

ConNotations

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

A Conversation with Christopher Moore

By Catherine Book

I met Chris Moore at a local independent bookstore on March 31st in between several events and drivebys. He ate lunch. I asked questions. He talked around the sandwich. He was rushed and stressed but awfully friendly and accommodating. He had just finished a talk and a signing. The signing went long but he never showed any impatience, he was just as friendly and accommodating to the last fan as with the first one.

I've been a rabid fan since I discovered "The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove." What's not to love with a title like that?? And almost all his titles are just as intriguing and bizarre: "Island of the Sequined Love Nun" and "Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal." So I had to know: did Chris name his own books? Actually – yes. However, sometimes he gets overruled. "Lust Lizard..." was

supposed to be "Munching Wackos." While I loved the poetry of the "Lust Lizard..." title, Chris still wishes it had remained "Munching Wackos." In case you don't know what Chris



Moore does, I should probably pause here and try to enlighten you. While his stuff is usually filed with general fiction, there isn't really a genre to describe him. It's mostly fantasy, and there's humor, of course, and there's irony. There's a little morality but not the preachy kind. And then there's just plain weirdness. His

(Continued on page 8)

Featured Inside

Regular Features

SF Tube Talk
All the latest news about
Scienc Fiction TV shows

24 Frames
All the latest Movie News

Gamers Corner
New and Reviews from
the gaming world

Videophile
Reviews of genre releases
on DVD

ConClusion
Convention News & Reviews

MangaZone
Reviews of Manga and Comics

Musty Tomes
Reviews of Classic Genre books

In Our Book
Reviews of New SF/F Books

Special Features

**A Conversation with
Christopher Moore**
by Catherine Book

NaNoWriMo Draws Nigh
by Shane Shellenbarger

**An American in Canada
Part 2**
by Jeffrey Lu

In Memory
John M Ford
Nigel Kneale
Frank McShane
Wilson "Bob" Tucker
Jack Williamson

Plus

CASFS Business Report

FYI
News and tidbits of interest to fans

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Generic Registration Form**

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SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

It's the end of one year and the beginning of a new one and we've got lots of new things to talk about. We've got news on this year's SciFi Channel December miniseries, some new series starting in January, a look at the hot new genre shows on the networks, and news on a new *Babylon 5* production.

At press time, **J. Michael Straczynski** was getting ready to direct the first installment of *Babylon 5: The Lost Tales*. It was originally intended to be three half-hour stories but has since changed into two longer stories that will feature John Sheridan (**Bruce Boxleitner**), Captain Lochley (**Tracey Scoggins**) and the Technomage Galen (**Peter Woodward**). A segment planned with Garibaldi (**Jerry Doyle**) has been postponed for later according to **Straczynski**. Once they got farther into production planning, they realized doing three separate stories would be a larger undertaking than they'd like for the first time out, so the budget and time for the third story has now gone towards making the other two better. He's said very little about the content of these new stories but has indicated there would be a common theme of "command" in the first set. Settings would be all over the *Babylon 5* universe, including Minbar, Earth, Babylon 5, and Mars. He's also indicated they plan to make the most use of today's technology in revisualizing the *Babylon 5* universe. **Straczynski** has written the scripts and will direct them with a production crew based in Vancouver. Music will be done by **Christopher Franke**, who did the music for the original *Babylon 5* series. If things go as planned, the first DVD release should be available sometime in the first half of 2007.

The SciFi Channel's December miniseries is *The Lost Room*, which will air over three nights from Dec 11-13. Originally developed under the name *Motel Man*, the miniseries will star **Peter Krause** as homicide detective Joe Miller, **Elle Fanning** as his daughter, and **Julianna Margulies** as the mysterious Jennifer. Miller is contacted by Jennifer, who claims her brother was killed over a motel room key that has the power to unlock a door into a room full of mysterious object with strange powers. When Miller comes into possession of the key and starts to investigate, his daughter disappears into the room and Joe becomes the subject of a police investigation as well as the target of several shadowy organizations wanting possession of the key. **Roger Bart** is Professor Howard Montague who is Miller's main adversary who is obsessed with finding the key. Also trying to obtain the key is Karl Kreutzfeld (**Kevin Pollak**), a wealthy businessman working with independent operator Suzie Kang (**Margaret Cho**), who has been tracking and identifying the various objects related to the room. Also getting caught up in the adventure is Martin Ruber (**Dennis Christopher**), the county coroner and a friend of Joe Miller, and Harold Stritzk (**Ewan Bremner**), a petty thief who teams with Miller to help him find his missing daughter. Directing is **Craig R. Baxley**, from scripts by **Christopher**

Leone, Paul Workman, and Laura Harkcom.

Coming up on SciFi in December is the end of the second season of *Doctor Who* and the end of the first half of the third season of *Battlestar Galactica*. January on SciFi is the debut of two new series, *The Dresden Files*, and *Painkiller Jane*, as well as the return of *Battlestar Galactica* for the second half of its third season. The *Stargates* will not return until March.

Battlestar Galactica will have its last couple of episodes in December before the third season's halfway point, with the show returning in early January after a few weeks off over the holidays. The show has done fairly well in the fall slot, doing better ratings than SciFi's normal numbers in this time period, but below what it did last season. It is still SciFi's flagship show and will likely get renewed for another season if not more. First up is *Unfinished Business* which will deal with a Fight Club on board one of the ships as well as show some flashbacks to life on New Caprica, giving us more info on Baltar and Lee and Kara's falling out. In *Eye of Jupiter*, a survey crew on a desolate planet is stranded when Cylons attack the fleet. While exploring the planet they find a temple with important information about Earth. The show returns in early January with *Rapture*, which concludes the main story started in *Eye of Jupiter* and sees Baltar return to the fleet and Sharon and Helo get Hera back from the Cylons. In *Taking a Break From All Your Worries*, Baltar is recaptured and ends up in the brig. He is now suspected of being a Cylon and he's not sure that they are wrong. In *The Woman King*, Helo investigates reports of a doctor not being a good one to people, especially Sagittarians. *A Day in the Life* features a flashback to Commander Adama's marriage on his wedding anniversary.

Also on SciFi on Friday nights are the final episodes of *Doctor Who's* second season. December starts off with *The Satan Pit*, concluding the two-parter where The Doctor and Rose meet The Devil on a remote planet. After that is *Love and Monsters*, where a group of people who have been made aware of The Doctor's existence are used by an alien to try to find and capture The Doctor. Next up is *Fear Her*, where the 2012 Olympics in London is the backdrop for a creepy story about a girl with special drawing abilities. Finally, the two part season finale, *Army of Ghosts and Doomsday*, sees the return of two major enemies of the Doctor and a teary-eyed end to the story of Rose Tyler (and her family).

SciFi's December movie premiere (airing December 16) is *Dead and Deader*, which stars **Dean Cain** as a special forces officer who becomes part human and part zombie after surviving being infected by a beetle carrying a zombie virus. He must race against time to stop a pandemic before everyone is turned into zombies. Also stars **John Billingsley** (*Star Trek Enterprise*), **Armin Shimerman** (*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*), and **Dean Haglund** (*The X-Files*, *The Lone Gunmen*). In other SciFi movie news, SciFi has reached agreement with RHI Entertainment for a slew of new movies for their Saturday night movie slot. These include *Grizzly Rage*, *Maneater*, *Eye of the Beast*, *Blood*

(Continued on page 4)

24 Frames

Movie News

By Lee Whiteside

DOA: Dead or Alive (Dec 8) Once again, a new release date for the movie based on the video game starring Natassia Malthe, Jaime Pressly, Devon Aoki, Brian J. White, and Holly Valance. I'd say odds are still 50/50 it will actually be released on this date.....

Eragon (Dec 15) This year's big fantasy movie is based on the novel by teen sensation Christopher Paolini. Starring as Eragon is Edward Speeler and he is joined by John Malkovich as King Galbatorix, Jeremy Irons as Brom, Djimon Hounsou as Ajihad, Sienna Guillory as Arya, and Chris Egan as Roran. It is the story of a boy named Eragon who finds a blue stone in the forest that he discovers it is a dragon egg. The arrival of the dragon brings him into a world of magic and power.

Night at the Museum (Dec 22) Ben Stiller stars as Larry Daley, who has taken a job as the night watchman on the graveyard shift at a museum of natural history. He accidentally activates an ancient curse that brings all of the exhibits to life. Robin Williams plays Teddy Roosevelt, Patrick Gallagher is Attila the Hun, with Mickey Rooney, Dick Van Dyke, Ricky Gervais, Carla Gugino, and Kim Raver also starring.

Black Christmas (Dec 25) A remake of the 1974 horror movie about a psycho

Santa terrorizing a sorority house during the holidays. Written and directed by Glen Morgan (The X-Files) and starring Michelle Trachtenberg, Oliver Hudson, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Katie Cassidy, Lacey Chabert, and Kristen Cloke. Expect lots of good holiday cheer in this one.

Children of Men (Dec 25) An adaptation of the P.D.James story about a futuristic society where humanity faces extinction because no one has been able to reproduce. England has been in chaos and as things appear to be improving, the appearance of a woman who is pregnant throws things into chaos even more. Alfonso Cuaron directs and Julianne Moore, Clive Owen, Michael Caine, Chiwetel Ejiofor, and Charlie Hunnam star.

Pan's Labyrinth (Dec 29) Opening in limited release is Guillermo del Toro's fantasy epic. Set in Spain in the 1940s, it is the story of Ofelia, who is living with her mother and adoptive father. With a backdrop of the fascist military, Ofelia creates her own fantasy world to escape into which helps her come to terms with the real world. It stars Maribel Verdu, Ivana Baquero, Sergi Lopez, Ariadna Gil, and Alex Angulo.

Hostel 2 (Jan 5) Three young Americans studying in Rome are invited to join a model at an exotic destination that is really a place for them to become victims of the sick and privileged.

(Continued on page 5)

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SF Tube Talk

(Continued from page 3)

Monkey and *In the Spider's Web*. Look for most of these to be screened in 2007 on the channel.

The Dresden Files is based on the series of books by **Jim Butcher** about Harry Dresden, a wizard in modern-day Chicago. **Robert Hewitt Wolfe** and **Hans Beimler** are producing and co-wrote the pilot script and are currently filming in Toronto. SciFi has ordered 11 episodes to go with the two-hour pilot movie. The series will star **Paul Blackthorne** as Harry Dresden with **Valerie Cruz** as Lt. Connie Murphy and **Rebecca MacFarland** as Susan Rodriguez. Others featuring in the pilot (and likely as regulars on the series) include **Conrad Coates** as Morgan, **Elizabeth Thai** as Ancient Mai, **Joanne Kelly** as Bianca, and **Raoul Bhaneja** as Kirmani. The opening movie will follow relatively closely to the first book in the series, with Harry dealing with a rogue wizard and the vampire Bianca. When a gangster and his girlfriend are found murdered with their hearts having been removed from them, Lt. Connie Murphy brings Harry Dresden in to find the killer. The series will also feature regular flashbacks with Harry's father and his uncle, Justin Morningway, who was Harry's teacher that Harry killed in self-defense when Justin turned evil. And, as in the books, Bob, the spirit that lives in a skull in Harry's basement will be a part of the show. No announcement yet as to who are playing the last three roles. Joining the show's staff as writers are **David Simkins**, **Curtis Kheel**, and **Jack Bernstein**.

Wolfe has been fairly active online letting fans know of the progress of the show and has indicated what things will be different in the TV series as opposed to the books. Some of the character names are different due to rights issues (there actually is a Chicago cop by the name of Karen Murphy, which is OK for a book, but not for a TV series). Harry Dresden will be driving a vintage Jeep instead of a vintage VW Bug (it just isn't practical to film inside of one and **Blackthorne** is just a bit too big for a bug), Harry's staff will be a hockey stick, not a standard wizard's staff, and the White Council is called the High Council. **Wolfe** has also indicated that like **Butcher** did in the books, Susan is de-emphasized in the TV series with the focus being on Harry, Murphy, and Bob with Morgan and Kirmani being the secondary characters along with Harry's father and Justin in the flashbacks. Look for the show to join SciFi's schedule in January, likely paired up with *Battlestar Galactica* on Friday nights.

Also coming on the SciFi schedule in January is *Painkiller Jane*. The pilot movie did fairly well for SciFi when it aired last year, and a series of 22 episodes has been commissioned that will air first on SciFi and then run in syndication. The weekly series will follow much closer to the comic book co-created by **Joe Quesada** and **Jimmy Palmiotti**. The movie had Jane as part of a military group and a feel that was not much like the comic and had little involvement by the creators of the comic. For the series, **Palmiotti** has been very involved with creating it and plans to write and also direct for the series. Jane was played by **Emmanuelle Vaugier** in the pilot movie,

but will be played by **Kristanna Loken** in the series, who will also be a co-executive producer. **Loken** is best known for playing the Terminatrix in *Terminator 3* and also recently appeared in the *Dark Kingdom: The Dragon King* miniseries aired on SciFi earlier this year. As described by the SciFi Channel Press release "Painkiller Jane is the story of Jane Vasko a DEA agent who is recruited by a covert government organization tasked with capturing 'Neuros' - genetically-enhanced individuals who possess superhuman powers of the mind. During the course of her first investigation with the team, Jane inexplicably discovers that she too possesses extraordinary abilities - abilities that render her impervious to injury ... but not pain. She develops miraculous regenerative powers, healing from every injury and finding herself stronger than she had been before. As she continues to work with the government to hunt Neuros, Jane tries to uncover the cause of her own transformation and what - if any - connection she shares with the very people she is pursuing." Other regular characters include Andre McBride, the leader of the Neuro Unit that Jane joins up with, and Connor King, the loose cannon and ex-con who is kept on a short leash by Andre. Look for the series to air either on Friday nights or possibly on Tuesday nights where it might be a good matchup with *Extreme Championship Wrestling*.

