

ConNotations

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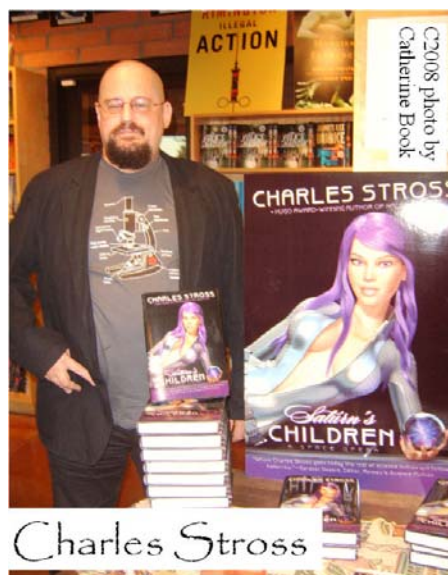
The Bi-Monthly Science Fiction, Fantasy & Convention Newszine of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society

A Conversation with Charles Stross

by Catherine Book

met Charles Stross when he did a signing at a local bookstore, Poisoned Pen in Scottsdale, Arizona on July 30, 2008. Charles hails from Scotland. Despite my car problems and late arrival, Charles was quite charming and accommodating. Since we were short of time, our conversation was a bit hurried but still quite satisfactory.

Charles currently has a three book deal with Ace/Orbit. Ace publishes in the US and Orbit in the UK. The first one to publish in July 2009 is "Palimpsest" a collection of short fiction, some of his more recent short fiction since 2001 including a new novella, for which the book is titled. The next one to publish, probably late in 2010, will be "419" a sequel to "Halting State." The title refers to a section of the Nigerian penal code that deals with those so-sincere letters we all receive about the millions of dollars some stranger is dying to give us. And the third, coming out in 2011, will be "The Fuller Memorandum," a Laundry novel which is named for the British tank general who invented the blitzkrieg in 1918. He was fascist and wasn't recalled during WWII, and he was Number Two in Aleister Crowley's mystical Order of the Silver Star. All of which make him a great figure to fictionalize. The story deals with an



occult secret service.

And "The Revolution Business", the 5th in the Merchant Princes series will go to publication in April 2008. And the last in the Merchant Princes series, "The Trade of Queens," will probably see publication late in 2009 or early 2010.

For someone as prolific as Charles, I was interested in a comment he made on his blog about how the service called Webscription thru Baen Books was the

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SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

With the start of the new year, we've got the majority of the network shows returning, albeit with a few casualties from the fall. There're also some new shows on the horizon as well as a few more returning to action in mid-season.

First up on NBC is the second half of the season for *Heroes* and *Chuck* as well as the return of *Medium* on Monday nights. *Knight Rider* has had its full season order of 22 episodes cut back to 17 with its (likely) final episode airing in late February. Debuting in March with a two-hour opener is *Kings*.

The next volume of *Heroes* is entitled "*Fugitives*" and from some hints about the storyline it looks like all of the powered people will be on the run once things kick in following a roundup and a subsequent plane crash, with the fate of some of them left unknown. What we do know is that we will finally meet Sylar's father, being played by **John Glover** (Lionel Luther on *Smallville*). Joining the cast will be **Zeljko Ivanek** as a character known as "The Hunter." Joining the production team with episode 19 will be **Bryan Fuller**, who became available when ABC didn't renew *Pushing Daisies*.

There's not much information on upcoming *Chuck* episodes. About the only spoiler tidbits I've tracked down are that Morgan will be seen in the buff during an upcoming episode dealing with a Sports Illustrated swimsuit photo shoot and we'll find out more about the Dark Intersect in an upcoming trilogy.

Knight Rider is undergoing a reboot of the series, but it is likely a case of too little, too late. The show will be ejecting cast members **Bruce Davison** (Charles Graiman), **Yancey Arias** (Alex Torres), and **Sydney Tamiia Poitier** (Carrie Ruvai) and keeping **Justin Bruening**, **Deanna Russo**, **Paul Campbell**, and **Smith Cho**. According to producer **Gary Scott Thompson** in the Hollywood Reporter, "We're moving away from the terrorist-of-the-week formula and closer to the original, making it a show about a man and his car going out and helping more regular people, everymen." Unfortunately, after planning the reboot, NBC cut five episodes from the season order, so the remaining four episodes of the reboot will likely end the series run in February (unless it gets pulled early).

When *Medium* returns in February, things will be somewhat back to normal in the DuBois household, with Joe getting a new job and also somehow managing to go back in time to give a warning to himself in college. One storyline has Allison having visions that the world is

about to end and she starts making a bomb of her own. **David Morse** will be guest starring in a couple of episodes as Caitlin's boss.

Debuting on Thursday night March 19 is the new series *Kings*, which takes a modern day approach of sorts to the legend of David and Goliath. NBC's press release describes the series as "an epic story of greed and power, war and romance, forbidden loves and secret alliances — and a young hero who rises to power in a modern-day kingdom." It stars **Ian McShane** as Silas Benjamin, the King of the country of Gilboa, living in the capital city of Shiloh. Gilboa is at war with their neighboring county Gath, and a skirmish between their forces ends up with a number of Gilboan soldiers taken prisoner. A young soldier, David Shepard (played by **Chris Egan**), defies orders and crosses enemy lines and taking on the Gath tanks dubbed "Goliaths" to rescue the prisoners, one of whom is Jack Benjamin (**Sebastian Stan**), the King's son. When David is promoted to Captain and escalated to a new level of prominence, he is drawn into the machinations of politics and other goings on. I've heard good things about the show from people like **Jane Espensen** and while it may be a bit confusing being drawn into the alternate world where it takes place, it may be worth checking it out.

FOX has brought back *24* for its delayed 7th season, and will be moving *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* to Friday nights as a lead-in to **Joss Whedon's** new series *Dollhouse*. *Fringe* will continue airing on Tuesday nights, now getting a big boost in the ratings thanks to *American Idol*. The producers have been pretty mum on what's coming up in *The Sarah Connor Chronicles* although there are admissions we'll see Kyle Reese, John Connor's father, in the present day and they are still promising a major death this season. Advance information for *Fringe* episodes is hard to come by as well. With the show running after *American Idol*, it should be getting even better ratings than it has been, although if it loses a large chunk of the *Idol* audience, Fox may move it elsewhere.

The debut of *Dollhouse* in mid-February is something being looked forward to by a lot of **Joss Whedon** and **Eliza Dushku** fans. The series has been having some ups and downs off-screen that **Whedon** has been pretty candid about in several interviews. He admits that he was starting to do too much too early in the series, throwing in stuff that should really be explored in a second or third season instead of an early episode and has made a completely new first episode as well as made some changes to other episodes in the hope that the series will be more accessible to casual viewers but also have enough meat for the fans.

As an example, he cited the *Buffy* episode "*The Body*" as an episode that had to draw on what had come before and really wouldn't have had the impact early in the series. As for specific episode information, there really isn't any out there and what has surfaced may no longer be accurate. It is safe to say that the series should be worth watching. How it will fare with the Friday night time slot remains to be seen, but with lower expectations for audience, it likely means a better chance for the show to build an audience if it doesn't show up initially. The show looks to have a strong cast, led by **Eliza Dushku** as the "active" Echo,



Tahmoh Penikett as investigating agent Paul Ballard, **Olivia Williams** as Dollhouse leader Adelle Dewitt, and **Amy Acker** as Dr. Claire Saunders. The premise of the show (the actives going out on assignments with different personalities) also makes for a good opportunity to bring in one-episode guest stars.

CBS is continuing with *Ghost Whisperer* and *Numb3rs* on Friday night, with *The Mentalist* continuing to have very good ratings, making it the best performing new show of the season. The *Eleventh Hour* has been performing OK on Thursday night and has had five additional episodes ordered. There's not much more to say about any of the shows in terms of advance information. Expect *The Mentalist* to bring the Red John serial killer storyline more to the forefront along with continuing to have fun with the former psychic angle.

ABC has dropped *Pushing Daisies* and *Eli Stone*, but they have given a vote of confidence to *Life on Mars*, ordering an additional four episodes and moving it to Wednesday nights following *Lost*. ABC will also be debuting *Castle* on Monday nights starting March 9th. *Life on Mars* has been building its audience and ABC hopes it to continue to do so having it paired up with *Lost*, likely a more compatible lead-in than *Private Practice*. Not much advance episode information to report, but the series will continue to explore the possible explanations for Sam Tyler's time travel as well as give us additional hints as to what is going on. As for *Lost*, I've given up trying to make sense of the limited spoilers that surface about individual episodes. Needless to say, they will continue to shock and surprise viewers as

the story unfolds with the flashbacks, flash forwards and present day action that pretty much requires a scorecard to keep up with. Debuting in early March on Monday night will be *Castle*, **Nathan Fillion's** latest foray into network TV that may have a bit of a chance to catch on. **Fillion** plays famous mystery novelist Richard Castle, who has gotten bored with his fame. When a real life serial killer has started staging murders based on those in his books, Richard is approached by NYPD detective Kate Beckett (**Stana Katic**) and gets involved with the investigation to find the killer. When that is solved, Castle and Beckett continue to work together solving other murders, developing a fiery relationship with each other. Also starring are **Susan Sullivan** as Castle's mother, **Martha Rodgers**, and **Molly Quinn** as his teenage daughter Alexis Castle.

The CW's Thursday lineup of *Smallville* and *Supernatural* continues to be a consistent draw for them and there is talk of extending both shows for at least another season. Coming up on *Smallville* is *Requiem*, which is, reportedly, the final episode for Lana Lang (**Kristin Kruek**). Also turning up in the episode is the character of Steve Lomard (**Ray Gellitti**), who in the comics is the Daily Planet's



arrogant sports reporter. *Infamous* sees the return of reporter Linda Lake (**Tori Spelling**), who is out to find out the truth about the "Red Blur" and Clark prepares to reveal his true nature to the world. *Turbulence* has Clark going to a press conference with Tess when problems arise on Oliver's jet. In *Hex*, a magician puts a magic spell on Chloe that makes her appear as Lois and she learns how Clark truly feels about Lois. In the meantime, Clark has a spell cast on him where he forgets about his powers. For *Supernatural* in February, there's only information on one episode, *Sex and Violence*, where a sexy thirtysomething doctor has a fling with one of the brothers and they end up being put under a spell where they have to fight each other. In another episode, we may see Sam Winchester sit down for a chess game with the grim reaper. Speaking of Reapers, the series *Reaper* returns for its second season in March. In the first episode, *A New Hope*, Sam and company have to hunt down a previous Reaper

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SF Tube Talk (Cont'd from page 3)

(played by **Sean Patrick Thomas**) that managed to find a loophole in his deal with The Devil, who might have some useful information for Sam to take advantage of. In another March episode, *The Sweet Science*, Sam's vessel is a pair of boxing gloves that he needs to use to catch an escaped boxer.

SciFi is into the final batch of episodes of *Battlestar Galactica*, which will be concluding its four year run at the end of March. Joining *Galactica* on Friday



nights are repeat runs of former network series *Invasion* and *Moonlight* (provided their ratings hold up). The remaining episodes of *Galactica* promises lots of revelations and answers to a lot of questions but there haven't really been much in the way of advance episode information. When about the most concrete piece of information is that one guest star will be a piano player that Kara opens up to, you're really reaching to get spoilers out of people. The series finale will unfold over two nights and three hours at the end of March. According to **Ron Moore** in several interviews it is very character focused and speculation is that it shows the eventual fate of all of the characters left alive by this point, jumping ahead into the future for many of them. But, that won't be the final end of *Galactica*. Sometime likely in June will be the two hour TV movie *The Plan*, focusing on the first two and a half seasons from the Cylon point of view and after that will be the prequel series *Caprica*, which will show us how everything came to be in the Galactica universe. That series is not expected to air until early 2010, so stay tuned....

BBC America will start airing the first series of *Ashes to Ashes*, the followup to the original *Life on Mars*, on Saturday nights starting March 7th. In *Ashes to Ashes*, DI Alex Drake (**Keeley Hawes**) is shot in 2008 and wakes up in 1981. Alex is familiar with Sam Tyler's detailed notes about his time tripping and is working with Gene Hunt (**Philip Glenister**) and other police from *Life on Mars* who have all transferred to the Metropolitan Police in London. From what she has read about Sam Tyler, Alex manages to get some communications via radio and TV coming in from 2008, but is still not certain if she is hallucinating or not. In the first episode, Alex believes

that catching the criminal who shot her in 2008 in 1981 might change her situation, only to find it doesn't. In episode two, Alex hooks up with a De Lorean-driving playboy while preparations are going on for the Prince Charles/Lady Di wedding.

Doctor Who has been in the news a lot for goings on behind the camera, not for what we've seen on screen. However, the 2008 Christmas special did draw over 13 million viewers on BBC1, making it the second highest rated broadcast for the year (behind a new *Wallace and Gromit* special, also aired on BBC1 over the holidays). It featured **David Morrissey** as "The Doctor" of sorts, and a plot by time displaced Cybermen to take over the world in 1851. Whether we will see it anytime soon in the US on SciFi is unknown. Filming began in January on the four 2009 specials that will be the last episodes of *Doctor Who* featuring **David Tennant** as The Doctor. Taking on the role of the long-lived Time Lord for series 5 in 2010 will be 26-year-old actor **Matt Smith**, who has been featured in the BBC drama *Party Animals* and in *The Ruby in the Smoke* TV movie where he co-starred with **Billie Piper**. **Smith** is the youngest actor to play The Doctor and was a surprise pick to everyone. According to producer and head writer **Steven Moffat** "The Doctor is a very special part, and it takes a very special actor to play him. You need to be old and young at the same time, a boffin and an action hero, a cheeky schoolboy and the wise old man of the universe. As soon as Matt walked through the door, and blew us away with a bold and brand new take on the Time Lord, we knew we had our man. 2010 is a long time away but rest assured the 11th Doctor is coming – and the universe has never been so safe." **Piers Wenger**, Head Of Drama, BBC Wales, added: "With two hearts, a ferocious



mind and over 900 years of experience behind him, it's not every 26-year-old actor who can take on a role like the Doctor but within moments of meeting Matt he showed the skill and imagination needed to create a Doctor all of his own." The announcement was made live on BBC 1 in a special edition of *Doctor Who Confidential* with the BBC getting the announcement made before any of the tabloids could beat them to it. There's been a lot of fan consternation about the choice, but I'm more than willing to believe that **Moffat** and **Wenger** have

made the right choice.

As for *Torchwood*, the five-episode Season Three will likely run on BBC 1 in the UK sometime in March. For this season, they are turning it into a week long event, planning on airing the five episodes titled "Children of Earth" over five nights. According to *Torchwood* producer Peter Bennett "It's not a story about spaceships, but it's about a government that did a deal with aliens back in the '60s, and they're now dealing with the consequences of that deal when the sins of their past come back to haunt them." All episodes are being directed by **Euros Lyn** with **Russell T. Davies**, **James Moran**, and **John Fay** writing episodes. Joining the cast for this series are **Peter Capaldi** as a government middleman caught up in the events, **Liz May Brice** as a covert government agent and **Paul Copely** as "a damaged man". **Kai Owen** will also be playing a larger role as Gwen's husband, Rhys. Look for it to turn up on BBC America sometime this summer, if not sooner. [Editor's Note: As of press time, Garth Ancier, president of BBC America, said that the U.S. summer broadcast will coincide with the BBC1 premiere with only a few hours, cross-Atlantic lag time.]

