

ConNotations

Volume 19, Issue 6
December / January
2009 / 2010
FREE

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

A Conversation with Todd Lockwood

by Bob LaPierre

I sat down with Todd Lockwood during his recent appearance at WesterCon in Tempe Arizona. We talked about a number of topics and digressed endlessly. I have left off most of the personal comments between us and tried to keep the important (to the reader) parts in. Todd is a pleasant, interesting, and very candid man. We ranged far afield on topics and passed information on a common friend. Here is the substantive part of that conversation.

Bob LaPierre: Since your departure from Hasbro/Wizards of the Coast what have you been up to?

Todd Lockwood: Freelancing, mostly book covers, which is what I always wanted to do. So that worked out and everything is fine.

BL: Anything that we would recognize?

TL: Well I did two covers for a couple of young adult books that R.A. Salvatore did with his son Geno, They're called the "Stowaway" and the "Shadow Mask". There is a third book due in that series. I just finished the cover for a Tad Williams novel. It is the third book in the series. Michael Whelan did the first book in the series, "Shadowmarch" and I did "Shadowplay", and this is the follow up to that (note the third volume was split into



two parts and the titles are not finalized as of publication; ed.).

(minor discussion about the realities of working titles vs. actual titles and the importance of not releasing a wrong title for the work.)

BL: So now that you are freelancing, do you find it more relaxing? Is there less

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Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society

PO Box 62613

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Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
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Permit 839
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Who Is Who This Issue

Managing Editor: Stephanie Bannon
Assistant to the Editor: Gary Swaty
Graphics Editor: Craig L. Dyer
Film & Video Editors: Len Berger, Craig
L Dyer & Bob LaPierre
Promotions Directors: Len Berger,
Richard Bolinski, Craig L Dyer
Advertising: Catherine Book
Proof Readers: Catherine Book, Bob
LaPierre & Gary Swaty
Reporters: Craig L Dyer, Jeffrey Lu
Staff Writers: Pam Allen, Nadine
Armstrong, Stephanie L Bannon, Catherine
Book, Shane Bryner, Craig L. Dyer, M.L.
Fringe, Michael Griffin, Bob LaPierre,
Jeffrey Lu, Christina Paige, Shane
Shellenbarger, Gary Swaty, Tom Tuerff,
Lee Whiteside, Randall Whitlock

Contributors:
Layout & Design: Stephanie L. Bannon
Keeper of the Mailing List: Craig L. Dyer
Labeling Crew for Volume 19 Issue 5:
Len Berger, Craig Dyer, Bob LaPierre,
Jeffrey Lu, Nyki & Bella Robertson, Wally
Sanville, Robin Webb

CN Mascots: [The Four CopperCon Kittens](#)
About ConNotations: *ConNotations* is the
fan published newszine of the Central
Arizona Speculative Fiction Society
(CASFS) an IRS-recognized 501(c)3 non-
profit organization. Circulation is
estimated at 7,000 readers for this issue,
including CASFS members and attendees
of recent CASFS conventions.

Subscriptions: The newszine is currently
sent free of charge to anyone who has
attended a CASFS sponsored convention in
the last calendar year and to all CASFS
members. Subscriptions are available. Cost
for a six issue subscription is: USA: \$20/
bulk. Corporate subscriptions are available,
email for rates.

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Publication: Publications dates are February,
April, June, August, October & December.
Publication date of this issue is 11/18/2009;
mailing date is 11/24/2009

Advertising: *ConNotations* reaches approx.
7,000 science fiction, fantasy, gaming and horror
fans throughout the Phoenix metro area, the
Southwest and nationwide. Our ad rates are:
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one-fourth page; \$20/one-eighth page. More
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Contact Information: ConNotations and its
contributors can be contacted by mail at PO Box
62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or via email at
editors@casfs.org

ConNotations
ISSN: 1082-7765
PUBLISHED: Six times a year
BY: Central Arizona Speculative
Fiction Society, PO Box 62613,
Phoenix, AZ 85082
ISSUE NUMBER: Volume 19 Issue 6
SUBSCRIPTION: \$25 for 6 ISSUES

SF Tube Talk

TV News & Previews

By Lee Whiteside

sftt Dec/Jan 09/10

We’ve got news this time on what’s been doing well in the new fall shows, Syfy’s latest miniseries, and **David Tennant’s *Doctor Who*** swan song.

The new fall season is underway and so far there are no casualties in the genre series department, although some have been faring better than others. ***Flash Forward*** debuted strongly for ABC and has gotten a full season order. With the full season order in place, the producers promise to show us that fateful day in April 2010 on that exact date, April 29th. But don’t expect the story to end there. ABC’s debut of “**V**” drew record ratings for the time slot for the network. They are probably now wishing they hadn’t shut down production which will mean the show won’t have any new episodes after the initial batch of that have aired in November. ***Eastwick*** has been doing fair for the channel, but nothing to get excited about, and it will likely not get any episodes beyond its initial 13. CBS’s teaming up of ***The Ghost Whisperer*** and ***Medium*** seems to be working out well for the channel with ***Medium*** sometimes doing better than ***Ghost Whisperer*** on some weeks. While ***Heroes*** hasn’t done any better in the ratings this year than last, compared to the other new dramas on the channel and the Jay Leno show, its doing better still than a good part of the rest of the network’s schedule. Expect the show to take a break before coming back early in the year, though, possibly paired back up with ***Chuck*** once again. Over on FOX, ***Fringe*** has dropped substantially from its initial ratings last year and may need to pick things up to get a third season. ***Dollhouse*** has been pretty much declared dead by FOX and they will be doubling up episodes during December to clear out their inventory after having pulled the series for November sweeps. ***The Vampire Diaries*** has done gangbusters for the CW and has also gotten a full season order and ***Supernatural*** appears to have benefitted some from a stronger lead-in. ***Smallville***, as expected, saw its live viewing numbers drop substantially when it moved to Friday, but when DVR viewing is figured in, total viewers haven’t dropped much from last season.

Smallville will be back in January with ***Disciple*** which will feature **Steve Bacic** guest starring as The Dark Archer, an old mentor of Oliver Queen’s who is a member of a Celtic assassin cult, with **Elise Gatien** returning as Mia Dearden (aka Speedy). After that will be a big two-parter (***Society/Legends***) featuring the Justice Society written by **Geoff**

Johns, bringing many legacy characters to the Smallville world. Guest starring as Carter Hall/Hawkman will be **Michael Shanks**, **Brent Stait** will be Kent Nelson/Doctor Fate, **Britt Irvin** as Courtney Whitmore/Stargirl and **Phil Morris** returns as the Martian Manhunter. According to **Geoff Johns** “Yes, Hawkman will have wings. And a big mace. Oh. And he and Green Arrow don’t get along. At all.”

Dollhouse will be bunching up episodes on Friday nights in December starting with ***The Public Eye*** where Echo is sent to stop Senator Daniel Perrin (**Alexis Denisof**) before he can expose the Dollhouse’s secrets. Adelle and Topher travel to the Washington, D.C. Dollhouse where they meet its genius programmer, Bennett Halverson (**Summer Glau**), a woman with a mysterious past connection to Echo. In ***The Left Hand***, Echo and Bennett have a shocking meeting as Adelle goes head-to-head with the ruthless head of the Washington, D.C. Dollhouse (guest star **Ray Wise**). Meanwhile, Topher sees double when he involves Victor in his espionage, and Perrin finds a surprising witness to testify against the Rossum Corporation. Next up is ***Meet Jane Doe*** where Echo finds herself out in the world-at-large as she struggles to control her multiple memory downloads. Topher discovers the dangers of science that will have devastating effects on the future, while Adelle engages in a power struggle with Harding (**Keith Carradine**). In ***A Love Supreme*** Echo’s past romantic engagements are found murdered, and the Dollhouse fears that Alpha (**Alan Tudyk**) has returned to seek his revenge. The Actives turn against their handlers, leaving one member of the house permanently mind-wiped. Two more episodes will air in December, ***Stop-Lost***, and ***The Attic***, for which no information has been released.