In *Stargate* news, MGM has announced a plan to make at least two direct to DVD *Stargate SG-1* movies. The first will tie up the Ori storyline while the other will deal with a time travel storyline. They plan to release them in Fall 2007 and they will also likely be screened on television, possibly the SciFi Channel as happened with the *Farscape* miniseries. In other *Gate* news, *Atlantis* has added **Jewel Staite** to their cast for a semi-regular role for its fourth season. No details yet on what her character will be. **Staite** is best known for her portrayal as Kaylee on *Firefly* and its movie followup *Serenity*. She also played a Wraith girl in a season two episode of *Stargate Atlantis*. Getting back to the broadcast networks, the big news is that the two new genre shows have not only made it to November sweeps, but both have been picked up for a full season. NBC has the most to crow about with *Heroes*, which is the highest rated new show of all of the networks in the key demographics, has been easily winning its time period on Monday nights and it has been improving as the season progresses as well as doing good ratings in repurposed airings on SciFi. *Jericho*, CBS's post nuclear attack series, has also done well and been very competitive for CBS although not delivering quite the ratings that *Heroes* has been doing but well enough to keep it on the air for a full season. Being new shows, there's not much advance info to be found for them and we're likely to see mostly repeats in December and January of both shows.

Heroes has been adding to the interest with weekly online comics that tell background and side stories tied into that week's episode. According to one report, NBC will keep new online comics coming even when the show is a repeat. The breakout character for the show has been Hiro (played by **Masi Oka**) but other characters are also developing their own followings. With the time travel possibilities there's no telling where

things are going and how things will play out which has led to a lot of activity in online forums speculating about the show. There's been rumors about who will play Sylar and indications that there will be more recurring characters brought in. Also, Jack Coleman (Horn Rimmed Glasses aka Claire's father) has had his status raised to a series regular from a recurring character. Over on CBS, *Jericho* has stuck to more standard storytelling with a few mysteries about what is really going on with some of the characters. It will likely stick to realistic speculative fiction and not inject more fantastic elements into the series. Elsewhere on the broadcast networks, NBC has brought back *Medium* to its schedule earlier than planned due to the failure of *Kidnapped*. It is now on Wednesday nights in the final hour of prime time. ABC aired six episodes of *Lost* before putting it on hiatus until February when they will run the rest of the season nonstop until May. In its place for the interim is the *Groundhog Day*-like series *Day Break*, starring **Taye Diggs** as detective Brett Hopper. Hopper is having a really bad day, being framed for the murder of the District Attorney and finding his loved ones in danger. As the day ends badly, he discovers he is living it all over again. Each episode of the series will be Hopper trying something different to change the day, hoping that he will be able to make things work out and he can continue with his life instead of reliving the day over and over. Caught up in the day is Hopper's girlfriend Rita Sheldon (**Moon Bloodgood**), Rita's ex-husband Chad (**Adam Baldwin**), Hopper's sister Jennifer Mathis (**Meta Golding**), Hopper's partner Andrea Battle (**Victoria Pratt**), and gang leader Damien Ortiz (**Ramon Rodriguez**). Whether the show will be able to make each episode different enough to keep viewers tuned it remains to be seen. It worked for the movie *Groundhog Day* and for the most part with *Tru Calling*, but making an entire series about redoing the same day over and over looks to be more than people may want to see on a regular basis. The CW debuted in September, rising from the ashes of The WB and UPN, bringing *Smallville* and *Supernatural* intact onto Thursday nights. The initial ratings for the new network have definitely not been the sum of the former two networks and has, in most cases, been lower. For the two genre shows, they have performed well enough to not be a cause of concern for their fans, especially considering how some of the other shows on the network have been faring. Coming up on *Smallville* after a month of repeats is *Hydro*, which guest stars **Tori Spelling** as Linda Lake, the new gossip reporter for the Daily Planet. She is able to turn herself into water. According to producer **Alfred Gough** in a *TV Guide* interview "she'll be exposing the very big secrets that will be driving the second half of the season." *Smallville* has been developing the Green Arrow (**Justin Hartley**) storyline with a payoff in January with the episode *Justice* where Oliver Queen will begin forming a Justice League. Guest starring will be **Alan Ritchson** (Arthur "AC" Curry aka Aquaman), **Kyle Gallner** (Bart Allen aka The Flash), and **Lee Thompson Young** (Victor Stone aka Cyborg). It is rumored to also feature an appearance by the Martian Manhunter. *Supernatural* has been holding on to

most of the *Smallville* audience and keeping the demon hunt going. Coming up in January is *Hunted*, where a young woman has a dream about Sam getting blown up in an explosion and finds him to warn him and Sam realizes he has a psychic connection with her. She doesn't want to have any part of that life, though. In *Playthings*, Dean and Sam visit the Cornwall Inn, which is a creepy old mansion that is now a run-down hotel. When they talk to the owner who is trying to sell the hotel, they start to realize things are far from normal there. Over on Showtime, their new series *Dexter* has done very well for them, earning the title of their most watched show and already getting a second season order. The show appears to have accomplished what Showtime wanted, a highly watched edgy drama that has generated some buzz for them. The show has started up the second season of *Masters of Horror*, which continues to deliver horrific tales each week from well-known horror directors and writers. Coming up are the episodes *Pelts*, directed by **Dario Argento**, teleplay by **Matt Venne**; *The Screwfly Solution* directed by **Joe Dante**, teleplay by **Sam Hamm**; *Valerie on the Stairs* written and directed by **Mick Garris** based on a story by **Clive Barker**; *We Scream For Ice Cream* directed by **Tom Holland**, teleplay by **David J. Schow**; *The Black Cat* directed by **Stuart Gordon**, teleplay by **Gordon** and **Dennis Paoli**; *The Washingtonians* directed by **Peter Medak**, teleplay by **Johnathon Schaech** and **Richard Chizma**; *Right To Die* directed by **Bob Schmidt**; *Dream Cruise* directed by **Norio Tsuruta**, teleplay by **Tsuruta** and **Naoya Takayama**. According to series creator **Mick Garris**, they're being a bit more daring with this season having worked out some of the kinks with the first season. Individual episode DVD sales have been good so there will likely be more seasons to come. **Garris** previewed his episode *Valerie on the Stairs* at the International Horror & SciFi Film Festival in Tempe in October. It stars **Tyron Leitso** as a writer taking up residence in a home of unpublished writers who finds strange things going on. **Clare Grant** stars as Valerie, with **Christopher Lloyd** as a writer and creator of a beast played by **Tony Todd**. It works as a *Twilight Zoneish*-type episode with the requisite amounts of blood and nudity required by the series. For more details on the other episodes, the www.mastersofhorror.net website has detailed info on all of the episodes. As with the series, it is not for the squeamish.

Coming up on ABC sometime this season will be a six-episode run of *Masters of Science Fiction*. The series will not require large ratings to be a success on ABC since they are paying a fairly small licensing fee and the producers plan to make their money on DVD sales. They are also developing a *Masters of Fantasy* series that will take a different approach by creating a fantasy world that fantasy writers will create stories for, much like has been done with the *Dragonlance* and similar gaming lines. In the meantime, look for the *Masters of Science Fiction* to turn up on ABC either as filler when a show gets canceled or as a mid-season replacement to air instead of repeats of one of their regular series. Directors include **Michael Tolkin**, **Jonathan**

(Continued on page 5)

SF Tube Talk (Continued from page 4)

Frakes, Harold Becker, Darnell Martin, Mark Rydell, and Michael Petroni. Stories include *A Clean Escape* (Story by **John Kessel**, script by **Sam Egan**), *Jerry Was a Man* (Story by **Robert A. Heinlein**, script by **Tolkien**), *The General Zapped an Angel* (Story by **Howard Fast**), *Little Brother* (story and script by **Walter Mosley**), *Watchbird* (Story by **Robert Sheckley**, script by **Sam Egan**), and *The Discarded* (story by **Harlan Ellison**, script by **Ellison** and **Josh Olsen**). Actors include **Judy Davis, Sam Waterston, Anne Heche, Malcolm McDowell, Terry O'Quinn, Elisabeth Rohm, Clifton Collins, Jr., Kimberly Elise, Sean Astin, James Cromwell, Brian Dennehy, John Hurt** and **James Denton** with **Professor Stephen Hawking** introducing each episode. My initial expectations for this series has dimmed somewhat with fewer name stories being used than originally announced (no **Bradbury** or **Asimov**) and initial involvement by some writers has been diminished or re-written to the point of their names no longer being on the scripts. I'm hoping it will do well enough to get more episodes made and not just end up as a bigger budget version of *The Outer Limits*.

Over in the U.K., the *Doctor Who* spin-off series *Torchwood* debuted with record setting numbers for BBC3, making the BBC very happy with it. Viewing figures for repeat episodes including airings on BBC2 have also been good. Indications are that the BBC will likely be wanting more beyond the first season. There are also good indications that the show will be turning up on SciFi in the U.S. Episodes coming up on BBC3 include *They Keep Killing* where the team uses alien technology to interrogate the victims of a serial killer and find out the truth is close to home; *Invisible Eugene* is about the victim of a hit and run driver who had been collecting alien technology and was afraid the aliens would come for him. Gwen investigates his world and finds he may not be completely gone from this world; *Out of Time* has a passenger plane from the 1950's travel through the rift and the Torchwood team helps them adjust to their new environment; *Combat* has the team investigating a ring who is kidnapping Weevils; Captain Jack Harkness goes back to the time of the London Blitz where he finds himself facing a dark secret from his past; and in *Apocalypse*, The Rift is violently fractured, and Jack realizes that Torchwood is destined to be drawn into one vast battle that will leave nothing and no one at Torchwood unchanged. Rumors are that the end of the first season of Torchwood will tie directly into Jack's appearance near the end of season three of Doctor Who.

The 2006 Christmas special for *Doctor Who* is *The Runaway Bride*, where a bride (**Catherine Tate**) finds her wedding day interrupted by an alien plot to take over the Earth. The aliens are spider-like and rumors are we may see Sarah Jane and K9 again (or that may be a confusion with the possible airing of the first *Sarah Jane Investigates* episode). The special will air on the BBC on Christmas day. On the animated front, Kids WB appears to have been doing well with new episodes of *The Batman* and *Legion of Super Heroes*. Over on the Cartoon Network, episodes of the *Fantastic Four*

appear to have been pulled with airings of season two of *The Batman* airing in its place starting in November. Episodes coming up on Kids WB of the *Legion of Super Heroes* include *Child's Play*, where a young sorcerer causes trouble and Superman learns about his vulnerability to magic; *Lightning Storm* sees Lightning Lad join up with an older and cooler team; however, he learns they aren't what they seem; and in *Brain Drain* a malfunction causes Brainiac 5's IQ to plummet and Superman and Timber Wolf travel to an inhospitable planet to obtain a rare element needed to save their friend. Other upcoming episodes will feature the substitute Legion, the return of Cosmic Boy, and a two-part season finale with a Sun Eater heading towards Earth's sun. In *The Batman*, upcoming episodes include *The Artifact* where a villain from the past threatens Gotham 1,000 years in the future; *Two of a Kind* where The Joker takes an interest in TV pop psychologist Harley Quinn and decides to groom her as his new partner in crime; and *Seconds* sees Batman thwarted by a criminal that can travel back in time by a few seconds to escape capture. Other episodes this season feature the Joker and the Martian Manhunter (with an alien invasion of Gotham City).

For more schedule information, news and links, visit the Magrathea/SFTV Pages at www.sftv.org Contact Lee Whiteside at SFTV@casfs.org

24 Frames (Continued from page 3)

Happily N'Ever After (Jan 5) Fairy Tale World's head Wizard goes on Holiday and Cinderella's wicked stepmother takes over in this animated parody of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. Voice actors include Sarah Michelle Gellar, Freddie Prinze Jr, Sigourney Weaver, George Carlin, Andy Dick, Wallace Shawn, and Patrick Warburton.

The Martian Child (Jan 19) Based on the novel by David Gerrold, it is the story of a science fiction writer who wants to be a father. He adopts a 6 year old boy who he

becomes convinced is an alien from Mars. The story won the Hugo and Nebula best novellette in 1995. John Cusack plays David, with Amanda Peet, Joan Cusack, Sophie Olonedo, Oliver Platt, and Bobby Coleman also starring.

Blood and Chocolate (Jan 26) A Romeo and Juliet tale involving werewolves tells the story of a teen werewolf who gets bored with her pack mates and falls for a human. Based on the story by Annette Curtis Klause. Olivier Martinez, Agnes Bruckner, Hugh Dancy, Katja Riemann, and Bryan Dick star.

The Invisible (Jan 26) Based on the story by Mats Wahl (Den Osynlige) and the Swedish movie of the same name, it is about a high school senior attacked and left for dead in a case of mistaken identity. He is left in a state of limbo with his spirit observing the police and his family searching for him as he is slowly dying. David S. Goyer directs and it stars Justin Chatwin as Nick, Margarita Levieva as Annie, Marcia Gay Harden as his mother, Christopher Marquette, Michelle Harrison, and Alex Ferris.

Musty Tomes

Major Ingredients, the Selected Short Stories of Eric Frank Russell
edited by Rick Katze
NESFA Press, 2000, 703 pp., \$29.00

Entities, the Selected Novels of Eric Frank Russell
edited by Rick Katze, NESFA Press,
2001, 691 pp., \$29.00
(includes *Wasp*, *Sinister Barrier*,
Sentinels of Space, *Call Him Dead*,
Next of Kin, and 3 other stories)

Design for Great Day
by Eric Frank Russell and Alan Dean Foster
Tor Books, 1995, 255 pp., \$21.00

At this point in our history, I daresay that Eric Frank Russell is the most important SF writer who everyone should be reading. Note what I just said. I didn't say the best SF writer (alas, Heinlein?),

the most historically significant (H.G. Wells?), or my favorite (too many). It is just that his themes and interests directly address the USA's most pressing problems. You may find this surprising, since he wrote from 1937 to the 1960s, and died in 1978. But two of his favorite topics were bureaucracy and unnecessary war. Surely those two have combined to a perilous degree nowadays.

Russell was John W. Campbell's favorite writer, and often appeared in *Astounding* magazine (now titled *Analog*). This alone might be surprising since he was not a hard-tech writer. In fact, his limited ability to imagine new technology makes all of his work very outdated to read. Spaceships are full of transistors and telephones. So are alien cultures on other worlds. There's nothing exotic or magical. So why was he Campbell's favorite?

Because you don't read him for the hardware. You read him for the social situations and personal human interest. For some good antiwar stories, check out 'The Best of Eric Frank Russell.' Not that he was anti-military. He grew up in a British military family and was in the RAF in World War Two. His stories of exploration ships in government service presaged *Star Trek* ('Men, Martians, and Machines', 'The Great Explosion'). His novel 'The Great Explosion' has a premise like the 'Firefly' TV show; with humanity's dissenters scattering to make their own worlds. One such has an economy based on "obligations" instead of money, and freedom based on the passive resistance phrase "I won't." His politics were very independent.

