aug 30) just in case. I arrived late afternoon and planned on taking the downtown shuttle to the con hotel, the Hyatt Regency Chicago. When I got to the Info Booth I ran into some other fans from the Bay area, so we poured into a taxi instead. The husband/wife team are involved with Con Jose' in 2002; I believe she's running Registration. We had a nice chat on the way to the hotel and once there headed up the escalator to the hotel's registration desk on level 2. I saw lots of fans standing around like they were waiting for some kind of resolution, so I began to fret while waiting my turn in line. Once I reached the front desk I found my reservation was in order and my key handed to me promptly. My friend from Vancouver, British Columbia, was arriving the next day so I only needed one key that night. I dumped my luggage off in the room, washed up and headed out to check out pre-con activities. The Hyatt is made up of two towers with a skybridge on level 2 and underground function space. I was staying in the west tower while I registered in the east tower. I noticed a pub near the elevators in my

tower which I later found out was Consuite. I walked past the hoard of fans still at the hotel's reg desk, down the escalator to level 1, then down the next escalator to the concourse level. Upon reaching this level I was faced with another escalator down or a hallway to the left. This hallway goes by the fish-bowl where Eggleton would later do a demo of a dragon in bright green on a flaming orange background. On the left farther down the hallway was the retro art exhibit which I only peeked into during the con, but had lots of old style artwork on display from someone's collection. Next comes another escalator to some ballroom level functions which I barely got to during the con. While still on the concourse level past the escalator to the right were small function rooms including the Internet Lounge. This is where the con had rented iMacs and networked them together for folks to use during the con. I managed to make on one once; otherwise, it was an absolute zoo. Some fans nicknamed this the gumball room since each machine was a different color from the one next to it. I discovered later that we were under the west tower at this point. If I had gone straight past the last escalator instead of into the hallway to the IL I would have hit the underground shopping mall.

Rather than stopping at the concourse level I headed down the escalator immediately in front of me to the ballroom level. I then chose straight instead of a u-turn. The u-turn would have taken me to another escalator down to one entrance to the dealers room on the Riverside Center level. By going straight and following the hall to he right I found the upcoming con flyers, voodoo (message) board and miscellaneous flyers. There was also an entrance into Grand Ballroom A which confused folks during the con when they'd walk right by it due to all the distractions down the hallway. Exiting the hallway led to the right to con registration on the left, other Grand Ballrooms (B, C & D) on the right, con merchandising past them as well as the daily newsletter desk and the exhibits. On the left past reg was the Fan Exhibits room where the seated Worldcons and future bidders were located. At the end of this level were more escalators which led down to the other side of Riverside Center. Turn left to enter the Live Stage Area or turn right to enter the art show / dealers room.

I hit con reg and got my badge from pre-reg. They gave me the option of one of two covers for the program book, both done by the Artist GoH, so I chose the rocket ship; later, I found the dinosaur version laying around somewhere and snatched one. They then handed me three small pocket-size guides clipped together with a pseudo hour glass ring. One was the pocket program, one the dining guide and one the events guide. I discovered later in the con that the local maps weren't in the dining guide at all, but the pocket program. I also found the Compuserve buttons left by a friend online for the various denizens of the

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SF Tube Talk (Cont'd from page 1)

ratings, holding up fairly well in subsequent episodes leading FOX to give the show a full season commitment.

FOX's other new show, *Freakylinks*, has struggled in the ratings and was pulled from most of the November sweeps by FOX, but not canceled (yet). It will



supposedly return in December, but if the ratings continue to be as low as they've been, don't expect to see any episodes past the initial order of 13.

Still to debut on FOX mid-season is *Night Visions*, *The Lone Gunmen* and *The Tick*. *Night Visions* has tapped poet **Henry Rollins** to be the host, ala **Rod Serling**. Look for all three to turn up sometime in January or February.

Over at The WB, *Buffy* and *Angel* have been throwing lots of stuff at their audience. From Dawn, the sister no one knew about on *Buffy*, to the return of Darla as a human (but not for long) on *Angel*, **Joss Whedon** has been having

lots of fun stirring things up. There have been rumors that Riley and/or Tara would be departing mid-season, but whether any of them are true, we'll just have to wait and see.

In the meantime, Buffy will have to protect Dawn from Glory, including nasty things that Glory conjures up to go against The Slayer. Angel and company will have to contend with Darla and Wolfram and Hart law firm.

Roswell has held up in the ratings and has been moving at a fast pace with revelations about the teens alien heritage and mission on Earth. Shortly before press time, The WB announced they have picked up *Roswell* for a full season of 22 episodes.

UPN's new series, *Freedom* and *Level 9*, debuted with decent, but not spectacular, ratings. However, the second week at the start of November sweeps dropped significantly. We may see UPN's mid-season replacements sooner than they planned.

On the *Trek* front, there's not a lot of news on the new series. **Rick Berman** and **Brannon Braga** are still working on it and they have said that there may be news to release in the February time frame. In the meantime, there is still lots of speculation on where it will end up. It could go the syndicated route as *TNG* and *DS9*, or it could go to a broadcast network. UPN seems to think they should get it, but Viacom now also owns CBS and there have been reports that NBC is also interested in the series.

Once *Voyager* ends, Paramount will have four *Trek* series in their library and so far only one of them, the original *Star*

Trek, has been sold to cable outlets. Viacom is getting ready to put the later *Trek* series on the auction block for cable rights that will make each series available when their respective syndication contracts expire. It had been speculated that Viacom was holding on to them for their own science fiction oriented cable network, but that is likely not going to happen. SciFi is obviously interested, but some other cable networks, like The National Network (formerly The Nashville Network and now working to get a wider, more general audience), TNT, and Fox Family are looking for something that has the wide appeal of a *Trek* series. Paramount is expecting to get license fees near \$1 million per episode for *The Next Generation* and around \$700,000 per episode of *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*. That's a lot of moolah from their cash cow.

We've still got the rest of the last season of *Voyager* left to watch, however. After giving us the wedding of Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres, they'll use it to deal with genetic engineering issues when a pregnant B'Elanna decides to tinker with her unborn child's makeup to prevent it from having Klingon tendencies. In *Descendants*, *Voyager* comes across a generational Klingon ship that has been traveling to the Delta Quadrant for many years, which obviously doesn't know about the current state of Federation/Klingon relations. In *Shattered*, *Voyager* encounters time distortions resulting in Chakotay going back and forth in time, bringing about the return of Seska and the Captain Proton holodeck program. Other episodes include Tuvok helping his daughter to solve a crime via their

communications with the Alpha Quadrant, and they deal with the issues of capital punishment when Seven develops an unusual relationship with a criminal. *Voyager* is transporting to his execution.

On the syndicated front, *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda* debuted very strong, becoming the top-rated first run drama in syndication. When new episodes resume in February, we'll see **John DeLancie** in *The Pearls That Were His Eyes*. He'll be playing Uncle Sid, who is "a wheeling-dealing interstellar trader and old family friend of *Andromeda's* second in command, Beka Valentine, who comes back into Beka's life bearing disturbing news about his former business partner — Beka's father." Other episodes include *All Great Neptune's Ocean*, written by author **Walter Jon Williams**, where *Andromeda* hosts a state dinner for some dignitaries and someone is murdered. *The Mathematics of Tears* looks to take an "in-depth look at the complexities of being a sentient starship", according to writer **Ethlie Ann Vare**. *The Devil Takes the Hindmost* focuses on Rev Bem and deals a lot with Rev's Wayism religion and putting it into practice. In *Star-Crossed*, *Andromeda* falls in love with a character named Gabriel, played by **Michael Shanks** from *Stargate SG-1*.

Taking a look at the other new syndicated series, we've got *Sheena* with **Gina Lee Nolin** as Sheena and **John Allen Nelson** as Matt Cutter. Of the three episodes I've seen parts of, the highlight in two of them has been when Sheena has to wash off all the mud she's covered herself with when she went after the bad guys. Both times she did it right in front of Cutter, taking off all her clothes, leaving him staring with his eyes and mouth wide open. That's likely why it is the next highest rated new show behind *Andromeda*.

The Queen of Swords is a mixed bag, where the main character, **Tessie Santiago** as Tessa Alvarado, still needs some work. She's not always convincing as the hero. What has made the show interesting in the early going is the interaction between **Peter Wingfield** as Doctor Helm and **Valentine Pelka** as Colonel Montoya. At the literal bottom of the heap (and really lousy ratings, which you tend to get when scheduled at 2 a.m.) is *The Immortal* with **Lorenzo Lamas**.

In the continuing shows, the big news is that this will be the final season of *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Studios USA announced in mid-October that the series will end in May. There is some fan activities attempting to keep it going, but it is likely that **Lucy Lawless** is ready for some time off or a show with a less grueling schedule. But we still have the rest of the season to follow Xena and Gabrielle's adventures. After having spent some time with Beowulf and the Norse Gods, the duo will end up in Japan for a couple of episodes at some point, maybe even the season/series finale. In

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SF Tube Talk (Cont'd from page 8) the meantime, we'll have some less serious episodes in *Old Ares Had a Farm* and *Send in the Clones*. *Clones* will be the season's clip show, with the wrap-around segments set in the near future where ambitious Xena fans have cloned Xena and Gabrielle. **Claire Stansfield** and **Michael Hurst** will appear in the present day segments. On a more serious note, the episode *Dangerous Prey* will be a homage of sorts to the movie *The Naked Prey*. Expect to see an appearance or two by Joxer's ghost as well as at least one more appearance by Aphrodite.

Along with the announcement of *Xena* ending, USA Networks also confirmed that *Jack of All Trades* was canceled, but that *Cleopatra 2525* would continue with hour-long episodes starting in January. There hasn't been any more details announced about this, however, and the last word had been that *Cleopatra 2525* had shut down production. So don't be too surprised if the hour-long episodes end up being the half hour ones repackaged.

On cable, SciFi has had their best ratings ever through the end of the summer, with *Farscape* and *Invisible Man* leading the way. They've lost some momentum by resting most of their first run shows through the end of the year, but new episodes and a few other new series will resume in January. Before then, SciFi's six hour *Dune* miniseries

will air with three two hour segments the nights of December 3rd, 4th and 5th, with all six hours airing back to back on the afternoon of December 10th. Even before they have aired, SciFi has given writer/director **John Harrison** the go-ahead to produce a follow-up miniseries based on further books in the series.

On *Farscape*, we'll see the last four episodes of season two in January, which promises to take the crew on a wild ride. Rumors abound that someone will die and that Crichton will have some nasty things done to him related to the Scorpius in his brain. *Invisible Man* has been picked up for a second season, but we've got seven more episodes left in this season to see. I haven't been able to dig up any preview info on them, but I'd recommend you catch the show during the current repeats if you haven't been watching.

Lexx has also been picked up for another season, this one of 24 episodes, but we've still got over half of the thirteen episode third season to see. We'll learn more about the nature of Fire and Water and see more of Prince as well as run into a few more familiar faces from the earlier episodes (like Mantrid and Giggerota). January will also see the start of the third season of *First Wave*. **Traci Lords** joins the cast as Jordan Radcliffe, the leader of a militia group Raven Nation that has been inspired by Cade Foster's journals. Foster and Radcliffe team up in the fight to destroy the aliens that are invading Earth.