Over on Syfy, ***Stargate Universe*** debuted strongly and has held up in the ratings for the most part, although doing comparable to early seasons of ***Stargate Atlantis*** as compared to the more successful ***Warehouse 13***. We’ve got a couple of episodes coming up in December and then after a break for the holidays, the series should resume in early January. First up is ***Justice***, which deals with shipboard justice and according to producer **Joseph Mallozzi** “we shift focus from the dark and dangerous alien environment of ‘*Time*’ to the shocking discovery and troubling developments presented in ‘*Justice*.’ **Will Waring** is doing the honors here, directing an episode that promises more than a few surprises in addition to decisions both startling and unsettling that will have far-reaching consequences for the Destiny crew.” After that is the first of the mid-season two-parter, ***Space***,

which **Mallozzi** describes as “Nothing is quite as it seems? Try — no one is quite as they seem. Furtive moves, shifting alliances, and hidden agendas guarantee a dysfunctional and disquieting galaxy-hopping community.” The series will resume in January with ***Divided***, which “is the one that really sings. It is taut, suspenseful, filled with intrigue, and offers up some terrific dramatic performances by many of our cast,” according to **Mallozzi** on his blog. After that will be ***Faith***, which deals with religion and faith and how it relates to the Ancients and the crew of the Destiny. In ***Human***, Nicholas Rush risks his life in a dangerous experiment involving the ship’s computer, and flashes back to the time when he was first recruited into the Stargate program. This episode will feature a guest appearance by **Michael Shanks**. In the episode ***Lost***, the focus will be on Ronald Greer with a flashback to his youth when he was dealing with his father, Reginald, who was a victim of Gulf War syndrome.

The second season return of ***Sanctuary*** has produced record ratings, getting a boost from having ***Stargate Universe*** as a lead-in. There’s not really any information on upcoming episodes, however. Upcoming episodes include ***Next Tuesday*** where Will and Magnus’ helicopter crashes on a decommissioned oil rig while carrying an abnormal. After that is ***Penance***, which will guest star **Michael Shanks** (who is really getting around this year) as a character named Jimmy.

Syfy’s big miniseries this December is ***Alice***, from the producers of ***Tin Man***, it is a contemporary reimagining of ***Alice In Wonderland*** that will air on Sunday and Monday, December 6 and 7. It stars **Caterina Scorsone** as Alice Hamilton, and independent twenty-something who finds herself on the other side of a looking glass in a strange city with twisted towers and casinos built out of playing cards that is ruled by the evil Queen of Hearts (**Kathy Bates**). Also starring are **Tim Curry** as Dodo, **Colm Meaney** as the King of Hearts, **Philip Winchester** as Jack Chase, **Matt Frewer** as the White Knight, **Andrew Lee Potts** as Hatter, **Harry Dean Stanton** as the Caterpillar, **Alessandro Juliani** as 9 of Clubs, **Timothy Webber** as Carpenter, **Alex Diakun** as Ratcatcher, **Zak Santiago** as 10 of Clubs, and **Eugene Lipinski** as Doctors Dee and Dum.

Coming up in January, Syfy will finally debut the ***Battlestar Galactica*** prequel series ***Caprica*** on January 22nd with the pilot movie that has already been out on DVD since last April. The series will pick up from the pilot and will focus on Zoe and how she handles being a robot and how she copes with the real world. According to producer **Ron Moore**, for Joseph and Daniel, “We pick

up from that point and they’re on very different tracks for quite awhile. Joseph has different priorities than Daniel does. Neither of them is really thinking that anything from the pilot is going to resurface again. Daniel has no idea that Zoe exists in the Cylon and as far as Joseph is concerned, that’s all yesterday’s news and he’s trying to move on with his son. Each of them will find in very early episodes that actually, these things have reverberations and repercussions and they’ll be drawn back in to these plotlines.” Spike fans should note that **James Marsters** will be on the series as terrorist leader Barnabus Greeley.

In new series news, Syfy has announced they have bought the rights from RDF Media to make their own version of ***Being Human***, the current BBC series about a vampire, werewolf, and ghost sharing a flat. Syfy plans to reimagine the series for a US audience and have committed to 13 episodes already. According to Syfy executive **Mark Stern** “We’ve loved this project and been tracking it for a while. ***Being Human*** definitely distinguishes itself as something new and different in a landscape filled with familiar supernatural fare. In adapting it, we intend to work closely with RDF to keep the wit, insight, and humor of the original, while opening up the series for a new audience.” Many fans have already expressed doubts about a US remake, especially when the UK original is still going strong. Recent attempts to remake UK produced series such as ***The Eleventh Hour*** and ***Life on Mars*** have not been successful.

Both the BBC and BBC America will be airing the final **David Tennant *Doctor Who*** episodes at the end of the year. While the BBC will have already aired ***The Waters of Mars*** in mid-November, BBC American has it slated to debut on Sunday, December 19th. The official description of the episode reads as “All will be revealed as the Doctor and his companion Adelaide (**Lindsay Duncan**) face terror on the Red Planet in one of the scariest adventures yet. **Peter O’Brien** guest stars as Ed, Adelaide’s second-in-command at the base.” The story is set on Mars in 2059 at Bowie Base One and while it will have some thematic link to the final two episodes of **Tennant’s** run, it will not be a direct tie-in to them. Airing over Christmas in the UK and shortly after in the US on BBC America is the two part finale dubbed ***The End of Time***. Joining The Doctor as a companion for the episodes is Donna Noble’s grandfather, Wilfred Mott, played by **Bernard Cribbens**. Reports are that there will also be appearances by other actors from the series including **Catherine Tate** (Donna Nobel), **John Barrowman** (Jack Harkness), **John**

(Cont’d on page 4)

SF Tube Talk (Cont’d from page 3)

Simms (The Master), **Camille Coduri** (Jackie Tyler), **Jacqueline King** (Sylvia Noble), **Tommy Knight** (Luke Smith), **Alexandra Moen** (Lucy Saxon), **Billie Piper** (Rose Tyler), and **Elisabeth Sladen** (Sarah Jane Smith) to name a few. It looks to be a big finale and the end of an era for the show as **Russell T. Davies** turns the series over to **Steven Moffat**.

That’s not quite the last of **David Tennant’s** Doctor. As a lead-up to the finale, the BBC will broadcast a new animated set of episodes titled *Dreamland* which will feature **David Tennant** as The Doctor and **Georgia Moffatt** as Cassie Rice. Also providing voices are **Lisa Bowerman**, **David Warner** and **Stuart Milligan**. *Dreamland* sees the iconic TARDIS touchdown in the desert in the USA. Stumbling across a mysterious alien artifact in a local diner, the Doctor is led to Area 51, also known as Dreamland, the US’ most secret base. He then finds himself on a momentous mission to rescue Rivesh Mantilax from the threat of the ruthless Viperox and the clutches of the American military. It will be made available via the BBC Red Button service in the UK and will also be made available on the BBC’s Doctor Who website (which may or may not allow US based computers to view it). In the third series of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, which just finished airing on the BBC in the UK, Tennant guest stars in the two-parter *The Wedding of Sarah Jane Smith* where Sarah is about to get married after a whirlwind romance. BBC America has indicated they will likely be airing the newer episodes of the series, but have yet to announce any firm airdates.