This alone would've got Campbell, besides a shared belief in psychic powers. Many of his stories are psi-based, or take the Fortean view that we're subjects of secret alien watchers ('Sentinels of Space', 'Sinister Barrier'). He is also known for the reverse theme: an obvious human troublemaker among aliens. Often these are humorous tales of a scout flaunting the alien culture's own rules ('Diabologic', 'Design for Great Day').

The reissued novel from 1957 is a more serious treatment, though. 'Wasp' is the tale of a secret human saboteur, landed on an alien world that is at war with Earth. The hysteria he generates might seem too

familiar now. As a novel of techniques of sabotage and terror, it runs the gamut from graffiti to beheading. Didn't I say it was relevant to today's problems? Oh my, you had better hurry up and read a copy before it gets censored out of existence. - M.L. FRINGE



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CASFS Book Discussion

The CASFS Book Discussions for December will be at the Bookmans in Phoenix at 8034 N. 19th Ave at 7PM. Beginning in January the discussion will be held at The Bent Cover 12428 N 28th Drive on third Tuesday at 7PM. If you haven't read the book, stop by anyway. Our discussions are rarely limited to just the book scheduled for that month.

Email questions to book@casfs.org
December 12: *Accidental Goddess* by Linnea Sinclair. A sexy, out-of-this-world adventure about Gilliane who became a goddess while she was time-traveling after her ship was attacked.

January 16 - *Variable Star* by Robert Heinlein & Spider Robinson. Derived from uncompleted manuscript by Robert Heinlein. Conflicts with Heinlein's established Future History. Should be fun to debate.

February 20 - *Storm Front* by Jim Butcher. The first of the "Dresden Files" books, soon to be a TV series. A working-stiff wizard/private eye in Chicago. An awful lot of fun.

March 20 - *A Secret Atlas* by Michael Stackpole. Based on the premise that those moments when one is "in the zone" whether it be sports, music or something else, that one is unconsciously accessing magic or a supernatural power to be better than we normally are. If one could train to that premise, then their art or talent could be raised to a supernaturally high level. Interesting idea...

April 17 - *A Princess of Roumania* by Paul Park. Miranda has been hidden in our world to protect her. She's really a Princess in an alternate world of conjurers. Now she has to go home. Sounds like fun, should interest Harry Potter fans...

May 15 - *Perdido Street Station* by China Mieville. An example of the "new weird." For more than a thousand years, the parliament and its brutal militia have ruled over a vast array of workers, spies, magicians, and junkies. Now a stranger has come with an impossible demand, and inadvertently something unthinkable is released. A reckoning is due and it is too late to escape. Lots of literary kudos to this one...

June 19 - *Declare* by Tim Powers. A cold war espionage tale with a supernatural twist. Absolutely fabulous storytelling.

INTERESTING TIDBITS

The Quills Award

Congratulations to our own Diana Gabaldon for winning the Quill Book Award for best Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror novel, her "Breath of Snow and Ashes" beating out "A Feast of Crows" by George R.R. Martin.. This annual award is determined by votes from ordinary readers. Various mediums are judged in 20 categories including a Book-of-the-Year. Christopher Paolini took the prize for "Eldest" in the Teen category. Christopher Moore's "A Dirty Job" took it for General Fiction (see his interview in this issue.) Naruto, Volume 7 by Masashi Kishimoto won for Best Graphic Novel. And for those who are addicted to cooking shows, Rachael Ray took the

award for her cookbook "365: No Repeats." You can learn more about it at www.thequills.org. Bookmark it and vote next year.

Phoenix Cactus Comicon News

Mike Mignola, creator of "Hellboy", and George Perez, artist for "Teen Titans", will be at the Phoenix Cactus ComiCon 2007. The date will be Jan. 26-28, 2007 at Mesa Convention Center. You can register online at your local comic store \$25 till December 31- \$30 till January 15- \$35 at the door. Website:

www.phoenixcomicon.com Info:
matt@phoenixcomicon.com

2006 World Fantasy Award Winners

Best Novel: KAFKA ON THE SHORE by Haruki Murakami
 Best Collection: THE KEYHOLE OPERA by Bruce Holland Rogers
 Best Anthology: THE FAIR FOLK edited by Marvin Kaye
 Best Novella: VOLUNTARY COMMIT-TAL by Joe Hill
 Best Short Story: COMMCOMM by George Saunders
 Best Artist: James Jean
 Special Award - Professional: Sean Wallace for Prime Books
 Special Award - Non-Professional: Telos Books
 Lifetime Achievement Awards: John Crowley; Stephen Fabian

EVENTS OF INTEREST

LITERATURE & SIGNINGS

Stephenie Meyer
 December 9, 7pm
 Changing Hands bookstore

Diana Gabaldon
 December 13, 7pm
 Changing Hands bookstore

Diana is hosting **Dana Stabenow**
 January 19, 7pm,
 Poisoned Pen, Scottsdale

Christopher Moore
 February 2, 12:15pm
 Poisoned Pen, TBD

James Sallis & Dana Stabenow Writers Workshop
 January 20, 10a-3pm, \$125
 Poisoned Pen, Central Phoenix

Metaphysical Mondays, 7pm
 Borders in Glendale

Fantasy/Sci-Fi book discussion group
 4th Wednesday, 7pm
 Borders in Glendale

Metaphysical Fridays, 7pm
 Borders in Paradise Valley

Metaphysical Wednesdays, 7pm
 Borders in Avondale

Manga Club
 1st Tuesday, 7pm
 Borders in Chandler

Scimitary-Talon
 Medieval Recreationists
 Dec 2, 12:30pm
 Jan 26, 12:30pm
 Feb 3, 12:30pm
 Bookmans, Phoenix Central

Southwest Costumers Guild
 Dec 9, 9am
 Bookmans, Phoenix Central

Celtic Harpist Chris Boyston
 Dec 23, 2pm
 Bookmans, Phoenix Central

Allison Ewing
 Reading from "Awakening Beauty" a dark fairytale
 Dec 2, 3p-5p
 Bent Cover bookstore

David Lee Summers
 Talk & demonstration on solar sails
 Dec 9, 1p-3p
 Bent Cover bookstore

GAMING

Strategy Gaming Night
 Dec 2, 5pm
 Jan 6, 5pm
 Feb 3, 5pm
 Bookmans, Phoenix Central

Living Arcanis D20 Roleplaying
 Dec 16, 12:30pm
 Jan 20, 12:30pm
 Bookmans, Phoenix Central

Hero-Clix gaming
 Sundays, 6pm
 Bookmans, Mesa
 Dungeons & Dragons RPG
 Mondays, 6pm
 Bookmans, Mesa

RPG night
 Tuesdays, 7pm
 Bookmans, Flagstaff

Retro Video Game Tournament
 Dec 2, 12:00pm
 Bookmans, Flagstaff

Dungeons & Dragons
 1st & 3rd Sundays, 6pm
 Bookmans, Tucson on Speedway

RPGA: Shield of Almor
 1st & 3rd Sunday, 11am
 Imperial Outpost Games

VSCCG Tournament
 Tuesdays 7:30 pm (not on Dec 26)
 Imperial Outpost Games

Hero Clix tournament
 Friday, 7pm
 Imperial Outpost Games

SCIENCE

The Evolution Speaker Series sponsored by the Univ of Arizona College of Sciences Arizona Science Center
 Dec 13, 7pm, Cosmic Evolution: From Big Bang to Biology
 Chris Impey, Professor of Astronomy
 Jan 31, 7pm, Social Evolution: Cooperation and Conflict from Molecules to Society

Rick Michod, Profession of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

Featured Exhibit at the Arizona Science Center
 "Wired for Thought: The Developing Brain"

Stargazing
 Dec 2, 7pm, special 'Star of Bethlehem' presentation
 Jan 6, 7pm
 Peoria Challenger Space Center
 Starlab Planetarium
 Dec 30, 11:30am, 12:30pm
 Jan 13, 11:30am, 12:30pm
 Peoria Challenger Space Center

Telescope Help Seminar, bring your own
 Jan 24, 7pm, \$10
 Peoria Challenger Space Center

Telescope Stargazing Class
 Jan 31 & Feb 7, 7p-9p, \$40, RSVP
 Peoria Challenger Space Center

Check the websites for confirmation, location and more information.

www.borderstores.com
www.changinghands.com
www.poisonedpen.com
www.bookmans.com
www.barnesandnoble.com
www.bentcoverbooks.com
www.imperialoutpost.com
www.azscience.org
www.azchallenger.org

NaNoWriMo

Draws Nigh

by Shane Shellenbarger

We've all heard about "The Great American Novel" and some of us have even attempted to write one, but when you're trying to compete with such novels as *The Great Gatsby*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *A Farewell to Arms*, you have to ask yourself, "Do I have what it takes?" It may be better to set your sights a bit lower; it may be more reasonable to set a goal that can be accomplished in a shorter period than the years it would probably take to write "The Great American Novel." How about writing a novel in a month? No, not "T.G.A.N.," but 50,000 words in 30 days. You may scoff, but it's been done and I'll tell you how.

In 1999, Chris Baty was a writer working in the San Francisco Bay area, experiencing the dot-com boom with no bust in sight. As bizarre as that time was, Baty decided to write a book, and to make it interesting he was going to write his first novel in one month. He spread the idea around and two weeks later on, July 1st, 1999, twenty-one people began the 1st Annual National Novel Writing Month. Of those twenty-one, six finished and the remaining fifteen wrote everywhere from 500 to 49,000 words. If you are wondering why Baty chose 50,000 words,

(Continued on page 7)

the answer is simple; he grabbed the shortest novel on his bookshelf, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, did a rough count, and went with that figure. Other novels of a similar length include, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *Generation X: Tales of an Accelerated Culture* by Douglas Coupland, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. November is designated as National Novel Writing Month.

After experiencing that month, Baty concluded that the thing that most separates people from their desires isn't a lack of talent, but a lack of a deadline. Goals without the essential evil of a deadline allow people to put off until tomorrow what they should (or could) do today. He also realizes the task of writing a brilliant novel in the time span of a month is unrealistic for most people, but the goal of writing 50,000 words is within the realm of possibility with these three elements: a Herculean task, a supportive network of family and friends, and a definite deadline. If those rules are the foundation of writing a novel in a month, the following elements are the framework:

1. Low Expectations = High Yields. Your goal isn't to write a brilliant first draft, your goal is to write 50,000 words. Let's assume that you want to write more than just the same word 50,000 times.
2. Write In Packs. Misery loves company, so if you can find some kindred souls who want to write a novel in a month gather them and their writing instruments together at a commonly agreeable venue (the local coffee shop, perhaps) and get to work. "Company" can also be friends and family who are willing to check on your progress throughout the month.
3. Activating Your Deadline. You need to decide what month out of the year will provide you with your greatest chance at success. Short months, gift-giving months, vacation months away from your writing instrument of choice tend to provide built-in failure. Months with three-day weekends, horrible weather, or when distracting housemates won't be around can provide long stretches of uninterrupted writing.
4. The Month-Long Novelist Agreement and Statement of Understanding. This is a pledge and contract with yourself of your intent to write a 50,000-word novel, ignoring notions of "craft" or even "competency" until they are needed **AFTER** the thirty-day period for editing purposes. You agree to shackle your inner editor, ignoring its piteous cries, wails, and moaning. You agree that nothing will stand in the way of completing your goal, neither Hell nor high water will stop you, and that the deadline is absolute, unchangeable, and

inevitable. After your goal has been completed within the allotted time you will be permitted to gloat, do a gleeful jig, and collapse from exhaustion until such time that you have sufficiently recovered enough to unshackle your editor and begin the process of detail work on the sculpture, which is your novel.

In his book, "No Plot? No Problem!: A Low-Stress, High-Velocity Guide To Writing A Novel In 30 Days.", Baty dispenses writing advice with a mixture of humor and practicality. A sampling of chapter titles includes: Ch. 2: Time-Finding, News-Breaking, and a Step-by-Step Guide to Transforming Loved Ones into Effective Agents of Guilt and Terror, Ch. 4: Cruising for Characters, Panning for Plots, and the First Exciting Glimpses of the Book Within, and the final chapter, Ch. 9: I Wrote A Novel, Now What?

The idea of A-Novel-In-A-Month has spread to the more formal field of academia. On October 21, Phoenix College launched CRW271 Section 1181, "30 Days = A Novel." According to Kate Cross, Director of the Creative Writing Program for Phoenix College, "'30 Days = Novel' was a standing-room-only success! *Thank you for your enthusiasm! We had to turn away many of you because registration was closed earlier.*" If enough interest is shown, Cross stated that the class would be added to the Summer session. If interested, e-mail Kate Cross at kate.cross@pcmail.maricopa.edu

I highly recommend that you find out more about Chris Baty's trials, tribulations, and triumphs. Baty writes in an easygoing, friendly manner that makes his book a quick read and it can be used as reference afterward if you are convinced to take the plunge and write your own novel. As you may have guessed, the book runs about 50,000 words.

<http://72.14.209.104/u/>
<http://www.nanowrimo.org/>
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=835782> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1132946>
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<http://www.scalzi.com/whatever/002560.html>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A188633>
<http://www.4hb.com/communicate/0250jcgreatamericannovl.html>
http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1030797

ConClusion

Bigger and Better: Phoenix Cactus
 ComiCon 2006
 by Jeffrey Lu

Listening to fans singing "Yoda" and another "Weird Al" Yankovic Star Wars song; I sat on a bench playing a hand held game. I was tired.

Not that I was bored... far from it. Two whole days, I had been in the dealer's room and found some cool stuff. I saw artists from Marvel to Devil Due's Publishing. Another, I grabbed a couple of free movie posters. This was cool.

Compared to last year, this con was at least three times bigger. Even though the volunteers did not know what they were doing, they tried their best to help out.

The preview night was confusing. Left within an hour.

The weekend made up for it. There was a game room. Also, two video games competition rooms. Even a drawing room for want-to-be artists.

People from panels came and went. I didn't have the program on Friday to know what was going on.