On the animated front, Cartoon Network will continue with new episodes of *Star Wars Clone Wars* and *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*. *Star Wars Clone Wars* will continue to fill in the time between Episode 2 and Episode 3, featuring the adventures of Anakin



Skywalker, Ahsoka, and Yoda, as they fight Count Dooku's forces. *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* has been a fun take on the DC Universe with a Silver Age style. Nicktoons has started up the first season of the animated *Wolverine and the X-Men* on Friday nights. The series has done well enough in Canada and other markets that a second season is already in the works. As you might guess, the series is about the X-Men, but with an emphasis on Wolverine. We'll have episodes where Wolverine must prevent Emma Frost from being taken over by the Shadow King, one where he rescues Magma from the Mutant Control Unit, and another where Nick Fury asks Wolverine to take on The Hulk when the real problem is really Wendingo.

A Conversation (Cont'd from page 1)

only e-book publisher who was doing everything right. I asked how he felt about e-book publishing. He felt that most publishers didn't understand the potential market or they were just afraid of it. When his "Saturn's Children" was released as an e-book, it was priced at \$25 when the hardcover retailed at the same price and was discounted on Amazon. Clearly, they didn't understand the e-book market. He mentioned Jim Baen and how he viewed the reading market. One of the things Baen discovered was that some readers were willing a premium price for the unedited book, the ARC, and still buy the hardcover when it came out. Charles believes that Amazon's Kindle is a dead-end, it's too expensive for this niche-market. He thinks that most e-books will be read on phones, notably the iPhone. There are already e-book reader programs available for the iPhone. Once the price structure is worked out and an e-book can be purchased for the price of a paperback or less, it will start catching on. He sees the e-book market as challenging the mass-market paperback and not necessarily the hardcover edition.

And for someone as prolific as Charles, I wondered if he worked on more than one project at a time. He reads omnivorously and researches a lot. He's usually working on something that had been researched much earlier. He does often have several projects in varied stages but found that he cannot switch between them quickly. He has to put one down to concentrate solely on another. Does that help when he runs into a block? No, he says a block only occurs if something isn't working, something that he obviously hadn't thought through. So he just has to figure it out – sometimes by taking a day or two off to reenergize or even by rereading all he's written so far to find where it went wrong. He says he's rarely been blocked more than a week, when his subconscious was telling him that something was wrong.

What his writing environment like? Charles and his wife live in a three bedroom apartment which is really a one-bedroom and two offices. He has several decaying computers and a sofa. He writes on the sofa with a laptop because his wrists hurt less that way. He plays an iPod on random. He finds he really needs a quiet place so writing while on the road doesn't work for him.

And what elements of a story are most important to him? Actually, *ideas* come first with him. Characters are pretty important, he added. And he tries to work on characters and plot to get them really right. He finds that when he's got the nucleus, the idea - then the plot, setting, and the rest tend to accrete around it. And who reads those drafts? Any writer's groups? He used to work with a group in

(Cont'd on page 6)

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A Conversation (Cont'd from page 4)

Edinburgh but not anymore. Lately, he uses his private blog and posts extracts for the couple hundred of invited test readers who leave their comments.

Any new ideas breaking ground right now? He'd like to expand the novella "Palimpsest" into a full-length novel someday. He'd like to get the Merchant Princes done and spend more time on the Laundry novels. He tending more towards series work rather than hatching a lot of new ideas.

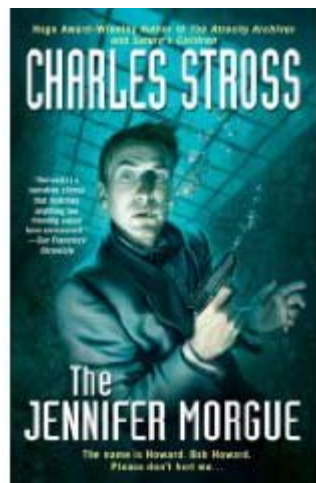
What is Charles most proud of? He paused a while and then admitted that there are things he's *dissatisfied* with – a most equivocal answer. He likes to think his best work is still ahead of him. He did finally admit that he was very satisfied with "The Jennifer Morgue" – he liked being able to de-construct James Bond...down to the nuts and bolts of him. He felt that lately he's been writing too fast – two books a year. He wants to slow down and take more pains with whatever he's working on. He states that the last five percent of the book takes 90 percent of the effort and maybe the last couple books like "Halting State" were a bit rushed. Not so rushed that it didn't make the Hugo list last year. But he felt that if he'd had another year, "Halting State" would have been a better book.

He then spoke for a bit about the direction of the science fiction and fantasy industry. Fantasy outsells science fiction two to one, he told me. It's been like that for many years. He remarked on the phenomenon of paranormal romance. Romance is, of course, the biggest genre; accounting for fifty percent of all fiction sold. But within, is paranormal romance which is reputed to outsell science fiction itself. Horror has also been overrun by paranormal romance. He speculates that the success of Buffy and writers like Laurell K. Hamilton have created a market niche and has been expanding under its own momentum ever since. I asked him if he thought it was heading for a collapse. He hemmed for a moment and then admitted he thought it was going to collapse a couple years ago. Now he thinks it may be heading for a retrenchment, a bit of trimming back; but that it will be with us indefinitely. He noted that a lot of science fiction writers overlook the important fact that over 70 percent of fiction sold is to women. He commented that some 'hard' science fiction are two-fisted, engineering tales that are positively misogynistic in its outlook. He sees that as being self-defeating and even bloody stupid.

I was curious about the difference between the US and UK publishing market. Oh, very fundamental differences – they are selling to people with very different cultural backgrounds. So there can be some real differences in writers' successes. For example, discounting

Rowling and Pratchett, the biggest SF seller is Iain M. Banks. Everything he sells is a top-ten bestseller, in the quarter to half million dollar book advance territory, but he's failed miserably in the US. With any luck, he may have a better future in the US since Orbit Publishing has opened up shop in New York and they take Banks very seriously. Pratchett is another example – he does quite well in the US but it doesn't compare to what he does in the UK where he sells over a million books a year which would compare to selling five million a year here in the US.

My last question to Charles was to ask if he attends SF/F convention. Only six or seven a year, he responded. *Only?* Charles is an old fanboy, he's been going to conventions for the past 25 years. How does he see the difference between the US and the UK cons? He pointed out that the US has five times the population of the UK, and he sees attendance in the same ratio – so a 300-person con is pretty big. There are cultural differences as well. US cons have to have a lounge with free munchies. UK cons have a real bar. I'm not sure which I'd appreciate more...



Star Trek The Exhibition at the Arizona Science Center

by Lee Whiteside

Star Trek The Exhibition at the Arizona Science Center opened to the public on Saturday, Nov 15th, with a VIP group in the morning and Arizona Science Center members getting to see it for the first time in the afternoon. It opened to the general public on Sunday, Nov 16th and will continue through early May.

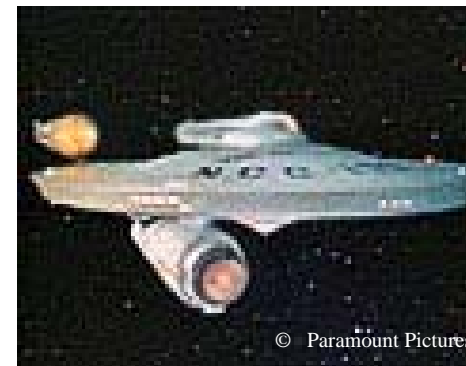
I attended the VIP opening on Saturday morning along with members of the press, members of the United Federation of Phoenix and members of the USS Leonidas Starfleet club. We got a chance to look at the exhibit without a large crowd and took our time looking at the various uniforms, props, ships, and set pieces on display. Mike and Denise Okuda were on hand to answer questions as well as David Stipes, former Trek visual effects supervisor who now teaches in Phoenix. The Okudas have put in a lot of work to make sure the exhibit's displays are accurate and informative. Other former Trek production crew such as Herman Zimmerman and John Eaves also were involved in creating the exhibit.

Coming into the entry area, you immediately see a large number of costumes on display from the entire run on Star Trek, including Khan in Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan, Counselor Troi's outfit from Next Generation, an Engineering outfit from The Motion Picture, plus many others from the original series. The Enterprise-D bridge set was one of the highlights of the exhibit, although my favorite piece on display was the very large mockup of the Enterprise-D saucer section used for the crash scenes in Generations. There is also a full size Scorpion ship from Star Trek:

Nemesis as well as models of all of the Enterprise ships on display. As you move into the exhibit there are plenty of props to look at, various uniforms worn by Captain Kirk as well as the TOS captain's chair, a display area of alien masks showcasing Michael Westmore's work, a mockup of the TNG sick bay, and a recreation of the TNG Engineering main room complete with pulsing lights. Downstairs is a recreation of Quark's bar and a station where you can buy photos taken of you on the bridge. Outside of the exhibit are a couple of motion simulators that can take you on a special Star Trek adventure with Lt. Worf.

Being an exhibit at the Arizona Science Center also means that there are informative displays about how real science relates to what we have seen in Star Trek including an educator guide available for classes visiting the exhibit. There're also informative displays about the history of Star Trek and information on the Star Trek universe for those not as well versed in Trek lore as are the members of the local Star Trek clubs.

With the release of the new Star Trek movie coming in May, this is a good way to get a Star Trek fix before returning to the Star Trek universe on the big screen. For more information including costs and hours, visit www.azscience.org





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Pro Notes

Hi, Everyone! Thanks for reading ConNotations and my column. It's a short column this month, everyone must be busy writing.

Nancy Kilpatrick from Canada has a lot of news – she has just finished editing an all-horror, all-Canadian anthology with noted author David Morrell. “Tesseract 13” will be launched this coming August at the mega convention Worldcon, to be held in Montreal. Nancy has been writing a lot of short stories lately. Some to look for in ‘09 are a grim tale in an anthology of stories from PS Publishing inspired by the songs of Bruce Springsteen; and a story in an upcoming anthology (details to come) in the world of Hellraiser. You can find a few of her recently published short fiction in these anthologies: *THE LIVING DEAD*; *BLOOD LITE*; *TRAPS*. Nancy is also working on two novels and claims she needs a holiday! Nancy is about to edit an all-Canadian, all-vampire anthology for Edge Publishing, to be launched at World Horror Convention, 2010 in Brighton, UK. This will be a signed by authors, limited edition book, all original stories. If you are interested in securing a copy, email Nancy at: nancykilpatrick@hotmail.com and she will pass along your name to the publisher.

Also hailing from Canada, is one of my personal favorites – **Robert J. Sawyer**. Rob tells me ABC is filming a pilot show based on his novel “Flash Forward” next month. The pilot script was written by David S. Goyer (Batman Begins) and Brannon Braga (Star Trek, 24), and David is directing. Rob is serving as consultant and will be writing one of the first-season episodes. Very exciting news! Rob also has a title coming out in April – “Wake” and will do a tour in Canada.

And from Connecticut, I heard from **Julie Czerneda** who said that she is in a mad dash to finish “Rift in the Sky, Book 3 of the Stratification”. It's scheduled for July release, not coincidentally the month before Julie will be Toastmaster for Anticipation, the Worldcon in Montreal. Before that, she'll be GOH at New Zealand's national convention, ConScription, and a guest at Australia's Conjecture. She'd better get back to writing so she can pack. Wish her luck!

Allen Steele, in Massachusetts, commented that he really liked ConNotations. His next novel, “Coyote Horizon,” will be published by Ace in March, with the audiobook coming out from Audible.com at the same time. This will be the first volume of a two-book duology that has a separate storyline from that of the original Coyote Trilogy (“Coyote,” “Coyote Rising,” and “Coyote Frontier”). He's currently working on the second volume, “Coyote Destiny,” which will come out sometime in 2010. At this point, Allen expects that these two books will be the end of the Coyote series as a whole. He says he may write another spin-off novel set in the same universe, like

“Spindrift” or “Galaxy Blues,” and stand-alone short stories or novellas are also a possibility; Ron Miller, whose artwork has graced the novels, and Allen have also discussed doing a traveler's guide to Coyote. He says he's been working on this series for ten years now, though, and the time has come to move on. But his wife reminds him that he's said the same thing before, so...

Moving down the coast to Florida - the biggest thing that happened this past year to **Joe Haldeman** was the sale of the movie rights to “The Forever War” to Ridley Scott. Scott is supposed to start working on it when he finishes his current movie. “The Forever War” is also being reissued in quality paperback form by St. Martin's Press in February 2009. His most recent book is “Marsbound,” which came out from Ace in August; the paperback will be published in August 2009. Haldeman is currently finishing up “Starbound,” the second novel of the *MARSBOUND* trilogy. Joe and Gay are going on a cruise to Alaska this summer, hosted by his favorite songwriter/performer Jack Williams.

Stephen Donaldson, in New Mexico, didn't have a lot of news but wanted to share that this coming June, the University of St. Andrews in Fife, Scotland, is going to give him an honorary degree (Doctor of Letters, usually written Lit.D., or sometimes Litt.D.). He says he doesn't know how or why he was selected, but he's certainly pleased.

And from the isolation of Colorado, **Dan Simmons** is busy working to meet the Feb 1st Little, Brown deadline for “Black Hills.” He says it's the most difficult, complex, beautiful, and maddening novel he's ever tried to write. (But at least it's short, he says – compared to his last six novels.) Dan is on a signing tour in February, he'll be at the Poisoned Pen bookstore in Scottsdale, AZ on Feb 25th.

And, finally – **Michael Moorcock** out in California has a lot happening – “The Best Short Stories of Michael Moorcock” edited by John Davey and Jeff and Ann VanderMeer at Tachyon and the Elric collectors' editions volumes 4,5,6 illustrated by Julian Sweet, Michael Kaluta, John Picacio respectively at Del Rey are due out soon. In production are: Tor are planning to produce the Hawkmoon books, “The Jewel in the Skull,” “Sorcerer's Amulet,” “The Sword of the Dawn, The Runestaff” in illustrated editions. He is in the process of writing a three book sequence provisionally called “The Sanctuary of the White Friars, Vol. 1,” “Two Lives, Vol 2,” “Five Saints” and “Vol 3 Seven Miracles.” It will contain both fantastic and realistic elements. Another book, “Stalking Balzac,” will also be a pretty straightforward roman a clef.

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

Previous ProNotes columns and book reviews are posted on our website at: <http://www.casfs.org/ConNotations/>

FYI

CASFS Book Discussion

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

Come do some face-to-face interaction with your fellow readers and SF/Fantasy fans! Haven't read the book? Don't worry, there's no quiz or anything. You can use the rest of us as your personal book reviewers to see if it's something you'd like. We start out with the book discussion, but the conversation can go anywhere. The get-together is held in the coffee shop of Bent Cover Books near 28th Drive and Cactus Road in Phoenix. We welcome potential new friends.
February 17, 2009 - *Old Man's War* by John Scalzi

March 17, 2009 - *The Incomplete Enchanter* by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt

April 21, 2009 - *Larklight* by Phillip Reeve

May 19, 2009 - *Tarzan of the Apes* by Edgar Rice Burroughs

June 16, 2009 - *Wyrd Sisters* by Terry Pratchett

CALL FOR UNPUBLISHED FICTION

I am working for a publisher in Tucson who is interested in expanding his line to include an SF anthology. Since we are both veterans, we would like to start with fiction by, for, and about the military side of SF, or the SF side of the military. If you have any stories of that sort lying in a box or filling memory of your hard-drive, or an idea that just needs an invitation for it to materialize, it is the dream of my middle years to have a slush pile of my very own. In the tradition of Joe Haldeman and Poul Anderson, poetry is also welcome. And if you can write a sestina that we can publish, I will personally award you a bonus.

We are still debating the merits of flat fee vs. royalties; in either case, authors retain copyright for other publications. There is very little overhead for the books published by Fireship Press, since all books are printed to order and shipped directly. This leaves more room for profit and royalty payments.

Another anthology with be theme based. If you have a story for *You Wish!* Send that along.

My goal is to fill some of the gap left by the passing of Marion Zimmer Bradley – not as author, but as editor. The *Swords and Sorceress* series brought many new authors into print, and her

editorial comments were an education.