In addition to the returning shows on SciFi, they will also debut some other shows that they have picked up. First of all is *Black Scorpion*, produced by **Roger Corman** as a weekly series based on the TV movies he produced for Showtime. The TV series stars former Miss Kansas **Michelle Lintel** as cop Darcy Walker who becomes Black Scorpion. **Scott Valentine** co-stars as Steve Rafferty. Guest stars as super villains include **Adam West, Frank Gorshin, Soupy Sales, Lou Ferrigno**, and lots of Penthouse Pets and Playboy Playmates according to the press releases. It looks to be very campy and likely very low-budget. But what would you expect from **Roger Corman**?

Also debuting on SciFi in January is *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*. The series stars **Chris Demetral** as a young Jules Verne who we discover had lots of adventures that inspired his stories. Also starring is **Michel Courtemanche** as Passepartout, **Michael Praed** (*Robin of Sherwood*) as Phileas Fogg, and **Francesca Hunt** as Rebecca Fogg. From reports on the initial episodes it looks to be a fun show with giant moles, rocket powered vampires, meeting up with the three Musketeers, and having a rocket shot to the moon. Guest cast has a lot of well-known actors including **David Warner, John Rhys-Davies, Rene Auberjonois, Tracy Scoggins, Patrick Duffy, Margo Kidder, and Michael Moriarty**.

In other cable news, USA Network has agreed to pick up *La Femme Nikita* for a run of nine new episodes, with most of the cast returning, although not all of them will be in each episode. TNT's airing of the *Witchblade* pilot did quite well and TNT has ordered an 11 episode limited series to air next summer. *The Outer Limits* has ended its run on Showtime, but has been picked up for an additional season on SciFi. As part of the deal, three of those episodes will be produced with the possibility of them being spun off into additional weekly series for SciFi. SciFi has also quietly put their *Sciography* series on hiatus after the first two episodes featuring *Battlestar Galactica* and *Quantum Leap*. Hopefully, they will resume them so we can at least see the Babylon 5 edition. For more news, schedules and SFTV info, check out www.sftv.org, webmastered by Lee Whiteside



Anomolous
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“Duck Man”, Carl Barks, dies at age 99

By Shane Shellenbarger

Carl Barks, world-renowned artist and author of Donald Duck and Scrooge McDuck’s comic book tales from 1942 through 1973, died of Leukemia in his sleep at a hospice near his home in Grants Pass, Oregon. He was 99.

Barks was a jack-of-all-trades. While growing up in Oregon, Barks left school at 15 to work as a logger, railroad repairman, rancher, and printer before focusing on cartooning for a humor magazine. Joining the Walt Disney Studios in 1935, Barks worked on 36 of Donald Duck’s animated cartoons, often as the only story artist and writer. His first effort for Disney, featured Donald Duck in “Modern Inventions.” While he didn’t create Donald, Barks was responsible for developing the character and look of the irascible duck as we have come to know him. Barks also did story development on “Snow White”, “Bambi” and “Fantasia.”

In 1942, Barks left Disney to concentrate on solo work. He was approached by Western Publishing to create tales about Donald and his nephews after the company licensed the characters from Disney. Creating the characters Scrooge McDuck, Gyro Gearloose, the Beagle Boys, Magica de Spell, and Gladstone Gander, Barks explored domestic and foreign locals, chronicling adventures in Duckburg, the Klondike, the planet Mars, and mythical lands such as the Seven Cities of Cibola. In this same year, Barks left Disney and moved with his second wife to San Jacinto, east of Los Angeles, where they owned a chicken ranch. In 1966, Barks went into semi-retirement, discontinuing drawing the ducks for Western Publishing, but still writing some of the stories, notably the Junior Woodchuck tales featuring Huey, Dewey, and Louie.

1968 saw the beginning of Barks work in oils, using the Ducks for his subject matter. In 1969, he sold one piece for as little as \$200.00. Disney Studios left Barks alone until a fan began producing posters from the oil paintings without Barks knowledge and Disney sued. Barks and Disney were able to come to an agreement on royalties and he produced 122 oils until 1976, when Disney withdrew permission due to fans selling photographs of Barks work for \$500.00. In 1981, the company Another Rainbow is launched with the publication of “The Fine Art of Walt Disney’s Donald Duck” which reproduced Barks oils in a limited edition coffee table reportedly valued at \$2,000.00. In 1982, Another Rainbow began producing licensed limited edition lithographs beginning with “Sailing the Spanish Main” in which Barks reworked

one of his famous comic book covers to include Uncle Scrooge.

Barks remained active, despite his advancing years and a diagnosis of leukemia in 1999. In May 2000, Barks chose to discontinue treatment for his leukemia and went into a decline shortly before his death on August 25th. Barks is survived by a daughter, Dorothy Gibson of Bremerton, Washington, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and eight great-great grandchildren.

L. Sprague de Camp 1907-2000

L. Sprague de Camp, who penned more than 100 science-fiction and fantasy books and contributed to stories about the fictional character “Conan the Barbarian,” died Monday, November 6, following complications from a stroke. He was 92. Although lesser known than some of his peers, de Camp was a strong influence on the science-fiction genre. Sprague wrote more than 100 science-fiction and fantasy novels. His work involving the Conan character continued well after the character’s creator, Robert Howard, died in 1936. Some of de Camp’s colleagues and close friends in the literary field included renowned authors Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov, who often prefaced many of Sprague’s fictional works.

Remembering L. Sprague de Camp

by Adam Niswander

I have been sitting here trying to adjust to living in a world without Sprague.

The news of his death on the 6th of November is momentous for me, for he was one of those larger-than-life legends who introduced me to the speculative fiction field and thrilled me with feats of imagination and invention I will never forget. I grew up reading his work. He began publishing stories almost a decade before I was born.

I cannot say I am surprised at his passing. He had been frail for several years, but it was the loss of his life-long companion, Catherine, last April, which seemed to me to make this loss inevitable. They had been married for sixty years. In the years I knew them, I never saw them separated by more than a few inches. In all our meetings and time shared, Catherine was by his side. When she passed away, I felt it would not be long before he joined her. I wish I had been wrong. I am confident they are together now exploring uncharted seas and landscapes.

Grand Master. Giant. Man of dignity and charm. Brilliant and daring writer. Meticulous and careful researcher. Artist. Prolific contributor. Innovative creator of characters. Ad infinitum.

On the eve of the premier of my first novel, Sprague and Catherine spent the evening in my suite in Minneapolis, spinning yarns of the history of our genre, casually recounting their adventures with other writers and figures of legend in our field. I was wide-eyed, open-mouthed, thrilled and captured by the grace and style of these magnificent people.

Sprague’s work needs no introduction. What he has left us in his work is fundamental to what is great about speculative fiction. His scholarly work, perhaps not as well known, was essential to me in developing an understanding of history. From his biography of Lovecraft to his work relating to archaeology, he gifted us with penetrating insight and accurate reportage. His presentations as editor of Robert Howard’s Conan books not only made Howard’s work accessible to many who might never have discovered it, but garnered respect in the literary and fantasy communities.

But, mostly, I will miss his razor sharp wit, keen observations of the human condition, his impeccable military bearing, and his kindness. I am thankful I had the opportunity to know him. I shall miss him. I shall not forget him.

We all owe him a great debt.

So tip a glass with me, salute the passing and honor the memory of one whose like we will not see again.

Adam Niswander
Maricopa, Arizona
November 7th, 2000

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24 Frames (cont'd from page 1)

by Lee Whiteside

victimized by a nasty practical joked played on him by four women. Ten years later, now charismatic and successful, the ex-nerd seeks revenge on his past tormentors. *Hannibal* has **Anthony Hopkins** returning to role of Hannibal Lector from *Silence of the Lambs*. **Julianne Moore** takes on the Clarice Starling role.

Spy Kids tells the story of two kids who attempt to save their secret agent parent from danger. The film stars **Antonio Banderas, Alan Cumming, Teri Hatcher** and **Cheech Marin**.

Pluto Nash stars **Eddie Murphy** as a lunar colonist in 2087 with a checkered past who attempts to thwart the plans of an Earth-based corporation to take control of the residents of the moon. *Monkeybone* is a live action/animation mix that stars **Brendan Fraser** as a cartoonist with a hit animated TV show who falls into a coma after an auto accident. The animated portion of the film takes place in this coma-induced place called Dark Town where the cartoonist teams up with his character Monkey Bone to outwit Death (**Whoopi Goldberg**) and escape the town (thus bringing him out of his coma).

Down in New Zealand, filming on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is nearing completion. The biggest news of late on the production came from newspaper reports that a lot of the extras, stuntmen, and horsemen were working for slave wages and not being treated well. Once someone actually talked to them, they found the reports had little truth to them.

Other films in production include *Jurassic Park 3*, set between the first two movies. It stars **Sam Neill, Michael Jeter, William H. Macy** with a cameo by **Laura Dern**. *Queen of the Damned*, based on the **Anne Rice** novel, will star **Stuart Townshend** as the vampire Lestat and **Aaliyah** as the 6000-year-old Akasha. The **Tim Burton** directed *Planet of the Apes* stars **Mark Wahlberg** as a human pilot who crashes on an Earth like planet where apes evolved into the dominant species. Not necessarily a remake of the original movie, but inspired by the entire series of movies.

Ivan Reitman's *Evolution* is a science fiction comedy about a meteor crashing to Earth near a small New Mexico town which releases alien organisms that quickly multiply and start to evolve at a rate that threatens all life on the planet. It stars **David Duchovny** (making a film while Mulder is abducted on the X-Files) as a community college professor who teams up with a government scientist (**Julianne Moore**) to try to save the world.

The fall movie that will likely get the most press is **Chris Columbus's** adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Harry Potter will be played by

Daniel Radcliffe, Hermione Granger is played by **Emma Watson**, and Ron Weasley is played by **Rupert Grint**. They've also got an impressive cast for the adults including **Robbie Coltrane** (Rubeus Hagrid), **Maggie Smith** (Prof. McGonagall), **Richard Harris** (Professor Dumbledore), **John Cleese** (Nearly-Headless Nick), **Richard Griffiths** (Uncle Dursley), **Fiona Shaw** (Petunia Dursley), and **Alan Rickman** (Snape). **Tom Felton** (Anna and the King) has been cast in the role of Harry's nemesis Draco Malfoy.

Upcoming Movie Release Dates

Dec 8 - Dungeons & Dragons, Vertical Limit

Dec 15 - The Emperor's New Groove, The Gift

Dec 22 - Dracula 2000

Dec 29 - Shadow of the Vampire

Feb 2 - Valentine

Feb 14 - Hannibal

Mar 30 - Spy Kids

Apr 6 - Pluto Nash

Apr 11 - Monkeybone, Pokemon 3

May 11 - The Mummy Returns

May 18 - Shrek, American Outlaws, Cheaters

Summer 2001 - Rollerball, Tomb Raider, Swordfish, Atlantis, A.I. Jurassic Park 3, Kiss of the Dragon, Evolution, Final Fantasy, Planet of the Apes, Osmosis Jones

24 Frames (cont'd from page 1)

by Margaret Grady

just come out in 2001 instead.