BBC America is currently listing *Survivors* as coming soon, and there is a good chance it may turn up on the channel on Saturday nights starting in January. The series is an update of **Terry Nation’s** series from the 1970s and is set in contemporary times when a devastating virus wipes out 99% of the world’s population and focuses on a group of survivors led by Abby Grant (**Julie Graham**), who is searching for her son, Peter, who she believes also survived. Also starring are **Patterson Joseph** as Greg Preston, **Max Beesley** as Tom Price, **Zoe Tapper** as Dr. Anya Raczynski, **Nikki Amuka-Bird** as Samantha Willis, and **Robin Addison** as Sarah Boyer. Also appearing are **Freema Agyman** as Jenny Walsh and **Shaun Dingwall** as David Grant. In the opening 90 minute episode, we meet the characters and experience the devastation of humanity as the virus spreads throughout the world, leaving a small group of people who come together to be able to survive.

A Conversation (Cont’d from page 1)

stress?
TL: In some ways it is and in others it isn’t. I freelanced more of my career than not. I freelanced in advertising for fifteen years, before I went to TSR. So freelancing again is familiar, it’s more stressful in some ways because there is no getting around your deadlines. When you miss one it’s bad and you try not to but it’s easy to get overbooked. This June was just crazy because I didn’t have anything lined up and then the R.A. and Geno Salvatore thing came up and I agreed to do them, and then four other covers to series I had begun came up. Within three days they all came in and all had the exact same deadline, so suddenly I was overbooked. I probably should have turned one of them away but, I hate to do that because they’re my series, and one of them I’m going to finish when I get back. And you never really know what their real deadline is, of the three I just finished I don’t think any of them really needed it when they got it. So I’ve got one client who is waiting on pins and needles and didn’t get to use it in their catalogue and three others who used it in their catalogue but they’re not gonna use the final painting for a while and a couple have changes they want to make, but they haven’t told me what they are yet so...its...those things can be stressful. But on the other hand a bad commute is a day the cat is in front of me on the way to the studio. (light laughter) I don’t miss commuting at all. And you set your own hours when you freelance so I can take a break when I need it instead of when the clock says it’s ok and so on.

BL: Now you said something about not wanting to turn something away, do publishers ever hold that against you? If you say “I’ve got too much and I can’t do that”?
TL: I don’t know, you just... yeah you know when they call you back with something you know they didn’t hold it against you. You know you try not to find yourself in those (kind of) positions but more and more the distributors are dictating the schedules and it used to be I got a couple of months notice, lead time on a painting, and it’s happening now where it’s often a month and sometimes a couple weeks. It’s hard to do cover illustration on that kind of a turnaround. It’s part of the reason I work digitally to save the time where I can save it.

BL: We’ve noticed that. In our review books the release dates seem to be clumped mostly around a quarterly schedule. So do you have any plans to do any more or your art books?
TL: Yeah, I have enough art to do another art book, I just need to ... get after it. It won’t be (with) Paper Tiger because they’re ... ahh... having difficulties shall we say and they don’t

want to return any of my messages. They are sitting on a pile of my first art book (“Transitions”) in England and I can’t get ahold of any copies. Because they don’t have a distributor in the United States anymore, they (annoyed) Sterling. They won’t talk to me. So a little upset with them, no actually I’m a lot upset with them. So it’s a matter of finding someone else who’s willing. It will have pretty much every Bob Salvatore cover that I did in it especially the newer ones. Everything from “A Thousand Orcs” on, I put that in my first art book but I’ve redone all his covers since. So I’ll put that one in again so I can say all the Drizzt covers are in this art book, and plus every other cover I’ve done that I like plus a few other things. So, yeah, I want to do that and I’m also working on - I wouldn’t call it a graphic novel, but an illustrated novel of my own. Been working on that for a little while. So there are other things in the fire, other Irons in the fire.

BL: About your convention schedule, sometimes it’s hard to know if you are going to be at a convention or not.
TL: Laughs) Yes, I know, I have a hard time keeping my own website up to date. I’m going to Comic-Con, I have a booth there. And then I’m going to be at Chattacon I think it’s called, in Chattanooga. Next February or March [editors note Chattacon is January 22-24, 2010]. Other than that I have nothing scheduled. I think I’m going to try to keep it that way for a little while, until next summer at least. Because conventions are hard work, as I know you know. And when you hang in an art show the convention starts at least a week before it actually starts and continues for a week afterward. And it’s expensive for me always, because I have to make prints and get them packaged up and I have to ship them. I’m also not doing paying work at the same time, so the trade off is in the fun that you have and the people that you meet and honestly, art show sales don’t very often cover expenses. So it’s all about whether it’s fun or not for me, and Phoenix is fun.

BL: You said you are going to Comic Con, what conventions do you find the most ...fun?
TL: Well my favorite is DragonCon far and away just because everybody there is having so much fun. There’s lots going on, lots of media, and art and costuming. It’s the costuming that makes it such a treat, they have that costume parade Saturday morning. It’s a huge convention these days so there is all these people there that I haven’t seen for a while. Yeah, DragonCon is probably the most fun for me. And then World Fantasy - I like it. It’s relaxing and it’s all friends in the industry, professional. And it’s in a different place every year so sometimes

it’s easy to go to as well. Those would be my top two. I do NorwestCon pretty much every year, I didn’t last year but Bob Salvatore and I were co-GOHs this year so that was fun. You would think that would have happened before but that was the first time we’ve been GOHs together anywhere.

BL: Well you have to find a chairman who specifically wants that sort of combination. My own choices were all over the board so...If you were told that you could only do one type of cover for the rest of your career, that nothing else would sell, what type of cover would you do?
TL: Explain what you mean by type do you mean like genre?

BL: Yes like fantasy, science fiction, I haven’t seen a lot of your science fiction art.
TL: I haven’t done a lot of sci-fi, I’ve done some but I’ve mostly been pigeonholed into fantasy. Honestly I think fantasy is my strength. I do enjoy painting fantasy I’ve always liked dragons and beautiful women, monsters, action.

BL: Do you read much for enjoyment?
TL: Not anymore, I get manuscripts that I have to read and sometimes are good and sometimes they are ok. They’re not always something I’d have bought for myself. But when I read for myself I’m usually reading news or history or something other than fantasy. I played D&D for twenty some odd years to keep my insanity when I was doing advertising, then when I started working for TSR I didn’t need that fix anymore - I was doing it every day. People ask me “when you have free time, what do you draw for yourself?” When I have free time I don’t draw.

TL: The truth is I do draw for myself, in the art show is a piece called “The Musculature of the Greater Dragon” That was something I did totally for myself. I did a drawing for Wizards of the Coast of the anatomy of a dragon like that also and ended up drawing the skeleton for the Draconomicon. And I always figured I’d make a poster of it, but when Hasbro decided they didn’t need an art staff and I brought everything home I failed to bring home the typeface I wanted to use, and I decided that I really should have had the front legs posed oppositely so I could see some of the chest structure. And I decided Wizards of the Coast owns that drawing so I really couldn’t do anything else with it. I just need to completely redo it, and that’s where I had left it for several years and then a few months ago I did a contract for a guy in Sweden who does “how to draw” books and he wanted to collaborate on a book on how to draw

(Cont’d on page 5)

A Conversation (Cont'd from page 4)
dragons so I drew it again just for him and then I was hooked. So I tightened it up and finished the poster that I wanted to do. So yeah I do do things for myself. (laughing)

BL: Well it's been a pleasure talking to you. Hopefully we'll get the chance to do this again sometime.