Please send submissions to c.wozny@hotmail.com with subject line Anthology. Let's publish!

CASFS DONATES TICKETS

The Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society (CASFS), through the efforts of ConNotations and Catherine Book, has acquired ten tickets to the local Star Trek exhibit at the Arizona Science Center and will be donating all tickets to the Children First Academy, formerly known as the Thomas J. Pappas School. The Academy serves the educational needs of the homeless and low-income children of our city.

AUTHOR SIGNINGS

Poisoned Pen bookstore
Janni Lee Simner, Feb 7, 2pm
Dana Stabenow, Feb 17, 7pm
Dan Simmons, Feb 25, 7pm

Barnes & Noble, Eastside, Tucson
Janni Lee Simner, Feb 14, 2pm

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

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

Path of the Craft Discussion group
discusses Neopagan theories inspired by both fiction and non-fiction books about magic, nature, mythology, and spirituality longest-running pagan book group in Phoenix. -Feb 28, Mar 28, 6pm
Borders, Phoenix Camelback

Manga Bookclub
1st Tuesdays, 7pm
Borders, Chandler

Manga Bookclub
Feb 21, 7pm
March 21, 7pm
Barnes & Noble, Goodyear

SPECIAL BOOK RELEASES

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

Borderlands Press
“Fears Unnamed”
by Tim Lebbon
“The Vampire Trilogy”
by Whitley Strieber

Cemetery Dance Publications
“The Secretary of Dreams, Vol 2”
by Stephen King

(Cont'd on page 8)

PS Publishing

“The Day It Rained Forever”
by Ray Bradbury
“Gunpowder”
by Joe Hill
“Planet of Mystery”
by Terry Bisson

PYR Publishing

“Sagaramanda”
by Alan Dean Foster
“Silverheart”
by Michael Moorcock
and Storm Constantine
“Ivory”
by Mike Resnick
“Star of Gypsies”
by Robert Silverberg
“World’s End: Age of Misrule 1”
by Mark Chadbourn

Subterranean Press

“Metatropolis”
edited by John Scalzi
“Songs of the Dying Earth”
by Jack Vance
“The Nonesuch and Others”
by Brian Lumley

Wildside Press

“Harp, Pipe, and Symphony”
by Paul DiFilippo
“The Labyrinth”
by Catherynne Valente

GAMING EVENTS**BOOKMANS, MESA**

Dungeons & Dragons Night.
Mondays, 6pm

DRAWN TO COMICS

HeroClix. Tuesdays 4pm-7pm. Fridays,
8pm-11pm. Saturdays, 3pm-6pm
Star Wars Miniatures. Sundays, 1pm –
4pm
Sit-and-Sketch with local artists. 3rd
Saturday, 6pm-8pm

GAME DEPOT

HeroClix & MechWarrior -
Wednesdays, 530pm
Magic, The Gathering -
Thursdays, 6pm-9pm
Monsterpocalypse.
Wednesdays, 5pm
Pirates – collectible cardgame.
Fridays, 5pm.

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES

Federation Commander -
2nd Saturdays, noon
RPG -
1st & 3rd Sundays

Boardgames & Demo Nite -
Thursdays, 6pm

SAMURAI COMICS

(check website for correct store location)
HeroClix Tournament, Fridays, 6pm
Mechwarrior Tourney, Wednesdays, 6pm
Yugioh Tournament, Sundays, noon
Anime Club, Sundays, noon
Pokemon, Sundays, 2pm

SPAZDOG COMICS

HeroClix Tournaments, Fridays, 7pm
Pokemon League, Saturdays, 3pm

SCIENCE EVENTS**ASU**

Science lectures and news: [http://
asunews.asu.edu/news/science](http://asunews.asu.edu/news/science)
Origins Symposium “A Brief History of
Time”, Stephen Hawking, Richard
Dawkins, Briane Greene, Craig Venter,
Steven Pinker, April 6

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

New exhibit: **Star Trek**, opened Nov
16th
The new Dorrance Planetarium is now
open.

Materials Science Workshops

These workshops provide fun hands-on
experiences to help participants under-
stand how materials scientists manipulate
the properties of various materials to
create the products that we use in our
everyday life.

Check website for dates and topics

Investigating WALL-E. Children work
with simple machines to see what makes
WALL-E run.

**Brain Imaging, Genomics & Preven-
tion of Alzheimer’s Disease.** Feb 6,
Planetarium

Evolution & Faith Revisited, Feb 20,
Science Café

**Imagining the Future: SF of
Nanotechnology?** Mar 20, Science Café

The Search for Life of Mars, Apr 3,
Planetarium

**Invisible Forces That Shape the
Universe**, May 1, Planetarium

Darwinfest – series of lectures hosted by
ASU, Wednesdays in February

**CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER,
PEORIA**

Family Fun Day, Feb 28, Mar 28, 10am-
4pm

“Understanding the Nature of Light”,
Fridays, 2pm

Stargazing. Starlab Planetarium. Check
website for dates and times

The Space Place is a 2-hour interactive
program for little ones with big imagina-
tions! Designed for children ages 3
through 6, the program features age-
appropriate activities designed to teach

preschoolers about our planet and solar
system. Call for reservations. 3rd
Mondays, 930am-1130am

ASU Meteorite Exhibit

Columbia Shuttle Memorial Display

Iridium Satellite Model

Lowell Observatory Display

Journey Thru the Space Program

Atlantis Space Shuttle Model

MOON SOCIETY MEETING

3 PM at orders Book Store, 1361 S. Alma
School Rd. (Alma School and Southern)
Mesa. . For more info contact Craig
Porterat portercd@msn.com

**PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM,
TUCSON**

New Volunteer Orientation. Feb 14,
Mar 14, Apr 11, 930am

SR-71 Symposium. Feb 21-22, 9a-5p

Titan Missile Museum Tours. Reserva-
tions only

The only publicly accessible Titan II
missile site in the nation. Tour the
underground missile site. See the 3-ton
blast doors, 8’ thick silo walls and an
actual Titan II missile in the launch duct.
Visit the launch control center, experience

a simulated launch, and more. Evening
tours to beat the heat: Oct 11, 5pm-8pm

SETI Institute’s Weekly**Science Radio Program**

Mondays, avail as podcast

<http://radio.seti.org>

<http://podcast.seti.org>

**OTHER GENRE-RELATED
EVENTS****AdventureCon -CANCELLED -**

www.adventurecon.com

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

The Star Trek Exhibit - opened Nov 16

BOOKMANS, PHOENIX

Arizona Browncoats Shindig. 1st Satur-
day, 7pm

Scimitar-Talon is a group of people
wanting to enjoy recreating portions of
the middle ages prior to 1600 AD.

Classes on Medieval Arts and Sciences..

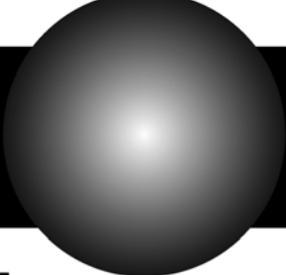
1st Saturdays, 130pm-230pm

Across Plus Anime Club. Sundays, 6pm

BOOKMANS, GRANT RD, TUCSON

Free Tarot Readings with Pandora,
Wednesdays, 6pm

(Cont’d on page 9)




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Wednesdays, 7pm

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Screenings of movies, many SF genre.
Check website for times and listings.

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www.midnitemoviemamacita.com

TUCSON FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

March 13-15, 2009 at University of
Arizona in Tucson
Here are the expected SF/F authors who
will attend:

Emma Bull
Liz Danforth
Charles deLint
Diana Gabaldon
John Gentile

~~Father Andrew Greeley~~ CANCELLED

Jane Lindskold
Jeff Mariotte
Dennis McKiernan
Yvonne Navarro
Weston Ochse
Jennifer Roberson

~~James Sallis~~ CANCELLED

Vijaya Schartz
Will Shetterly
Janni Lee Simner
S.M. Stirling
Robert Vardeman
John Vornholt

Check the web sites for confirmation,
location and more information.
Game Depot, 480-966-4727
<http://www.azchallenger.org>
<http://azscience.org>
<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>
<http://beyond.asu.edu>
<http://www.bookmans.com>
<http://www.borderlandspress.com/>
<http://www.borders.com>
<http://www.browncoats.lagemann.org>
<http://www.cemeterydance.com>
<http://www.changinghands.com>
<http://www.drawntocomics.com>
<http://www.imperialoutpost.com>
<http://www.library.pima.gov>
<http://www.loftcinema.com/showtimes>
<http://www.novaspace.com/Spacefest/>
<http://www.pimaair.org>
<http://www.poisonedpen.com>
<http://www.pyrsf.com/catalog.html>
<http://www.samuraicomics.com>
<http://www.seti.org>
<http://www.spazdogcomics.com/>
<http://store.pspublishing.co.uk/>
<http://www.subterraneanpress.com/>
<http://www.titanmissilemuseum.org/>
<http://tucsonfestivalofbooks.org/>
<http://www.wildsidepress.com/>

In Memory

Forrest J Ackerman
Majel Barrett
Michael Crichton
Bob May
Edouard Mesert
Patrick McGoohan
Ricardo Montalban

Forrest J Ackerman
November 24, 1916 - December 4, 2008

Forrest J Ackerman, the sometime actor, literary agent, magazine editor and full-time bon vivant who discovered author Ray Bradbury and was widely credited with coining the term "sci-fi," has died. He was 92. Ackerman died November 24, 2008 of heart failure at his Los Angeles home.

Forry was a Lifetime Active member of Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America and his awards include Hugo Award: Number 1 Fan Personality, 1953 and the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement, 1997.

Ackerman's wife, Wendayne, died in 1990; he has no surviving family members.

Majel Barrett
February 23, 1936 - December 18, 2008

Actress Majel Barrett Roddenberry, beloved star of *Star Trek* passed away on December 18, 2008 surrounded by family and friends. She was 76 years old. She is survived by her only son Eugene "Rod" Roddenberry Jr. Additional Information on Majel's life may be found at

<http://www.rodtenberry.com/>

A memorial ceremony was held on January 4, 2009 at Forrest Lawn. Condolences can be sent via email to share@rodtenberry.com or by mail to:

Roddenberry Productions
4400 Coldwater Canyon Avenue, Suite 100

Studio City, CA 91604

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests that a donation in Majel's name be made to one of the two following organizations, who share Majel's love for animals and dedication to animal rescue.

Precious Paws
18034 Ventura Blvd., #430
Encino, CA 91316
www.preciouspaws.org
(818) 304-5595
C.A.R.E.
P.O. Box 56631
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
www.care4pets.org
(818) 685-9980

Michael Crichton
October 23, 1942 -November 4, 2008

Michael Crichton died unexpectedly in Los Angeles, California following a battle against cancer. He is best know as the author of *Jurassic Park* and *The Andromeda Strain* as well as being the creator of *ER*. His books have been translated into thirty six languages and thirteen have been made into films.

Crichton's awards included the Academy Award, Emmy, Peabody, Writer's Guild of America Award, and Edgar Allan Poe Award.

He is survived by his wife, Sherri Alexander and a daughter, Taylor Anne, from a previous marriage.

Bob May
September 4, 1939January 18, 2009

Bob May, who donned The Robot's suit in the hit 1960s television show *Lost in Space*, died January 18, 2009 of congestive heart failure. He also performed in several television series, including *The Time Tunnel*.

May was a regular at autograph conventions in the Los Angeles area and around the country and was much sought after by fans of the show

May lost his home in an upscale mobile home park in the San Fernando Valley in the November 2008 California wildfires that hit the Los Angeles area, though he and his wife were able to escape without injury.

He is survived by his wife, Judith, two children and four grandchildren.

Edouard Mesert
Sept 28, 1957 - Dec 14, 2008

Edouard B. Mesert passed away due to complications from an extended illness on December 14, 2008. Memorial



services were held on January 18, 2009 hosted by Edouard's uncle Milt Kenin and officiated by the Reverends Theodore Elsenheimer, Nancy Elsenheimer and David Weaver.

Edouard was a frequent participant in local conventions and a member of the Southwest Costumers Guild, seen

frequently in silken robes or in his regency vampire persona. Outside of the convention circle, Edouard was a professional political consultant, involved in civil rights issues and campaigns for candidates ranging up to the US Senate.

Edouard was an active member of the Church of the Beatitudes and it was clear from the anecdotes told at the memorial service that he did much to enliven their social functions. He always closed his e-mails and voice messages with his favorite quote from St. Paul, "God is still speaking."

Donations to Edouard's memory may be directed to the Youth and Music Ministries, Church of the Beatitudes United Church of Christ, 555 West Glendale Avenue, Phoenix AZ 85021.
<http://www.beatitudeschurch.org/>

Patrick McGoohan
March 19, 1928 - January 13, 2009

Patrick McGoohan, an Emmy-winning actor who created and starred in the cult classic television show *The Prisoner*, died in Los Angeles after a short illness.

McGoohan won two Emmys for his work on the Peter Falk detective drama *Columbo*, but he was best known as the title character Number Six in *The Prisoner*, a surreal 1960s British series in which a former spy is held captive in a small village and constantly tries to escape.

He is survived by his wife, Joan Drummond, their three daughters, five grandchildren and one great grand-son.

Ricardo Montalban
November 25, 1920 - January 14, 2009

Ricardo Montalban, the Mexican-born actor who was best known as the wish-fulfilling Mr. Roarke in TV's *Fantasy Island*, and as Khan Noonien Singh in the *Star Trek* (1966) episode *Space Seed* and *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* (1982) has died at his home. He was 88.

Montalban is survived by his daughters Laura and Anita, sons Victor and Mark and six grandchildren.

Poetry and memories of those who have passed may be found on our web site at <http://www.casfs.org/>

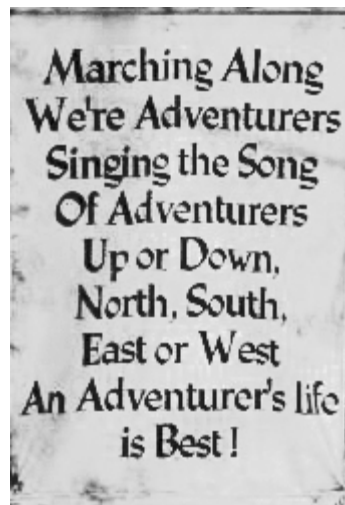
Disney Silences the Song of the Adventurers Club

By Shane Shellenbarger

It is New Years Eve, 1937 and you have been invited to attend a very special party at the Adventurer's Club, a unique place filled with unique people. You descend the stairs from the Zebra Mezzanine, noting the attendees are world adventurers (or people who claim they are), and the walls of the Main Salon are covered with artifacts and bric-a-brac gathered from locations as diverse as Antarctica to Zanzibar.



You note the bronze statue of Zeus, with his rod and creel. You look up at the stone edifice of Babylonia, goddess of all things fertile and tip your fedora to the Club Gleemeister, Colonel Critchlow Suchbench, who pays you no mind. You jimmy the lock and slip into the Library, moving over to the haunted organ, fish a Liberty half dollar out of the watch pocket of your vest, and drop it into Fingers Zambezi's over-sized brandy



snifter. You hear the sharp crack of knuckles and watch as the keys of the organ seem to move without provocation and the tune, "My Funny Valentine," fills the Library. You slip out a side door as the main door opens.

Straightening your tie, you walk into the Mask Room and watch for a few minutes as the masks of Arnie and Claude banter back and forth. You feel something brush up against you. You turn and see a maid with auburn tresses who gives you a wink and pops her gum in synchronicity. Graves the butler, standing behind her, clears his throat and she moves off, swishing her feather duster as she goes. Graves addresses you as, "Sir," and presents a silver tray containing a glass tumbler three quarters filled with a 50-year-old adult beverage. You accept the proffered drink and move on to the

Treasure Room as Beezle the genie makes an appearance for the club's new inductees. He sees you and bows as you incline your head in his direction. Just then, you hear a fanfare coming from the Main Salon and you head back that way. Colonel Suchbench is finishing a song and beginning the official Club Song. You join in.