Shadow of the Vampire -- It's the story of the making of the old silent film Nosferatu. It will star John Malkovich as filmmaker F.W. Murnau, Willem Dafoe as vampire actor Max Schreck, Cary Elwes, Udo Kier, and Eddie Izzard. Nicolas Cage is one of the film's producers. The story: While Murnau is busy filming, crew members mysteriously sicken and die, others seem to disappear, and his leading man, Max Schreck, begins to act very strangely. Sounds like it could be cool. (Plus, it's supposed to come out on my birthday, December 29.) ;)

And Then, In 2001:

Monkeybone -- This sounds vaguely reminiscent of *Cool World* -- a cartoonist goes into a coma, enters his comic book world, and has twelve hours to figure out how to return to his real body. It will star Brendan Fraser as the Cartoonist, Whoopi Goldberg as Death, Chris Kattan, Bridget Fonda, Dave Foley, Rose McGowan, Bob Odenkirk, and Paul Rubens as Monkeybone, the cartoonist's creation. The movie is based on Kaja Blackley's *Dark Town* comic book, published by Mad Monkey Press, and is set for release in April.

Pluto Nash -- Eddie Murphy stars with (himself, and) Illeana Douglas, Randy

Quaid, Peter Boyle, Pam Grier and Jay Mohr in this sci-fi comedy, currently in production for an April 2001 release. Rumor has it that the set for the offworld colony is one of the biggest in the world, and seems somewhat Jetson's-inspired. **Shrek** -- 3-D animated fantasy from DreamWorks, not to be confused with the earlier mention of Max Schreck. This animation will be computer generated, based on live action models. Mike Myers plays the title character, Shrek, Cameron Diaz plays the princess, Eddie Murphy is a donkey, John Lithgow is the villain, and Linda Hunt is a witch. As the story supposedly goes, Shrek wants to be different from the rest of the ogres. No pillaging the countryside, terrorizing farmers for him... Shrek wants to be a brave knight, who perhaps seeks the heart of the princess? We'll see, somewhere around May, if all goes well.

The Mummy Returns -- So far, the familiar names attached to the film are Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, and The Rock (as the Scorpion King). This time Imhotep returns to life in a British museum, which is going to be a bad thing. But when there's something else running around London even more powerful than him, you know things are worse. Then Brendan Fraser's character's son gets caught in the middle. Now, frankly, that's scary... I mean Brendan Fraser having a son. ;) Currently set to open in May.

A.I. -- Steven Spielberg has finally picked his next effort... bypassing (incredibly) the *Harry Potter* franchise for a different adorable poppet, Haley Joel Osment. The story takes place in the mid-21st century, after the Greenhouse Effect has melted large chunks of the polar icecaps, leaving our coastal cities partially submerged. Man develops a computer with artificial intelligence to survive. We all have read enough sf to know how well that one ends up. Look for this one to kick off the summer movies in June.

Atlantis: The Lost Empire -- This project is pretty hush-hush, but so far we know it will be animation from Disney and will not have songs. I think the coolest thing about this so far is the cast of voices -- get this -- the voices of Mark Hamill, Claudia Christian, Michael J. Fox, and possibly Leonard Nimoy. (That's cast from Star Wars, Star Trek, and Babylon 5... and Back to the Future? all in one spot.) Also set to open in June.



Jurassic Park 3 -- Sam Neill is back, but apparently not Jeff Goldblum. Instead, the cast will include Tea Leoni, William H. Macy, and Michael Jeter. It also looks like they're introducing a new kind of

dino (see logo)... guesses include a Giganotosaurus, or a Megaraptor. Word is very tight on this project, but a frequent rumor is that it will be a dino vs. humans-in-cities... possibly leading to an ironic human extinction. This one is positioned for July 18, 2001 -- no doubt to try to steal numbers by opening two weeks after...

Planet of the Apes -- So far, it will star Mark Wahlberg (human pilot), Tim Roth (leader chimp), Helena Bonham Carter (ape princess), Michael Clarke Duncan (gorilla lieutenant) and Spike Jonze (ape who befriends human). Tim Burton will direct, Rick Baker is doing the makeup, and of course, Danny Elfman is doing the music. This new film is reportedly not a remake, and will introduce a whole host of new apes and monkeys. Besides the three species in the first film (chimps, gorillas, and orangutans), they will also feature baboons, Howler monkeys, Mangabeys, Spider monkeys, gibbons, Lervet monkeys, Mandrills, and Loris 'monkeys.' The masks are supposedly reminiscent of the original film, but imagine what 30-odd years of technical improvements will bring. Charlton Heston's advice for Mark Wahlberg, the film's new protagonist: "He's got to have them design some fake naked feet... or he'll get killed running around on the rocks." Mark's rumored to have snagged pal George Clooney to do an ape cameo... we'll see! Opens THE weekend of JULY 4.

Osmosis Jones -- A mostly-animated cop-buddy picture, except our protagonists are a white blood cell and a cold tablet, trying to save the City of Frank from a lethal virus. Sounds like it could be fun! Stars the voices of Chris Rock as Osmosis Jones, David Hyde Pierce as Drix (guess), Laurence Fishburne as Thrax, the virus, and also Joel Silver, Brandy, William Shatner, Molly Shannon, and Chris Elliot. The live segments are directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly. Bill Murray plays Frank Pepperidge (aka the City of Frank), and Ben Stein is his doctor. This one should be out in the summer.

Evolution -- So far, it stars David Duchovny and Julianne Moore, and sounds awfully X-Filish. A meteorite crashes into to Earth, ending up in an underground cavern. Investigating military scientists discover one-celled lifeforms on the meteorite, which quickly grow into more complex plants and animals. As the creatures continue to rapidly evolve, the scientists realize they may be powerless to stop its spread. Another summer flick, no doubt banking on the stars to sell it.

Final Fantasy: The Spirit Within -- Apparently this cgi-animation is based on a Playstation videogame? It seems to be very well done, because the execs at Sony were reportedly all abuzz about it. I think the voice talent will include Alec Baldwin, James Woods, and Donald Sutherland.

(cont'd on page 12)

by Margaret Grady

Rollerball -- Yes, a remake of the 1975 flick is in the works, currently set to come out the summer of 2001. It will star Chris Klein, LL Cool Jay, and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos.

John Carpenter's Ghosts of Mars -- Oh brother, where art thou? It used to be that John Carpenter's name filled me with anticipation for what he'd next bring to the screen. But after the last several years, and particularly, *John Carpenter's Vampires*, I think he's kind of lost that magic... and this next one appears to be no exception. It's a sci-fi horror flick, set 175 years in the future, where Mars colonists accidentally awaken long-dead Martian ghosts. It will star (so far): Natasha Henstridge, Ice Cube, Pam Grier and Joanna Cassidy. And maybe those ghosts know kung fu, since they're rumored to have hired Yuen Wo Pin as the Fight Coordinator.

Ghost World -- This comic book adaptation has no superheroes, but it does have Steve Buscemi. Having recently read *Ghost World* by Daniel Clowes, I can tell you that it's basically a coming-of-age story of two high school girls, and how their relationship crumbles. Certainly not what I was expecting, but quirky and somewhat interesting. John Malkovich produces, and Scarlett Johansson, Thora

Birch, Brad Renfro, Illeana Douglas, and Teri Garr are all in it.

Josie & the Pussycats -- The live-action version is currently being filmed, starring Rachel Leigh Cook (*She's All That*) and features the singing voice of Kay Hanley from the band Letters to Cleo. The basic plot is girl likes guy who doesn't know she exists, so she starts a band and wins his affection -- no crimesolving in this version. We're currently looking at a November 2001 release.

Monsters, Inc. -- This latest bit of animation from Pixar will star the voices of Billy Crystal, John Goodman, James Coburn, Steve Buscemi, Jennifer Tilly, and Bonnie Hunt. It is also scheduled to come out in November.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone - Well, I think everyone's read it but me. And I'll probably just wait for the movie... that way when I read it, I can hopefully just visualize the characters from the movie and not create any conflict. A youthful actor I've never heard of, Daniel Radcliffe, is going to play Harry. Other more notable names attached are: Maggie Smith as Professor Minerva McGonagall, Alan Rickman as Professor Snape, Richard Harris as Professor Dumbledore?, Robbie Coltrane as Hagrid, Warwick Davis as Professor Flitwick, John Cleese as Nearly Headless Nick, and Verne Troyer (*Mini-Me from Austin Powers II*). Mark your calendars

again for next November!

The Fellowship of the Ring -- Whoo-hoo... about darn time! The first of *Tolkein's Lord of the Rings* trilogy gets a serious treatment (with the others to follow later, for a total of \$360 million). Recognizable stars' names (and the characters they play) include: Ian McKellen as Gandalf, Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn, Liv Tyler as Arwen, Ian Holm as Bilbo Baggins, Christopher Lee as Saruman, Elijah Wood as Frodo



Baggins, Sean Astin as Sam Gamgee, Cate Blanchett as Galadriel, Brad Dourif as Grima Wormtongue, John Rhys-Davies as Gimli, and Matrix's Hugo Weaving as Elrond. Cate Blanchett commented that she was having a tough time speaking Elvish... "it's hard - the language is incredibly formal"... and difficult to prevent it from sounding like badly done Shakespeare. This one's set to

come out in December of 2001. Official website: www.lordoftherings.net So, as you can see, the next couple of years look like there will be a lot to choose from. One additional rumor I'd like to pass on... it sounds like John Travolta is prepping to do another *Battlefield Earth* installment. What could he possibly be thinking? Well, see ya at the movies!

Blade Runner Tidbit

Director Ridley Scott revealed on the BBC Channel 4's documentary "On The Edge Of Blade Runner", that, yes, Deckard was the mysterious sixth replicant.

Apparently, in the Director's Cut version, the biggest clue for analysis was the appearance of a unicorn on screen while Deckard is lost in thought. The unicorn shows up again later as the origami discarded by Gaff.

As the replicants had no memories of their own, they had to be implanted and fans interpreted the appearance of the model as a sign that Gaff knew what Deckard was thinking because it was an image shared by other non-humans.

Director Scott agreed, adding "I still think it's one of the best films I ever made."