So, I signed up for next year. Hopefully, I'll know what's going on the coming three-day Phoenix Cactus ComicCon 2007 in Jan. (Playing my handheld Texas Hold 'Em game, I won. Still have no idea how I did it.)

Luck of the Draw: Oct. 12-15, 2006 at
 HexaCon 16
 by Jeffrey Lu

Okay, this was luck. On Thursday evening, I went to the preview of the Barry Bard at the Movies Memorial. I was the second person to grab a prize- a horror dvd. I thought this was a cool thing before Halloween.

During that time, I had played cards. More often than most, I lost.

I wandered and watched some new games I have never before heard of. Found out later some were playtesting.

On Sunday morning, I went to the Barry Bard Memorial Movies. I again obtained the second ticket for the table of goodies. (Wow, two in a row. I'm often in next-to-last place in the local conventions.) I made my choice and later gave it to a friend.

With Lady Luck on my side, I'll be back. (Maybe I should go to Las Vegas?)



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Conversation (Continued from page 1)

first published story was "Practical Demonkeeping" which was a charming little tale of a fellow who got saddled with a voracious demon some 70 years before and spends his time on the road trying to find human scum to feed the demon and keep him from eating nice people. Until he wanders into Pine Cove... "Lust Lizard..." is also set in Pine Cove. One year the folk in the town were particularly melancholy and the weight of it was a lure to a particular sea monster who came up to see what there was to snack on. He turned himself into a trailer home and ate newspaper boys and Avon ladies. And then there was "Lamb..." which is an eye-opening account of the missing years of Jesus, from his best friend's point-of-view. And what impressed me most about this story was that Chris could be irreverent and respectful at the same time – and it all worked! It's hard to describe Moore's stories; they really have to be experienced in person.

His stories seem very attractive to Hollywood, too. "Practical Demonkeeping" has been bought outright by Disney but it's been sixteen years and they haven't done anything with it yet. Chris has quit asking. "Bloodsucking Fiends" was bought outright as well; while "Coyote Blues" has been optioned five times! Several others are still under option, including his newest story "A Dirty Job" which just published this year. Any of them would be a movie natural and his fans would attend in droves. I wondered if Chris was interested in doing the screenplays for any of them (a lot of writers wouldn't touch a screenplay if you held a gun to their heads) and he answered that the only one he'd like to do the screenplay for would be "Bloodsucking Fiends." He thought it would be fun...

So... how does he do it? What's his style? Where do the ideas come from? Not surprisingly, Chris doesn't do anything the expected way. Not that there's really a 'normal' way to write a book. Lock up six writers in a room and

none of them will agree on one way to write a book. But, this is strange even for writers: Chris outlines with a big pad of paper on which he draws circles and lines... But some things are universal – work is overlapping more and more. While he's editing the last one, he's begun research on the next. Then, he's promoting one book while he's writing another. The only trouble with that is that he doesn't write while he's on the road so promoting a book tends to slow down the next story. And when he's not working, Chris likes to eat, work out, take photographs and watch movies. Sometimes the movies and photography lend themselves to ideas. (*I have a strong suspicion that Chris has a ViewMaster that is linked to an alternate reality and he just relates what he sees. How could one man think up so much weirdness...?*) But it's not really work – it's all play to Chris; he hasn't had a real vacation in ten years. He probably doesn't need one.

Over and over again, as I've sat in on Moore doing readings and public events – he stresses that he really researches his books. You just wouldn't think of that while you're wallowing in the story. He tends to spend as much as six months doing research. I asked him which story he was most proud of: definitely "Lamb..." he answered. That novel was the most ambitious and he was very proud that he pulled it off. But "Fluke, or I Know Why The Winged Whale Sings" was the most problematic. He explained that that one was hard because he needed so much science in it while it still had to be comprehensible and funny.

And who is his audience, I asked? Well, he grinned about this one – the curve is from the precocious eleven-year-old to the 75-year-old grandpa with the 37-year-old, once divorced, trauma nurse as the median. *You see? I can't get a dull answer from him.* He does appreciate his fans, he tells me he gets dozens of email daily and while he won't answer an epic with an epic, he will offer a line or two in response to every email. You can reach him at www.chrismoore.com.

And fandom? Now *those* people are weird, he told me. Chris went to his first

convention at a Worldcon around about 1994 and he went to one in 2002 just to meet his editor. And, for the first time, he'll be the Writer Guest of Honor at LunaCon, New York, next March. I'll be interested to hear what he thinks of fans after that.

So what's next, I wondered? A little historical comedy set in medieval England. Nothing like a little plague humor, he smiled.

An American in Canada Part II: Questioning Quebec by Jeffrey Lu

Quebec. Quebec? The city, that only a few years ago, wanted to rebel against Canada and be a country? The French-speaking citizens hate Americans? I was wrong.

Early in the morning, I signed up for a trip to downtown Quebec. I enjoyed the tour; seeing the old town by horse and carriage. The place had dual languages signs in French and in English.

The tour guide was, I believe, a local French-speaking college professor. He grinned and showed us the beautiful sights of Quebec. One of them not only perplexed the group but also the locals.

The tour guide mentioned a gift from France to Quebec. He asked us what France gave to the U.S.? Someone mentioned the Statue of Liberty. He smiled and nodded.

The professor then said we'd be seeing what France gave to Quebec.

We came. We saw. We wondered.

My mouth dropped. Instead of a lady in green with a torch, I see the gift. I think I saw the French's gift to Quebec. Questioningly, I looked at the tour guide.

He nodded in sadness. I looked again with concern.

The "gift" was a few white cube things stacked together.

A modern art sculpture...from France.

Now, I see why the locals like us.

(Next, An American In Canada Part 3: Scenic Cruising at Saguenay Fjord)

Videophile

- ***** **X-Men The Last Stand**
- **** **Supernatural - The Complete First Season**
- *** **Silent Hill**
- ** **Dungeons & Dragons: Wrath of the Dragon God**
- ** **The Curse of Lizzie Borden - Director's Cut**
- * **Mutation**

****X-Men The Last Stand
20th Century, 104 minutes, PG-13
DVD \$29.99

From the back cover: "Experience the awesome power of the X-Men's epic, final battle. Join well-known mutant heroes and villains, and meet a cadre of all-new warriors - including Angel, Beast, Juggernaut, and Colossus - in this thrilling, explosive adventure!"

After a controversial "cure" is discovered, mutants can choose to retain their superhuman abilities or give up their unique gifts and become "normal". When peaceful mutant leader Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart) clashes with his militant counterpart, Magneto (Ian McKellen), the battle lines are drawn for the war to end all wars."

Non-stop action from the first moment. Jean Grey as the Dark Phoenix becomes as worthy an opponent as she was an ally. The very real dilemma presented by the "cure" is handled well and is thought provoking long after the film ends.

This is a great chapter in the X-Men series. Very highly recommended. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

Supernatural - The Complete First Season
Warner, minutes, NR
DVD \$59.99

From the back cover: "The Creepy The Demented The Unexplained The Unearthly

Sam Winchester (Jared Padalecki) grew up hunting such terrifying things. But that's all in the past. Law school beckons him. So do safety and normalcy. That is, until Sam's estranged brother, Dean (Jensen Ackles), appears with troubling news: their father, a man who's been hunting evil for 22 years, has disappeared. So now, to find him, the brothers must hunt what their father hunts... and Sam must return to the life he thought he'd left behind."

I had high hopes when this series premiered and I was not disappointed. Sam and Dean have some creepy stand-alone "monster" encounters as well as the continuing story arc that ties the season, and the series together, without the tedious, overly serious, conspiracy-behind-every-event atmosphere that has spoiled other shows. The cliffhanger ending was suspenseful without being overdone. I look forward to many more seasons of Supernatural. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

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*****Silent Hill**
Sony, 125 minutes, R
DVD \$29.99

From the back cover: "Based on the best-selling horror action game, Silent Hill stars Radha Mitchell (Man on Fire) as Rose, a desperate mother who takes her adopted daughter, Sharon, to the town of Silent Hill in an attempt to cure her of her ailment. After a violent car crash, Sharon disappears and Rose begins her desperate search to get her back. She descends into a fog of smoking ash and into the center of the twisted reality of a town's terrible secret. Pursued by grotesquely deformed creatures and a townspeople stuck in permanent purgatory, Rose begins to uncover the truth behind the apocalyptic disaster that burned the town 30 years back."

This is a taut, chilling thriller. The atmosphere of the town is incredibly creepy, there are some genuine "gotcha" moments and the ending is both sad and haunting (not to mention leaving things ready for a sequel). Going into this, I was not aware that it was based on a game and can honestly say that you do not need to be familiar with the game Silent Hill in order to enjoy this film.

I have not yet checked out the special features on the DVD, the film alone was enough to convince me to add this one to our DVD Library.
Recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

****Dungeons & Dragons:
Wrath of the Dragon God**
Warner Brothers, 105 minutes, NR
DVD \$19.99

Ok - this movie played out slower than a normal gaming session. It starts out with Damodar (played by Bruce Payne) the villain from the first movie who finds an orb that will break the curse set upon him. He then plots to awaken his dark god to rule over the world.

Meanwhile, Berek and Melora (played by Mark Dymond and Clemency Burton-Hill) are summoned to see why people aren't returning from a cave. There they find a dragon sleeping and a possible larger plot. When Melora tries to locate the source through a magic spell, Damodar curses her for snooping. Now, Berek must gather together four heroes: Lux, the female Barbarian (Ellie Chidzey); Dorian, a cleric (Steven Elder); Ormaline an Elf Wizard (Lucy Gaskell); and Nim, a Rogue (Tim Stern), to bring back the orb to break the curse.

The plot seems to go more into what is happening to Melora than to the adventurers. The special effects and Dragons are nicely done; but for a movie called "Wrath of the Dragon God" there aren't many dragons. There were two traps, 3 puzzles, 3 magical items, and, I think, a max of ten spells used throughout the movie. This could have been a better movie' but at least it was better than the first movie. - **Ninjakittyofdoom**

****The Curse of Lizzie Borden -
Director's Cut**
Razor Digital, 82 minutes, NR
DVD \$14.99

From the back cover: "Nestled within a quiet California town, a museum dedicated to the legend of Lizzie Borden has been opened.

Cassy, a beautiful college student is drawn to the museum, taking a summer job as a tour guide. Cassy is quickly propelled into the mystery of the Folklore surrounding

the legend of Lizzie Borden. It begins to consume her every waking moment. She begins dressing, acting and talking as if she were Lizzie Borden. And there are the dreams. Dreams of blood and death!

One by one her friends are found murdered and her boyfriend, Andrew begins to fear the worst. Cassy may be next!

Is some madman killing off all their friends, or has the ghost of Lizzie Borden come back for a bloody rampage?

Will Cassy and Andrew be able to stop the killer, or will they fall victim to the same fate that Lizzie's parents did so many years ago?

Until the final bloody axe falls, no one is safe from the CURSE OF LIZZIE BORDEN"

This is obviously a low-budget, independent film. While the premise is interesting, the story has no real links to the actual Lizzie Borden case, the museum does not resemble the actual Borden house and the acting is amateurish. That said, if you are willing to have realistic expectations this is a fun, albeit gory, romp of a horror flick.

Ax murders, beheadings, oozing intestines, a couple of gratuitous sex scenes and lots of foul language makes this unsuitable for children. But for everyone else, grab a bowl of popcorn and enjoy. It is so bad, it is fun! - **Stephanie L Bannon**

***Mutation**
Razor Digital, 85 minutes, NR
DVD \$14.99

From the back cover: "Bone-crunching martial arts combine with heart-pounding horror in this intense sci-fi thriller.

"K" was the most infamous serial killer of his day, torturing and

murdering dozens of innocent victims. Until Detective Steve Gornick tracked the maniac down and destroyed him.

Years later, a brilliant young scientist injects K's corpse with an experimental serum, bringing the killer back to life and giving him superhuman strength and speed.

As K cuts a bloody path through Los Angeles, he begins to mutate into an unstoppable force of evil. Even the detective who once put him down may not be able to destroy the monstrous

MUTATION."

Another low budget horror film. This one is a Frankenstein-type tale in which a doctor brings a notorious serial killer back to life. Predictably the killer goes on a killing spree, there is lots of gore, cursing and bad acting.

This one, unfortunately, doesn't have any redeeming features; even the "Making of" feature has the feel of "Uncle Joe with his new Xmas camcorder" with poor sound quality and bad lighting. - **Stephanie L Bannon**

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Gamers Corner

Dragon Compendium Volume 1 Dungeons and Dragons \$39.99, Paizo Publishing, 250pp

First let me say, OMG! I perused this volume expecting to see a lot of articles mired hopelessly in past revisions. I found instead several of the best articles from the past updated to version 3.5. I used to play a jester in times past; the update makes great sense and looks superbly playable.

The volume is split into several sections including: Races, Classes, Prestige Classes, Classics (articles on Glyphs, Poisons, Riddles, and many more), Monsters, and an appendix with, among other things, the solo dungeon charts from the original DMG.

I am looking forward to actually using these articles in gaming and found the fact that it is Volume 1 very auspicious. My only problem with this book, like the next one, is that I had to purchase them since nothing has come in this time for review. Five stars out of five. - **Bob LaPierre**

Races of the Dragon Dungeons and Dragons \$29.99, Wizards of the Coast, 160pp

Dragons have long been the most impressive (when run properly) creatures in D&D. This volume lets you play one of the many races which have dragon's blood running through their veins. The obvious ones are the Half-Dragon, and the Kobold. The new ones are the Spellscale, a scaled descendant of a dragon that is called strongly to sorcery, and the Dragonborn, a character race that goes through a long ritual giving themselves up to Bahamut, the god of good dragons.

There are special feats and prestige classes. Also, the spell lists are great; however, the section on equipment and grafts - wow! Now there is also a great section starting each race called "A day in the life" that gives players a chance to see just what kind of characters the race "typically" produces.

Another excellent volume - 4.5 stars out of 5. - **Bob LaPierre**

The Order of the Stick Volume 2 No Cure for the Paladin Blues By Rich Burlew \$29.95, Giant in the Playground, 244pp

Gamers and comics about gamers have been around for 30+ years. Now, knowing this and having been a reader of the comics almost as long as I have been playing; I didn't think there would be anything to these "Order of the Stick" books. I am pleased to say I was very, very wrong.