TL: Thank you and I look forward to seeing this in your newsletter.

“Alley Oppsy Daisy!” It's the 50th Anniversary of Rocky the Flying Squirrel and Bullwinkle J. Moose, Pt. 4

By Shane Shellenbarger

As you'll recall from last time, our intrepid band of animators, writers, and voice actors were experiencing troubles South of the Border. The product coming from the Mexican animation studio, Val-Mar, did not match the quality of the pilot produced in the U.S. of A. The behind-the-scenes politics and Machiavellian machinations are explored in great detail in Keith Scott's book, “The Moose That Roared.” Suffice it to say, Jay Ward had a major problem and neither enough time nor money to fix it properly. The show, which Jay Ward and Bill Scott had originally believed would be a daily five minute program, had been contracted between P.A.T. and General Mills as fifty-two half hour shows. Financially, this meant that each half-hour show would be produced for \$8,520 at a time when the average one minute TV commercial cost between eight and nine thousand dollars. In addition, Ward and Scott would have to co-produce the series in its entirety for no added money (save for percentages of the show elements) while deferring their own salaries until show delivery.

Meanwhile, things were moving at a lighting pace in the Los Angeles studio. In deference to his health problems, Ward curtailed his commute from Berkeley and took a combination office/apartment on the cusp of West Hollywood. The writing staff was beefed up by bringing Chris Jenkyns, George Atkins, Chris Hayward, Skip Craig, and Lloyd Turner. Layout animators David Hanan and Bernie Gruver came on board. Alex Anderson contributing two scripts, Ted Parmelee signed on as a freelance animation director, with Al Shean filling out the art department. It was the summer of 1959 and events were about to go from hectic to a grinding halt.

After pricing the film stock, approving the finished theme music, and commencing the animation of the show titles, Ward invoiced the bills back east to P.A.T. Two sets of payments were delayed and the director, Parmelee, refused to go to Mexico. The writers were concerned and their writing suffered. Ward feared that his reputation would be ruined. Bill Scott sent word that a recording session had been canceled and that writing and storyboards were not moving forward. In essence, all work had stopped. Four weeks went by without funds coming from P.A.T. Ward and Scott threatened breach of contract. Eventually it came to light that P.A.T., the company financing *Rocky and His Friends*, had no money. P.A.T. had planned to borrow against the General Mills contract, but Manufacturers Hanover (P.A.T.'s bank) would not approve the loan due to the Mexican production link. Len Key attempted an end run play. He signed a performance bond with American Surety (a AAA insurance Carrier) guarantying completion and delivery of the show. He took that and the General Mills contract to Citicorp in Mexico, presented them to the Citicorp manager and asked for a loan. The manager, who was an American, declined the loan, stating that his bank didn't deal with gringos because gringos don't win in Mexican courts, which meant that if the Mexican studio defaulted Ward Productions couldn't collect.

General Mills began to panic. They wanted *Rocky and His Friends* so that they could compete with Kellogg's sponsorship of *Huckleberry Hound*. Finally, Gordon Johnson talked the ad agency, D-F-S, into guaranteeing a \$125,000 loan from the Chemical Corn Exchange Bank. Johnson and a friend, Robert

Travis, purchased 60 percent of the stock in P.A.T., with the entirety of the stock pledged to the ad agency pending repayment of the loan. By July 10th, Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample had paid off all outstanding debt. This meant that the ad agency was the de facto executive producer of the show. Eventually, the *Rocky* group was able to discharge the loan six weeks early.

Based on these experiences, Jay Ward

didn't want to keep his financial future exclusively in the *Rocky and His Friends* basket. He began to push for a second TV show. Ward still believed that a puppet show could work, but there seemed to be little interest in the industry. NBC showed some curiosity in a Ward produced Winnie the Pooh pilot, but nothing came of it. For the time being at least, Ward was shackled to *Rocky and His Friends*.

(Cont'd on page 6)

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www.randomcon.org
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Around August 1959, the Mexican unit announced they were ready to start. Ward and Scott had their doubts, but were encouraged when they were able to secure the talents of award-winning UPA designer/director Bill Hurtz. For Ward and Scott, this was the first positive note since the deal had been struck. Hurtz job was oversee the work of the Mexican animators, judging the work on a daily basis, while keeping an eye on the budget and critical dates. Ward gave Hurtz the authority to reject any work he deemed below standard. In the meantime, the ad



agency D-F-S was pushing for a twice weekly airing by September 29th, 1959. Armed with Jay Ward's guidelines and mindful of the pressure from the ad agency, Hurtz arrived in Mexico on July 20th to find that things weren't as ready as they had been stated. Val-Mar had no telephone, no English-speaking stenographer, the magnetic film from Los Angeles was being held up in customs, and the layout department was wholly inadequate. Soon, Jim Hiltz and Gerald Baldwin (who had traveled with Hurtz) found themselves pressed into double duty, redrawing layouts as well as directing the cartoons.

The budget again reared its ugly head. Hanna-Barbera (H-B) was producing its half-hour shows for \$21,000 per episode, nearly three times the *Rocky* budget. Ward reasoned that their shows should have been budgeted above H-B's, since *Rocky* had more dialogue, movement, scene changes, and more voice actors. In 2009, a 30-second advertisement aired during *The Simpsons* costs over \$200,000 dollars. Val-Mar was falling behind schedule and Ward knew that the September 29th air date was merely a pipe dream.

Come back next time for part 5 entitled, "Gringos Are Mucho Loco Or Take Back What You Said About José Doroteo Arango Arámula."

For more info go to : <http://tinyurl.com/Shane-Info-Blog>

An American in New Zealand Part 8: The Third Blunder Continues- Hobbit Homes

By Jeffrey Lu

Peter Jackson went to the sheep ranch at night. His scouting team found the perfect tree for the famous Bilbo Baggin's Birthday Celebration for *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. He wanted to chat with the owner and rent a part of land for a few years.

Peter knocked at the door. "Yes?" questioned a man's voice. "Hi, I'm Peter Jackson and I would like to rent your..." said Peter. "Could you come in, please? Door's unlocked. Can't hear you well from outside," replied the man." Peter opened the door and went inside.

Inside, Peter saw an old man and his three sons glued to the T.V. set. Curious, he looked at the screen. They were watching the national Rugby championships. (In the U.S.A, this is like our Super Bowl.) When a commercial arrived, the old man turned to Peter and said, "Can we talk business tomorrow?"

Peter nodded. He asked, "Can I look around?" The father said, "Take your time. We'll be here."

So, Peter looked around in the dark to see if he can make a place named The Shire, a reality.

After three years, at least half of the Hobbit homes were destroyed. One of the sons was planning to bulldoze the rest until the rains came. There were only seventeen Hobbit holes left. He thought of finishing the job but decided to wait a few months when the dry season came. He did not see the first movie of Peter's re-creation of Middle-Earth. Come to think of it, none of the family has seen the Lord of The Ring Movies.

When the first movie opened that year on the following month, there was a knock on the door. The father came and opened the door. He saw a crowd of people. "Hello!" said a stranger. "Is this where the Hobbit homes are?" The old man asked him and his other friends to wait. He phoned Peter Jackson.

"Yes?" said Peter.

"Uh, this is

your landlord. There seems to be a problem."

"Really? What is it?"

"There are group of strangers coming to our ranch and wanting to see the Hobbit homes."

"Well, show them the place and charge admission."

"Okay. Can we talk more about this?"

"Sure, how about tomorrow?"

The rest is history.