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ConClusion (cont'd from page 7)

science fiction forums that I inhabit. I grabbed mine and left messages on the voodoo board for some of them to coordinate a dinner for Thursday evening. Most everything was being set up at this point, so I headed back up the escalator to level 1 (plaza level) and ran into some friends between the two escalators. It turned out to be very fortuitous since this constriction point was a handy meeting place for most all rendezvous during the entire con. We ended up doing dinner at Stetson's, the steakhouse in the Hyatt, which was expensive and ok, but no big deal. Since there were parties listed on the party board (hallway on ballroom level) I headed up to the 32nd floor of the east tower and started walking my way down each hall and to each floor. The first party I found was Charlotte in 2004. This bid is for North Carolina for the weekend before Labor Day Weekend. I asked them why and their reply was that DragonCon will be over LDW for the next 5 years and they didn't want to compete. My thought was that the demographic of attendees doesn't overlap that much. However, in subsequent conversations with other fans about the subject it became clear that the competition Charlotte would experience would be mostly for volunteers and pros. DragonCon draws from all over the south and pros like going to this 18,000 person convention. In comparison, ChiCon 2000 had about 6,000 attendees. Still, some

purists will vote for LDW bids and their competition, Boston in 2004, is bidding LDW. Charlotte won 4 out of 6 party reviews as I recall from the daily 'zines. They had the 2nd best barbecued pork I've ever had; the 1st exists only in Huntsville, Alabama. Despite dining every night before parties I just had to sample their pork each night of party hopping. There were several other parties open Wed eve including the ASFA suite. The Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists regularly holds a suite for members, guests and artists. Realistically, they are open to the public, and are therefore much friendlier than SFWA and their respective suite. To get into the SFWA suite you are either a member or invited guest. Period. By the end of the con I had a friend obtain a guest sticker for me for SFWA, but I didn't spend much time there. Rather, I hung out quite a bit in the ASFA suite talking with Bruce Miller of Denver about art shows and the like. He ran the World Horror Con art show this year and has run the shows for MileHighCon for years. Interesting fellow. He has two parrots and can only travel to destinations that allow him to keep them in his room. That meant he was staying at the Fairmount Hotel and not the Hyatt. As a member of ASFA, I also took a spell at introducing folks to ASFA and the benefits. I did that for about an hour and made several converts out of passersby. By then I saw it was after midnight local

time (CDT = MST + 2), so I headed down and over to my tower. That's when I saw Consuite in the pub, so I took a quick stroll through and found alcohol being served to those willing to produce IDs, sodas from a fountain and an assortment of dried munchies hither and thither. It was kind of neat how the booths and tables lent themselves to smaller groups and intimate conversation. I didn't stay long, but headed to the room and crashed.

Thursday came early when I was contacted by another local fan from Phoenix, Lee Whiteside. We did breakfast at one of the restaurants in the underground mall. This one was accessible from the plaza level by walking around the Hyatt restaurant in the atrium and down an escalator at the far end. Besides a fast food Chinese place, ice cream parlor and sort-of French restaurant there was the pub-style place. That's where we ate. We parted ways and I headed up the escalator to check for messages and attend some programming. Some examples of items offered ranged from 16 to 24 simultaneous events. Several were reading rooms or children's programming. What is a Planet? Your First Worldcon. Tai Chi by Steven Barnes. What's New in Computers? (That one was sitting room only, on the floor, no view). Costuming 101. Windy City Writers. Opening Ceremonies, where select supporters were

allowed to throw a pie at their favorite (or least favorite) committee head. Finger painting. Extra-solar Planets (I checked this one out as well). Revamping the Hugos. Dune: The Mini Series (saw this one at Comic Con in July). Open Filk: Instrumental Jamming. Besides doing lunch with some friends and dinner at Due's Pizza Parlor with Compuserve folks (ever try to fit 14 of us at one table at a restaurant, then split the bill?), I hit the parties in both towers after the Meet-the-Pros at the Fairmount Hotel nearby. They offered ice cream and huge crowds in small rooms, most disappointing; I found out later that the cost to do it in the Hyatt was prohibitive, thus, the Fairmount. Later, Boston had a good party, Toronto in 2003 (which we were voting on this year along with Cancun), UK in '05 bidding Glasgow again. Lots of other smaller parties were firing up. I ran out of time again after midnight and crashed.

Friday started out with more programming. Some of the items that occurred were: Estate Planning for Authors and Artists, Discussing L. Frank Baum and 100 years of Oz, Space Law (stuck my head in this one or a bit), The Physics of Fantasy, Slideshow by Don Maitz and Chris Moore, Web Site Design, Designing Computer Games, Reenactment Groups, The SF-Comic Connection, Farscape Presentation (saw this one at Comic Con as well), GoH talks, various

(Cont'd on page 14)

Blue Planet Books - 1/2 page

readings and signings, Chesley Awards (handled by ASFA, I got to watch them do a slide show with overhead lights on), Hugo Nominated Films, Ancient and Medieval Economic Systems, Docent tours of the Art Show. I managed to catch a few events between lunch with some friends and another online gathering, Bix Bash, for dinner. We tried to find one of the dining guide listed restaurants, Eerie World Café, only to find it out of business. Next door was a hole-in-the-wall Japanese restaurant which was quite pleasant. All the staff were Japanese. At the table behind us I heard a woman talking Russian with her companion. Who would guess? Back we went to the con hotel for parties. More pork, drinks galore. One fellow involved with Furry Fandom was serving ice cream topped with your favorite liqueur. Very few folks found him, but I enjoyed it. I also ran into more locals at the parties, like artist Larry Vela who was featured local artist at LepreCon 26. Since it was Friday the parties were everywhere. Not only did I start early, but I ended later and barely got all the parties visited. It's a tough job, but someone had to do it. Saturday brought gobs of program events. Anime: Why Do We Love It? Famous Crashlandings in SF/F. The Hubble Space Telescope Show (this was a packed puppy, complete with free handouts outside afterwards). North or South of the Border: Worldcon in 2003 (I asked some serious questions of the Cancun folks, and they had poor answers). Terraforming Mars. Solar System Update (well attended). Cryptography Panel (a few poor choices for panelists caused several folks, including me, to leave early). Music Workshop: Music Theory 101. Copyright and the Internet. Your First Worldcon. Headdresses and Hats. SCIFI.COM. Alien Languages. WSFS Business Meeting. Christian Fandom Meeting. The Fantasy of Physics. By Color, How We Organize Our Books. There's More to Film Than Special Effects. Is Fandom Jewish? More Hugo Nominated Films. ASFA Business Meeting. Forthcoming from Tor Books! Humor in Writing. GoH Speeches. Hugo Awards Ceremony. Alexandria Digital Library Chocolate Party. I met more friends for dinner, this time doing Bennigans since Houlihans blew us off after 45 minutes of waiting. I got back in time to see some of the Hugos on the local TV feed, then hit the parties again. Sunday had lots more programming. Nineteenth Century Fantasists. When Both Spouses Write. Slideshow: Bob Eggleton. Fan Fund Auction. Favorite SF Writers. The Myth of Fannish Tolerance (I really wanted to see this one, but couldn't). Cryonics, Fiction or Fact? The Care and Feeding of the Creative Person. Launch Windows and Orbital Mechanics (this was right out of what I studied in college). Beyond Harry Potter II: Censorship and Children's Literature. Voice and Persona: Third Person is Still a Person. The Price of Space. How to Watch a Masquerade. Creating a Magazine from

Scratch. Collecting vs Amassing. They Came from Chicago. Privatizing and Commercializing Space (see our local Space Access Conference). People for the Ethical Treatment of Mars. Nanotechnology and Clarke's Law. What Makes Bad Programming? Masquerade Contest. Estate Planning for Fans (I knew most of this already). From Menace to Romance: The Evolution of the Vampire. Today I met up with friends from the UK and we visited an Italian restaurant a short walk away. We had to wait for a bit, so got talking to several other fans waiting for to-go orders. By the time we sat down theirs had not come, so we invited them to dine with us. One turned out to be an English teacher who also writes periodically and the other was a young teen in college. After he paid his share and left I found out that he was a child prodigy, was 13 and a sophomore in college! If I had known I would have spent more time chatting him up. He was very pleasant and enjoyed our rapid-fire conversation, topics, etc. Once back in the Hyatt I had a brief glimpse of the Masq awards and winning contestants on TV. Then, the parties! Monday finished up Worldcon with numerous interesting events. Space Tourism. Cartoons and Comics Made into Live Action Films. Asteroids and Comets. Beginning Astrophotography (I also knew most of this). Where No Woman Has Gone Before. The Rebirth of Hard SF. Sources of Fantasy: Mythology. Finding Old Books. Nonprofit Doesn't Mean Not Making a Profit. Art and the Web. How to Lie with Statistics (only class I dropped in college due to a broken leg). Closing Ceremonies (not very pompous as some have been in the past). I met up with friends for dinner (at the same Italian restaurant as the night before), hit remaining parties, hung out in Consuite and went to bed early. My roommate had left today, so I hunted for someone to help defray the cost of the room for one night, but to no avail. It was very strange to have the room all to myself again, but such is the way of conventions at times. I did manage to visit the gaming at the Swissotel nearby. It is a triangular cross-section building. They had some films and gaming. I sat in on a Star Wars Trivial Pursuit game already in progress. I didn't do well until we started the next game whereupon I had 5 of 6 wedges before I had to leave. The previous winner was really frustrated at his lack of success with this newcomer, especially one so old! As I left I discovered this hotel also connected to the underground mall and I was able to return via it to the Hyatt. Tuesday the hotel was eerily silent. I did lunch with a couple fans I knew before heading to the airport. I sat with a staff member of ChiCon 2000 in the airport shuttle who filled me in on some of the backroom dirt as well as previous Worldcon politics. They are working for next year's Worldcon in Philadelphia, so I hope to find out more as time allows. I said goodbye and headed for check-in, found my gate hours before I needed to be there, and read for awhile. I wandered

around only to stumble into Alexandria Honigsberg and her husband, David. We did lunch at Chevy's in the airport, caught up on stuff and parted ways. My flight finally came and I flew home reminiscing on the past weekend's activities. So, who all was participating this year? Forrest J. Ackerman, Steven Barnes, Jack L. Chalker, Ellen Datlow, Kate Elliott, David Feintuch, Janice Gelb, Francis Hamit, Steve Ihrwin, Steve Jackson, Jordin Kare, Geoffrey A. Landis, George R. R. Martin, Larry Niven, John Ordovery, Fred Patten, Trevor Quachri, Eric S. Raymond, Robert J. Sawyer, Harry Turtledove, Laura J. Underwood, Vernor Vinge, Len Wein, no one whose last name starts with X, Janine Ellen Young and Mary Francis Zambreno. There were lots and lots of others in attendance. Their names fill parts of the publications I have. If you'd like more details, please give me a call or email me below. In summary, the convention was good, but not as great as ChiCon V in 1991. I heard a rumor that the science program was originally quite extensive, but the Program Chair was forced by the committee to pare it back and add more fannish stuff. If true or not, it clearly showed. Although there was some, there wasn't a lot. Much of it was placed in small rooms without adequate seating for the interested audience. What was offered was quite good. If my wife had gone, she might have been disappointed in what few art slide shows were offered. The ones I peaked in were quite good, but not what Boston offered in 989 where she basically stayed in one room for an entire day and didn't move, except for basic bodily functions. The Hugos and Masquerade were much better for attendees when they were held in 1991 in the Hyatt, but with the advent of TV access in each of the 3 major hotels, it wasn't that much of a problem. I did talk to the guy who was given credit for putting the TV access together and found out his secrets. Talk about bypassing the bureaucratic obstacles! The parties were quite wonderful and the conversations more fun than 9 years ago, but then again I know lots more people nowadays. I also got to do lunch/dinner with more friends this year than some Worldcons. All in all I had a great time and look forward to Philly next Labor Day Weekend! Oh, and Toronto creamed Cancun for 2003 :-)



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In Our Book

The Myths of Magic
 edited by Jess Lebow
Wizards of the Coast, 343 pp., \$7.99

This book is well named. Eleven authors have written stories which revolve around myths as told or known by story characters. All concern Dominaria, the original setting of the card game Magic: The Gathering. The myths are nestled within action stories related to the original cards. As myths, they tell of the origins of people, creatures, or parts of nature. This is the usual notion of what myths are about (academic hair splitting aside), and all of the authors carry it off well. As the action stories enhance the game setting well, I presume. Since I'm not a player, I just have to enjoy the stories for their own sakes. - **Michael Griffin**

Comic Book Culture,
An Illustrated History
 Ron Goulart
Collectors Press, 204 pp., \$49.95

Looking at old comic book covers inspires an instant sense of wonder and an appreciation of beautiful art. This is a book about cover art, which is often better than inside art. While the majority are superhero covers, other genres like "good girl art" are shown, too. Goulart has about 64 pages of text, an authoritative history beginning in the 1930s when first comic books came out. This is a history of the golden age, ending at the 1950s. Over 400 covers are pictured, about 26 of those full-sized. About 120 are only the size of matchbook covers, which is my only complaint. But this book is a pure delight. If you went into a comic book store and spent fifty bucks, what might you get? One golden age comic book, or twenty modern comic books, or this large coffee table book. By far, this would be the best choice. - **Michael Griffin**

Realware
Rudy Rucker
Eos Trade Paperbacks, 305 pp., \$14.00

This is the fourth in Rucker's 'Ware' series, begun with 'Software' in 1982. I read that one just before this new one, and I'm glad I did. It's not necessary to know the previous novels in the series, but it adds to the enjoyment of this one.