I laughed so hard at this volume I had to buy the first one as well. First- note that the characters are stick figures. Second - note that they are adventurers in the world's most popular roleplaying game. Third - they are both power gamers AND rules lawyers. Seeing them comment about the ranks the ranger took in the survival skill or comparing wisdom modifiers was just like watching a game being played at my favorite game store (Hi Darren!).

The book follows the adventurers as they leave the first dungeon and journey

aboveground for awhile. There are several plots going on at once with the paladin tracking them, and the subsequent adventures that brings are the final third of the book. Since this books ends on a cliff-hanger, I hope the next one is out soon.

The characters are well-developed and are typical game characters. I'd swear that some of the comments came from a home campaign I was in for years. In his commentary, Burlew says he has enough material in his head for four more volumes. I better make space for them on my shelf. - **Bob LaPierre**

It was great to have three such wonderful volumes to review. See you next time.

Jeffrey's Corner

Warhammer 40,000 For The Emperor by Sandy Mitchell Black Library Publication, \$7.99, 395 pp.

This is Commissar Ciaphas Cain's first adventure. He not only has to deal with a murdered alien (Tau) ambassador in front of his eyes, but also needs to survive against an alien invasion, riots on the streets, and mutiny. Of course, there is a secret Inquisitor investigating him as he tried to protect other alien ambassadors.

This book made my day. Highly recommended for humor-type science fiction readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000 Caves of Ice by Sandy Mitchell Black Library Publication, \$6.99, 254 pp.

This is the second book on Commissar Ciaphas Cain. He and his regiment of Valhallan Guardsmen are brought to an ice planet to defend an important mining facility from the alien invaders, the Orks. Cain will find a more deadly enemy in the caves of ice.

Overall, I loved it. Enjoyed the twists of a very deadly "sleepy" alien enemy. Recommended for humor-type sci-fi readers and 40,000 Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000 The Traitor's Hand by Sandy Mitchell Black Library Publication, \$7.99, 380 pp.

This is the third book on Commissar Ciaphas Cain. A fellow Commissar attempts to discredit Commissar Cain's heroic action against the Chaos invasion. Cain not only has to defend these accusations, but also has to counter a deadly cult, a rivalry of another Imperial

Guard regiment, fight a Chaos Marine and a daemon, and have a duel.

Liked it. Cain is one lucky person. Recommended for humor-type sci-fi readers and 40,000 Warhammer fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

(Continued on page 11)

Charlaine Harris

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Gamers Corner

(Continued from page 10)

Reaper of Souls
by Dan Abnett and Mike Lee
Black Library Publication; 415pp.,
\$7.99

This is the third installment. Another tale of Malus Darkblade searching for the next artifact- a dagger. Little does he know that he is fated for worse than death- a few "back stabbings." After that, he will be "cutting out" his dreams.

Different than the other two novels about this dark elf. Highly recommended in the twists and turns of betrayal from family, friends, and allies. Did not expect the near ending of his reunion with mom. This book is for dark fantasy and/or Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer: The Konrad Saga
by David Ferring
Black Library Publishing; \$9.99,
650pp.

This omnibus has three novels within. They are "Konrad", "Shadowbreed", and "Warblade." The story overall is about a wood-gathering orphan who will become a warrior even though he has no clue who he is. These are Konrad nonstop adventures.

Page turners. Enjoyed all three. Recommended for dark fantasy readers and Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer 40,000:
The Inquisition War**
by Ian Watson
Black Library, \$9.99, 762 pp.

There are two short stories, and three novels: "Draco," "Harlequin," and "Chaos Child." Most of the stories are about a group - an inquisitor, an assassin, a navigator, and a dwarf- uncovering dark plots among mankind in space. Yet, not all of the team will survive.

Overall, this is a dark science fiction. Recommended to Warhammer 40,000 readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer 40,000
The Last Chancers**
by Gave Thorpe
The Black Library, 765 pp, \$10.99

Lt. Kage tells his stories in surviving the multiple suicide missions against the enemies of mankind. This is like a futuristic "The Dirty Dozen."

This omnibus contains two short stories and three novels- "13th Legion," "Kill Team," and "Annihilation Squad."

Interesting read. Dark stories. Recommended to dark science-fiction readers and Warhammer 40,000 fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Warhammer 40,000 Eisenhorn
by Dan Abnett
The Black Library, 764 pp, \$9.99

Inquisitor Eisenhorn and his crew are fighting aliens, mutants, and heretics. But other inquisitors think he is the enemy!

This tome contains two short stories and three novels- "Xenos," "Malleus," and "Hereticus."

This was my first time reading Dan Abnett- very impressive. How a Puritan

becomes a radical inquisitor. Enjoyed them all. Highly recommended to dark science fiction buffs and Warhammer 40,000 readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Fiends of the Eastern Front:
Operation Vampyr**
by David Bishop
Black Flame Pub., \$6.99, 254 pp

The Germany Army invaded Russia in 1941. Strangely, to the Germans, the Rumanian "support" groups are only seen at night...with pointed teeth. They are learning weapons and tactics of the Germans air force and army to fight the Soviet forces.

Three German brothers suspect these Rumanians to be vampyrs that are out to destroy humanity. Will these brothers and

their German contacts be able to counter these monsters with just bullets and bombs? Or will they need something more?

This is the first book of a war-horror trilogy.

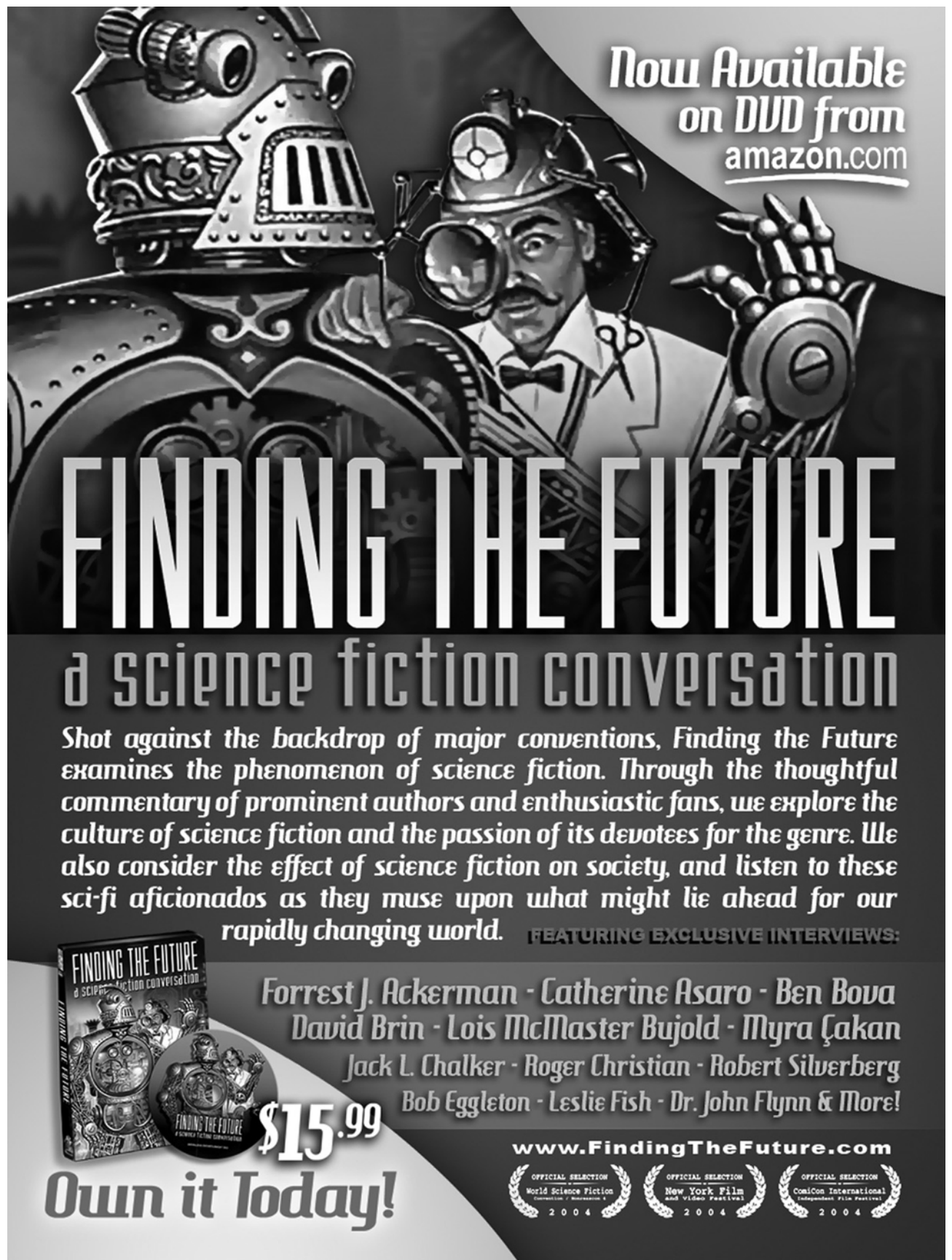
Enjoyed this dark tale. Recommended to horror and history buffs. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Fiends of the Eastern Front:
The Blood Red Army**
by David Bishop
Black Flame; \$7.99; 252 pp.

This story is about a Soviet penal group fighting the undead in Leningrad, 1942.

This is the second of the series. Interesting concept. There were some historically inaccurate points; but otherwise entertaining. Recommended

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for dark horror and WWII history fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Fiends of the Eastern Front:
Twilight of the Dead**
by David Bishop
Black Flame; \$7.99; 249 pp.

This books is the final conclusion of the Eastern Front WWII trilogy. An uneasy alliance with Germans and Russians fighting together against a common foe- the undead.

Dark. Some surprises. Enjoyed it even though I wondered about the lake. Recommended for dark horror WWII readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

In Memory

**John M Ford
Nigel Kneale
Frank McShane
Wilson "Bob" Tucker
Jack Williamson**

**John M. "Mike" Ford
1957-2006
by Nadine Armstrong**

John M. Ford died September 25th, 2006, of natural causes at his home in Minneapolis. He was born in Indiana, and attended Indiana University, where he helped found the science fiction club, and published his first short story in Analog in 1976. He did not graduate, however, instead acting upon an invitation to go to New York and help start Asimov's to which he contributed frequently for the next twelve years. Despite his constant ill-health caused by diabetes and its complications he continued to write. **Web of Angels** and **Princes of the Air**, his first two novels, were published in the early 1980's. It was his next novel, **The Dragon Waiting** that gained him wider notice, winning him the first of his many awards. He then went on to publish two of the best-loved *Star Trek* novels, several award-winning gaming books and modules, stories, poems, and a novel set

in the *Liavek* shared-world, as well as song lyrics, comics, and a spy novel. Most recently, he was working on a fantasy novel entitled **Aspects**, which was unfinished. John M. Ford was that very rare thing, a *real* genius. He could discourse on



© David Dyer-Bennet

anything and everything at the drop of a hat. He was a mainstay online both in gaming forums, where his sig files were widely envied and admired, to Making Light, the Nielsen Haydens' weblog. His last post to it was a villanelle called 'A Little Scene to Monarchize' -its first line: 'I am the king, and I want a sandwich.' Eric Burns, a fellow *Star Trek* game writer described him as the only one to have any effect on canon saying, "...the only way one could reconcile the two versions of the Klingon Empire were through John M. Ford's eyes." "Winter Solstice, Camelot Station" began life as a

Christmas card to his friends-it ended as the only poem to win the World Fantasy Award for Best Short Fiction. Neil Gaiman, a close friend, tells of sending him a party invitation containing a typo, and then, Ford turning up at the party, performing a one-act musical based on it. The next year, the invitation was nothing more than driving directions to his house with a footnote: "I want to see John M. Ford turn this into literature." That became a sonnet cycle. At Minneapolis conventions, his "Ask Dr. Mike" panel-which was simply him, in a lab coat, in front of a white board, answering questions from the audience, were so popular nothing could be scheduled against them. And there was his haunting poem about 9/11, "110 Stories", which can be found online at <http://nielsenhayden.com/110.html>

A memorial service was held for him on the 27th of October at The First Universalist Church of Minneapolis. His close friends Robert Jordan, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Neil Gaiman, Victor Raymond, as well as an aunt, Jane Starner gave the eulogies. Jon Singer, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Steven Brust, Beth Meacham, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, and Emma Bull all read from his works. Emma Bull and Adam Stemple also played and sang a song he wrote. A separate, more informal gathering was held in London and written up by *The Guardian*. A memorial commu-

nity to discuss his works has been formed on LJ-called Nemesis Draco. Anyone is welcome to join. Also, the John M. Ford memorial endowment has been set up to benefit the Minneapolis Public Library. Details can be found on Nemesis Draco at http://community.livejournal.com/nemesis_draco/ He is survived by his partner, Elise Matthesen.

**Nigel Kneale
April 18, 1922 - October 29, 2006**

Nigel Kneale, died at age 84 after a series of small strokes. He was best known for his creation of the character of Professor Bernard Quatermass, who has appeared in three serials for BBC Television, one for Thames Television and three feature film adaptations of the BBC serials for the Hammer company. The groundbreaking serial *The Quatermass Experiment* was one of the first event television shows, emptying the streets and pubs for the six weeks of its duration. Other stories by Kneale include TV adaptations of Orwell's 1984, *The Stone Tapes* and *The Year of the Sex Olympics* which predicted "reality TV." In the 1990's, he turned down an invitation to write for The X-Files. Many of the themes that are common in today's horror and SF had their first showing in Kneale's work.