Sadly, Sam's house in the *LOTR: The Return of the King* was destroyed. There is a hill of dirt that stands as a tribute to one of the famous Hobbit holes.

There are only seventeen holes left. Luckily, this set is the only one left standing.

Fortunately, Frodo's home still stands, today. One can actually go inside. There is no door or windows at the entrance. Inside, the place is enforced in concrete.

I had photos taken of me trying to go inside one of the window like a burglar. I also had my face out of the entrance windows. My favorite is waiting at the front steps of the famous hole.

I found out later that one of the sons who was an accountant told his father that this touring business could help their family sheep business. He mentioned the draw of tourists all over the world would love to see the famous Shire. I'm glad they did. The place is remarkable. Now, next time about their major family business- sheep.

An American in New Zealand Part 9: The Last Third Blunder- Sheep in The Shire.

Gamer's Corner

Dungeons and Dragons Online
Eberron Unlimited
Turbine Incorporated
FREE!!!

This is loosely based on D&D 3.5 (and I do mean loosely); it is set in Eberron in an under-used setting in the 3.5 universe. Now I should state that free is not quite completely free. While the game is free and you don't have to pay for it as long as you play there are certain limits. First: limit of two characters, if you buy an upgrade subscription you can have more. Second: some quests are only available if you buy the module. Third: you cannot play certain classes or races without buying the right. Now the fourth is not really a money thing but you need it to advance. There are certain items needed to unlock each set of levels and you cannot advance until you have the item for that group.

The combat is fairly straightforward and the monsters are right out of the manuals. I thought some of the combats were a bit overwhelming for single player mode but I didn't have too many opportunities to try team play (my hours are odd). I think that with more team play I would have died less and had more fun.

Death is interesting, you can talk to a cleric before delving and you respawn at his location if you die alone away from a regeneration spot. You can respawn at a regeneration spot if you die close enough or if you are with a team and one of them carries your soul to the regeneration spot.

Lots of fun but I wish it had come out before 4th ed. It is difficult to think of this as D&D when it is so different from what I play at the table.

3.5 Stars out of 5

See you next time. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

(Cont'd on page 7)

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**Warhammer 40,000 Ravenor:
The Omnibus
by Dan Abnett
Black Library, \$13.99, 891 pp**

These are the stories of Inquisitor Ravenor and his team in a secret struggle against the future horrors from aliens, heretics, and chaotic forces from the Warhammer 40,000 universe. Little will Ravenor know that he and his group will not only have to battle an arch enemy but also a hidden enemy within.

This omnibus contains three novels- Ravenor, Ravenor Returned, and Ravenor Rogue. It also contains two short stories: “Thorn Wishes Talon”, and “Playing Patience.”

Dark. Realistic. Things go very wrong. Didn’t expect Ravenor and team to go rogue in order to finish an arch villain. Recommended for Warhammer 40,000 readers and dark sci-fi readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer 40,000 Emperor’s Mercy
by Henry Zou
Black Library, \$7.99, 415 pp**

Inquisitor Obodiah Roth and his hunter-friend Silverstein are sent on a mission on to deny the Chaos legions their objective- finding a very powerful relic of destruction. Roth will find out what heavy costs are needed to do his job.

Inquisitor Roth is a new character that is worthy of Warhammer 40,000 series.

Excellent. Realistic. Worthy of a checkmate on an Archenemy. Recommended for Warhammer 40,000 readers and dark sci-fi readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer Grey Seer
by C.L. Werner
Black Library, \$7.99, 408 pp**

Someone found an artifact in the sewers. Grey Seer Thanquol wants it for power. Little does he know that his most dangerous enemies will not be a human wizard and his gang of experts, but his own rat kin- the skaven.

Grey Seer Thanquol is an ongoing skaven enemy of Warhammer’s *Gotrek & Felix* series. This is the first adventure for Thanquol.

Funny. Thanquol is like the coyote in the Roadrunner cartoons. He keeps trying to undermine the humans but fails again and again due to common rat error(s) and/or from a fighting team of a dwarf and a human. In this book, he attempts to not only reduce the human population but also his own worst enemy: skaven clans. Also, Grey Seer Thanquol loses another Boneripper, a big rat bodyguard. Rats!

Spoiled again. Recommended for Warhammer readers and dark fantasy readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer Gotrek & Felix The
Second Omnibus
by William King,
Black Library, \$10.99, 766 pp.**

Here are the further adventures of two unlikely companions- a slayer dwarf named Gotrek and his poet-human friend Felix to search for Gotrek’s great doom. The general idea was Gotrek was to die while Felix immortalized Gotrek’s death in person by an epic poem. But there’s one catch: Felix needs to be alive in order to write it.

This omnibus contained three novels: “Dragonslayer,” “Beastslayer,” and “Vampireslayer.”

A very good read. These two are drinking buddies who end up as unlikely pair of heroes for the Empire. Highly recommended to dark fantasy or Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer Gotrek & Felix
The Third Omnibus
by William King and Nathan Long
Black Library, \$13.99, 825 pp**

Here is an unlikely team to be a bane to all common evils- giants, orcs, and humans. With Gotrek’s magic axe and Felix’s powerful sword, they go back-to-back for Gotrek’s quest- his doom. This omnibus contained three novels- “Giantslayer,” “Orcslayer,” and “Manslayer.”

Funny. Good series to read. Even though some parts are dark, the pair never part even against all odds. Recommended to dark fantasy or Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer Gotrek & Felix
“Elfslayer”
by Nathan Long
Black Library, \$7.99, 412 pp**

Dwarf Gotrek and human Felix are teaming up with an old wizard friend named Max. The wizard will be bringing a new companion, seer Claudia. Their mission is to stop someone from using an old relic that creates natural disasters. This group will not only have to battle skaven (rat men) but also pirates, water dragons and dark elves.

This is the tenth book of the series.

Interesting. Everyone will all have to pay a cost to fulfill the mission- realistic not exactly a happy ending. Recommended to dark fantasy and Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**

**Warhammer Gotrek & Felix
“Shamanslayer”
by Nathan Long
Black Library, \$7.99, 412 pp**

Gotrek, the Slayer Dwarf, and his human friend, Felix, are going north to wipe out a cult named the Order of the Fiery Heart. They will meet old and new friends. Yet, will this be enough to not only fight the large herd of beastmen and their mighty warlord but also a shaman that can turn humans into beastmen?

This is the eleventh book of the series. Lot of twists and turns. Enjoyed it. Did not expect the ending. Highly recommended to dark fantasy and Warhammer readers. - **Jeffrey Lu**



Trivia Questions

1. Who was the Second author of Fuzzies?
2. For whom is the Hugo Award named?
3. What year was the first Nebulas Awards?
4. hat time-honored profession are the Seamstresses of Discworld?
5. Who coined the term ‘SciFi’?
6. What was the original criteria for inclusion in First Fandom?
7. What is the definition of a Galaxy?
8. What year did Skylab crash?
9. The First time we see Nicholas Courtney (The Brigadier) is in what episode?
10. In what issue of what comic was Spider-Man’s first appearance?
11. Who was the first actor to portray Superman?
12. What is a comet?

[Answers on page 18]

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December 15, 2009 - QUARTER SHARE by Nathan Lowell

January 18, 2010 - TURNCOAT by Jim Butcher

February 16, 2010 - INVISIBLE MAN by H.G. Wells

March 16, 2010 - THE LAST CENTURION by John Ringo

CASFS MEMBER STILL MAKES GOOD, V.2

Mike Griffin's sixth academic paper on mythic algebra is now out in the August 2009 issue of the journal *Semiotica*. It covers what its title says: "Semiosis, Mythic Algebra, and the Laws of Association." These laws were coined by Aristotle, John Locke, and David Hume. A related analysis of cargo cults follows that. Look for the journal in print or online at your university library.