*Marching Along
We're Adventurers
Singing the Song
Of Adventurers
Up or Down
North, South,
East or West
An Adventurer's Life is Best.*

Kungaloosh!

The Library doors open, initiates, and full members alike enter for the night's festivities. You take out your pocket watch and note the 10:00 hour. It is just two hours until 1938. You close the watch, replace it in your vest, and follow the crowd into the Library for the evening's main entertainment.

The preceding is the type of experience and entertainment you could enjoy at the Adventurers Club on Pleasure Island in Downtown Disney while staying at Walt Disney World. Correction, not "could enjoy" but could *have* enjoyed, because Disney has shuttered the Adventurers Club, perhaps forever.

On May 1st, 1989, The Adventurers Club opened on Disney's Pleasure Island

along with a number of other clubs, restaurants, and stores at the Walt Disney World Resort. The Disney Imagineers, led by Head Writer, Show Producer, and Show Director, Roger Cox and designer, Joe Rohde (designer of Disney's Animal Kingdom) styled the interior after a 1937 era private club for explorers and world travelers. The walls of the club were festooned with photographs and artifacts from countless expeditions and explorations. The Adventurers Club featured audio-animatronics, puppets, and a cast of characters and adventurers who performed in scripted shows and improvisational comedy. The shows and cast conversations were often laced with innuendo, while they mingling with the club's patrons who were often referred to as initiates, fellow adventurers, or simply "drunks."

The cast of live characters were large: Aviator and ladies' man, Hathaway Browne. Club Treasurer and ichthyologist, Otis T. Wren. Befuddled Club Curator, Fletcher Hodges. Club President and socialite, Pamela

Perkins. Explorer and cabaret singer, Samantha Sterling. Junior Adventurer and contender for the Balderdash Cup, Emil Bleehall. The mysterious and rarely seen gypsy, Madame Zarkov, Club Butler and trumpeter of announcements, Graves, along with too many maids to name.

The group of faux cast members included: Club Gleemeister and cable-controlled puppet, Colonel Critchlow Suchbench. The stone-faced goddess of women and all things fertile, Babylonia who would sometimes speak to the mounted animal head of the Yakoose. These three could be found in the Main Salon. In the Mask Room were Arnie and Claude, who were (as you might have guessed) talking masks. The Treasure Room contained the disembodied head of Beezle, a genie. The Library is the domain of the disembodied "Fingers" Zambezi and his haunted organ. Each of these characters is a combination of mechanical magic and human actor.

Lastly, there was the cast of characters who were either only referred to, but never seen, or those who appeared in the



early or closing days of the club's existence: Sutter Bestwick, Emil Bleehall, Sr, Sheila Griffin, Chilton Thompson, and Marcel, a man in an ape suit who appeared in the early days of the club and in the final Hoopla on September 27, 2008, the club's closing night. Marcel would invite the club's permanent members to join him on a yearlong safari.

On June 17th, 2008, Disney announced they would be "... taking the Downtown Disney experience to the next level. We are doing this through enhancements to existing Downtown Disney locations. Extraordinary new shopping, dining and other experiences including a completely re-imagined Pleasure Island, and enhanced theming and story telling brought to life by Disney Imagineers." Disney also released the statement that "... it's consistent with our commitment to regularly evaluating and refreshing our product to ensure it is relevant to our Guests and providing them with new and exciting experiences they can only have at Walt Disney World Resort. In addition, our Guests are telling us that they want additional shopping and dining experiences at Downtown Disney and we want to position Downtown Disney for long-term success."

My interpretation of those statements is the operating costs of the Pleasure

(Cont'd on page 11)

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Island clubs - 8 Trax, The Adventurer's Club, BET Sound-Stage Club, Mannequins Dance Palace, Motion, and The Comedy Warehouse (my personal favorite) - were too high or the revenues generated were too low and Disney wanted a bigger profit. I believe that they have removed several reasons for going to Downtown Disney and Pleasure Island and they may well see a loss of revenue for some time to come. Over 8,200 people signed the on-line petition to save the Adventurers Club and I share their hope that Disney will reconsider and perhaps resurrect the AC in a fitting venue, perhaps the new Animal Kingdom Lodge. It would indeed be a shame to lose this unique and eclectic entertainment venue forever.

In closing, I give you the Adventurer's Club Creed:

*We climb the highest mountains,
just to get a better view.
We plumb the deepest oceans,
because we're daring through and
through.
We cross the scorching desert,
martinis in our hand.
We ski the polar ice caps,
in tuxedos looking grand.
We are reckless, brave, and loyal,
and valiant to the end.
If you come in here a stranger,
you will exit as a friend.*

KUNGALOOSH!

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Musical Notes

by Tom Tuerff

Jeff and Maya Bohnhoff - Mobius Street
Mystic Fig Records

The Bohnhoffs like to alternate CD releases between filk parodies and original songs. This excellent release belongs to the latter camp, and definitely worth picking up.

Jeff Bohnhoff's lyrics have always displayed a concern for mankind in general. This is obvious from the start of the album. "Empty Man," which describes too many people nowadays: both physically and spiritually bankrupt.

The album's title cut talks about how people tend to make the same mistakes over and over, when the opportunity to change for the better may be looking you in the face.

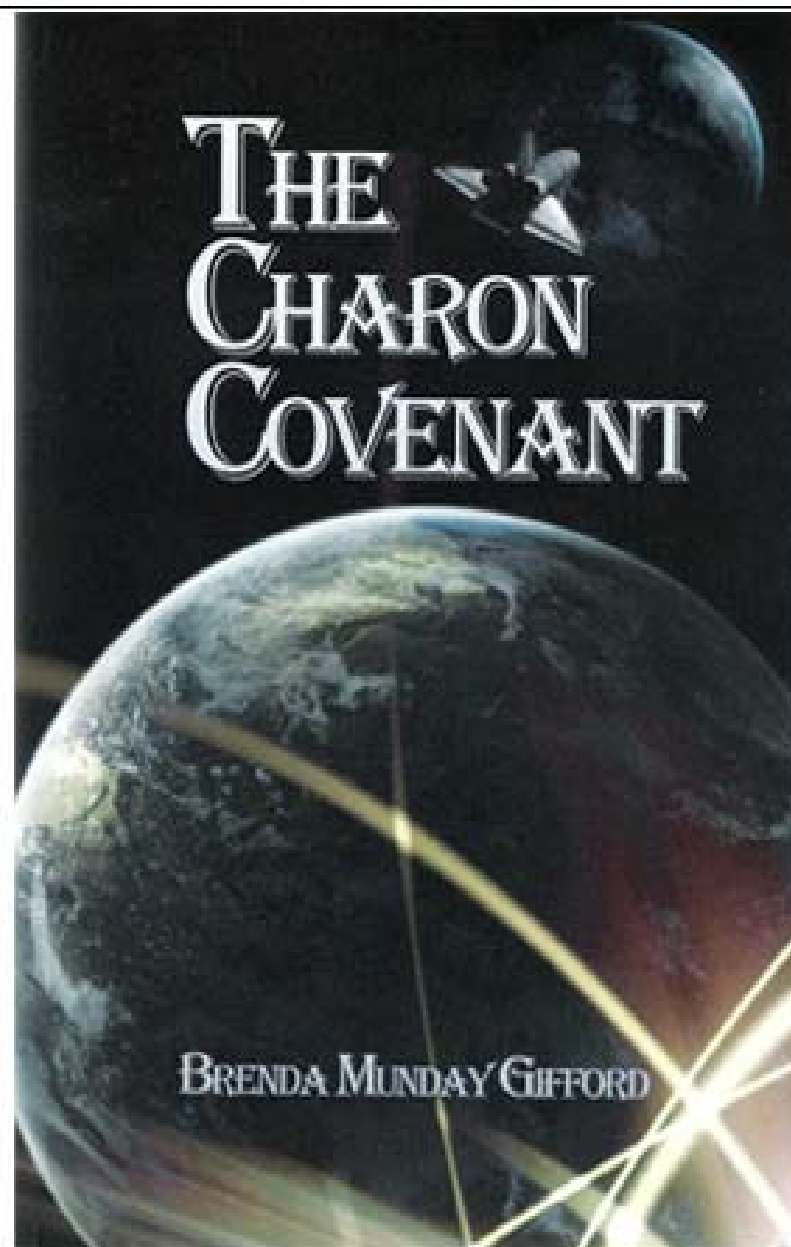
The song combines a variety of interesting percussion, fuzz guitar and overlapping harmonies that really stick with you and drive the message home.

It's not all deep reflection, of course. "Radio Fee Luna" lets the Bohnhoffs rock out in an almost B-52s style. And the very effective "Flying" allows Jeff to rock out big time.

As always, Maya Bohnhoff's vocals are spot-on perfect. She mixes well with backing vocals by Vixy Dockrey and is

never overwhelmed by even the most ambitious musical arrangements here. Pretty impressive when you figure that among the backing musicians here are sessions legends Jerry Marotta on drums and bassist Tony Levin.

"Mobius Street" is available at www.cdbaby.com. If you like your message songs combined with a solid rock sensibility, you need to pick this one up!



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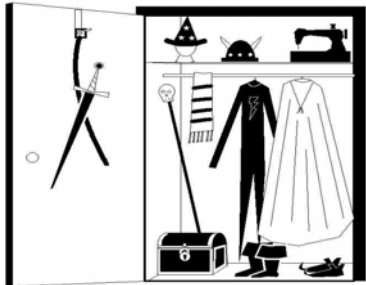
Wife... mother... warrior... Dara Drew thought she was going to be a simple wife and mother on the moon base colony she called home...but first she will have to save herself and her son and escape from her home planet. There is only one thing that stands between her and freedom...a horde of aliens and their battle drones.

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The Costume Closet



The Costume Closet

A Domino Delivered in Less Than Thirty Minutes

by Randall Whitlock

The lore of old time radio tells us that the Lone Ranger made his famous mask from his slain brother's leather vest after his posse was bushwhacked by the Cavendish gang. My situation was not so grave. I just needed a mask in a hurry for a Halloween party.

I wanted a mask that fit properly, with the eye holes positioned just right. To accomplish this, I molded a sheet of



aluminum foil around my face. Blind-folded by the foil, I traced the shape my eye sockets and the arch of my nose with a soft marker pen. I also marked how high up my forehead, around to the sides, and down on my cheekbones I wanted the finished mask to reach. I took off the foil form and transferred these marked lines to folded paper by piercing the trace lines through the foil with a pin.



I played connect-the-dots on the paper, connecting the perforations with a pencil line and smoothed out the curves. This created the mask pattern seen in the lower part of the photograph.

This style of mask, surrounding the eyes and sometimes the nose, is called a "Domino", a favorite of superheroes, as well as lords and ladies at carnival. There's a domino in the middle of the

Southwest Costumers Guild logo. Check out the recent film "The Spirit" for a classic example.

I traced the pattern with marking pen onto some scrap felt I had laying around the sewing table. I extended the corners of the mask to form ties. You can also attach string or elastic to the corners, hold the mask on with spirit gum, or use the force of your power ring.

The theme of the party was "Davy Jones' Crew" (From "Pirates of the Caribbean", not the Monkees), So I added some felt barbels to suggest a lobster man. I made a lobster claw glove for the costume too, but that's another story.

An American in New Zealand

Part Three: Pick of Picton

I was on a boat to see wild dolphins and penguins at Picton. This excursion had a no refund policy that there is no guarantee to see these creatures at that time. I shrugged and decided to give it a go.

Seen dolphins at Sea World. Seen penguins in a zoo or casino but never in their wild habitat. I was curious to see more of the penguins after seeing a real colony (See Part One). I began to be a fan of this tux-wearing bird. I wanted to see more.

The boat roared into life. One crewmember lectured about the birds in the area. I looked around and saw only blue waters.

I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned around.

"Jeff, get your camera ready!" cried a friend.

She pointed to the back of the boat.

"Penguins?" said I.

"Nope, dolphins!"

When I got to the back, my jaw dropped. Around twenty people were ready to take snapshots of these mammals.

Then one dolphin came swimming in the open. It was going in small circles barely above the surface underwater. Then, the creature was performing some exotic water dance to entertain us humans on board. When the dolphin was finished, it then disappeared under the boat. It seemed like an hour but the whole thing lasted less than a minute.

Everyone in the crowd was clapping. I looked around the boat to find a fish shack. I really wanted to give the critter a thank-you by throwing to them some fish sticks. Instead, I had only taken a couple shots of these cool performers. I became a fan of dolphins for life.

My lady friend said, "Did you see the flock?"

"Flock?"

"You missed a great show. There were a few dolphins swimming around the sides of the boat."

"Only saw one. That is enough."

The next stop was to see a few tiny islands. The biggest one was a size of a house.

On top of one rock was a single penguin sleeping.

That lone penguin suddenly woke up. It looked at the boat with its head cocking to its side. It then gave a startled cry.

A flock of penguins suddenly appeared on the island. They were expecting their enemy, the killer whale, to eat one of their companions. Instead, all of them stopped their tracks and turned their heads to the side like wondering what the heck were we?

The penguins seemed to see their first U.F.O. (Unidentified Foolish Oriental). I smiled and waved a hello.

The stunned crowd quickly walked to the edge to glimpse more of our boat. The startled birds had their mouths open. They did not know if we were predators or allies.

We were just tourists. I smiled and waved goodbye. I forgot to take a snapshot but it was worth seeing them wild and alive even though they were confused.

I then became a fan of wild penguins.

I definitely got my money's worth. Next on An American in New Zealand Part Four: The Lord of the Rings Second Blunder- The Road Taken at Wellington.

Screening Room

Inkheart

Killshot

Hotel For Dogs

The Unborn

Repo! The Genetic Opera

Bedtime Stories

The Tale of Despereaux

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Inkheart

Starring: Brendan Fraser, Eliza Bennett, Paul Bettany, Helen Mirren, Andy Serkis

Director: Iain Softley

Runtime: 106 minutes

Rated: PG for some fantasy violence

Release Date: January 23rd, 2009

Reviewed by: Len Berger

(ConNotations Film Editor)

What would it be like if characters come alive when a book is being read out loud? Mortimer (Mo) Folchart (played by Brendan Fraser) shows us exactly what can happen when characters do come out of the book into the real world. This skill gives Mo the honor of being known as a 'silver-tongue'.

Inkheart is a wonderful fantasy adventure based on a book with the same name written by Cornelia Funke. We follow Mo and his daughter Maggie (played by Eliza Bennett) on a quest to repair the damage done by Mo before he realized the power he had. Dustfinger (played by Paul Bettany) is one of those "damages", a character from the book Inkheart who only wants to return home to his woman. They travel to Italy to visit Maggie's aunt Elinor (played by Helen Mirren) who tells Maggie stories about her mom and how she used to read to her in Elinor's library. Elinor minces no words when she indicates how upset she

(Continued on page 14)

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Screening (Cont'd from page 12)

is that Maggie's mom abandoned her when she was a very small child.

Mo's early mistakes included the release of Capricorn and other villains from the book. Capricorn (played by Andy Serkis) and his evil henchmen live in an impressive castle and are beginning to enjoy life in the "real" world. Capricorn notes one of his favorite things: Duct Tape. Capricorn and his lot have their own 'silver tongue' but he has not mastered the art and characters brought forth by him are only partially removed from the book from whence they came.

Capricorn seeks greater power and will need the skills of Mo to accomplish his goals. However, Capricorn reveals his capitalist side when Mo is captured and Capricorn asks him to read him riches so he can "pay for repairs" at the castle. Of course Mo strives to return Capricorn to the book from whence he came.