The central figure of 'Software', the computer programming genius Cobb Anderson, comes to his final fate in 'Realware.' Oh, and Cobb isn't even the main character. We have young star-crossed lovers, their parents, friends, and enemies in the year 2054. Adventure spans the globe from San Francisco to Tonga Island to four-dimensional hyperspace. It's got sex and drugs and swearing and violence and aliens who give magic wands to people. Call this one

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 14)

a cyberpunk version of The Sorcerer 's Apprentice - **Michael Griffin**.

Year's Best SF 5

Edited by **David Hartwell**,
HarperCollins, 494 pp., \$6.99

If you only read one science fiction anthology in your lifetime it should be this one. I mean that. Hartwell has selected one poem and 24 powerful short stories from Asimov's, Analog, Interzone, F&SF, and other sources. Why do I like this collection so much? Well, I have a personal corollary to Sturgeon's Law that 90% of all fiction is garbage. I believe that 90% of all science fiction and fantasy is adolescent formula fiction, which often pretends that it isn't. This anthology clearly shows that there's another 10% out there, waiting to thrill us and also give us food for thought. - **Michael Griffin**

The Crook Factory Dan Simmons

Harper Torch PB, 562 pp

Dan Simmons is a writer who is known for his fantasy and horror as well as his science fiction. Just when it appears that you can classify him as a writer of such things he decides to go to a different genre. The cover touts this as being a novel of suspense but historical fiction would be much more accurate.

The plot of the novel is simple. Using a fictional FBI agent named Joe Lucas as a narrator, Simmons tells of the non-fictional exploits of Ernest Hemingway and his brief stint working as a voluntary spy for the U.S. in Cuba during WWII.

The book opens with Joe Lucas (now a CIA operative in Cuba) learning of Hemingway's suicide. At that point we are brought back to the early years of WWII and Joe's being assigned personally by J. Edgar Hoover to go to Cuba to join Hemingway's group of spies, "The Crook Factory" of the title.

Once in Cuba, Hemingway reluctantly accepts him and he moves out to Hemingway's Cuban estate to start setting up the spy network. Early on in this Hemingway decides to get the U.S. embassy to outfit his boat with weapons and long range fuel tanks so that he can start hunting U Boats.

There are lots of sub plots in this novel. The bulk of the book deals with Hemingway's chasing of a luxury yacht *The Southern Cross* and looking for U Boats. He suspects that the *Southern Cross*, a U.S. registered vessel is supplying U Boats in the Caribbean and wants to catch them at it and to personally sink a U Boat.

As usual Simmons's descriptive writing is well worth the read. I especially liked the fight between Lucas and Hemingway when Ernest has discovered that Joe is really an FBI agent sent to keep tabs on him and the Crook Factory. It is so well

written it is almost like you are watching it rather than reading it. In addition to the action several real life celebrities make an appearance in this book. Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman both attend a party early on in the novel. Ian Flemming of James Bond fame also shows up several times in a (real life) role as a member of British intelligence.

Any fan of WWII novels and spy novels will like this book as well as any Simmons fan. I recommend it. - **Rick Andrews**

Science Fiction of the 20th Century: An Illustrated History Frank M. Robinson Collectors Press, 256 pages, \$59.95

What can I say about a book that reproduces some of my favorite SF/Fantasy art? It covers the early days of pulp and the current days of computer-aided movie making. From "The Cosmopolitan" and it's serialization of "War of the Worlds" to "Star Wars: Episode One" with stops at "Argosy," "Astounding," "Asimov's," "Planet," "Fantasy and Science Fiction," and many others. Just seeing covers that were unavailable before I was born makes me realize how insignificant a time I have been reading. I wish I had two copies of this one, one to read and show off and another to preserve the rich heritage it represents. I will suggest that if you don't buy this, read it at the library- **Bob LaPierre**

Acorna's People Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Scarborough Harper Torch, 355 pp, \$6.99

Acorna's People is the third volume of the adventures of the Unicorn Girl. A fourth volume, Acorna's World is expected out soon.

Acorna has found her race, or they have found her and she travels to her people's new planet in hopes of finding where she really fits in. Alas, she finds she doesn't really fit in there either. She is too human. But boredom is soon challenged, when her Aunt is sent out to find out what has happened to all the off-planet Linyaari who have suddenly dropped out of communication. It's the slaver's who want to enslave the Linyaari and the healing power of their horns. Will Acorna, teaming up with a renegade salvage man, a maimed survivor of the torturing Khleevi [who destroyed the Linyaari home world] and a sentient temple cat rescued by the salvager, be able to stop an army of sadistic bad guys, bring the slavers to a just end, save their friends, and bring the reclusive Linyaari into the Federation? Of course they will. The fun is in the characters, the action, and the decided menace of the villains. It is fast paced and thoroughly entertaining. [I love the adopted uncle, Hafiz Harakamian, so reminiscent of the Traders series of yesteryear.] Not only

McCaffrey lovers, but adventure lovers will enjoy this one. - **Pam Allan**

Acorna's World Anne McCaffrey & Elizabeth Ann Scarborough Avon/Eos, \$24.00

Acorna's World is the fourth book in this series about the Unicorn Girl. I read this book, then I had to go back to read the first three of the series. This book is exciting and medium to fast paced. I have always loved Anne McCaffrey's books. Anne McCaffrey & Margaret Ball wrote the first two books. Together, they are great. Anne McCaffrey & Elizabeth Ann Scarborough wrote the last two books and together they are GREAT!! (They also wrote the Powers That Be series.)

Acorna and company find a substance that sends the Khleevi fleeing back to their home world in terror. Acorna finds her mate (Not Thariinye!), and Aari & Maati find something very important to them. This book is chock full of finds! To anyone who loves Anne McCaffrey's works, get this book. To anyone who doesn't know how great Anne McCaffrey is, get this book and find out. - **Helen "April" Rice**

Saturn's Race Larry Niven and Steven Barnes TOR \$24.95

On a private island of the ultra rich a young student accidentally stumbles on a horrible secret. What is the secret? How far will they go to silence her? What will happen if the secret gets out?

This book is a well-written suspense thriller. The story line is well developed. The characters are believable. I found this book hard to put down and would enthusiastically recommend it to others. Read this book to see what our near future could be like. - **William B. Whitmore**

The Wild Machines Mary Gentle Eos, 391 pp. \$6.99

The Wild Machines is book 3 of the Book Of Ash. A book 4, Lost Burgundy, is due out soon. The book can stand alone.

In The Wild Machines, Ash and her mercenaries return from a leveled Carthage, to rejoin the rest of her troop under siege in Dijon. The forces of her sister Faris far outnumber the besieged Burgundians.

Duke Charles, the leader of the Burgundians, is dying. Dijon is under assault. The wild machines have turned the western hemisphere into an ice age and famine is rampant. Ash must contact the wild machines, at the dukes order, for intelligence yet somehow withstand their dominance. She must also find out what makes the eradication of Burgundy so imperative in the wild machines quest to eradicate the human race. She and her

troops must also survive. Will she? Can she? Will they?

The Book Of Ash, and The Wild Machines are military alternate history. The commentary of modern archeologists trying to balance history as known to them, and this reality is fun as they try to substantiate the translation of Ash's chronicles. But what really makes the book[s] worth reading is the well drawn characters in a very vivid world. These are not gentle books but fascinating chronicles of medieval warfare in full and inglorious detail. Ms. Gentle is a powerful writer with a marvelous sense of humanity. I would give it 4 stars out of four. - **Pam Allan**

Wheel of the Infinite Martha Wells Eos/HarperCollins; \$24; 355pp.

This was a perfect book for the monsoon season! It takes place on an unnamed world and set in an area much like Cambodia. More specifically, an ornate city like Angkor Wat, a place I've always wanted to visit. Exotic, jungle-draped and humid, full of temples covered with writhing carvings; surrounded by canals and smooth areas of grass.

The novel deals with Maskelle, an exiled Voice of the Adversary. The Adversary is a being who was never human, but who is considered the giver of bad luck and revenge as well as dispensing justice, playing a sort of devil's advocate upon the actions of the Ancestors/gods of this world, and human deeds.

Maskelle comes into the story, heading back to the city of Duvalpore, for the Hundred Year Rite and the intricate sand painting which is an accurate picture of the world, called the Wheel of the Infinite. She meets up with renegade swordsman Rian, a Sitanese kjardin on the lam from his Holder lord, while traveling with a puppet/theater troop headed by the irrepressible Rastim.

And of course, once they reach Duvalpore, things get intense. There are murders and mystery galore: a possessed puppet, a Court Lady of an unearthly nature; wise old men, and the emperor, who coincidentally is Maskelle's son. These are all set in a city criss-crossed by canals, tall temples lit by oil lamps, nobles draped in satins and gold embroideries on silk: incense everywhere. I loved it.

Maskelle reluctantly takes on the task of discovering why the all-important sand-painting of the Wheel of the Infinite is being disturbed by a spreading black stain. The Hundred Year Rite keeps the world going as it is, literally.

Her investigations uncover demons and madness and howling souls from an ancient city that threatens to overwhelm Duvalpore and her whole world.

This is the first Martha Wells book I've read, and I've really enjoyed her

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In Our Book (cont'd from page 15)

straightforward style. Her descriptive ability is wonderful without being too gaudy and her characters are sensible souls. I especially loved the setting. It was a wonderful, humid journey set in an engaging novel. - **Sue Martin**

Silverhair **Stephen Baxter** **EOS, 293 pp, \$5.99**

Silverhair is book 1 of a proposed trilogy. It does stand alone.

Silverhair is a young mammoth cow, one of the last of the wooly mammoths hiding out on a deserted tundra island. Her herd/family is virtually wiped out by smugglers blown to the island by a storm. The remaining cow and two calves are saved by a nicer batch of humans and Silverhair must cross the Arctic Ocean with the help of some whales who remember an oath from 50 million years ago. The remaining mammoths are held behind glass walls while the humans plan to propagate them by crossing them with regular elephants. The mammoths dream of the Skysteppe, Mars.