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

"The Hunger" by Whitley Strieber. Ltd Edition print
"Pirate Radio" by Rex Miller & John Maclay

Cemetery Dance Publications

"Invisible Fences" by Norman Prentiss
"The Corpse King" by Tim Curran
"Catching Hell" by Greg Gifune

Dragon Moon Press

"Time Twist" by Lizzy Shannon
"Gentle Howling" by M.H. Bonham (absolutely *killer* coverart!)

PS Publishing

"Gilbert and Edgar on Mars" by Eric Brown
"Ars Memoriae" by Beth Bernobich
"Impossible Stories" collected by Zoran Zivkovic
"Creatures of the Pool" by Ramsey Campbell
"The Black Heart" collected by Patrick O'Leary
"Old Man Scratch" by Rio Youers
"Spook City" anthology w/Ramsey Campbell, Cliver Barker, Peter Atkins, et al

PYR Publishing

"Fast Forward 1" by Lou Anders, anthology
"Dawnthief: Chronicles of the Raven 1" by James Barclay
"The Healer" by Michael Blumlein, MD

Subterranean Press

"Mister Slaughter" by Robert McCammon
"Songs of a Dead Dreamer" by Thomas Ligotti
"Locke & Key" Welcome to Lovecraft" by Joe Hill
"Necroscope: The Plague-Bearer" by Brian Lumley, illustrated by Bob Eggleton (possibly the final Necroscope tale)
And too many more to mention....

Wildside Press

"The Phantom Detective in The Video Victims" by Robert Wallace
"I'm Dying Here" by Damien Broderick & Rory Barnes

Wyrm Publishing

"Tides from the New Worlds" by Tobias S. Buckell
"Toast" by Charles Stross

GAMING EVENTS

DRAWN TO COMICS

STAR WARS MINIATURES. Fridays 7:30pm-11pm, Sundays, 1 - 4pm
SIT-AND-SKETCH with local artists. Saturdays, 4pm-6pm
DAY-AFTER-CHRISTMAS clearance sale, Dec 26th
"SKIP" WEEK, last week of December call for details
MARVEL NEW YEARS PARTY, Jan 1st

GAME DEPOT

MONSTERPOCALYPSE. Wednesdays, 5pm
HEROCLIX & MECHWARRIOR. Wednesdays, 530pm
MAGIC, THE GATHERING. Thursdays, 6pm-9pm-9pm

GAMER'S INN

MAGIC, THE GATHERING, Phoenix ProTour Qualifier. Dec 12, 10am.
WHITE WOLF RPG con, hosted by The Wrecking Crew. Dec 4 -6
MAGIC 2009. Dec 5, 10am
WARHAMMER 40K
MIDNIGHT MADNESS TOURNAMENT 1750 points. Jan 2, midnite

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES

FEDERATION COMMANDER. 2nd Saturdays, noon
RPG. 1st & 3rd Sundays
WAR MACHINE. Wednesdays, 4pm
BOARDGAMES & DEMO NITE. Thursdays, 6pm
MAGIC BOOSTER DRAFTS. Fridays, 7pm

SAMURAI COMICS

(check website for correct store location)

MAGIC, THE GATHERING. Friday, 6p at both locations, & Tues, 6pm (west valley) & Sat 1pm (Phx)
YUGIOH TOURNAMENT. Sundays, noon (Phx) & Sat, noon (west valley)
ANIME CLUB. Sundays, noon (west valley)
POKEMON. Sundays, 2pm (west valley)

SPAZDOG COMICS

STAR WARS MINIATURES. Thursdays, 5pm
HEROCLIX TOURNAMENTS. Fridays, 7pm
POKEMON LEAGUE. Saturdays, 3pm
MAGIC, THE GATHERING. Saturdays, 4pm
TOY DRIVE w/ARIZONA GHOSTBUSTERS FOR CHILDRENS CANCER NETWORK. Dec 5, noon-4pm
INDEPENDENT COMIC CREATORS SIGNING. Meet your local comic creators. Dec 30, all day.

SCIENCE EVENTS

ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

ROBOTS, THE INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION. Sep 27-Feb 14, 2010.
SATURDAY SCIENCE CLASSES: "It's About Time!", Dec 5, 10am-1130am
Ongoing Exhibits:
DORRANCE PLANETARIUM
EVANS FAMILY SKYCYCLE
MY DIGITAL WORLDS
FORCES OF NATURE
NEW ROCK WALL for climbers aged 8 and above
SATURDAY SCIENCE CLASSES for ages 6-10. Check website for dates and topics.

ASU

SCIENCE LECTURES AND NEWS: <http://asunews.asu.edu/news/science>
ANNUAL LECTURE FROM NOBEL LAUREATE FRANK WILCZEK, title is "Arrows and Crystals of Time", Jan 21, 730pm
PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM TO DISCUSS ORIGINS OF EVERYTHING. Presented by some of the greatest minds in science, incl 6 Nobel Laureates. Apr 6, ASU Gammage.

CHALLENGER SPACE CENTER, PEORIA

STARGAZING. STARLAB PLANETARIUM. Check website for dates and times
THE SPACE PLACE is a 2-hour interactive



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MOON SOCIETY MEETING

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PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, TUCSON

SANTA CLAUS BREAKFAST. Dec 5, 9am
NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION. Dec 12, 930am
VOLUNTEER PRESENTATION SERIES. Dec 19, 10a-11am
SPECIAL EXHIBIT: NASA DRIVEN TO EXPLORE' Jan 9-11
SPACE GALLERY EXHIBIT. See an Apollo space capsule, moon rock, Phoenix Mars Mission.

SETI Institute's Weekly

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Titan Missile Museum

TITAN MISSILE MUSEUM TOURS. Reservations only - The only publicly accessible Titan II missile site in the nation. Tour the underground missile site. See the 3-ton blast doors, 8' thick silo walls and an actual Titan II missile in the launch duct. Visit the launch control center, experience a simulated launch, and more. Top to Bottom Tours: Dec 8, 12, 19. More dates avail on website.

OTHER GENRE-RELATED EVENTS

BOOKMANS, PHOENIX

ARIZONA BROWNCOATS SHINDIG 1st Saturday, 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

METAPHYSICAL GROUP Thursdays, 6pm
POLAR EXPRESS STORYTIME, Saturday Dec 12, 6pm
N.E.R.D.S. MEETUP, Saturday, Dec 19, Dec 26, 6pm

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SCREENINGS OF MOVIES, many SF genre. Check website for times and listings.

MISC

MATTHEW PETERSON, best-selling and award-winning author of Paraworld Zero, is interviewing over 50 of the top fantasy/science fiction authors in the world for his online radio show, The Author Hour: Your Guide to Fantastic Fiction, which airs every Thursday at 9 a.m. pacific / 12 p.m. (noon) eastern on VoiceAmerica (the world leader in live Internet talk radio with millions of monthly listeners). The guests on his next episode include Terry Brooks, Brandon Sanderson, Tracy Hickman, Margaret Weis, and R. A. Salvatore. Then the week after that, he's got Anne Rice, Ursula K. Le Guin, Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson, and Orson Scott Card. The interviews are transcribed and archived onto <http://TheAuthorHour.com> for people who missed the live show, plus the interviews will be syndicated through iTunes. Go to <http://TheAuthorHour.com> to see the full list of guests and to listen to the previous interviews Matthew has already done with international best-selling authors such as Terry Pratchett, Eoin Colfer, Piers Anthony, Diana Gabaldon, Meg Cabot, and Holly Black.