Especially enjoyable is the cinematography where we are treated to some gorgeous scenery. The score is fitting as well and sets the mood through the happy and dark scenes of the film. Branden Fraser performs his role admirably as do the rest of the cast. Inkheart is an enjoyable family film (if the young ones can handle the scary and fantasy violent scenes).

Inkheart is rated "B".

Killshot

Starring: Mickey Rourke, Diane Lane, Thomas Jane, Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Director: John Madden

Runtime: 84 minutes

Rated: R

Release Date: January 23rd, 2009

**Reviewed by: Len Berger
(ConNotations Film Editor)**

Killshot is an intense film about a hit man named Armand (known as The Blackbird) (played by Mickey Rourke who just won the Golden Globe for best actor in *The Wrestler*) and his very excitable partner Richie Nix (played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt). Armand is one of those 'honorable' hit men, somewhat of an oxymoron for someone in his profession.

Richie is one of those criminals that will do just about anything and do it as sloppily as possible. For example, Richie spots Armand's blue Cadillac and decides to car jack him. Note, it's not a good idea to car jack a master hit man but Richie can't help himself. Richie demands Armand's wallet, finds a business card and asks "What do you do for them?" Armand replies "I shoot people". For some inexplicable reason Armand partners with Richie and does his best to mentor him. But the crime must go on so Richie and Armand proceed to Richie's

latest crime attempt at a real estate firm. Richie's plan does not go well.

Carmen Colson (played by Diane Lane) works at the firm where Richie's crime is progressing. Carmen's husband Wayne (played by Thomas Jane who was the Punisher in the 2004 film) happens to come by looking for a job at the same time. They become witnesses and become targets for the rest of the film.

The acting is wonderful, especially Mickey Rourke's portrayal of a hit man. His focus on getting the job done keeps the audience wondering what his next move will be. Diane Lane does a decent job of being afraid, very afraid. On a negative note the police did not do what they should have obviously done but, hey, some viewers may not notice.

The film is rated R for violence, language and a bit of nudity.

Killshot is rated "B-".

Hotel for Dogs

Starring: Emma Roberts, Jake T.

Austin, Don Cheadle

Director: Thor Freudenthal

Runtime: 100 minutes

Rated: PG

Release Date: January 16th, 2009

Reviewed by: Len Berger

(ConNotations Film Editor)

Throughout the world there are stray dogs that few people want. The dogs end up in the pound and we all know what could occur after the waiting period. In the film *Hotel for Dogs* two foster care troublemaker siblings Andi (played by Emma Roberts) and Bruce (played by Jake T. Austin) quite inadvertently stumble upon this issue and take it to task. The pair already cares for their dog Friday who must be kept hidden from their foster parents who are not too keen



about pets. Bruce built an amazing doggie elevator outside of their apartment window so Friday can come and go.

As the film opens, our siblings are "raising cash" to feed Friday since their foster parents keep the cabinets locked. Things do not work out as planned and Bernie (played by Don Cheadle) comes to their aid. Bernie had placed the pair with their current foster parents and was called

by the authorities when Andi and Bruce were caught.

Hotel for Dogs is a classic good vs. evil (the animal control officers) film with a lot of humor and some romance. Being a film about dogs there is some doggie romance which at times is more touching than the human romance. On the humorous side Bruce created the Golden Fire Hydrant with an auto flushing device to deal with the problem of – well you know. And when Cooper is on the streets he spots a police car with a bumper sticker that reads "Take a Bite Out of Crime" and Cooper does – he bites off the license plate which is just another chew toy for him.

The film used both acting dogs and dogs rescued from a pound. Training the dogs took a few months and training the actors to work with the dogs took time as well. As part of their training the dogs were taken to public places so when the dogs were on set they would think everything is normal. Teaching the dogs to work with the various gadgets was also a step-by-step process. Trainers were given dummy gadgets to work with so the dogs would become familiar with them before being trained with the working gadget. The actors themselves had to deal with the dog trainers who were often yelling or gesturing in the background during a shoot. The DVD release will undoubtedly have footage showing the training and the doggie outtakes.

This is an enjoyable family film and dog lovers will love it even more.

The film is rated PG due to some language and intensity. Very young viewers might be scared by some dog growling but these scenes are very short.

Hotel for Dogs is rated "B-".

The Unborn

Running Time: 88 minutes

Rated: PG-13

Stars: Gary Oldman, Odette

Yustman, Cam Gigandet, Jane

Alexander, Meagan Good

Directed by: David S. Goyer

Opens: January 9, 2009

SYNOPSIS

This is the story of a young woman name Casey who after experiencing some unusual, and sometimes frightening, events, discovers that she had a twin brother who died during her mother's pregnancy and is now trying to come into the world.

REVIEW

Well, this review will be simple and short. While there were a few decent scares in the movie, it was mostly very predictable. But then again, it was produced by Michael Bay who is always hit-or-miss, so hopefully this will be his "miss" to give way for the Transformers movie that will hopefully be the "hit". But in the meanwhile, I really wouldn't recommend this unless you really like

somewhat lame, predictable, and just not overall very scary horror films. I give it a D+ – Sarge

Repo! The Genetic Opera

Running Time: 97 minutes

Rated: R

Stars: Anthony Head, Alexa Vega, Paris Hilton, Paul Sorvino, Nivek Ogre

Directed by: Darren Lynn Bousman

Limited Release - check local listings

"Zydrate comes in a little glass vial."

That line is from one of the catchiest songs in the movie *Repo! The Genetic Opera*.

The movie begins with the setting, shown in comic-book style. Years into the future, a disease sweeps the world, causing massive organ failures. Millions die. A hero known as Rotti Largo (Paul Sorvino), head of the company GeneCo, steps up with organ financing, saving countless lives.

Here's where the setting takes a twist for the macabre as Repo Men are introduced: Legal assassins that repossess your organs if you miss a payment.

Now that we have the setting, it's time to introduce the heroine: Shilo Wallace, played by Alexa Vega, a 17-year-old girl with a blood disease. She sneaks out of her room to eat a lunch with her dead mother... who is laying six feet under an engraved slab of rock. An attempt at bug-catching introduces her to GraveRobber (Terrance Zdunich), and a close encounter with GeneCo authorities.

We are then introduced to Shilo's father, Nathan (Anthony Stewart Head). He's a loving father, caring for his sick daughter, all the while carrying the burden of accidentally killing his wife. We also find out that he's secretly one of the Repo Men, which leads to a grotesquely amusing scene of him dancing and singing around a target before repossessing his organs.

The scene changes to Rotti, who finds out that he has a terminal disease. He apparently doesn't like to heed the saying "don't shoot the messenger." We are also introduced to the Luigi children, Amber (Paris Hilton), Pavi (Nivek Ogre), and Luigi (Bill Moseley), whom Rotti thinks are an embarrassment and doesn't want anywhere near his company.

Sarah Brightman plays the part of Blind Mag, the voice of GeneCo, and Terrance does a wonderful job as GraveRobber, especially in the song "Zydrate Anatomy."

There's another little number later where Shilo turns into a rebellious rock star, complete with guitarist and screaming fans.

Everyone then heads to the opera house for the dramatic climax. In a scene vaguely reminiscent of Hamlet, secrets are revealed, people die, and the opera's a

(Cont'd on page 15)

Screening (Cont'd from page 14)

hit. No, I'm not going to say what exactly happened. This is the ending; you have to watch it for yourself.

There's humor, there's tragedy, there's gore, and there's music. With a wonderful cast, great special effects, and an original story, it's a huge surprise this movie hasn't gotten better reviews.

All-in-all, I give this movie ****1/2 -
Caitlin Gilson

Bedtime Stories

Running time: 99 minutes

Rated: PG

Stars: Courtney Cox Arquette, Keri Russell, Teresa Palmer, Guy Pearce, Lucy Lawless

Director: Adam Shankman

Opened: Dec 25, 2008

SYNOPSIS

Skeeter Bronson, a hotel handyman, finds himself having to baby sit his niece and nephew for a week. Not having any real skills with kids (although he acts like one himself), he muddles his way through. After telling a bedtime story to the kids, a story that the kids themselves embellish a bit with weird additions, he discovers the following day that key aspects of the story, primarily those that the kids added, come true. And this keeps happening each time he tells them a story and they add to it. After discovering this bizarre pattern, he begins to try to make this work in his favor.

REVIEW

This was a very delightful movie. I have to admit that I had my doubts when I heard that it's starring Adam Sandler (as Skeeter) as he's general known for a little bit more adult themed, somewhat violent slapstick comedy. But he's definitely proven here that he also can most definitely do family entertainment, and do it well. The other standout in this movie is Buggsy, the giant-eyed guinea pig, who appears throughout the movie.

So to sum up, this was a very well-made movie. It was well-acted and well-written. I give it an A-. - **Sarge**

The Tale of Despereaux

Voiced by Mathew Broderick, Dustin Hoffman, Emma Watson;

Narrated by Sigourney Weaver

Rated G

Running Time: 94 minutes

Opened Dec 19, 2008

Some adrenaline-junkie reviewers have been dismissive of this movie, as if a movie has to be frenetic to win their approval. But for parents who prefer quieter fare in the way of family films, *The Tale of Despereaux* is ideal. There is still plenty of action and danger, just no car chases or explosions.

The background attention to detail is exquisite; some very talented artists were given free rein and the result puts most cartoons to shame. The mouse village, the rat realm, and the animated vegetable entity Boldo are imaginative marvels.

Based on the Newberry Award winning book by Kate DiCamillo, the story has been modified slightly to eliminate bloodshed. A rat, Roscuro, voiced by Dustin Hoffman, sets off a chain of events in a castle that result in a tragedy. In his grief and anger, the King passes some harsh laws, and clouds darken the skies perpetually – but never release rain. This kingdom needs a hero.

A little mouse is born, Despereaux, who is unlike the other mice. He is so keenly alert that he has no room in his mind for fear. He won't cower, he won't scamper away from danger, no matter how his parents or peers or teachers try to instill in him the mousely virtue of cowardice. And instead of eating the library books, he reads them. Despereaux aspires to be a knight, brave and honorable. When he meets the forlorn princess of the castle, he shares his stories and hopes with her.

A jealous, but not actually wicked serving girl tries to supplant the princess, but both end up trapped in the dungeon with the rats, who are ruled by Botticelli (Ciaran Hinds), the only deliberately evil character in the whole story. It falls to Despereaux to effect a rescue, with some assistance from gravity, Roscuro, sunlight, and a cat. Give this one a try; it's a charmer. – **Chris Paige**

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Running Time: 110 minutes

Rating: PG-13

Stars: Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly, Kathy Bates, Jon Hamm, Jaden Christopher Smith

Director: Scott Derrickson

SYNOPSIS

An alien named Klaatu comes to Earth in glowing sphere that sets down in the middle of New York's Central Park. In



short order Klaatu is shot and captured where he attempts to warn the human race to clean up their collective acts and

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quit damaging the planet before other aliens remove the problem (us) in order to save the planet. And of course, our government handles everything completely wrong and further endangers us all.

REVIEW

While this movie has very good special effects, its story was rather lacking. In part, this was due to the fact that the original was (at the time) a very cleverly hidden political commentary about the paranoia of communism in the midst of the McCarthy era, where as this new version is a very blatant ecological commentary. And while I'm sure Al Gore will appreciate this film, it just wasn't that good.

Besides lacking story, you've got Keanu Reeves who seemed to be playing a variation on his Neo character from "The Matrix" rather than the character of

Klaatu. And you also have Jaden Smith (son of Will Smith), who in his last movie, "Pursuit of Happyness", absolutely shined, but in this was cast as nothing more than an annoying, whining pain in the ass. Just like Dakota Fanning in "War of the Worlds", I just wanted to see the aliens come along and rip his head off to shut him up. Basically, good actor, bad part.

So to sum up, while it is worth it for the effects, it's not worth much else. I give it a C+. - **Sarge**

In Our Book

The Map of Moments
by Christopher Golden & Tim Lebbon
Bantam, \$12.00, 354pp

Another fun and successful collaboration. This is part of a series called *The Hidden Cities*. What this series has in common is simply the theme. No location or character continues from the previous book “Mind the Gap.” The theme is, apparently, what goes on in a city just below the obvious – in the underground or the heart of a city.

This city is New Orleans – during and just after Katrina. Our main character is returning to the deluged city to pay respects at a funeral — to the woman he loved, who betrayed him, and then died during Katrina. But a strange man offers him a deal – make a journey and save her. And the mechanism for the journey is a map. This is a map of New Orleans with significant magical moments notated. And when Max goes to the right location, he experiences that moment in New Orleans’ history. And all the moments are designed to prepare him for the moment in time when he can save his love. But sometimes you don’t get what you want or even expect... And the man who sent him on this journey had something quite different in mind about saving Gabrielle...more along the lines of *when*.

This was a fast read; mostly because I just couldn’t put it down. It was wonderful and it was hideous. It was enlightening but it was also saddening. It could have been blown out of proportion and been a 600-page novel which would sell for twice the dollars; but, fortunately, Golden and Lebbon appreciate ‘less is more.’ Thanks, guys. I love these stories.
- Catherine Book

Blood Sampler
by David Lee Summers &
Lee Clark Zumpe
Sam’s Dot Publishing, \$7.00, 73 pp

If you like vampire stories, this may be the best seven dollars you can spend. Most of the 35 stories are a single page long: they’re vignettes. A few are longer. There’s humor, horror, and history, loss,



love and legends, sex, seduction, and surprises. Some are suitable for younger

readers; others are good for couples to share. The illustrations by Caroline O’Neal are a bit like Aubrey Beardsley, and they complement the stories nicely, occasionally carrying the action further or supplying a visual punch-line.

Both authors are good at conjuring specific locations in a very few words. “On the Ramjet” is a tribute to Robert W. Bussard and his vision of space travel. “Sirmione,” by Zumpe, is a romantic story set in Italy with a long-smoldering rivalry at its heart. “Late Night Snack” describes a vampire’s psychic manipulation of the victim that lead to the payoff – but the real action is the author’s literary manipulation of the reader. “Dragon Reborn” is Summers’ longest offering; it includes an unusual suggestion for the genesis of King Arthur’s quest for the holy grail. His “Surplus Population” is a timely rant, and the victim is a manager, so that’s fun to read. So are “Jealousy,” “The Matchmaker,” and “Love Eternal.” Summers has a poetic streak to his writing, along with a liking for little twists. I found myself want to read longer versions of some of these stories; according to his bio-blurb, Summers’ novel *Vampires of the Scarlet Order* does contain extended versions.

This sampler would make a great Valentine’s Day gift for or from our gothic fen. – **Chris Paige**

The Flame and the Shadow
by Denise Rossetti
Ace Books, \$15.00, 387 pp

Straight off, let me just say; this book is all about sex. Pretty creative sex, too. One might even say kinda kinky.

With that said, it’s also a very descriptive, extremely tactile, colorful novel set on the planet Sybaris. Sybaris, a favorite vacation spot, is run by “technomages” who are in constant conflict with the “Pures;” wizards and witches who use innate magick. Both groups live in enclaves inaccessible by the regular citizens.

Rossetti’s story focuses on Cenda; a witch who constantly struggles with the deep despair from the death of her toddler-aged daughter, Elke Cenda had been as ill as her child and tried to follow her into the light, but was forced back by a goddess and her consort. She reluctantly returned to her body with a gift from the compassionate celestial couple.

The gift was creating and utilizing fire—which made her the first true fire witch on Sybaris.

And now, due to the machinations of a traitor among the magic users, Cenda is the focus of an intense hunt by the technomages who want to dissect, poke, prod and experiment on her in hopes of discovering how she can manipulate fire. And trust me - not in a kindly manner. Cenda’s use of fire is not just a neat trick to light lanterns or reheat tea: she can call

forth such a flood of heat and flame that buildings will explode and people incinerate. Imagine what she could do (and others cloned from her) in a war. Her abilities are a much desired profitable commodity in the galaxy at large.