(Continued on page 13)

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In Memory

(Continued from page 12)

Frank McShane

Nov 12, 1954 - Nov Oct 27, 2006

Frank McShane passed away on Friday, Nov 27th, 2006. He had many friends in fandom, especially those within the United Federation of Phoenix. Frank had been active for many years in the U.F.P. and local fandom and he will be missed by all of us. Following are the sentiments of many of Frank's friends in U.F.P. He will be truly missed by all of us. - Lee Whiteside



© David Bluestein

I always considered him the backbone of the UFP. Frank was a friend of mine, a good one at that. He cared, he took care of things, and he was responsible. We all have lost much, and when we all finish life this is one of the things to be remembered by. I will remember Frank McShane. ~ Frank Williams

Frank McShane was a gentle bear of a man with the most tender heart. In the near thirteen years that I knew him, I never saw or heard him raise his voice above a mellow tone. He also never had a bad word to say about anyone that I can recall. He had a quiet nature that drew people to him. Goodbye Frank. It really was an honor and a privilege to know you. ~ Terri Spencer

What I remember most is the fun I had working with Frank at the early Creation Cons. I was the "pioneer" of magnets, creating the first ones in black and white by printing clipart and sayings onto white stickyback paper, sticking them to magnet material, and cutting them out to sell at conventions. Frank really liked the idea, but didn't like the black & white "blah" pictures, and being the idea man that he was, he immediately improved upon things, spraymounting color pictures to cardboard. So he became our "representative" at our convention table, and thus, we all benefited by his Christmas card presents (which cover my refrigerator), the buttons we would wear that he would make, and the other crafts that he was so good at. Working with Frank was a pleasure; his smile, his sense of humor, the way he would laugh, the way he interacted with people he didn't know -

which made him very approachable in any setting. The other thing I enjoyed about Frank was how he liked to do road trips, like our trips to Vegas or to Kartchner Caverns. ~ David Bluestein

Frank was more than our Secretary, or our Fundraising chair, or our Archivist; he was one of the foundations on which our present club was built. He had an unending enthusiasm to be a member of the UFP, and was willing to put in lots of time to do a lot of "dirty work" that others could not find the time for. He was unfailingly kind and generous with his time, and could definitely hold his own in a Trek conversation ;-) ! I think the club was his main social outlet, and I know he enjoyed spending time with all of us. ~ David Williams

I would also like to say something about Frank: he was a good person. I met him a long time ago before I joined the club, he was always nice to me and always said hello. I will definitely miss his secretary's report at the meetings. ~ Maia C.

Frank - you are terribly missed; and, may I say, that you were a kind-hearted, soft-spoken person who knew what to say to try to make us all get along better! Frank told me some of his funnier stories from the military while we tore down the consuite at CopperCon. He was proud of his time there and I know he was happy to have us as family now. I just wish, as most of you do, that I could have told him Goodbye and how grateful I was for his friendship. ~ Annette Sexton-Ruiz

I will always remember Frank for his energy, his unfailing kind nature and, of course, his magnets. The Universe needs more people like Frank, not fewer. I think we will miss him more as time passes. We have too few like him. ~ Gary Swaty

Treat every meeting with a friend like it's your last. That belongs in Lefler's Laws. ~ Randall Whitlock

The last time I saw Frank was at CopperCon, 2006. I found a few old books and magazines (some had no covers) that he wanted - The Man from U.N.C.L.E. I gave all of them as a gift. He smiled and pumped my hand. His passion for this and Star Trek were unequalled. I've known him since the 90's and enjoyed his company. The last memory of him giving me farewell - a Vulcan salute. He was a good friend. ~ Jeffrey Lu

A Man in Deed (A Tribute to Frank McShane) by Jeffrey Lu

His calm voice
Echoes with love and laughter
In the United Federation of Phoenix
Con suite, CopperCon 2006.

In a month's time,
His smile is no more.
His words are gone.
His life remembered.

Gone like Spock's mom,
Frank McShane, indeed,
Once a secretary and orphan,
Now journeys to the heavens, above.

Wilson "Bob" Tucker November 23, 1914 - October 6, 2006

A few weeks before turning 92, Wilson "Bob" Tucker passed away in a Florida hospital. Wilson was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Fern, who passed away in June, 2006. He will be cremated and his ashes will be interred next to hers.

Wilson Tucker became involved in science fiction fandom in 1932. Around that time he began publishing a fanzine, *The Planetoid*. He also published the fanzine *Le Zombie*, from 1938 to 1975. Professionally, Tucker wrote over 60 short stories and novels including the Campbell Award winning *The Year of the Quiet Sun*.

"Bob" Tucker was a well-loved convention guest and fanzine writer. He served on the committee of the 2nd World Science Fiction Convention, Chicon, in 1940.

He was noted for using the names of fellow fans and other friends in his fiction, to the point that the literary term for doing so is now called tuckerization.

Awards include: the Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer in 1970 and the Retro-Hugo for same category in 1954. The *Science Fiction Newsletter* won the Retro-Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 1951. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, Inc made Tucker its second Author Emeritus in 1996 and in 2003 he was inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame.

The 2007 North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC) in Collinsville, Illinois will be dedicated to Bob.

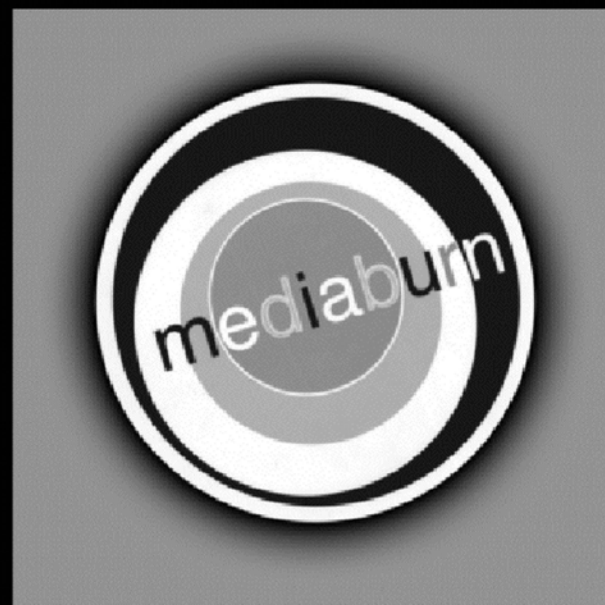
Jack Williamson April 29, 1908 – November 10, 2006

John Stewart Williamson, who wrote as Jack Williamson and Will Stewart, died November 10, 2006 at his home in Portales, New Mexico.

Williamson was named a Grand Master of Science Fiction by the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1976. He was only the second person to receive this honor. The first was Robert Heinlein. Additionally he was SFWA President from 1978 to 1980 and won a Hugo

(Continued on page 14)

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In Memory
(Continued from page 13)

Award in 1980 for Wonder’s Child: My Life in Science Fiction. He was one of the inaugural inductees in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 1996.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributing to the Jack and Blanche Williamson Scholarship, ENMU Foundation, ENMU Station #8, Portales, NM 88130 or the Portales Public Library, 218 South Avenue B, Portales, NM 88130.

In Our Book

Dragon’s Eye
by James A. Hetley
Ace Books, \$14.00, 355 pages

The Morgans and the Pratts are two ancient Maine families; really ancient – their history started before the Pilgrims even landed. Their lineage is...complicated. They’ve been feuding for centuries but the Pratts have changed the rules, they brought in an outsider to upset the balance of power. When the Morgan goes to investigate, he’s captured and his brother and teenaged son have to get him back. But the brother doesn’t have the family link to the Dragon that sleeps in the ocean beneath their house and the boy is too young to have gone through the trial yet. But he has to or they have no way to contact the Morgan.

The land houses more than two ancient families and centuries of their secrets – even longer ago than when the Pratts and Morgans appeared, a house was built over a special spring to guard it. The caretakers have always been women. Their role in life is to protect the spring, the Haskell house and any woman within its walls. So when the battle between the Morgans and the Pratts, with their outsider, an Incan brujo, starts to claim female lives and threaten the safety of two little innocent girls, the latest Haskell Witch gets involved. And nobody is safe.

The story also explores several interpersonal relationships. The Morgan family relations between the head of the family, Daniel Morgan, his brother Ben who is officially dead to the outside world but still works for the family and young Gary, only seventeen years old with the fate of his whole family resting on his ability to claim his genetic inheritance. And then there’s Alice Haskell, her love for the local Constable, Kate Rowley, a blond throwback to the Vikings’ last visit, and Kate’s troublesome daughter whose choice of friends threatens her mother’s life. And, then there’s Caroline Haskell, the next Witch, who has deeper ties to the Morgans than she even knows.

James scored big with me on his first two books but I feel conflicted about this third effort. The story is wonderful; I loved it. But I had problems with the characters and the pacing. The pacing was uneven and I didn’t slip through the story effortlessly, it was more like the jerking pace of a city bus. And then the characters... the story started and ended with the weakest character; there was a certain symmetry but it weakened the effect of the story. Interestingly enough, the main focus of the story was with the women. James did a fairly credible job trying to speak through his women but I knew the difference. To his credit, I think

a man would enjoy this story immensely; I don’t believe any of them would be able to tell the difference and may actually come away with a deeper appreciation for women’s strength. The characters were too shallow for my taste. By that, I mean that I didn’t feel I really knew them. James gave them plenty of action and choices but I never felt I understood their motivations. The men were almost completely ignored, all we know of them is what the women saw. The evil one was more of a walk-on character when he should have been the main point of conflict. Instead, the conflict between the characters took center stage. And we never even met the Pratts who instigated the entire event. But I will say this: I enjoyed the story and found myself thinking about it when I wasn’t reading. – Catherine Book

Dark Moon Defender:
A novel of the Twelve Houses
by Sharon Shinn
Ace Books; \$23.95; 435pp

Sharon Shinn does it again. As books about the Twelve Houses go: this one’s terrific. “Dark Moon Defender” is the third novel in the series and it’s a doozie. I couldn’t put it down and when I had to, well, I resented it!

This is the story of Justin, the street urchin turned exemplary King’s Rider and how he falls in love with a very unusual woman, Ellynor. She is a woman of the Lirrenlands and has her own brand of magic. And as a Lirren woman, custom has it she should never fall in love with a man not of the Lirrenlands for then her father, brothers and any number of cousins would have to challenge him to the death, because, well, he’s not one of them.

And to top everything off, Ellynor is a novice in the Lumanen Convent—home of the rabid followers of the Pale Mother. These are the ones that throughout the previous two books and this one as well, have been killing, usually by burning, mystics with a vengeance. Mystics are folks who have magical abilities: to shape-shift, to heal, to call forth fire, etc.

Ellynor went to the convent to lend support to her cousin Rosurie (who really had a calling) and because she felt a bit hemmed in by her over-protective brothers and Lirren customs. Of course the convent, though different, is not quite what Ellynor thought it would be.

And how do Justin and Ellynor get together? Well, Justin, as a King’s Rider is sent to the town of Neft (closest city to the Lumanen Convent) to report on any suspicious and seditious activity by Coralinda Gisseltess, the head of the convent and the most rabid anti-mystic there is.

One day, Ellynor, sent on an errand to Neft is trapped by a man with rape on his mind. He is swiftly dissuaded by the appearance of Justin, who bests him handily in a fight.

Of course, Justin is taken by Ellynor, whom he finds fascinatingly naive, and beautiful to boot. And she, despite her background and the rules of the convent, finds herself drawn to Justin.

The trials and tribulations these two “star-crossed” lovers go through is enough to raise your hair and have it fall out. The action and drama are very intense and compelling. And of course, the two discover a lot about themselves in the process. For Justin it is allowing himself

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to love beyond his tight circle of friends (Tayse, Senneth, Cammon, Donnal and Kirra—all mystics, save Tayse and all loyal to King Baryn of Gillengaria) and for Ellynor it is the discovery that what she considers a common skill among Lirren folk is considered mystic magic in Gillengaria. And something that might just get her killed. For not only does she have the powers of a mystic, the goddess of her people is the Dark Watcher, the night. And though Ellynor respects the capricious Pale Mother (the moon), her soul belongs utterly to the Great Mother of the night.

Justin as a King’s Rider and Ellynor with her exceptional skills prove a volatile combination and all hell breaks out in the last third of the book.

As I said, I couldn’t put this down, except under duress! Don’t miss it! - Sue Martin

Blood Royal
by Will McDermott and Gordon Rennie
B(lack) L(ibrary) Publishing, Games Workshop Ltd
Nottingham, Great Britain, Paperback, 254 Pages, \$6.99

This novel is set in the Grim and Gritty backdrop of the Games Workshop Planet of Necromunda. Necromunda is world of Hives, huge buildings each having a population in the billions. Each Hive has a Spire inhabited by the privileged few, the Hive proper inhabited by the billions who do the productive work and the UnderHive inhabited by violent gangs, misfits and Bounty

Hunters. At all levels in a Hive, competition is fierce and survival difficult. Maintaining one’s place is hard. Some fall from the Spire to the UnderHive. Some choose the UnderHive.

Our story concerns a Royal Son of Helmawr, ruler of Hive Primus and thus all of Necromunda. This Mutant Vampiric son descends into the UnderHive bringing Death and Chaos in his wake. Kal Jerico, another son of Helmawr, who has chosen the life of a Bounty Hunter in the UnderHive, is hired to capture the Mutant Vampire intruder. The Ruler wants his son and heir back alive, but factions in the Spire want him dead. The situation is further complicated by Helmawr’s growing dementia.

The novel is rife with complicated interactions between gangs, intruders from the Spire, competing Bounty Hunters, criminal syndicates and a plethora of others. Within the Spire, factions contend for supremacy. Nothing is simple. Even our Bounty Hunter Kal Jerico and his two partners, Scabs and Yolanda are in conflict. Loyalty is rare. Most seek profit and devil take the hindmost.

Kal is your stock likeable villain out for profit and a good time. Scabs is your stock staunch and loyal henchman. He does what he is told and cares not for profit. He just wants to be with his friends. Their conflict makes him uncomfortable. Yolanda is more complicated, being a former gang leader who burned out and left the gang. She just wants a smooth, profitable, bounty hunting life. She is continually furious

(Continued on page 15)

In Our Book (Continued from page 14)

because Cal's casual style often endangers them and costs them their fees.

The Vampire and his pursuers are laying waste to UnderHive. Kal and his friends want them gone. To that end, they gather a motley collection of Gangers and Bounty Hunters to eject the interlopers. After conferring with another royal relative, Kal realizes that the fate of the entire hive (and indeed the planet) may rest on the outcome of their efforts. Desperately they work and fight.

This story is well written and gripping. I recommend it. – Gary Swaty.

Awakening Beauty
by Allison Ewing
PublishAmerica, \$16.95, 189 pages

This is a fairy tale despite what the jacket description says. It tries too hard to entice the reader into what appears to be a very twisted fairy tale – hence, not a fairy tale at all. However, if one is familiar with fairy tales, then one knows that few of them truly have happy endings or that all the characters are exactly good or evil. So, this is really a fairy tale. The story isn't exactly that different from a hundred different tales, the characters aren't exactly what you think they might be from their stereotype. The good king - isn't, the beautiful queen - isn't, the noble knight - isn't. And Beauty doesn't have the exact happy ending that she should have had. And the evil witch had reasons for what she did and didn't do; not that that excuses her.