SPECULATIVE FICTION WRITER MICHELLE M. WELCH has embarked on a new project in a new role - as editor. She has launched "Theme and Variations," a podcast anthology of speculative fiction with music as a theme. Authors include Keyan Bowes, Ernest Hogan, Elaine Isaak, Lejon A. Johnson, Jack Mangan, Rick Novy, Lon Prater, Caroline Rhodes, and Michelle M. Welch, and some of the episodes feature performances or original music by several of the authors. The eight audio episodes of the anthology premiered at Podiobooks.com in late October, and you can visit www.Podiobooks.com or www.ThemeAndVariationsAnthology.com to listen and download for free.

TUCSON FESTIVAL OF BOOKS March 12-14, 2010

GENRE AUTHORS: Jennifer Ashley, Frank Beddor, Terry Brooks, Emma Bull, Charles deLint, Karen Joy Fowler, Alice Hoffman, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Jane Lindskold, Jeff Mariotte, Cheyenne McCray, Dennis McKiernan, David Morrell, Yvonne Navarro, Weston Ochse, James A. Owen, John Scieszka, Will Shetterly, Janni Lee Simner, Vicki Lewis-Thompson, Aimee & David Thurlo, John Vornholt, Catherine Wells, Timothy Zahn

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Screening Room

The Road
The Fourth Kind
A Christmas Carol

The Road
Starring: Viggo Mortensen, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Robert Duvall, Charlize Theron
Director: John Hillcoat
Runtime: 119 minutes
Rated: R Violence and language
Release Date: November 25th, 2009
Reviewed by: Len Berger
(ConNotations Film Editor)

The Road is about survival after an apocalyptic event that all but destroys the planet and most of the people. The “event” is never identified but scenes indicate that much of the surface of the Earth has been consumed by fire. The story focuses on a family when the “event” starts. The wife (played by Charlize Theron) is pregnant and wonders if she should give birth into this terrible new world. The child is eventually born and several years later the father (played by Viggo Mortensen) and son (played by Kodi Smit-McPhee) leave their home to avoid one more tough winter. All they have is each other, a pistol with two shells for protection and a bit of food. Oh yea, they also have a shopping cart – you need some form of vehicle to hold your belongings.

Their travels are wrought with danger due to the extreme shortage of any food. The “event” has left the Earth barren. Gangs roam the country seeking out any food source they can, including humans. The son witnesses things that no child should see. Father spends time preparing his son to take care of himself and how to judge the people he might meet. The son listened and learned so well that in one case he so concerned about a stranger being treated poorly by his father he asks “Just help him, Papa”. In the son’s eyes, that stranger was one of the good guys.

There are little moments of joy in the form of flashbacks to the pre-“event”

days or when the father finds a lone can of Coke and gives it to his son who is overjoyed by the carbonation.

Perhaps there is some hope for the future of mankind in this new world but it will not be easy.

The Road is a powerful film about the love between a father and his son and how that love sustains the pair during their travels. In the face of massive adversity their relationship conquers all.

Kodi is a relatively unknown actor and does a superb job in the film. Viggo Mortensen (Aragorn in the Lord of the Rings films) is outstanding as well, perhaps one of his best roles. The film is based on the novel “The Road” by Cormac McCarthy.

The Road is rated “A-” and is highly recommended

The Fourth Kind
Starring: Milla Jovovich, Will Patton, Elias Koteas
Director: Olatunde Osunsanmi
Rated: PG-13
Run time: 98 minutes
Gold Circle Films, Dead Crow Productions, Chambara Pictures
Distributed by: Universal Pictures
Release Date: November 6th, 2009

The proper term for what this is hasn’t been coined yet. I am going to call it a Dramatized Documentary.

Dr Abigail (Abby) Tyler [Milla Jovovich] was a psychiatrist involved, with her psychiatrist husband, in a detailed sleep study in Nome Alaska. As the movie begins Milla Jovovich tells us that the story is based on the real experiences of Abby Tyler and that there are real audio and video recordings interspersed with the dramatizations. She says that they are here to present the facts and you should draw your own conclusions.

There seem to be two polar opposite positions presented in the movie, the one espoused by Abby Tyler and the one from Sheriff August (Will Patton). Unfortunately because the movie is ultimately written and directed to be pro-Abigail I don’t know if one can really be

objective in assessing the merits of both sides. Sheriff August really is painted unsympathetically and as a rude blowhard.

The interspersal of the actual videos with the movie was done so heavily-handedly that it made me just tired of the whole thing. If presented as a movie, without all the “real video and audio” I would have enjoyed it far more. It does make you think, but not necessarily as much about the subject as about how it could have been faked.

Oh - one last thing: “eleven million people having seen or knowing someone who has seen a UFO” is not equal to “eleven million reports of UFOs”. It’s kind of fun but ultimately it is like whipped cream, it tastes good but it has no real substance.

Three stars out of five ~ **Bob LaPierre**

A Christmas Carol
Starring: Jim Carrey, Gary Oldman, Bob Hoskins, Colin Firth, Robin Wright Penn
Director: Robert Zemeckis
Rated: PG
Running Time: 96 minutes
Distributors: Buena Vista Pictures Distribution
Release Date: November 6th, 2009

Everybody knows the story, but every so often someone tries to tell it either differently or slightly updated. This time it is more of a reaching back, it has more flavor of an older copy (“Scrooge”, the Alastair Sim version, comes to mind.).

The dialogue is mostly right from the novel by Charles Dickens. I noticed some small deviations but nothing to fret about. I was amazed, however, to see how wonderfully Jim Carrey (as Scrooge) channeled Alastair Sim. The inflection and the timing were so close I might not need my fix this year.

The art looks more like it was done with oils and brushes than with computers and pixels. The 3-D effects made you feel you were actually flying through the streets of London. The snow was so good I occasionally tried to wipe them from my glasses.

The character heights were designed to show the people by their perceived worth in the eyes of society. The scale was tremendous and the effect of immenseness for the members of the upper crust were from one and a half to two times the height of the members of the lower class.

Many people played multiple roles and Carrey played all three ghosts as well as all incarnations of Scrooge. The image capture work required Carrey to do most of the stunts himself, including flying and sliding down the banister. Often Carrey suffers from a lack of boundaries, but Zemeckis seems to have harnessed his energies perfectly.

Four and a half stars out of five ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Videophile

Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure
Disney, 81 min, G
DVD \$29.99

Despite the fact that my friends and colleagues might say I am older than the target audience for this DVD, I thought the video was delightful.

Tink (Mae Whitman) is a tinker fairy. She makes devices to help others do their jobs and chores easier and with less errors. Her best friend is Terrence (Jessie McCartney) a dust fairy (they make sure all the fairies have their allotment of pixie dust [“one cup, no more no less”]).

One day Queen Clarion (Anjelica Huston) sends for Tink, she wants her to craft a new harvest scepter before the blue harvest moon. The scepter is important because it creates blue pixie dust, this is necessary to rejuvenate the tree that provides the dust for all the fairies. The scepter is topped by the rarest of gems - the Blue Moonstone.

Tink begins to work and Terrence helps her. You see her slowly losing her temper with Terrence’s constant help and obsession with tidiness. She finally snaps and sends him away after his latest acquisition for her damages the almost finished scepter. After he leaves she kicks the offending object and it promptly crushes the moonstone.

She decides to find a missing mirror with a wish to restore the stone. She tries to request more pixie dust but is refused. She sets off in a balloon type device and goes in search of the lost treasure.