On a night out at a local tavern, persuaded by a well-meaning friend, Cenda finally relaxes and enjoys the Unearthly Opera company whose showcase performer is a talented singer/musician named the Duke of Ombra, with whom she strikes up an affair.

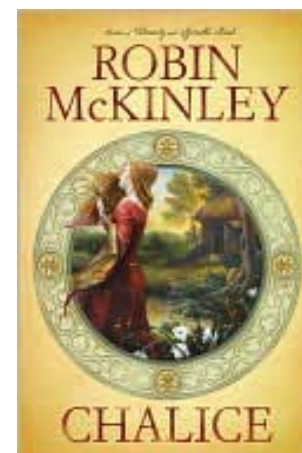
The novel focuses on these two and Rossetti gives us rich layered characters that we care about. The novel details the two lovers trying to keep out of the clutches of the technomages and Ombra and Cenda’s adventures are gripping. The worlds they inhabit are a wonderful combination of medieval/fantasy and high-tech star-faring planets.

A fascinating debut novel. - **Sue Martin**

Chalice
by Robin McKinley
G.P Putnam’s Sons, \$18.99, 263 pp

Robin McKinley is the author of *Beauty*, a lovely retelling of beauty and the beast that was remarkable for its utter lack of villains. No evil, selfish sisters, no foolish father; all the action is propelled by love or circumstances and conflicting

loyalties. Which is not to imply that McKinley can’t do villains: in *The Hero and the Crown*, the dragon Maur destroys an entire kingdom *after* he’s been killed; and *Deerskin* is dark with evil. Still, for the most part, this author eschews the sewers and cesspools of the soul.



And so it is with *Chalice*. This is the story of a young bee keeper, Mirasol, who has been elevated, suddenly and without preparation, to a position of symbolic, but very real power in a demesne that has been misruled for many years. The elder son, who inherited the responsibilities of demesne Master from his father, liked to indulge his passions; wanting no possible rival, he sent his brother off to become an acolyte of the element of fire. Ironically, six years later

(Continued on page 17)

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 16)

the Master dies in a fire, without having produced an heir. Now the younger brother has been summoned home; the trouble is, he is already half elemental, so that he can barely walk or talk, and his touch burns.

Mirasol tries desperately to fulfill her obligations as Chalice, a representative for the spiritual powers of the land. Each Chalice has a set of ceremonial vessels for specific occasions, but she also has a very personal vessel of her power – some fluid that can be borne in a chalice, usually water or wine; Mirasol's is ... honey. That's unusual enough – there's never been a honey Chalice before – but the fire that killed the past Master also killed the former Chalice, who had not trained an apprentice. Mirasol had been chosen by augury, and no one, not even Mirasol herself, thought her a suitable choice.

Politically naive, Mirasol nevertheless notices hostile machinations are being brought to bear against her demesne and the new, chancy young Master. Unfortunately, unwittingly, she plays right into the hands of her Master's enemies. With only her intuition and the old records of past Chalcies to guide her, Mirasol must undo the harm done during the years of misrule, and her own unintended complicity.

Be sure to have a pot of your favorite honey at hand when you read this one, so you can partake of that golden, edible magic of the earth as you enjoy McKinley's golden story-telling. – **Chris Paige**

**Peacekeeper:
a Major Ariane Kedros Novel
By Laura E. Reeve
Roc, 2008, Mass Market Paperback,
\$6.99, 324 pp**

This author has built a universe which has humanity divided between inhabitants of the Terran Empire and The Consortium of Autonomous worlds with an added group of aliens, The Minoans, who control faster-than-light travel. Our heroine is an explorer and a reserve Major in the armed forces of the Autonomous Worlds. To the Terrans she is a war criminal responsible for the use of a Solar System destroying weapon in the late war between the two human nations. This weapon was so terrible that all fighting stopped. The Terrans have had squads of assassins out killing those involved. Kedros is in deep cover with a new identity.

Now, just as she and her partner have discovered important remains of FTL technology which might end the alien star drive monopoly, she is recalled by the Autonomous worlds to supervise the demolition of the terrible weapons she used in the war. A treaty has been signed

the two groups are coming together. Both sides are destroying their weapons with the mediation of the Minoans. Can she remain unrecognized during the proceeding? Also, she finds that both Aliens, the Terrans and her own employers are showing an unhealthy interest in her discoveries. Her private business makes her military duties more complicated. Can she survive the intersection of these things? Who is sabotaging the demolition? Can she survive the protocols unrecognized? What of the bids the Minoans, Terrans and the Autonomous Security apparatus are making for her technological discoveries? Will any of them get violent about it?

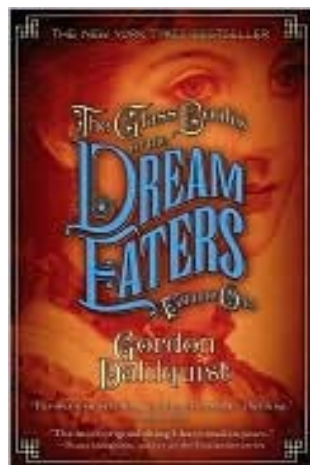
The story is engrossing and the characters seem real. Ariane is traumatized by her war experiences. She and her group were not told that the probes they launched were anything but intelligence probes, but she was still torn by it. Soon the results of her handiwork would show in the local sky and she would see the death of a star and its solar system. She hopes it won't be as bad as predicted. The Terran villains varied; one, Nathan, is a psychopath and another, Isrid, is a dedicated, focused, end-justifies-the-means type. Interesting last names held by characters originating from the slow generation ships sent out before FTL, names like Voyage and Journey. Ariane's business partner is Matthew Journey. One of her boss', Colonel Peter Edones, cronies is a Colonel Voyage.

The author's experience as a U.S. Air Force officer during the implementation of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty lends an air of realism to the treaty implementation in the story.

The book lives and breathes. I recommend it highly. – **Gary L. Swaty**

**The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters
Volume One and Two
by Gordon Dahlquist
Bantam Trade Paperback, \$12.00 ea;
Vol 1, 464 pp, Vol 2, 415 pp**

I read this hoping for a little fun. On the surface it is a fast paced "Steam Punk" type novel. I found it to be a



wonderful idea that only just failed in its execution. Much of the flavor is colored

by American views of English prudishness of the nineteenth century. The villains are also too apt to reveal their plot to the heroine.

This is called a bodice ripper, supposedly filled with heaving bosoms, taunt muscles, and strong sweaty men. In reality there are some sexual situations, but they seem done mostly to shock our prudish American sensibilities. The writer is also very wordy, he seems to need ten words to say what might be better served by five.

The plot is fairly simplistic, a cabal uses mind control to start taking over a small German duchy; it has the largest supply of the clay needed to make the glass they use to make the cards and books. I'm not sure that the twists and turns are completely necessary, but they are a good way to keep the reader interested in the story.

I liked the idea - the ability to drain memories and ultimately the entire mind into an item carved of a special glass - sounds like current science fiction computer intelligences, but it is handled in a unique way and giving anyone who looks at the glass the ability to see the memory is very cool.

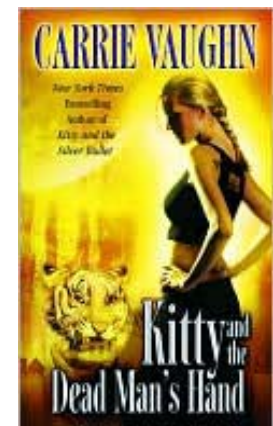
I am looking forward to the next volume, if he can improve his story telling, not the story, he will be read for decades to come.

Story 4 out of 5 stars – **Bob LaPierre**

**Kitty and the Dead Man's Hand
by Carrie Vaughn
Grand Central Pub, \$6.99, 329 pp**

The fifth entry in the popular Kitty series finds Kitty taking on Las Vegas and a wedding.

Ben and Kitty are already the recognized alpha pair of their Denver pack, they decide to get married "human style" as well and what better than a Las Vegas wedding. The producers of Kitty's radio show arrange a live TV feed of the show so it is off to Vegas for a working vacation.



Once there things go awry - their hotel is hosting a gun show full of bounty hunters specializing in hunting werewolves, a magician on the Strip may

(Continued on page 18)

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 17)

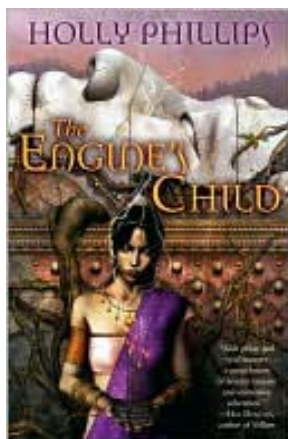
well be the real thing, there are secrets in the vampire community and Balthasar, who fronts an animal act with a supernatural twist — and then Ben disappears. Kitty has a host of suspects, and some surprising allies, as she searches for Ben.

This is an enjoyable series, I mean, who can resist a werewolf named Kitty? This entry does not disappoint. The story continues in the next book, *Kitty Goes to Hell* due out in March. I look forward to it and many more. Highly recommended - **Stephanie L Bannon**

The Engine's Child by Holly Phillips Del Rey, \$15.00, 386 pp

The Engine's Child is a mixture of fantasy and political intrigue in a quasi-Hindustani isolated island world. The protagonist, Moth, flits between the temple, where she is a supposedly celibate novice, to the waterside tidal slums where a secret project is underway. She is a feminine Thief of Bagdad, part heroine, part trickster.

Long ago, their ancestors escaped a world in ruins by way of portals. Clarke's



Rule applies: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic;" a court faction lead by Aras Baradam is attempting to cobble together enough knowledge and/or mystical energy to reopen the portal to the original world. Others are wholly concerned with the world they inhabit. Lady Vashnamara is trying to preserve and advance technological advantages and strike balances between the social castes; Lord Ghar likes the pleasures of power more than the attendant responsibilities, but like the snarling dog in the manger, he won't share even those, lest others accrue influence. Moth's lover, Aramis, has a position in both Vashnamara's court and Baradam's faction.

Moth, her sister Silk, and the disaffected tidal dwellers are looking for a middle way. They hope to build a magically powered ship to sail their world's oceans, so they can invent their own superstitions and power enclaves

instead of suffering under the heels of hereditary ones.

Moth is entrancing: mischievous, quick, and alluring. And Holly Phillips is a most original word-smith. She has invented a complex, coherent world, rich in sense-descriptions without being tedious. In particular, I'd recommend this story to fans of C. Cherryh. Phillips is a Canadian writer, the author of numerous SF short stories, including the collection *In the Palace of Repose*, and the fantasy novel, *The Burning Girl*. – **Chris Paige**

Necropath: A Bengal Station Novel By Eric Brown Solaris, Nottingham UK, \$7.99, 414 pp

Necropath is a story of a telepath, Jeff Vaughan, who works as a contraband inspector at Bengal Station, a huge gritty spaceport crowded with millions of milling human beings and aliens. His job is to keep an eye out for entities and goods harmful to human beings.

Bengal Station is a mass of social strata from the beggars and "working girls" through the mid-level techs up to the bureaucrat and on to the super rich. The author's vivid descriptions of the port and its multitude of denizens makes a vivid backdrop for the story.

It is an account of the man, Jeff, and his complex relationships with three young women. Tiger, a Thai working girl and her sister, Sukara provoke complex reactions in Jeff as does Elly Jenson the Chosen of the Alien Vaith. All three evoke memories of a traumatic loss in his youth. His attraction to them leads to his discovery of the alien Vaith and the threat they are to Earth and all mankind in the galaxy.

Jeff investigates and finds sculldugery in the port authority and ultimately in the police at the highest level. He persists risking all to stop the menace. The story is gripping all the way through to the final pages. Recommended. - **Gary L. Swaty**

Nebula Awards Showcase 2008 edited by Ben Bova ROC trade paperback, \$16.00, 375 pp

These annual anthologies seem to get a bit bigger each year. Aha, the complete novella by James Patrick Kelly (Thoreau as arsonist) and the complete novelette by Peter S. Beagle (Last Unicorn sequel!) are included. There's essays on the sci-fi field by Bud Webster (past), Orson Scott Card (present), and Mike Resnick (paperless future). Joe Haldeman introduces the poetry section. Short stories by Elizabeth Hand, Eugene Mirabell, James Gunn and a novel excerpt by Jack McDevitt. Not to mention Diana Wynne-Jones, Mike Allen's poem, Evans and Kopsaka-Mernel's poem, Ruth Berman's poem, John Kessel on James Gunn, Andre Norton winner Justine

Larbalestier, lists of all Nebula winners, and Ben Bova's intro essay. You cannot get a better anthology than this, to see the current (2007 winners for 2006) state of the art at its best. - **Mike Griffin (not the NASA guy)**

The Stepsister Scheme Jim C. Hines Daw Paperback, \$7.99; 344 pp

This was a very quick read. The question of what happens *after* the "happily ever after" isn't new but the author seems to have found a great answer to it. The back story on "Sleeping Beauty" and "Snow White" shows that they were perfect for supporting cast. I have always thought that there must be



more to the stories. Jim gives us an enjoyable possibility.

Cinderella is attacked in the castle by her stepsister and while she survives she finds her husband, the prince, has been kidnapped. Danielle (Cinderella) learns that there is a special team put in place by the queen that consists of Talia (Sleeping Beauty) and Snow (White). Talia is an extraordinarily gifted weapons master due to the gifts bestowed upon her by the fairies. Snow is a mistress of mirror magic.

The trio follows the trail to fairy town and involves one of the most powerful creatures in faerie. The involvement of a spectre from the past and the return of the seven dwarves create a battle worthy of the best battles in fantasy.

4.5 out of 5 stars - **Bob LaPierre**

Cybele's Secret by Juliet Marillier, 2008 Alfred A. Knopf, \$16.99, 432 pp

Cybele's Secret is 'a companion novel' to *Wildwood Dancing*, which was a marvelous blend of the dancing princesses motif, Transylvanian folk-lore, and star-crossed romance. In that book, five sisters have access to the Other Kingdom; on full moon nights they cross a portal from their castle home, Piscul Dracului, into the realm of magic. There dark-haired Iulia and gentle Tati dance with fae partners, little Stela cavorts with the more playful denizens, and Paula discusses

philosophy and plays chess with an odd assortment of witches, astronomers, and soothsayers. Narrator Jena also dances, but she is an observer, safeguarding all her sisters. When Tati, the eldest, falls in love with one of the Night People, the sisters attract the attentions and interventions of the most powerful of the vampires and the old witch of the woods.

In this sequel, Paula is the protagonist. At 18, she has become an assistant to their merchant father, and they are traveling by ship to Istanbul, hoping to purchase an artifact from the time of pagan worship of the earth goddess Cybele. It is reputed to hold a message, a parting gift from the goddess before she withdrew from the world, which can bring prosperity and good fortune.

Paula and her father are distressed to discover, on their arrival, that his business partner has been murdered. Openly admitting to an interest in Cybele's Gift is dangerous. The Sultan of Istanbul is tolerant of Jews and Christians, who are, after all, brothers in faith; but he has no intention of allowing the revival of a pagan cult. Even so, other merchants hope to purchase it, including the dashing and piratical Duarte da Costa Aguiar.

Paula has longed to find a way of returning to the Other Kingdom ever since her sister Tati chose to stay in that realm forever and the portal was closed to them. She also hopes to earn enough commission to start her own business as a book merchant. Paula wishes to visit the libraries of Istanbul, but most places are denied her, as she is both non-Moslem, and a woman. Her one hope is to get an introduction to Irene of Volos, a female scholar of wealth and influence.

As she helps her father transact business, she begins receiving messages from Tati that summon her on a quest that runs counter to her father's objective. The artifact can open a portal to the Other Kingdom, but first it must be restored to its place of origin. Paula has a good understanding of the nature of quests; she knows that they are tests meant to benefit the mortals who undergo them. But they also mean confronting your most appalling fears and acknowledging unsettling truths about yourself. Paula has always relied on her wit and philosophical outlook; she discovers that in some conditions even the latter can be a liability.