The thing I liked best about this little story is that the tone and pace of the book

are exactly as I remember old fairy tales (not the Disneyfied ones). I enjoyed the angst of the main characters but didn't particularly enjoy the background that explains why they are the way they are. It was full of ugliness and misery – much as reality typically is. I don't mind that in my fairy tales but I prefer it dressed up more; this was pretty gritty stuff.

The writing and plotting is competent. The pacing, character development and dialog was good; although the writer allowed too many current colloquialisms to creep in. It was a pleasant, uncomplicated read and I am satisfied enough to read the next thing this author produces. – Catherine Book

Kris Longknife: Resolute
by Mike Shepherd
Ace Books, New York, 342 pp., \$7.99

After Kris Longknife: Mutineer/Deserter/Defiant comes Kris Longknife: Resolute.

Princess Longknife was a trial to her relatives. Her naval career was inconvenient. They had found her a quiet niche in Training Command for her last posting. Trouble found her and she saved the day. But this time they placed her in a backwater where nothing had happened for at least 20 years. They dumped her in place as commander of Naval District 41, a command so unimportant that a lieutenant had commanded it with only local reservists for staff for over 20 years. Here they thought she could find no trouble and trouble could not find her. Little did they know...

She arrives and finds her Headquarters at High Chance Station abandoned with a

quite impressive antique derelict battle cruiser orbiting with it. She immediately acts to reactivate it and the station and sends minions out who hire a suspiciously well armed cargo ship to haul supplies. Her AI and its alien chip find evidence of new and peculiar gates. She investigates in her supply ship. She finds alien pay dirt. She returns. Her old Nemesis Henry Smythe-Peterwald shows up with a Flotilla of ships. Things get really complicated. Ultimately she saves the day, in part, because of unwanted support from veterans and children.

The book is delightful space opera with enough military realism to keep the military buffs happy and enough action for the adventure junkies. The tension between Chris's newcomers, the civilians, the retired stationers and old war veterans is well drawn. When Peterwald arrives they all work together marvelously against almost impossible odds.

This is a book which will be enjoyed by most military, adventure and hard SF fans. – Gary Swaty

Child of a Rainless Year
by Jane Lindskold
Tor Books, \$14.95, 400 pages


I am not a fan of Lindskold's Firekeeper saga but I do love everything else of hers that I've read. This is a complete gem but very different from everything else she's written. I admire that in a writer. It's always a pleasure to find that a writer has more breadth and depth than most.

Mira is a middle-aged spinster schoolteacher. How much more trite can a character be? But that's too facile a

description – Mira is so much more and so much less. Having been fostered at nine, she is full of uncertainty and questions about what happened to her mother and who is her father. At 50+, she now has the time and impetus to investigate her roots – her foster parents are dead and she has just discovered that she still owns her childhood home in New Mexico, a huge Queen Anne Victorian house that has been shut up for forty years. But going back to her childhood home doesn't answer anything. If anything, the questions multiply. Why were her foster parents forbidden to take her back to New Mexico or ask any questions about her birth mother? Why did her foster-father keep the home and never tell his wife or Mira? Why could no one find out anything about what happened the day her mother drove off and was never seen again? Who are the silent women who cooked, cleaned and took care of Mira-the-child? And how is it they are still in the house, taking care of Mira-the-woman?

The book is full of mirrors and reflections which are integral to understanding Mira and her mother, Colette. While Mira is on a trip of nostalgia and exploration, she carries with her the journals that her foster-mother, Maybelle, made of her own journey to find Mira's mother and understand why she left the child... and, more importantly to May... whether Colette will ever reappear and take back the child she loves. May's journal explored some very strange topics and theories as to who or what Colette was. While Mira reads the journals and begins to clean and rediscover her childhood home; current

(Continued on page 16)



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In Our Book

(Continued from page 15)

events and her foster-mother's research begin to come together. It took some very bizarre events to convince Mira that she was heir to more than just a house. In fact, the house itself was more than just a structure. Mira was heiress to a strange ability that was tied to the house and her birth family. The bigger question than what happened to her mother, is the one of – was the house just a tool or was it controlling her? As it turned out, both questions were equally important and linked.

The only thing that kept me from completing the book in a day was fatigue – I fell asleep. I immediately picked it up again the next morning and read until it finished. Unlike some stories that grab me and then end; I didn't wish for more. I was satisfied. It was a complete story, and I was happy when it ended. It was a wonderful character exploration and a fascinating premise. This is not a horror story, it is a gentle fantasy designed to pique curiosity and cause one to consider what else about our reality isn't how it appears.

Mira's character was fully developed and, considering that all we knew of Colette is what Mira knew, I was happy

with her character. The other major character is the caretaker of the estate, Domingo, whose family and history is also linked to the house although he doesn't discover this until Mira comes. While the reader doesn't get any more of Domingo than Mira did, I was also satisfied with his character. The single detractor of the story, and this is more my taste than a real criticism, is the overuse of exposition. I would have preferred more adventure and risk for Mira to discover all the answers but the book would surely have exceeded 600 pages had the author done so. I also caution that the female reader may enjoy this journey of self-discovery by a woman a bit more than the

male reader. I'll keep this on my shelf for a second reading someday. – **Catherine Book**

Variable Star

by **Robert A. Heinlein and Spider Robinson**

TOR/Tom Doherty Associates, \$24.95, 318 pp.

Variable Star is a novel written by Spider Robinson from a Robert A. Heinlein outline. Spider captures some of the flavor of the 1950s Heinlein novel.

The outline was probably the original genesis of **Time for the Stars**. The novel as outlined destroyed too much of the universe Heinlein needed for his Future History series so he revised it. The two stories are quite similar. Both have a couple separated by time dilatation who are reunited by faster than light drive. Both are coming of age stories. Both have telepathy between twins. Both have the ship in dire straits with FTL as the *deus ex machina*.

That being said I must say that Spider produced an excellent and quite readable novel. It does not read quite like Heinlein, but I forgive him because he has given us one more instance of something very close to Heinlein. I even forgive him for mentioning three legged Martians and Venerian Dragons as part of the same universe. (You need the MultiVerse for that!)

The business and political backdrop of super rich families dominating business and politics is believable though it does seem to project an unheinlein-like anti-business bias. Also Spider's acceptance of the Covenant as a solution to mankind's conflicts does not reflect Heinlein's view of that document as reflected by Lazarus Long.

The character of Joel Johnston is well drawn. He is your typical self-centered selfish youngling who in the course of the story matures into a socially conscious person so beloved of Spider. (Heinlein would not have liked him) The surrounding characters are not so well developed. The females fit the Heinlein stereotypes especially Jinny and Evelyn.

Over all I give the book an "A." Good work Spider. – **Gary Swaty**

The Myth Hunters

Book One of the Veil

by **Christopher Golden**

Bantam Books, \$12.00, 350 pages

Chris Golden does it again...and again...and again. He creates the most compelling and wonderful stories with enough horror to cause that little frisson down my neck. Our hero, Oliver, is again – an innocent, decent man who gets dragged into a situation not of his making. Through a cover of both wonder and horror, Oliver is confronted with the reality of Jack Frost in his living room. Jack Frost, who is bleeding water on the carpet, and requesting – no, demanding – Oliver's assistance, is Oliver's gateway into another world. Jack is being pursued by a murderous creature who will also pursue Oliver after he saves Jack's life by leaping off a cliff into the winter ocean and ending up in a different world. This world is where all the myths went when they left our world. But someone or something is hunting the myths who still cross over and visit our world. And now Oliver has their attention. Oliver is also

(Continued on page 17)

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In Our Book

(Continued from page 16)

an anomaly to all the other denizens of this world – an Intruder – who must be killed on sight lest he return to his own world with news of them. But with Jack Frost as his protector and mentor, he hopes to find a way to convince the rulers of this strange world that he is no threat. It's just really hard to concentrate on that task when so many nasty, horrible creatures are trying to kill him, Jack, and Kitsune, a fascinating, beautiful woman who shapeshifts into a fox. And, on top of all that, Oliver is consumed with guilt for having left a woman he loves at the altar, his sister scared and confused about his absence, and maybe even his father, the man who squashed all his fantasies and dreams. But the more he thinks about it and learns about this new world, the more Oliver begins to imagine himself never leaving it...

In addition to our three main heroes; back at home, his absence is being investigated by a local detective who becomes quite determined to find answers to all the impossible questions he's found. Where did Oliver go in the middle of the night, in the middle of a blizzard – without his car? Is the brutal death and mutilation of his father, the little girl in a small town 100 miles away, and all the other children in cities around the world linked to Oliver? And did his sister's disappearance mean that she's in league with him – did they murder their own father? Or is it something much more sinister that has made them equally victims?

If I start going on about how much I

love this story, I'll have to continue in the next issue. The characters are real, they are in my head. There is wonder and awe throughout this story. The description of Kitsune's shapeshifting leaves me aching for the reality and the fight with the cherry-tree demon is nothing short of really fabulous storytelling. The gods of the Harvest were just plain creepy and the whole story is amazingly satisfying in only 350 pages.

Since this is Book One, you will have to find Book Two. I mean – *really* have to. This is a cliffhanger story, not a gentle decline in the story with the characters pursuing a new goal in the second book. I can't remember when I've anticipated a sequel with so much longing. – **Catherine Book**

Rogue Angel: Destiny

by Alex Archer

Worldwide, July 2006, 346 pp. Mass Market paperback, \$6.50

Rogue Angel: Solomon's Jar

by Alex Archer

Worldwide, Sept. 2006, 346 pp. Mass Market Paperback, \$6.50

These two books are the beginning of a bi-monthly series of novels about the bearer of Joan of Arc's Sword who defends the world from evil in our time. She is Annja Creed, an archaeologist and explorer. When she touched the fragmented Sword of Joan it immediately became whole and vanished, but she found she could recall it at need from whatever realm it vanished to.

Destiny: Annja was in Lozere France researching the Legend of The Beast of Gevaudan for a TV program called

Chasing History's Monsters. Unknown to her there existed a Brotherhood whose sole purpose was to keep the Church's involvement and guilt in the matter safely buried even if they had to bury the occasional archaeologist.

She was led to the final fragment of the Sword by a mysterious Frenchman named Roux while fleeing from the Brotherhood of the Silent Rain and a criminal named Lesauvage. Roux and his apprentice Garin had been assembling the other fragments for centuries.

She must come to grips with her new Destiny while trying to stay alive and defeat some serious Evil. She succeeds and we move on to:

Solomon's Jar: Annja was looking at alt.archaeolog.esoterica and found a reference to a brass jar fitting the description of the Jar in which Solomon imprisoned the Demons he used to build the Temple. She set out to investigate and so did others who wished personal power. Thus Annja and the Sword of Joan were again embarked on the defense of the World from serious evil. She has to contain the Evil and not let the Cultists or the religious Zealots gain the power of the Jar.

Both novels are quick reads with lots of action and interesting characters. The continuing characters are of particular interest. One is almost tempted to associate Roux with a much earlier Wizard and a much more famous Sword. Garin is morally ambivalent and quite interesting. The various villains are well drawn and delightful. Annja is interesting. She does not find the image of herself as the Bearer of The Sword and Defender of The Good an easy one to bear. The books are fun. I look forward to *Rogue Angel: The Spider Stone* due out in November. – **Gary Swaty**

Exile

by Mercedes Lackey
Daw, 291 pp, \$25.95

Exile is book four of the *Dragon Jousts*...

Kiron escaped imprisonment in Tia with a dragon he hand-raised from the egg... Reaching Alta, his homeland, he fell in love with a fledgling priestess, Aket-ten, and learned of the Magi - Mages without ethics who developed a weapon that kills from afar.

Kiron and Aket-ten fled Alta with the other jousts and dragons, and members of the royal family, to a lost city in the desert called Sanctuary. From Sanctuary, they trained new dragons and jousts. Through careful planning, they join the Altan and Tian jousts and bring down the Magi. But Sanctuary was overflowing and they found a new cliff city that seemed made for dragons. The jousts were happy to move to more spacious quarters. However, though the Magi were conquered, there were still more mages that wanted to destroy everything that had been built. They then had to fight not only armies but a wildcard goddess that loved destruction and blood. Aerie had its own secrets, and the Jousts had to learn them and become avatars to save the future.

Any Lackey novel is exciting and fun, with good characterizations, good plotting, good world building, this one with an Egyptian aura. This novel is no different. Gotta have it. - **Pam Allan**

Offspring

by Liam Jackson

Thomas Dunne Books, 290 pp, \$24.95.

Offspring is the first book of a proposed *Offspring* Trilogy.

Sam Conner has always had a closer than usual relationship with his guardian angel. Now that the world has gone to Hell in a handbasket, with grisly abductions, killings, and epic crime waves, Sam knows he is supposed to do something. But what can a fourteen-year-old boy do? His guardian Angel tells him to go to a small town in Tennessee. He will be told as he goes, and, oh- yes there are forces out to kill him, so now is a good time to leave. He goes. And behind him are nearly omnipotent enemies as well as three others he must join with to prevent the veil being torn completely and let in the really bad guys. The only guys that can stop them are the bastard offspring of angels that mated with regular people. The saviors have never met and are in for real trouble. Well... who said that world saving was easy?

Offspring is classic thriller with a good versus evil plot. Angels VS Demons in an intense violent and suspenseful chiller that is hard to put down. It's a keeper. - **Pam Allan**

The Lady of Serpents

by Douglas Clegg
291 pp, \$23.95

The Lady of Serpents is the second volume of the *Vampyricon*.

Aleric was once known as the Falconer because of his rapport with the birds. A forbidden love with the baron's daughter lost him his life, only to be reborn as a vampire.

Hailed as the messiah of the vampires, he is captured and forced to fight in the Arena by the sorceress Enora. To end her reign of terror, he must escape, find the alchemist behind her power, though this may mean the unleashing of the Lady Of Serpents, who is not only an enemy, but the one who made him a Vampire. She alone holds the key to the future of human and vampire alike.

Richly layered foray into a past full of sorcery and mystery, and a pageturner to boot. What more can you ask..... - **Pam Allan**

Freedom's Sisters

by Naomi Kritzer

Bantam Spectra, 401 pp, \$6.99

Freedom's Sisters is book three of the *Dead Rivers* trilogy.