What we have is Watership Down with Mammoths. The humanized pachyderms are nicely drawn. You end up wishing that they are out there somewhere, maybe with a lovable Sasquatch or two. I'll be interested to see if they get to Mars in the next book. It can make a pleasant afternoon's read. **Pam Allan**

Laws Of The Blood, Partners **Susan Sizemore** **Ace, 279 pp, price unknown**

Laws Of The Blood, Partners, is the second volume of a series but does stand alone. The first volume is Laws Of The Blood, Hunt.

If you're an enforcer, or nighthawk, for the vampire community you have the unenviable job of hunting down the breakers of the vampire legal code and dispatching them permanently. You don't want to meet up with a mortal vampire hunter who wants to dispatch you. Even if you both seek the same missing teenager.

Char is pursuing the missing boy for his vampiric counselor. Jebel Haven is pursuing him for an FBI agent who is also his mother, and has a blackmail file on him. To make it all more interesting, the boy has become a pawn in a ritual black magic scheme with a sorcerer, a demon, and a lot of dead bodies.

The laws of the vampires do not permit the slaying of a demon by a vampire. So Char and Jebel must join forces in an uneasy peace to fulfill their initial quests, while planning on killing each other when it's over. So, as Tina Turner belts, What's love got to do with it?

This is a page-turner with a complicated plot line flowing from well drawn characters and more action than a Stephen Segal, or Van Damme movie. It even has a touch of humor. If you like

vampires, supernatural and natural action, or just a good compulsive page turner, You'll love this one enough to look for the first one. - **Pam Allan**

The Swordsman's Oath: The Second Tale Of Einarinn **Juliet E. McKenna,** **EOS, 528 pp. \$6.99**

The Swordsman's Oath is the second volume of the series and is preceded by The Thief's Gamble. Although it is a continuing story, each tale stands as a separate volume. However, reading the previous volume would add to the enjoyment.

The Elietimm have invaded the Tormelin Empire, using an archaic form of magic called Artifice, The wizards of the present have no answer to the older form. The Archmage sends Sworn Swordsman, Ryshad, mages Shiv and Viltrid, and thief mercenaries Livak and Halice to seek information on the Elietimm and their magic.

By the time Ryshad, and his artifact sword have been sold into slavery and returned, they find themselves seeking a lost colony destroyed by the Elietimm twenty two generations before to return the souls back to the bodies from the artifacts they were stored in. Of course, they run into the bad guys and must match magic and swords.

I found the book curiously unsatisfying, with some minor characters better drawn than major ones, with the exception of the swordsman himself. It read more like a serial episode than a complete novel. This is one that you should read in series order to fully enjoy, but it can make a pleasant read on a rainy afternoon when the cable is on the fritz. - **Pam Allan**

Valor's Choice **Tanya Huff** **Daw; \$6.99; 409 pp.**

This is Tanya Huff's first foray into military science fiction, and when I first saw the cover, I said, "It's an elf...with pink hair! With a machine gun! I gotta get this!" Fortunately my impulse buying clued me in on a very well-written novel, reminiscent of both Lois McMaster Bujold and Elizabeth Moon's novels. (Which is to say, that it has a sense of humor, while at the same time being very serious and attention grabbing, rather than a nausea-inducing catalog of carnage and weapon stats...)

The background behind "Valor's Choice" is that there has been a war going on for some time between the Confederation (a conglomerate of mostly peaceful, older species who solved the problem of not being able to fight by getting the "younger species;" Humans, Krai and di'Taykan respectively, to join up with the Confederation, and incidentally, fight for them) and the "Others," a much less pleasant group of imperialists intent on expanding into territory held by the Confederation. We

aren't told how long this war has been going on in the story, but we can assume several generations by the cohesiveness of the military culture, and the interrelationships between characters of different species.

The plot itself involves a platoon of Marines (a platoon of Marines who had just survived a recent battle with the "Others" and had their leave interrupted, by the way) being assigned as an honor guard to diplomats on a First Contact mission with a new warrior species (really, really tall, aggressive lizard-people, of which more will be said later) and the travails of a Staff Sergeant as she deals with a new second lieutenant (the last one having gone and died on her before this mission) civilians, diplomats and being on a plane that's just crashed in the middle of a swamp that's in the middle of a preserve inhabited by really tall reptilian juvenile delinquents armed with spears and a very bad attitude. Also linked into the story line are subplots concerning interspecies politics, alien psychology and the general infallibility of Staff Sergeants (what, you didn't know?!)

This is a great book, my only caveat is that you might not be able to put the darn thing down - **Rena McGee**

Downfall **Jean Rabe** **Wizards of the Coast; \$21.95; 378pp.**

"Downfall" is the story of a girl who cries a river and drowns the whole world...Well, actually it isn't though a mysterious little girl in the employ of a black dragon seems to be making the attempt at flooding the ogre kingdom of Blode with killer thunderstorms.

Meanwhile, Our Heroes, Rig Mer-Krel and his knightly girlfriend Fiona, on a trip to gather funds to ransom her brother from the aforementioned dragon, make the horrible discovery that a former friend, Dhamon Grimwulf, has sunk to new lows after bugging out on a dragonslaying expedition. Now he's adventuring with a trio of bandits and drinking like a fish to stave off the pain from a dragon scale that is embedded in his leg. (And if you're really, really curious how it got there, I suggest that you read Rabe's Dragons of a New Age trilogy, which explains most of the events previous to this novel).

For some reason, the discovery that Dhamon is a total sleaze who wants nothing to do with Fiona and Rig does not deter Our Heroes from adventuring with Dhamon and his new buddies (Though the fact that Maldred, one of Dhamon's new friends has taken a shine to Fiona plays a part.) They do the obligatory roleplaying game dungeon crawl and monster bash, the only difference being they get hired by an ogre chieftain, rather than a human lord. Then they go on an expedition to free slaves being held by the black dragon. Somewhere in between these adventures, Dhamon acquires a dragonslaying sword

with the throwaway ability to find anything that the bearer desires. Needless to say, Dhamon wants it for the later ability, rather than the former.

The novel ends on some very sour notes. Fiona accidentally kills the contact she was supposed to meet so she could pay off the ransom. Maldred turns out to be an ogre-mage, (he was wearing human form to avoid the usual, "Aieeeee, it's an ogre-mage! Kill it! Kill it! reaction his kind usually gets) and they get ambushed by a pint-sized terror who pops up to make threats and revelations before vanishing in standard "Minion of the Villain" fashion.

"Downfall" is the first of a series, and so far, seems to have already acquired the "second book drag" syndrome. The main character, thus far, seems to be a waste of oxygen, most of the minor characters failed to get my interest or sympathy, and the only character I genuinely liked (a kobold who reminded me of a kid I used to know a loooooong time ago) gets killed, for no other reason than to further a plot device...despite these little quibbles, I more or less enjoyed reading this book, which was very light and fast, though I would suggest that the prospective reader wait for the book to come out in paperback, or get it in the library. - **Rena McGee**

Well of Darkness: Volume One of the Sovereign Stone Trilogy **Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman** **Avon/EOS; \$25; 450pp.**

I'll let you know straight off this is based on a role-playing game called Sovereign Stone by Lester Smith and Don Perrin.

I don't play role-playing games, so this was not a deterrent for me. I like fantasy about high magics, dark and light, elves and humans, quests and challenges; the whole gamut of fantasy fiction's usual plot supports.

And perhaps, because this is based on a game and maybe limited by it's constraints, I found this a world thin of description and personality, except for the main antagonists. There's an elvish nation that seemed constructed on psuedo-Asian concepts of Ancestor worship, honor and saving face, highly structured, emotion-less, except for the rare exception, xenophobic...stereotypical behaviors. Oh, and a love of very ornate gardens and the outdoors. And then there are the humans: messy and grand, and in this particular culture, ripped apart by in-fighting: brother against brother; with a noble, beloved father-king in the middle of this struggle. One prince of course, dedicated to the light and the other making his descent into the Void, or the dark side. An evlsh noblewoman, against all her cultural taboos, falls in love with the evil prince...There are also Dwarves, gypsy wanderers and horse-trainers extraordinary and the Orken, sea-faring

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giants that always smell strongly of fish and are highly superstitious.

Well, you get the picture: the characters in this tale are the sum total of their characteristics: nothing more or less. Even their personalities are based on cliches and formulas. Perhaps because these are the needs of this role-playing universe. But for a reader, the whole novel is not very engaging or original. The Big Conflict in this story is between these two brothers and their efforts at gathering the four parts of the magical Sovereign Stone (given to the king by the gods), an artifact that would aid in avoiding war and unite these disparate peoples.

The ensuing power struggle destroys just about everything set up in the beginning of the book. This gives us a clear field for the action of the next two books....Sigh.

Really, if you're not a player of the original game, I'd skip this. And if not, at least wait until it comes out in paperback or goes on remainder. Better yet, support your local library and get it there. - **Sue Martin**

The Fourth World By Dennis Danvers

Avon Books, Inc., \$23.00, 336 pp

I am a reluctant technocrat; I have envisioned the dire consequence of immersion of daily life into a web culture and I fear it. Mr. Danvers colorfully and ominously illustrates his web-dependent world; not so much with those who live in virtual web-reality but with those who do not. His principal characters are Santee St. John, a "living camera", who works for a web news producer and Margaret Mayfield, an idealistic young woman, who has rejected web-dependent America for mysterious and beautiful Mexico.

Santee's job is to experience reality and record it to share with people on the web. For most people, except "webkickers", the recorded experience is just as good as reality. Santee finally experiences enough reality when he is sent to Mexico to record the suppression of a revolt by the peasants. He decides he wants to take a personal interest in real news reporting.

Margaret introduces Santee to the culture and people and gives him an appreciation and love for the country that rivals her own. When they discover a particularly diabolical incident of peasant exploitation, they decide to fight for Mexico. Santee and Margaret separate – she to travel to villages to make contacts and he to return to his job and play undercover agent. They develop a plan that they believe will raise sympathy from the rest of the world for the Indian's plight. They can't know that their plan has been usurped and will completely destroy all chance of the Indians regaining their land. Their plan involves a web-virus that infects people. The bad guys have a little creative colonization planned for the Indians – on Mars.

Surprisingly, their chief nemesis and savior are one and the same making for an unexpected conclusion.

Mr. Danvers is a little inconsistent in his characters' development. Santee is fairly well developed but Margaret is somewhat less. His supporting cast includes a webkicker, an adolescent boy, with – of course- computer expertise; his web girlfriend who doesn't even live on Earth and a middle-aged, burned out hippie with no cajones. There is also the expected AI. Mr. Danvers spent a specific amount of time fleshing out these characters and then dumped them in the middle of the story to fend for themselves. I did enjoy the story development; however, much of it dragged on longer than necessary to make a point and often the characters would disappear for so long I felt disconnected from them. If Mr. Danvers could have tightened up a lot of scenes, kept his characters more evenly balanced and moved the last quarter of the story more dynamically, this would have been a first class novel. – **Catherine Book**

Mad Merlin By J. Robert King Tor, 478 pp., \$24.95

This is not a familiar Merlin. He is not a heroic wizard giving all his power to make an immortal king. He is not a rapacious, power-hungry magician manipulating Arthur for his own purposes. He is a true madman with no knowledge or understanding of why or how. However, this madman is still Merlin with all his power and no restraints on its usage. He is a child with a gun.