Juliet Marillier's writing is spare but evocative: the images unfurl before your inner eye as she describes the port city and the life of Istanbul. The obvious comparison is to Robin McKinley and her novels *Beauty*, *Deerskin*, and *Sunshine*, but another can be drawn, for Marillier also takes us to the Dreamscapes. Different regions thereof - less horror, more hope and romance - and with none of Lovecraft's purple prose, but the terrain is unmistakable. If you need some

(Cont'd on page 19)

In Our Book (Cont'd from page 18)

time in faerie, these stories will transport you.

As a bonus, the cover art for both *Cybele's Secret* and *Wildwood Dancing* is by Kinuko Y. Craft, one of the most talented of all living illustrators. – **Chris Paige**

Moving Targets (and other tales of Valdemar)

edited by Mercedes Lackey
Penguin, \$7.99, 352 pp

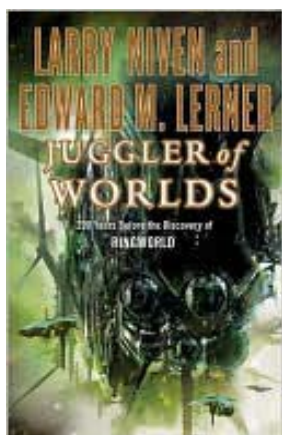
A wonderful collection of well-written stories ranging from heart warming to tear jerking. The well-rounded world created by Mercedes Lackey is blessed by this addition to its ever-developing history. Each story and each author have done a magnificent job of capturing what it is to be a Herald, a Sun Priest, or a Watchmen - spinning new and refreshing tales that breathe new adventure into Valdemar.

Surely fans from all walks of life will be sparked into new throes of imagination by this collection of fascinating short stories, each painting a picture so surreal that you may as well be watching a film on the big screen. – **Amy Lynn Ramirez**

Juggler of Worlds

by Larry Niven & Edward M. Lerner
Tor Books, \$24.95, 349 pp

This is great, action-driven, hard SF. The plot and characters are Niven's, the world is *Ringworld's* prequel; the writing style is Lerner's. If you love Niven's hard logic and cool humor, both are still present, but there is an overlay – pure Lerner – of subjective character angst and explosive high tech.



It is great to meet Niven's cast again: Nessus, the Puppeteer; Beowulf Shaeffer, billionaire and agent provocateur; a young, brilliant Carlos Wu; and Sigmund Ausfaller, paranoid accountant turned agent of ARM, the human's police/military/investigative corps. Part of the action revisits the events of the short stories: the discovery of flaws in the Puppeteer hull design and a black hole that will eventually devour the galaxy, and references to the Man-Kzin Wars.

But the perspective is novel. The rest of the story describes the cataclysmic effect of the sudden evacuation of the alien Puppeteers from known space - not that they stop influencing human and Kzin activity. In Ringworld, Nessus confesses that the Puppeteers had orchestrated socio-economic pressures to breed humans to be lucky and Kzin to be tame; here you get to see that plan's erratic, sometimes desperate development.

Much of the action follows the vanished Puppeteers as they reshape their society. Their rivalries, factions, loves and

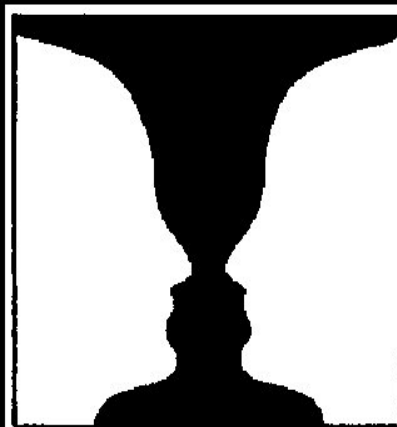
sacrifices finally get some direct attention.

If you have every one of Niven's books on your shelf, this fills in gaps and answers questions. If you pick it up as a stand-alone or as an introduction to Niven's universe, it is complete onto itself – but it's a lot more fun if you've read the earlier stuff. I recommend a visit to your local or e-bookstore; stock upon vintage Niven, and be a voyager in his world. – **Chris Paige**

Nevermore: A Graphic Adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's Short Stories:
Edited by Dan Whitehead
Sterling Publishing Co, 2008. Hardcover, \$15.99, 117 pp

This graphic adaptation does one thing which Poe purists might object to, but does it so well. The stories are reset into a more modern context to allow the casual non-literary reader to be more comfortable. This was not actually necessary since most readers of dark graphic novels are comfortable and even familiar with Poe's background and themes. Nonetheless the book will find place in almost anyone's collection of graphic novels.

The art is varied with a different artist for each story. Particularly notable was the artist for *The Raven*, the only poem included. Stuart Tipples drew it in stark black and white with no shading. He and Dan Whitehead adapted the text. Quite effective. Erik Rangel drew *The Masque of the Red Death* in shades from gray to black. This and the realistic poster style was especially evocative. Textual adaptation was by Adam Prosser. Steve Pugh used a similar style for *The Pit and the Pendulum* with Jamie Delano provid-



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January 20, 2009 Starship Troopers by Robert A. Heinlein.

February 17, 2009 Old Man's War by John Scalzi

March 17, 2009 The Incomplete Enchanter

by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt

April 21, 2009 Larklight by Philip Reeve

May 19, 2009 Tarzan of the Apes by Edgar Rice Burroughs

June 16, 2009 Wyrd Sisters by Terry Pratchett

ing the textual adaptation.

The degree of textual modification varied from almost none for the Raven to a lot in moving *The Masque* to California. I think the adaptations were well-done and they work.

Also included are *The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valsemar*, *The Murders in Rue Morgue*, *The fall of the House of Usher*, *The Black Cat*, *The Oval Portrait* and *The Tell Tale Heart*. Read the book. It's wonderful. — **Gary L. Swaty**

Magic to the Bone

by Devon Monk

Roc/Penguin Books Ltd, \$6.99, 355 pp

This looks to be the beginning of a new series in the burgeoning fantasy/detective genre. Narrator-protagonist Allison Beckstrom is a Hound, able to detect and trace the origin of magical



castings. Magic is commonplace now, popular for everything from illusions of beauty to securing advantage in business. The trouble is, "magic gives as good as it gets," i.e. – it exacts a price for each use.

If you prepare a spell carefully, you can choose how it will affect you instead of being surprised; but either way, it will hurt, whether it's a three day-migraine, or a bout of impotence, or a car wreck. Unscrupulous persons – and when has there ever been a shortage of those since the Golden Age of Cronos? – have an out: they can offload the penalty onto someone else with a Disbursement spell. That's where Hounds are useful.

Our heroine is not unscrupulous, so she pays the price herself each time she employs magic in her line of work. But Magic doesn't just collect its pound of flesh from her – it also deletes portions of her memory. Not that Allison much minds parting with her past, but still....

Allison gets a whiff of the caster from a deadly Disbursement offloaded onto an orphan and is mad enough to resort to blood magic in a confrontation.

What she doesn't know is that another magician has found a way to fool even the best Hound.

I love the premise of this book, and it is a fresh source of entertainment to the reader, safe on the other side of the premise boundary, to see how Magic exacts its settlement for service rendered.

This is film noir in book form for all who enjoy hard-bitten, loner detectives who lose out at every turn but hang on to their principles throughout, for whom love is always synonymous with treachery. Almost always. – **Chris Paige**

The Lost Ones

by Christopher Golden

Spectra Fantasy, \$12.00, 427 pp

This is the third and last of Golden's Book of the Veil series and was more

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 19)

than eagerly anticipated by yours truly. While I love his horror, this dark fantasy story was just wonderful. In this last piece, Oliver is still imprisoned by the Sandman along with his fiancée, Julianna, and his sister, Collette. His friends and allies are all plotting how to rescue them, including Kitsune, the fox-woman who loves Oliver and betrayed them. But despite their best intentions, Oliver and Collette finally discover their inherited power as the Legend-Born and free themselves. As the Legend-born, they are supposed to have the power to bring the Lost Ones home. The Lost Ones are those humans who stumbled or slipped thru the Veil into the world of Legends and Myths, and are unable to ever return.

The world of legends, gods, and myths is also populated by monsters and nightmares....and Atlantis. And Atlantis is tired of their land being 'diluted' by humans. Atlantis wants to close the Veil and all the Doors to the human world, and then kill all the Lost Ones. But to do so, they have to first destroy all those who can travel between – the Borderkind. They've been trying to do that since the beginning of this story. The slaughter has escalated to all-out war with the Lost Ones and all the Borderkind, myths, legends and gods who either don't want the doors closed or who fear that Atlantis will continue their 'cleansing' even after all the humans are dead.

The story shows us all the viewpoints of our main characters as they race to a final showdown with the evil sorcerers of Atlantis. Each of the characters we've come to know since the first book has found something to change their lives – love, redemption, forgiveness, strength or character. And our hero, Oliver, changed most profoundly. The one character who seemed a bit short-changed was his sister, Collette. She was the only character of which I was disappointed. I think the author used her only as a plot device. If he'd tried to develop her as strongly as Oliver, the book would have been either a great deal longer, or we might have lost other characters. If you prefer character-driven stories, Golden isn't really for you. He's fueled by plot and story – which he does really, really well. I think he strikes a pretty good balance in about 400 pages. The story is intense, and fast, and satisfying. I don't care that I don't know each character's most innermost feelings; I only need to know that their motivation is true to the story. A most satisfying story and I'm really glad he ended it properly. Not every story has to go on interminably as a series. Golden continues to be a favorite author of mine. Don't miss his stuff; there's bound to be something in his bibliography to please you. - **Catherine Book**

Extraordinary Engines Edited by Nick Gevers BL Publishing, \$7.99, 448 pp

This collection of fourteen stories is described (accurately) as the definitive Steampunk anthology. Turn up the gas light, throw some coal in the stove and relax as you pass through a variety of alternative Victorian futures. Highlights include James Lovegrove "Steampunch", which traces the rise and fall of steam-powered boxing, Margo Lanagan's "Machine Maid" in which a prudish young bride discovers her husband's automaton housemaid had some interesting (cough, cough) secondary functions, Kage Baker's "Speed, Speed the Cable", in which time travel agents seek to protect the first transatlantic telegraph cable from sabotage, and Robert Reed's "American Cheetah", in which a robotic Abraham Lincoln faces an equally robotic James gang in an alternate Northfield, Minnesota raid. - **Randall Whitlock**

The Love We Share Without Knowing by Christopher Barzak Bantam Books, \$12.00, 285 pp

The title fits the novel well, for here are the narratives of over 14 people whose lives are connected by love and loss in Japan and the United States. Reading it is like walking through a maze, one where the yew hedges tower over your head and you are startled by the revelations of crossing paths that open to each other. It is also a ghost story. Some of the ghosts are figurative, as characters are haunted by memories, but some of the narrators are themselves ghosts. Another character is trapped in a dream world by a lover's curse until he is rescued by a more generous love.

Not all the characters are identified by names, just referred to as 'a boyfriend from America' or given a mysterious first person voice; so there is some ambiguity for readers to decipher or decide, or leave uncertain. It takes detective work to track all the connections, especially as some of the red threads are indicated by only a few words.

The interconnecting stories are well-written, with an emphasis on character as opposed to action. Some of the conversations bite into your mind. There are also idioms translated from the Japanese that are startlingly lovely, or apropos, or harsh.

If you are looking for an adrenaline rush, check out the other books reviewed here; if you are looking for a literary satori, here is a rare find. - **Chris Paige**

Starfist: Wings of Hell by David Sherman and Dan Craig Del Ray, \$23.00, 343 pp

Starfist; Wings of Hell is the thirteenth of the *Starfist* series.

It's the twenty third century. Humans have spread across the galaxy. Exploration has been peaceful; but now, intelligent aliens bent on destroying humanity have launched their campaign. Armed with Force Recon's hard-won knowledge of the alien base, the 34th must first infiltrate and destroy the menace. As their mission gets more dangerous, it's election time at home. Unless the current president can convince the voters of the real threat, humanity is in real trouble.

This is another high-action, down-and-dirty military science fiction written by combat veterans who understand the ethos. A must-get for lovers of military Sci-Fi. - **Pam Allan**

Gears of the City by Felix Gilman Spectra, \$24.00, 452 pp

Gears of the City is the second novel by the author of *The Thunderer*.

Arjun has just returned from one dangerous quest. Instead of relaxing, he undertakes a perilous task. Rescued from the hollow men by two sisters, he volunteers to rescue a long-lost third sister from another ghost like himself. He must make a dangerous trek to a mysterious stronghold filled with traps and devices that couldn't exist. As he struggles to save the girl and himself, he must uncover the secrets. The truth of what is behind the Mountain may be the most shocking secret of all.

Though it stands alone, reading *The Thunderer*, would make for an easier read. This said, we have an imaginative

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FiestaCon

(Westercon 62)

July 2-5, 2009

Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, Tempe, Arizona

www.fiestacon.org

FiestaCon Guests of Honor

Artist **Todd Lockwood**

Author **Alan Dean Foster**

Editor **Stanley Schmidt**

Fans **Jim & Doreen Webbert**

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FiestaCon Contact Information

Chairman: Mike Willmoth

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In Our Book (Cont'd from page 20)

and often unexpected fantasy with good characters and plenty of originality. This is a complex, exciting fantasy well-worth the read. - **Pam Allan**

Eon: Dragoneye Reborn
by Alison Goodman
Viking, \$19.95, 554 pp

Eon: Dragoneye Reborn is the first part of a duology by the author of *Killing the Rabbit* and *Singing the Dogstar Blues*.

Twelve-year-old Eon has been training for years in dragon magic requiring swordplay and magical aptitude in hopes of becoming Dragoneye, apprentice to one of the energy dragons of good fortune. But Eon has a secret. Eon is actually Eona, a sixteen-year-old girl forbidden to practice dragon magic

under penalty of death. When her secret is threatened by a powerful evil dragoneye, she and her allies are plunged into a deadly struggle for the Imperial Throne. Eon(a) must battle overwhelming forces to save the Empire and her life.

This book is a winner. This novel has it all. Good characters, court intrigue, swords, and dragons whose power is channeled through human eyes. The writing is fast-paced, hooking the reader from the first page. You can't put it down and though it comes to a satisfactory conclusion, this reader finds herself anxiously awaiting the concluding volume. Plastic out. Charge. - **Pam Allan**

Walls of the Universe
by Paul Melko
Tor, \$25.95, 383 pp

Walls of the Universe is by the author of *Singularity's Ring*.

Farm boy John Rayburn was worrying about how to get the money for college, and how to deal with a psycho-bully when his doppelganger appeared, tempted him to travel between worlds, and then stole his life.

John, tied to a broken transfer device, finds himself traveling between worlds unable to reach home. He finally settles on a universe and begins to rebuild a new transfer device. John Prime 'invents' other worlds' technologies and makes a fortune. John 2 inadvertently introduces pinball. It becomes a huge success, but both draw the attention of those chasing John Prime to claim the device for their own ominous purpose. John 2 must go back, and get John Prime to join him on a rescue mission and reclaim both their lives against the more powerful invaders.

Melko has written a fun ride with good characters, more twists than a compact florescent bulb, that holds your interests shows us a modern fantasy [ie; multiverse] thriller that bodes well for a long and prosperous future. - **Pam Allan**

Dragonheart
by Todd McCaffrey
Del Ray, \$27.00, 538 pp

Dragon Heart is the second solo novel by Todd McCaffrey in the Pern series.

A plague has hit the Weyrs of Pern felling first the fire-lizards and then the dragons; the only defense against the threadfall. Fiona, and her queen are coming of age when the second weyrwoman and her dragon go between...[die] The already diminished ranks of the dragon riders and dragons face a coming threadfall in crisis mode as dragons sicken leaving only underage and under-trained dragons to succeed them.