As a freeborn servant of the Greeks, Lauria once hunted escaped slaves. Now she frees them. Her loyalties now lay with the Alashi, and her blood sister, Tamar. However, the Greek sorceresses do not take treason lightly when it includes freeing the djinni who serve them. When her father captures her and turns her over to the Sorceresses, Tamar must seek, both in reality and the Borderlands, the dream realm. Lauria must find her own magic to free the rivers ... and them all.

Kritzer is a splendid storyteller with more psychological twists than Karl Jung. Mercedes Lackey has company in the firmament. She has joined the Authors to look for at the bookstore. My sure sign of gotta have it.. - **Pam Allan**

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Club Listings

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

ADRIAN EMPIRE A medieval and renaissance recreationist club. Sword-fighting, arts, banquets, masquerades, dances. meets every Wednesday night from 7-10pm at Encanto Park. All are welcome. Free.

AERIAL MIRAGE JUGGLERS. Meets Wednesday 7-10pm in Encanto Park, 15th Avenue, south of Encanto. No dues, everyone welcome. All levels skill exchange in many areas of object manipulation Dave Davis <aerialmirage@gnersds.com>, 602-955-9446; or Ron Harvey <rbh1s@yahoo.com>, 480-775-4690 for more info or impromptu juggling sessions.

ANIZONA ANIME CONVENTION INC The group that sponsors Arizona's premiere Anime convention each year. Monthly meetings alternate between the east and west valley at Bookmans. If you are interested in Anime and conventions this is the group for you! Visitors welcome. For more information check our website at www.anizona.org or email to info@anizona.org

ARIZONA LANBASHERS LEAGUE A collaboration of computer gaming enthusiasts, the Arizona LANbashers League throws quarterly LANparty events. Between parties, support is given to local groups who wish to advertise their own gatherings. We have no set genre of games and play anything from strategy games to first-person shooters to driving/flying simulations. No annual membership is required and admission to an event ranges from \$5-\$15. See our webpage for current events. Email: azlanbashers@earthlink.net Web: www.lanparty.com/all/ VoiceMail: 602-306-9339

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

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

BASFA Local Tucson science fiction group that puts on TusCon. Contact us at PO Box 2528, Tucson AZ 85702-2528 or basfa@earthlink.net our website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~basfa/>

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

*******C.R.O.E.T.** Celtic Reenactment of Fellowship and Trades is Phoenix based Reenactment group specializing in the western European renaissance. We research lifestyles and trades concurrent with the Celtic Peoples from 400 BC until 1746 AD. We emphasize Scots, Irish or Welsh crafts and do Celtic re-enactment. We open participation to anyone with an interest in period crafting and entertainment. Demonstrations occur at the Highland Games, Scarborough Fair, and the Arizona Renaissance Festival. Web page <http://www.crofters.org> We meet in Tempe at the Pyle Adult Center SW corner of Rural and Southern on the 2nd Saturday of every month, phone number (480)350-5211. The Board meeting will be at 2:00 pm with the General meeting starting at 2:30 pm.

THE DARK ONES (Dark-wunz) n. 1) An organization formed for the expression and exploration of various cultural themes including, but not limited to, the Dark Ages and the Renaissance through forms of art including, but not limited to, painting, drawing, writing, photography, spoken word, and acts of characterization. 2) a member of this organization. 3) Information available at www.darkones.org

THE EMPIRE OF CHIVALRY AND STEEL, INC. The Empire of Chivalry and Steel specializes in the general recreation of the culture of the Middle Ages including all of the Art Forms, Events (Feasts, Tournaments, Ceremonies and Wars) and Combat Arts covering the years of 800AD up to 1650AD and any location within Europe or its explored

territories. For more information contact Leonard Byrd (Tucson) (520)742-2432 Web: www.galandor.org

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

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

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

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

PAReX is a non-profit, just for fun organization dedicated to the proliferation of robotics as a hobby. Monthly meetings will be held and will be announced under the Meeting Information page, <http://www.parex.org/meetinfo.htm>. All interest-ed persons are invited to participate. We are currently in the process of getting organized and becoming an official organization with tax status. Web page: <http://www.parex.org/> E-mail Contact: John Kittelsrud, parexteam@cox.net

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

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

RAW GAMES (Role-players & Wargamers, Inc.) Role-players & Wargamers, Inc. is the Valley's oldest role-playing and wargaming club. Currently meeting at 8159 W. Weldon in Phoenix every Sunday from 3pm-9pm (except during conventions and other special events). Open to new members - call (602) 849-9515. www.rawgames.org

THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM The kingdom of Atenveldt doth lie in the state of Arizona. Within the fair kingdom can be found six Baronies: Atenveldt, Mons Tonitrus, Twin Moons, SunDragon, Tir Ysgithr and Ered Sul. For more information on any of these or for general information on thy past tomorrows thou mayest contact Mistress Myrddina o Dolwyddelan (Terry Schwartz) PO Box 584, Sonoita AZ 85637 (520)455-5835 Email: myrddinal@aol.com Web www.atenveldt.com

SOUTHWEST COSTUMER'S GUILD The Southwest Costumers Guild is a loose organization of persons interested in all facets of historical, cultural, science fiction, fantasy, and humor costume. Members are often seen on stage and behind the scenes at local and regional Science Fiction Convention masquerades. They meet on the last Sunday of each month at various members' homes in the greater Phoenix area. For details. Southwest Costumers Guild, PO Box 39504, Phoenix, AZ 85609 or Randall Whitlock at costumers@casfs.org or www.southwestcostumersguild.org

SPACE ACCESS SOCIETY Space Access Society's sole purpose is to promote radically cheaper access to space, ASAP. We think it's possible within ten years, with a little luck and a lot of hard work. Join us and help us make it happen! SAS membership is \$30 for one year, which gets you emailed Space Access Updates the instant they pass final edit, plus discounts on our annual conference on the technology, politics, and business of radically cheaper space transportation, featuring leading players in the field. Email us at: Space.Access@Space-Access.org Web page: www.space-access.org/

SUPERSTITION SPACEMODELING SOCIETY is Arizona's club for builders of model and high-power rockets and those who love to see them fly. Launches are held on the second Saturday morning of each month in Rainbow Valley. SSS hosts the annual G. Harry Stine Memorial Rocket Launch every October. Visit www.sssrocketry.org for membership information, directions to the launches and meetings, and to read the monthly newsletter, "Newton's Minutes."

TARDIS is a Phoenix-based General SF/Fantasy Fan Club, specializing in International media SF/Fantasy since 1983. **TARDIS** meets every two weeks at different locations around the valley. Activities include watching videos, discussions, parties, games, and occasional outings with more to come now that Doctor Who is returning from hiatus. Many members maintain an active presence at conventions. You can contact us at 2243 W Wagon Wheel Dr, Phoenix, AZ 85021, Voice Mail at (602) 864-0901, E-mail TARDIS-Info@cox.net or visit us at <http://members.cox.net/tardisaz/tardis.html>

TEKWAR FAN CLUB Sanctioned by the series' production companies and the USA Network! It is THE information conduit between the fans and the series! Fan club

(Continued on page 19)

Club Listings

(Continued from page 18)

membership will bring you the following 1) subscription to the info filled Tek Informer newsletter; 2) official TekWar Fan Club membership card and kit. Membership is by regular mail only and the newsletter and materials will not be reproduced electronically. To join the action and initiate your annual membership, make check or money order out for \$12.50 to: Official TekWar Fan Club (Membership section), 2522 N Sparkman Blvd., Tucson AZ 85716-2417

T.H.E.M. is ASU's science fiction and fantasy club. Weekly meetings are held on the Arizona State University campus, with dates and places to be announced after the semester starts. For more information, Email them@themonline.org Web www.themonline.org

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

UNITED FEDERATION OF PHOENIX A Phoenix area Star Trek and general SciFi fan club. We are a social club that meets every two weeks at various locations around the Phoenix area. The UFP has been meeting for over 30 years of continuous activity. Dues are \$15/per year prorated when you join; no restrictions. Membership includes membership roster and monthly newsletter. Come to any two meetings at no obligation. For information, write the UFP at PO Box 37224, Phoenix, AZ 85069, or call Jim Strait at (602) 242-9203. Web page: <http://www.U-F-P.org> or Email to Info@U-F-P.org

USS STORMBRINGER The Stormbringer is a correspondence Star Trek fan club chapter of Starfleet, Intl. based out of Tucson AZ. The chapter was commissioned as the USS Stormbringer NCC-74213, attached to Division 31, Starfleet Covert Operations, on 10/31/98. As of 11/29/98 there were 32 members. There are no dues other than the \$15 for joining Star-fleet Intl.. Members are scattered world wide but the primary clusters are in Tucson, AZ and Plano, TX. They don't meet on a regular basis since they are a correspondence chapter. Their web site is: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Vault/9505/> and their contact/CO is Capt. Dave Pitts, thepitts52@hotmail.com

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

What is CASFS?

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

WESTERN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION (WesternSFA) A non-profit corporation that sponsors the ConRunners seminars and sponsored the 2004 Westercon. Dedicated primarily to educational activities relating to literature, music, and visual and performing arts, especially in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, costuming, gaming and science. Applicants for membership in WesternSFA must be sponsored by a current active WesternSFA member. Dues are \$10 yearly plus a \$5 non-refundable application fee. General Meetings are held on the first Friday of February, May, August and November, at the Bookmans located at 19th ave. and Northern in Phoenix. Guests are welcome. For more info contact Craig Dyer at WesternSFA, PO Box 67457, Phoenix AZ 85082, (602) 973-2341, Email: craig@westernsfa.org Webpage: www.westernsfa.org



Generic Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

Badge Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

(See individual convention listing for mailing address)

More info on ☐ Masquerade ☐ Art Show ☐ Volunteer ☐ Other

Convention Listings

DARKCON 2007 (January 4th – 7th, 2007) **Phoenix AZ.** Embassy Suites Phoenix North \$109 S/D Use Group Code: ODC Arizona's Premier: Fantasy, Science Fiction and Gaming Convention Media GoH: Jewel Staite Artist GoH: Kit Rae Artist Guest: Liz Danforth Gaming Guests: John Wick and Ken St Andre www.DarkCon.org

PHOENIX CACTUS COMICON (January 26-28, 2007) **Mesa AZ** Mesa Convention Center Guests: Mike Mignola, George Perez, lots of others. Comics, Anime, Gaming, Panels. Membership Rates \$25 Full event ticket with Friday Preview Night \$8 Gaming area only ticket (see website)

WORLD HORROR CONVENTION 2007 (Mar 29-Apr 1 '07) Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Center, **Toronto, Ontario, Canada.** GoHs: Michael Marshall Smith, Nancy Kilpatrick. AGoH: John Picacio. MC: Sephera Giron. Publisher GoH: Peter Crowther. Editor GoH: Don Hutchison. Info: email: amanda@whc2007.org; website: www.whc2007.org

ANIZONA 3 (April 5-8,2007) Mesa AZ - Arizona's First Anime Convention - Guests include Kaite Bair, Jodon Bellafanto, Michael McConnohie, Melodee Spevack and other TBA. Location: Phoenix Marriott Mesa Membership is capped at 1600 and there will be NO memberships sold at the door. \$35 thru December 31, 2006, \$40 thru March 31, 2007. Mail check or money order to AniZona 3, PO Box 67641, Phoenix AZ 85082 Web: www.anizona.org Email: info@anizona.org

LEPRECON 33 (May 11-13, 2007) Mesa AZ Arizona's Annual Art Oriented Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention featuring the largest SF/F Art Show in the Southwest! Guests: Artist - Jael, Author - Karen Traviss Membership: \$30 thru 10/31/06, \$35 thru 1/31/07, more later Kids 7-12 half price, Six and under Free with Adult Membership Hotel: Phoenix Marriott Mesa Contact: LepreCon 33 PO Box 26665 Tempe, AZ 85285 Phone(480) 945-6890 Email: Lep33NOSPAM@LepreCon.org Web: www.leprecon.org/lep33/

PHOENIX CONGAMES (June 14th - 17th 2007) **Mesa AZ** Mesa Convention Center & Phoenix Marriott East in Mesa Arizona. Membership \$20 thru November 30th, 2006, \$25 thru January 31st, 2007, \$30 thru April 30th, 2007, \$35 at the door <http://www.conevents.com/page/phx/main.asp>

MangaZone

Yotsuba&! Volume 1
By Kiyohiko Azuma
ADV Manga , 233 pages, \$9.99

This adorable manga from the creator of Azumanga Daioh is a great, wonderful, fun read. It is the story of a young girl (part Chiyo-chan, part Osaka) named Yotsuba and her wonderful adventures in life. Volume one introduces you to the cast: Yotsuba and her adopted Father, Mr. Koiwai, Jumbo, their very tall friend, and the Ayase family (Asagi, Fuka, Ena and their mother). You watch Yotsuba learn different things like how to catch cicadas, what an air conditioner is, and how a swing works. Also look for hidden things from Azumanga Daioh. If you love fun crazy stories then read this; you will be sure to laugh out loud. - **Ninjakittyofdoom**

Star Trek: The Manga
by various authors and artists
Tokyopop; 192 pages, \$9.99

There are five short stories about Star Trek: The Original Series.

One story has a connection to Star Trek: TNG and Star Trek: Voyager. One of the tales has a twist with a popular anime/manga series against Star Trek:TOS.

Loved it especially with the anime series vs. Star Trek:TOS.

Recommended for Star Trek and manga science fiction fans. - **Jeffrey Lu**

Mailing/Subscription Information

ConNotations is sent free of charge to those who have attended a CASFS sponsored convention in the past calendar year (currently 2005). Attendees of CopperCon 25 or HexaCon 15 will receive ConNotations Volume 16 Issues 1 thru 6.

ConNotations updates it's mailing list each December.

Individual subscriptions are available for \$20 for 6 issues beginning January 1, 2006.

Some non-CASFS groups give their membership lists to CASFS and purchase a bulk corporate subscription so their attendees may also receive ConNotations

Currently these groups are:



Role Playing Games

D&D, D20, GURPS, WOD, Shadowrun,



Miniature Wargames

Warmachine, Hordes, 40k, D&D Minis



Trading Card Games

Magic tG, BSG, Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, AGT



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