Merlin is driven to create Arthur and when he does so, he wants only to keep Arthur for himself. He is so delusional he isn't even aware of the baby's needs and nearly kills him. He finally finds people to help him raise the baby and the story becomes very familiar and routine – for a while. The reason that Merlin needs Arthur so desperately is that he senses Arthur will be his salvation and the key to his madness.

The unique perspective to this particular Arthurian story is that Merlin is really a fallen god – fallen so far and so hard that he lost his reason. The story seems to sort of side-step at the point where Merlin regains his mind and remembers what he is. The second half of the book seems more like a sequel than the same novel. While the first half is a good journey story that keeps the reader guessing what Merlin really was; the second half is a story about belief and faith. It becomes a real jumble of Roman, Greek and Celtic gods including some I didn't even recognize. Mr. King badgers the reader with speech after speech about faith giving life to gods. This isn't an original idea. The book does climax with a wonderful battle and the overall texture of the story made me glad I'd read it. – **Catherine Book**

The Voyage of the Jerle Shannara: Ilse Witch by Terry Brooks Del Rey Books, \$26.95, HB 454 pages

In his latest novel, Terry Brooks returns to the fantasy world of the Shannara novels. It carries on some time after the Heritage of Shannara where we were introduced to Walker Boh, the only character to carry on from that series, now known only as Walker, the last Druid.

Be warned the novel is the first of a three novel series. So, as expected, Brooks leaves you hanging at the end of the book with most of the characters in peril of some sort. Brooks carries on with his epic fantasy storytelling with this novel, living up to the expectations of his fans.

Events are set in motion when a mutilated elven castaway is found floating in the seas of the Blue Divide. He looks to be the lone survivor of an expedition that was lost thirty years earlier that went in search of an ancient magic, more powerful than any magic in existence. He carries with him a map that would lead Walker to Castledown, where the magic has been hidden since ancient times. Walker's adversary, the Ilse Witch, learns of the map and sets out to get it for herself.

In order for Walker (and the Ilse Witch) to make the journey in a short time, they both make use of the latest innovation in their world, airships powered by magic and technology. This brings in a crew of Rovers, who have followed on from sailing ships to the airships, to pilot the ship, which has been named after their first elven king, Jerle Shannara.

Walker enlists the aid of several others, the young human boys, Bek Rowe and Quentin Leah, Panax the Dwarf, the half-man, half-beast Truls Rohk, the Wing Rider Hunter Predd, the seer Ryer Ord Star, and the elven prince, Ahren Elssedel. We also have return appearances by some of the magical items seen previously in the series. The story is told mainly from the point of view of Bek Rowe and Walker, although occasionally we see things from some of the other character's perspective.

The first two-thirds of the novel is spent introducing the reader to the new characters and bringing them all together to get started on the journey. The last third covers their journey to Castledown, including several stops to recover the magical keys they need to get to the ancient magic once they get there. And once they arrive at Castledown, things definitely don't go as expected, leaving the reader ready for the next installment.

The new characters and elements Brooks introduces in this novel help to keep the series fresh. Elements revealed at the end of this installment look to make the subsequent ones even more interesting as we begin to learn more about the ancient times in this fantasy world from what they have discovered. - **Lee Whiteside**

(cont'd on back cover)

Club Listings

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Please check your club listing for errors. Please send corrections and updates to the editor in writing or via email)

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. For details, call (602)582-6990.

ARERIAL MIRAGE JUGGLING CLUB International Juggling Association affiliate club meets 7-10pm Wednesday evenings at Encanto Park. No dues, everyone welcome. All levels skill exchange in many areas of object manipulation. Devils' Club meets Fridays 5pm north of the Hayden Library on the ASU campus. For more info, call (602) 585-7623, or write 2326 E. Electra Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85024.

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@earthling.net Web: <http://www.gibbed.com/all> VoiceMail: 602-306-9339

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

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Club Listings (Cont'd from page 17)

BASFA Baja Arizona Science Fiction Association, a non-profit organization. Puts on TUS-CON Convention annually.

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

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 (602) 978-9314.

DAYSTAR HOLT Arizona's first and longest-running Elfquest fan club. Daystar meets to talk about EQ and related stuff, develop characters, publish stories in our 'zine *Playelf* and create an annual calendar. Other common interests include music, bellydance, camping and of course, SF. Membership is free (18 or over) and is attained by group vote after you attend two meetings or holt-related get-togethers. Meetings are usually the first Saturday of each month; for more info, call Tom or Janice at (602) 581-2258. They have a website up at <http://members.home.net/jeanderson/daystarholt.html>

DESERT LURKERS Tucson based Babylon 5 fan club. Meets and communicates via listserver over the Internet. Anyone with e-mail access can subscribe to the Desert Lurkers by sending e-mail to b5-l-request@dragon.org and putting "subscribe" (minus the quotation marks) in the subject line. Interested people can contact Alexander Goodrum at E-mail address: goodrum@AZStarNet.com

EARTHLINK SCI-FI CLUB SF generalists with some focus on comics and environmental issues. Meets at various conventions and occasions. Publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Cosmic Wavelengths*. For information contact them at 8508 E. San Lorenzo, Scottsdale, AZ 85258, or call Nohl Rosen at (602) 991-8847.

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 Bart Smith (Phoenix) (602)937-6995 or Leonard Bird (Tucson) (520)742-2432

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF JEDI KNIGHTS Members of the Tatooine Base have revised the International Brotherhood of Jedi Knights, a not-for-profit fan club dedicated to Star Wars. Membership is \$8.00 U.S. and/or \$11.00 (Canada/foreign) and includes a membership packet consisting of a one year subscription to *The New Jedi Times* (published 6 times a year), membership card, IBOJK charter & bylaws information on Jedi studies and a free gift. Checks should be made to either Patty Vance or Elizabeth Laignel. For further information send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: The I.B.O.J.K.; P. O. Box 5459; Glendale, AZ 85312-5459; or call either Patty or Lilly at (602) 843-8303. May the Force show you the way of the Jedi!

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION COUNCIL Meets every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month. Meeting at the Westridge Mall (75th Ave. and Thomas Rd. Phoenix, AZ. The IFC is regimental (Using Ranks and structured similiarly to ST) but has social events as well. Attends local Creation And Trek Production Cons, and ST Movie premiers. POC for IFC is A/Fleet Admiral John Nelson (602) 934-3987 or by voice mail (602) 409-7169 or c/o P.O. box 14370 Phoenix, AZ 85063-4370. E-Mail: bnelson502@aol.com Membership Approx 35-50. The Bi-Monthly newsletter is *Cactus Log*.

THE JEDI KNIGHTS Meetings are the 3rd Sunday of each month. For more information call Carol Alves, Publicity, (760)244-9593 or write Jedi Knights, c/o Jim Lowerre, 12291 Meade Street, Garden Grove, CA 92841-3629

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

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 25 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.

PHOENIX JAPANIMATION SOCIETY Local chapter of Japanimation/general animation oriented fans - meets monthly. Membership is free, though optional monthly newsletter is \$5/year or \$.50 per month. Call Tom Perry at (602) 996-2196 or write 3241 E. Altadena, Phoenix, AZ 85028.

RAGE ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST A Live Action Theatre Troupe based out of the ASU campus in Tempe, AZ. It is dedicated to the game Werewolf: The Apocalypse by White Wolf publishing. Contact Mike McLaughlin at (602)461-5842 or write 1730 W Emelita Place #2025, Mesa AZ85202-3144 or email to 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 Carrow's Restaurant at 7th Street & Monte Vista in Phoenix every Sunday from 3pm-9pm (except during conventions and other special events). Open to new members - call (602) 849-9515.

ROLE PLAYING GAMES CLUB (RPGC) The official gaming club of Az. State University. Activities include: live-action roleplaying games, tabletop gaming, conventions, parties, etc. General meetings are open to the public and are held every Friday at 6pm in ASU's Memorial Union. Dues are \$5/semester. For more info, contact Michael McLaughlin, 1730 W. Emelita #2025, Mesa, AZ 85202-3144, or call (602)464-3144; RPGC@asu.edu

SCIENCE FICTION CONTINUUM The Science Fiction Continuum: An Independent Star Trek and Sci-Fi club in Phoenix, AZ. The SFCOM is an active club that participates in Local Phoenix, and Southwestern Star Trek and Sci-Fi conventions and movies. The SFCOM has three different divisions. The SFCOM itself, a free group where fun is the name of the game. The Deep Space SolarFlare (DSSF) an active member club in the International Federation of Treker's (IFT). This group is based on DS9 (a space station). And the IKV Sto-Vo-Kor (Independent Klingon Vessel). A Klingon Bird of Prey, roming the desert looking for battle. Are the Fed's too soft, looking for combat, feel the call to glory. This is the ship for you. Membership in the SFCOM is free! To join DSSF or the Sto-Vo-Kor a nominal fee for the national clubs involved and uniforms. For further information contact President John Nelson at (602) 409-7169 or on the internet at; BNelson502@aol.com or check out our web site. <http://www.thesfcom.com>

SFACE (Speculative Fiction And Computer Enthusiasts) Phoenix College's one and only connection to the worlds of speculative fiction, including science fiction, fantasy, and horor as well as table top, live action and internet gaming, SFACE also serves as a guide through the Internet - both teaching basic use and utilizing as a source of speculative fiction. For more info contact Dr Ray Bromley at bromley.ray@a1.pc.maricopa.edu. The SFACE Web site is found at <http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/departments/studentact/organizations/sface/>

SHADOWKEEP BBS Intelligent conversation, awesome graphics, stupendous door games, unworldly filebank, RPG forums, QWK message system and online RPG BBS-moderated games! Our BBS is mainly RPG oriented and we offer many services to GMs and players. No fees necessary for users who post intelligent messages! \$5 in credits to new users. Over 20 conferences and 10 doors to choose from! Shadowkeep BBS - PCBoard 15.2/M - US Robotics 28.8 Modem. Phoenix, AZ (602)245-0919; Connect at 2400-28800

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 infor-maton on any of these or for general information on thy past tomorrows thou mayest contact Mistress Myrddina o Dolwyddelan (Terry Schwartz) PO Box 584, Sonoita AZ 85637 (520)455-5835 Email: myrddina1@aol.com www.atenveldt.org

THE SOUTHWEST COSTUMER'S GUILD The Southwest Costumers Guild is a loose organization of persons inter-ested in all facets of historical, cultural, science fiction, fantasy, and humor cos-tume. Members are often seen on stage and behind the scenes atmost local and regional Science Fiction Convention masquerades.They meet on the last Sun-day of each month at various mmbers' homes in the greater phoenix area. For details. Southwest Costumers Guild, PO Box 39504, Phoenix, AZ 85609 or call Randall Whitlock at (602)995-7514, email: costumers@casfs.org or Website: <http://members.aol.com/souwesgld/guild.html>

STARBASE TUCSON Tucson Arizona based Star Trek club. For info call Geof Wood at (520) 746-1822 or write Starbase Tucson ; 3314 E. Benson Hwy ; Tucson AZ 85706. Email:pegasis409@aol.com

STONEHENGE BBS Enjoy over 60 online games including TradeWars 2002, StarFight, The Pit, Dirty Play, Usurper, LORD, and Battle Grid (new, like Battletech). Topical message boards, E-Mail, and Network Echoes. 1000's of files to download: utilities, games, GIF pictures, & more every day! Stop by and give us a try at Stonehenge BBS (602) 947-2223, FidoNet 1:114/120, 300-9600bps, V.32/V.42bis, 24 hours a day.