Could the past hold the answer? Guided by a mysterious ally and the dragons' ability to go back in time, Fiona will lead a risky expedition with far-reaching consequences for Pern and herself.

The Pern series show no weakening as the torch is passed from mother to son Collectors, of course, will gotta-have-it, but newcomers will be caught up and read them all. Plastic out! Charge. - **Pam Allan**

Flight into Darkness
by Sarah Ash
Bantam, \$24.00, 464 pp

Flight into Darkness is book two of the *Alchemist's Legacy*, and the concluding volume of the epic fantasy begun with *Tracing the Shadow*.

Rieuk Mordiern accidentally freed the spirit charged with keeping the balance between the living and the dead. Now, his sole aim is to restore the balance. Celestine believes the spirit is her personal guardian helping her pursue

vengeance against the inquisition that sent her father to the flames. But now, seven daemons from another realm, once imprisoned, are threatening the mortal world. As the boundaries begin to dissolve, Rieuk and Celestine learn what heroism truly is.

Well-written, with good characterizations and tight plotting, we have classic epic fantasy that will enthrall the reader despite not having read the previous volume(s). However, you will want to do so. - **Pam Allan**

The Golden Tower
by Fiona Patton
Daw, \$24.95, 324 pp

The Golden Tower is volume two of *The Warriors of Estavia*.

Anavatan, the magical City of the Gods is always under siege by both humans and hungry spirits. Five years before, three [unsworn to any God] are caught in the open attacked by wild spirits. Graize was thrown free of the God-wall and gave birth to a godling, Hisar. Brax, desperate to save himself and Spar, a seer-child, swears to Estevia. Spar follows Brax into the temple.

Now Anavatan is at crisis. Graize has become a prophet, rallied Anatavan's enemies to his cause along with Hisar. Spar has become one of great seers, still unsworn, has his own plans for Hisar.

Caught in the middle is Brax, warrior and protector to Spar, is the prime target of Graize, but has been claimed by Hisar. As the godling approaches its full power their world will be changed.

Patton has written a great heroic fantasy with complex characters, including Hisar, in a fully developed world that holds the reader's attention. I am going to have to find *The Silver Lake*. This is a real keeper for Fantasy fans. - **Pam Allan**

Heart and Soul
by Sarah Hoyt
Bantam Spectra, \$6.99

Heart and Soul continues the series begun by *Heart of Light* and *Heart of Fire*.

Within the magical realm of a British Empire with magic, Nigel Oldhall has a mission to return the power jewels to their avatar in Africa. He doesn't plan on being attacked by Chinese pirates

Red Jade, daughter and sister of the true Emperor of all under heaven is on a mission to reclaim the royal status stolen from her family by invaders but find themselves trapped in schemes of treason and shifting loyalties that will change their lives.

Well-written, with lots of action and good characters including villains you love to hate, it is well-worth an afternoon and a few dollars and library space. - **Pam Allan**

(Cont'd on page 22)



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Discworld is a trademark of Terry Pratchett

Queen of Dragons
by Shana Abe
Bantam, \$6.99, 322 pp

Queen of Dragons continues the Drakon series by the author of *The Dream Thief*.
A woman calling herself Princess Maricara of Transylvania reveals the existence of a lost Drakon tribe to Alpha lord Kimber Langford, Earl of Chasen, and lord of Darkfrith. She arrives at

Darkfrith with news that serial killers are attempting to erase the Drakon from existence. To save their kind, the two must ally themselves body and soul in a battle that can be their salvation, or extinction.... or both.
What we have is an enjoyable paranormal historical romance, a fantasy with something for everyone. The hero and heroine are strong, beautiful, and dangerous and involved with a battle to survive. What more can you ask for a pleasant afternoon's escape from the mundane? - **Pam Allan**

Heir to Sevenwaters
by Juliet Marillier
Roc, \$23.95, 395 pp

Marillier is the author of *The Sevenwaters Trilogy* that precedes this one.
The chieftains of Sevenwaters have long been custodians of the great and uncanny forest, one of the last refuges of the Tuatha De Danann [the Fair Folk of Old]. They have lived side-by-side with the veil between the otherworld for centuries. Now things are changing with

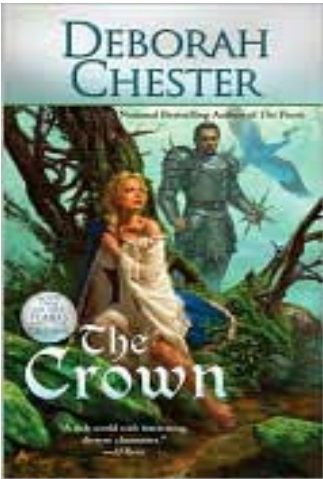
me up all night reading. It is well-written, with characters that draw you in and won't let you go. I plan to hunt up the trilogy and add to my store. If you love good fantasy, you will want to do the same. We have a New Fantasy star in the heavens - **Pam Allan**

Found You
by Mary SanGiovani
Leisure Books, \$7.99, 290 pp

Found You is by the author of *The Hollower*.
In the small town of Lakehaven, something has arrived. It can't see you or hear you but it can find you just the same. When it does, your fears and nightmares have a name, a name you don't want to know. Will anyone survive?
Found you is quintessential horror, well-written, fast-paced with vivid imagery. You may not want to read too close to bedtime for a restful night; but if you are a horror lover, you will want to read it for the chill of your life. - **Pam Allan**

The Crown
by Deborah Chester
Ace, \$7.99, 298 pp

The Crown appears to continue *The Pearls*.
Forsaking her spirit for her heart, Lea has fallen in love with her kidnapper, a man with no soul. Lord Shadrael has contracted with the vindicants to trade her for his soul, but when they renege on



their agreement, the badly wounded Shadrael must rescue Lea escaping into the hidden ways where evil rules. To survive, they must find a balance between light and darkness.
Here be romantic fantasy. With plot twists, action, and good characters, we have a pleasant afternoon's reading for anyone who loves romantic fantasy. Enjoy. - **Pam Allan**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

call the BBS, or write to: LSS c/o R. Martin; 2522 N. Sparkman Blvd.; Tucson, AZ 85716

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

CENTRAL ARIZONA SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY, INC. (CASFS) The non-profit corporation that puts on CopperCon conventions, SmurfCons, HexaCons, occasional regional cons, and publishes Con-Notations. Best described as SF/F generalists with a strong bent towards literary SF/F. Guests welcome - meets at 8pm on the last Friday of each month in January thru September and the second Friday in October, November and December at JB's Restaurant, 1818 W Montebello in Phoenix, AZ. For information: write PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or email info@casfs.org Web www.casfs.org

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

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

THE EMPIRE OF CHIVALRY AND STEEL, INC. The Empire of Chivalry and Steel specializes in the general recreation of the culture of the Middle Ages including all of the Art Forms, Events (Feasts, Tournaments, Ceremonies and Wars) and Combat Arts covering the years of 800AD up to 1650AD and any location within Europe or its explored territories. For more information contact Leonard Byrd (Tucson) (520)742-2432 Web: www.galandor.org

A GATHERING OF PLAYERS-Find Your Adventure Our club is running into our fourth year. Join us for games and adventure set in the Dungeons and Dragons realm. We offer Living Greyhawk and Xen'drik Expeditions. Visit <http://www.warhorn.net/gathering>, to see what we have coming up. We will have character creation sessions to get you started and answer all questions. Our group has been together, and growing, for four years. We're a good group of friends that believe in gaming fun first. Our member group's ages range from 13 to 49. We welcome both new and experienced players. 10:00 a.m. Character Creation - We will have a session to create characters for all of the campaigns we run. AGoP will have all books available for reference. We encourage you to purchase the books if you like the game. All character materials are provided; character sheets, master item logs, adventure records, etc. Dice will be loaned to you if you don't have any yet. In other words, all that is needed for the first day is for you to join us and have fun.

If you have any questions email us at agatheringofplayers@gmail.com.

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

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

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

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

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

PAReX is a non profit organization dedicated to building and promoting Autonomous robotics. The club has been in existence since 1998. Meetings are currently conducted twice a month at two different Phoenix, Arizona locations, <http://www.parex.org/meetings.shtml>. Club dues are on an annual basis: Regular members \$20 Student members \$15 Of course visitors are always welcome because we know you will eventually become a member anyway Web page: <http://www.parex.org/> E-mail Contact: parexteam@cox.net

THE PHOENIX FANTASY FILM SOCIETY A Phoenix based club interest-ed in the entire realm of SF, Fantasy and Horror film. PFFS has been in existence for 30 years, meeting every 6 weeks in member's homes. Dues are \$10 per year. Membership includes newsletters, an annual film awards and

various outings. For information, contact PFFS, P.O. Box 34023, Phoenix, AZ 85067 or call David Storck at (602) 274_7404, e-mail: Menzeez@aol.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Cont'd on page 24)

Club Listings (Cont'd from page 23)

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

TEKWAR FAN CLUB Sanctioned by the series' production companies and the USA Network! It is THE information conduit between the fans and the series! Fan club membership will bring you the following 1) subscription to the info filled Tek Informer newsletter; 2) official TekWar Fan Club membership card and kit. Membership is by regular mail only and the newsletter and materials will not be reproduced electronically. To join the action and initiate your annual membership, make check or money order out for \$12.50 to: Official TekWar Fan Club (Membership section), 2522 N Sparkman Blvd., Tucson AZ 85716-2417

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

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

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

USS LEONIDAS The Leonidas is a member of Region IV of STARFLEET International. The chapter is an opportunity for those that share a love of Star Trek to have fun and help the community at the same time. The Leonidas stresses uniforms or other costumes to have the ability to participate actively in various events as they present themselves but they are not required. In an effort to expand membership the USS Leonidas has assisted in the formation of a High School Star Trek club called the STARFLEET Science and Tactical Academy. Students participate in a wide range of

activities with the hope that they will become interested in Star Trek and join STARFLEET as officers. The USS Leonidas has a crew of 30. Starfleet Science and Tactical Academy has 52 cadets. Members age from 14-65 years old. Average age is 20-25. Club meeting locations vary due to scheduled away missions and such, but usually meet in a classroom at Apache Junction High School. Membership with Starfleet International is required. www.sfi.org Upon joining STARFLEET a member is a Cadet. Upon passing the Officer's Training School Exam at the Online Academy, the member becomes a Commissioned Officer aboard the Leonidas. The chapter does not have dues as of yet. The dues to be a member of STARFLEET International are \$15 a year. No newsletter, but members do receive an activities E-mail update. No web site yet. Contact : Jonathan Krieger, 480-677-0269, LAHCommander@mchsi.com

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

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

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

Convention Listings

Space Access '09 (April 2-4, 2009), our upcoming 17th annual conference on the technology, politics, and business of radically cheaper access to space, will take place Thursday April 2nd through Saturday April 4th 2009 at the Best Western Grace Inn in **Phoenix Arizona**. Our conference attendee hotel room rate is \$99 a night tax included, single or double, and comes with full buffet breakfast. For reservations, call 1-800-843-6010 and ask for the Space Access Conference 2009 room block. Conference advance registration is \$100, mail checks along with your name, email, and organization (if any) for your badge to: Space Access '09, 5555 N 7th St #134-348, Phoenix AZ 85014. . <http://www.space-access.org/>

AniZona 2009 (April 10-12, 2009) Embassy Suites Paradise Valley/ Scottsdale, **Phoenix, AZ**. Guests Toybox. Karaoke, Cosplay, Game Room, Viewing Room, Panels, Dance, Artist Alley and much more. Memberships \$20 thru 03/31/2009. **MEMBERSHIP CAPPED AT 1000**. For more info - www.anizona.org or info@anizona.org

RandomCon (May 8-10, 2009) a **NEW gaming convention** to be held at The Grace Inn, 10831 S 51st St, Phoenix, AZ 85044, (480) 893-3000, ww.graceinn.com Our rates are \$75 S/D, \$85 T, \$95/ Q. For our games we plan to have **RPGA** - plans include Living Forgotten Realms, Arcanis and Pathfinder. **Amber Diceless** - In the tradition of AmberCons across the World, RandomCon brings you the Chronicles of Amber in roleplaying form in a variety of games. **Houses of the Blooded - John Wick's** new 'big game!' Come try out this new system that puts narrative control in the players hands! **Eric Torres**, will be demo-ing and selling his new Card Game, Rynaga **PLUS Console Gaming, Card Games, Board Games, Miniature Gaming, LARPs**, and much more! There will be a consuite and a small dealer room. Cost is \$15 until December 31, 2008, \$20 Jan 1 to April 30, 2009 and \$25 at the door. Pay now via Paypal on our web site at www.randomcon.org or mail check or money order to RandomCon, PO Box 67457, Phoenix AZ 85082. Check our web site for updates or contact us at info@westernsfa.org

AdventureCon, (May 30-31, 2009) University of Phoenix Stadium, **Glen-dale, AZ** - CANCELLED www.adventurecon.com

FiestaCon (Westercon 62) (July 2-5, 2009) Tempe Mission Palms, **Tempe, AZ**. 60 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona 85281 Artist GoH: Todd Lockwood, Author GoH: Alan Dean Foster, Editor GoH Stanley Schmidt, Fan GoHs: Jim and Doreen Webbert, Toastmasters: Partick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden. FiestaCon is also hosting the 1632 Minicon with Eric Flint. Memberships \$70 thru 12/31/08, \$75 thru 3/31/09, more later. Phone: 480-945-6890 Write:

FiestaCon, c/o Leprecon, Inc., PO Box 26665 Tempe, AZ 85285, Email: fiestacon@leprecon.org web: www.fiestacon.org

North American Discworld Convention (Sept 4-7, 2009) Tempe Mission Palms, Tempe, AZ. 60 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona 85281 Guests: Terry Pratchett, Diane Duane, Peter Morwood, Esther M. Friesner and Bernard Pearson. Memberships \$80 thru 3/31/09, more later. Phone: 480-945-6890 Write: NADWCon, c/o Leprecon, Inc., PO Box 26665 Tempe, AZ 85285, Email: info@nadwcon.org Web: www.nadwcon.org

CASFS Business Report

November / December 2008 CASFS voted to donate \$100 to First Book which will get matching funds from Random House thus doubling the donation. First Book will provide books to a Middle School with these funds. Random house was matching the donations until Dec. 31, 2008. Such donations mesh well with our Corporate Raison d'etre.

CASFS held elections December 12, 2008 for President, Vice President and three Board seats. Those elected were President Mark Boniece, Vice President Gary Swaty, Board Members Michael Contos, Susan Uttke and Randall Whitlock.

In December the Strategic Planning Committee discussed results of the Swot analysis of CASFS .The Committee discussed CASFS's strengths and looked at weaknesses as well. In the next meeting the Committee will attempt to suggest possible actions we should take in the light of our analysis. Plans for CopperCon 2010 will be guided by these recommendations.

On November 18th the CASFS Book Discussion Group talked about Galactic Patrol. In December we had a Roll Your Own discussion of favorite books

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, Hexa-Cons, SmerfCons and other conventions. We are a charitable, non-profit organization that exists to further science fiction, fantasy and science fields in Arizona. CASFS currently meets at the JB's Restaurant at 1818 W Montebello in Phoenix The meetings begin at 8PM and are held on the last Friday of the month Jan. through Sept. and on the second Friday of the month Oct through Dec. Everyone is invited to attend two meetings as a guest (non-member). Membership rates are \$12/year plus an initial \$3 application fee and rates are pro-rated for the amount of the year remaining. For more info: Webpage: www.casfs.org Email: info@casfs.org

Generic Convention Registration Form

Name: _____
Badge Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/ZIP: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ memberships for _____ convention.

(See individual convention listing for mailing address)
More info on __ Masquerade __ Art Show __ Volunteer __ Other