TARDIS 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, fund-raisers, auctions, games, camping trips and outings. We also maintain an active presence at local conventions. TARDIS publishes a monthly informative newsletter, *The Index File*, with a national circulation which is included with membership. Annual membership is just \$12.50. You can contact us at P.O. Box 63191, Phoenix, AZ 85082-3191, Voice Mail at (602) 864-0901, E-mail TARDIS-Info@primenet.com or visit <http://www.primenet.com/~jgeorge/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. T.H.E.M. is ASU's science fiction and fantasy club. Weekly meetings are held in the Memorial Union, with dates to be announced after the semester starts. For more information, contact Erik Wennstrom, email: ew@asu.edu Phone: 480-968-5257. To subscribe to our listserv, send a message to them-request@asu.edu.

TUCSON FAN ALLIANCE E-Mail Address is Bkoehler@Juno.com or DMitchell1@Juno.com.

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

UNITED FEDERATION OF PHOENIX A Phoenix area Star Trek and general SciFi fan club. We are a social club that meets every two weeks at

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various locations around the Phoenix area. The UFP has been meeting for over 20 years of continuous activity. Dues are \$10/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

UNITED WHOVIANS OF TUCSON A well-informed and very active Dr. Who club. \$15 yearly membership includes four issues of their fanzine - TARDIS Time Lore - written by semi-pros and other dedicated fans. For more information, contact The United Whovians of Tucson at P. O. Box 13541, Tucson, AZ 85732-3541. Also, you can contact the president at kfbuwot@aol.com or the UWOT webmaster at unitedwhovians@aol.com Web page at: <http://www.azstarnet.com/~hgadng/uwotclub.htm>



Convention Listings

The Twelfth Regeneration of Gallifrey One (Van Nuys, CA) **February 23-25, 2001**, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Guests: Sarah Sutton, Mark Strickson and Bonnie Langford from Doctor Who. Memb: \$30 to 6/30/00, \$35 to 9/30/00, \$40 to 11/30/00, \$45 to 1/31/01, \$50 at the Door. Info: Gallifrey Conventions, PO Box 3021, North Hollywood, CA 91609 Phone: (818) 752-3756, info@gallifreyone.com Web: www.gallifreyone.com

LepreCon 27 (Scottsdale, Arizona) **May 18-20, 2001** Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort Artist GoH: Stephen Hickman, Author GoH: Michael A. Stackpole, Local Artist:

Robert Ross, Music: Echo's Children. Memberships \$25 through 8/31/00, \$30 through 12/31/00 \$35 through 5/01/01, \$40 at the door. Kids 7-12 half price, Children 6 and under are free when accompanied by and adult Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, 7601 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, AZ (480) 991-2400. Rooms \$73 + tax S/D/T/Q, Suites \$125 + tax S/D/T/Q Info: LepreCon 27, PO Box 26665, Tempe, AZ 85285 Phone: (480) 945-6890 Email: lep27@leprecon.org, WWW: www.leprecon.org/lep27

AgamemCon V (Burbank, CA) **June 8-10, 2001** Burbank Airport Hilton, Babylon 5 and SF Media oriented convention. Guests include: Tracey Scoggins, Alexandra Tydings, David A. Brooks, Bear Burge and more! Full Science programming track Memberships \$30 to 8/31/2000; \$40 to 11/30/2000; \$50 until 5/15/2001 and \$60 at the door. Kids 8-12 half price, 7 and under are free. Info: AgamemCon, PMB# 330, 92 Corporate Park, Suite C, Irvine, CA 92606; Email: orrock@ix.netcom.com; www.agamemcon.org

HexaCon 11 (Scottsdale, AZ) **July 27-29, 2001 NEW DATES!!** Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort. Arizona's Largest Annual Gaming Convention Memberships: \$15 until 12/31/2000, \$20 thru 06/25/2001, \$25 at the door. Special Thursday night events for pre-registered members only. Info: Hexacon 11, PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082 Phone: (602) 973-2341; Email: the_lop@casfs.org Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, 7601 E Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, AZ (480) 991-2400. Rooms: \$67 + tax S/D/T/Q. Suites \$100 + tax S/D/T/Q

DarkCon 2001 Summer 2001 in Phoenix, AZ. Semi-annual fantasy and science fiction convention. "The best kept secret in Arizona." Check out our website at www.darkcones.org. Updates regularly. Rates are \$20. For more information call: (602) 978-5592 or (602) 978-9314.

CopperCon 21 (Scottsdale, AZ) **Sept 7-9, 2001** Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort. Author Guest: Julian May; Artist Guest:

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(602) 264-3608
Kenny & Maureen Borden

Mark Roland, Local Author: Diana Gabaldon, Music Guest: Heather Alexander. Membership \$25 thru Dec 1, 2000, \$30 thru April 1, 2001, \$35 thru Aug 1, 2001, \$40 at the door. Kids 7-12 half price, 6 and under free with paid adult membership. Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, 7601 E Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, AZ (480) 991-2400; Room rates are \$67 plus tax S/D/T/Q, Suites \$125 plus tax. Info: CopperCon 21, PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082, Email: leigh@casfs.org Phone (602)973-2341

Generic Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

Badge Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ memberships for _____ convention.

(See calendar for mailing address)

More info on Masquerade Art Show Volunteer Other

In Our Book (cont'd from page 17)

Star Trek: New Frontier: Excalibur Trilogy by Peter David
Requiem (\$6.99, 267 pages),
Renaissance (\$6.99, 270 pages)
Restoration (\$19.95, 409 pages).

The latest batch of Peter David's Star Trek: New Frontier novels is a trilogy consisting of two paperbacks and a hardback. The Excalibur Trilogy is somewhat different in that the namesake starship is not present, having been already destroyed at the start, and Captain Mackenzie Calhoun is presumed dead for the first two books.

"Requiem" starts out with the crew of The Excalibur gathering to remember Calhoun, who presumably perished with his ship while saving the rest of the crew. Details here about what happened are vague, though, and the reader is left wondering what happened. The crew members then go their separate ways, leading us on several adventures over the course of the first two novels. We follow Zak Kelbron and Mark McHenry as they investigate alien abductions on a backwater planet, which leads to an interesting revelation about one of them. Lt. Soleta, the Half Vulcan/Half Romulan Science officer tracks down her Romulan father, leading her on to the Romulan home world. Thallonian Ambassador Si Cwan and his sister, Kalinda, investigate the murder of Si Cwan's teacher, Jerome.

In "Renaissance," Vulcan Doctor Selar returns to Vulcan with her child by the Hermat Engineer Burgoyne intending to raise it in a purely Vulcan manner. Burgoyne objects and this leads to several confrontations with Selar culminating in a duel to the death between the two. Lt. Robin Lefler and her mother, Morgan, take a vacation to Risa, where they meet Montgomery Scott, and take a liking to a father & son pair who are not what they seem.

In the final book, "Restoration," we follow Captain Shelby, who has been given command of the Exeter, as she

deals with her first missions, including a perplexing case of conflict between two worlds, one of which has been offered membership in the Federation. She has to deal with her hand-picked crew, finding that her captaining is more influenced by Calhoun than she realized. This brings her to face up to her feelings for Calhoun and she realizes how much she really misses him.

We also find out what happened to Calhoun, who is not dead (surprise!), but managed to escape with a shuttle, crash-landing on the backward planet of Yabaka. The shuttle is destroyed, leaving Calhoun with little hope of contacting Starfleet. He ends up being the local lawman, also being the protector of a local woman, Rheela, and her son Moke. Rheela has the ability to summon rain to the parched land and is resented by the local townspeople for it. Calhoun is attracted to her, but his feelings for Shelby keep him from acting on it.

As a bonus, the third book has a 52 page New Frontier minipedia covering the characters, planets and aliens featured in the New Frontier novels.

Overall, the three books make for a large scale saga in Peter David's personal corner of the Trek universe. The pacing between the three books could have been better, though the cliffhanger at the end of the second book isn't resolved until late in the hardback, and in more of a "here's how we got out of it" manner. The two paperbacks do a good job with giving us more insight into the supporting characters, but lack the presence of Calhoun and Shelby, whereas the hardback is almost all dealing with Shelby and Calhoun on their separate paths. Keeping the reader in the dark about the fate of Calhoun and what happened to destroy the Excalibur in the first two books seems more of a ploy to make sure you buy the hardback.

The various plotlines work well. The Kebron/McHenry plotline is classic Peter David with lots of humor and a surprise appearance or two. The Si Cwan storyline doesn't really pick up until it runs head on into the Lefler's adventure on Risa, although the manner in which both were resolved after the fact was a bit

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disappointing. The Soleta and Selar/Burgoyne stories were interesting, but I did find myself wanting to skip the Selar/Burgoyne chapters to continue with the alternating chapters dealing with the Leflers on Risa. The third book alternates between Shelby and Calhoun in a well-paced manner, culminating in a very satisfying, non-cliffhanger ending. - **Lee Whiteside**

**Babylon 5: Legions of Fire Book 3:
Out of the Darkness**
**Peter David based on an original
outline by J. Michael Straczynski**
Del Rey Books, 266 pages paperback
\$6.50

The third and final book in the Babylon 5 Centauri Trilogy lives up to its expectations. It fills in a large chunk of the Babylon 5 history that was only glimpsed in the series and I think it's a real shame that what we read in the novel has not been dramatized as part of the TV series or in a followup movie. As in the first two books in the series, we follow the Babylon 5 storyline centered on Centauri Prime with Londo and Vir, following the events that lead up to and beyond the flash forwards and other glimpses into the future we've seen in the TV series. The answers to a lot of the hanging questions are given in this novel. The fate of Sheridan and Delenn's son, David, how they came to be on Centauri Prime in the flash forwards we saw in "War Without End", how G'Kar came to be there at Londo's end, and the answers to Lady Morella's Prophecies

about Londo and Vir.

The heart of the book, however, is still the journey taken by Vir Cotto to help bring about the defeat of the Drakh and his ascent to become Emperor of Centauri Prime after Londo's death. We also get to spend some time with Delenn, Sheridan, Garibaldi and David Sheridan, including the fateful day when he is given Londo's "present." Peter David brings the characters to life, expanding on Straczynski's outline to add to the Babylon 5 mythos. If you're a fan of Babylon 5 and want to know how these storylines end, grab the book (and the preceding two if you haven't already) and plan to spend some time reading about, instead of watching, Babylon 5. - **Lee Whiteside**

Carpe Jugulum
Terry Pratchett
Harper Torch , 378 pages, \$6.99

I could simply say this is another "Discworld" novel and those of you who will enjoy this book will know what I mean. However this book is actually one of the best of a great series. The Magpyrs are a wonderful example of family guests overstaying their welcome. I thought the way they were portrayed was the key to believing the book. I imagine in England these characters are supposedly representative of a societal group but here in the USA they are just hilarious. The only bad thing I have to say about this book is it leaves too many of us longing for the next one. Get it. If you can, get the UK version (better cover art)- **Bob LaPierre**

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