The tale is typical Disney fare, determined heroine, cute animal companion, revelation about real problems, friendship winning in the end. But it is delivered in a very entertaining method and you enjoy the trip.

Since this was watched in a theater I cannot comment on the extras but typically Disney delivers, especially when the feature is this wonderful. I recommend buying this if you have girls from three to thirteen on your list. Older may like it too.

Four and a half stars out of five ~ **Bob LaPierre**

A Lobster Tale
Starring: Colm Meaney, Alberta Watson, Graham Greene, Jack Knight
Directors: Adam Massey
Phase 4 Films, 95 minutes, PG
DVD \$9.99

Colm Meaney is most familiar to SF fen as the Irish engineer Miles O’Brien on *Star Trek Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*. Here he stars in a family-oriented fantasy about a down-on-his-luck Maine lobster fisherman named Cody who finds a mysterious, glowing

(Cont’d on page 12)

Volume 19 Issue 6



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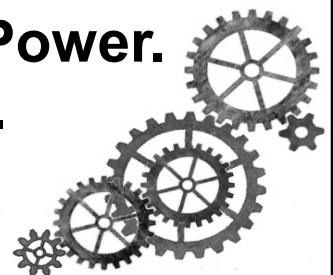
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Videophile (Cont'd from page 10)

green sea moss with healing properties. First it saves his hand after an ugly accident; later, he applies some to a bad injury one of his friends has sustained. Well, after that, he is besieged by neighbors who want a piece of moss. One has a bunion; one limps; another wants a cure for impotence; two donut-munching brothers hope it can reverse obesity.

In the midst of this importunate clamor, Cody misses the warning signs that his closest friend has a serious condition until it is too late. Meanwhile, he is also oblivious to his wife's efforts to spark his interest or his son's difficulties with a school bully. Then a company offers him a fortune if he will sell the remainder of the moss. This could be the answer to all their family's woes, except before Cody makes a decision one way or another, the moss is stolen.

The best part of this movie is the character of the town cop, played with understatement and coyote humor by Graham Greene. He steals; he litters, he offers wise counsel; and when he conducts the investigation his methods are indirect but effective slapstick.

This film is more sobering than upbeat, but it could also lead to some good family discussions about life choices. – **Chris Paige**

Musty Tomes

Ghost of a Chance
by Yasmine Galenorn
Penguin Group, 2003, \$6.99, 262 pp

Ghost of a Chance is the first in the Emerald O'Brien series of supernatural mysteries. In a small northwestern town, Emerald is a divorced mother of two, local witch, and owner of a thriving tea shop. She is teaching her younger child, Kipling, aspects of the Craft, since he shows a strong affinity, while 13-year-old Miranda is going through the throes of adolescent hostility and self-isolation. But a double-haunting intrudes upon them: one is the ghost of a murdered woman, pleading for justice; the other a malevolent entity that grows more and more powerful. Emerald's life only gets more complicated when a possible suspect takes a romantic interest in her. At first he seems a little too good to be true, but there's darker material under the polish.

Emerald's bravery and determination lead her into very dangerous places. Vicarious adrenalin rushes can be addictive, so at the end of the adventure you may find yourself eager for the next installment.

Besides having a good premise, Galenorn writes solid descriptions of characters, places, and events. My only quibble is that the love-making scene read like wish-fulfillment. This is a likeable book that works a captivating spell on readers who incline towards this genre. As a bonus, that author includes a protection charm at the end. – **Chris Paige**

Bone Dance
by Emma Bull
Tor Books, \$15.99, 315 pp

Emma Bull's earlier novels are being reissued in trade paperback, so now is a good time to fill gaps in your library. *Bone Dance* is subtitled "A Fantasy for Technophiles," but aficionados of tarot, Santeria (the religion of which voodoo is a derivative), and classic movies are also in luck.

The chapter titles are a mind-bending combination of a tarot spread, proverbs, and multi-layered descriptors. The narrative itself is taut and fraught with signifiers and surprise revelations.

In the aftermath of a nuclear war between the US and South America, most people go about their lives and mind their business, but narrator/protagonist Sparrow keeps getting involved with the exceptions, like the dancing Jammers

who seem to have a group mind and a direct line to the gods, or the scary-dangerous Beano, who deals in pain, or mysterious strangers who talk in riddles. A techno-wizard, able to coax cables and wires to deliver the goods, and keeper of a cache of irreplaceable recordings from the past, Sparrow can sell a copy of *Singing in the Rain* to the wealthiest man in town and then help man the sound and lighting mix at the local nightclub. But then the memory blackouts begin, and Sparrow starts losing the hustler's edge, and a tarot card reading presents more Greater Trumps in a single spread than any mere street urchin should ever evoke. The carefully guarded secret of Sparrow's past is tied to the origins of the war and the special agents, the Horsemen, who triggered it. Now the last surviving Horsemen are seeking each other out in a final power play, and Sparrow is the trump card each one wants to wield. Hubris, despair, love and hope are at war with each other.

Sparrow is almost torn apart by the struggle, but eventually comes to a place where choice, real choice, becomes possible.

Emma Bull is such a good story-teller that someone ought to pour rubies, gold, and emeralds into her lap. This is no read-

(Cont'd on page 13)

CopperCon 28 wishes to thank its wonderful staff and volunteers with a complimentary membership to CopperCon 30 (2010) to be held Sept 3-6, 2010 at the Windemere Hotel

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For more information about CopperCon 30 (2010) please check the web site at
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and-forget distraction novel; it etches itself into your mind and changes you. I just wish the new publication had an index with source-references for all the movie quotes, because I only caught about half of them, and inside jokes are more fun if you're, well, on the inside. Yes, it's lame to need an index, but I'd rather be lame and learn than remain uninformed. – **Chris Paige**

Charles Fort: The Man Who Invented the Supernatural
by **Jim Steinmeyer**
2008, Tarcher/Penguin, 333 pp., \$24.95, hardcover.

The Book of the Damned; The Collected Works of Charles Fort
2008, Tarcher/Penguin, 1126 pp., \$18.95, softcover
contains: **The Book of the Damned (1919), New Lands (1923), Lo! (1931), Wild Talents (1932).**

To be a human being is to believe in false things. Probably nothing abstract that we think of is objectively true: all religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, economics. All that we know and believe are pragmatic, subjective approximations to truth, merely useful symbols. Even science has this limitation, and no one laughed more at its expense than Charles Fort. So-called modern “skeptics” may loathe Fort as a mystery-monger or promoter of unscientific, superstitious nonsense, but they miss his point. He delighted in finding facts – or claims – to show that scientific theories are never complete explanations. The data came from newspaper, magazine, or journal clippings. He didn't say he believed in those claims. Rather, his purpose was to keep mankind open to clear perception instead of close-minded dogma – even if that dogma came from the scientific community. His four books range from UFOs to psi to the paranormal to teleportation and wacky reports of raining frogs.

In his lifetime, these books were popular. Some writers did get his sense of humor, his true skepticism: Theodore Dreiser and Tiffany Thayer were his champions. Among classic genre authors, his fans included H.P. Lovecraft, Eric Frank Russell, Donald Wolheim, Damon Knight, R.A. Lafferty, and Stephen King. Fortean societies still exist, with active websites, and the print magazine *Fortean Times* is still in bookstores (right next to *The Skeptical Inquirer*). A few books on Fort exist (see his Wikipedia entry), and now we have a new biography. Jim Steinmeyer has also written the six-page introduction to this new omnibus collection. It's for browsing, dipping into at random, not a straight read-through

although one should certainly begin with the first chapters. Fortunately, there's a 63-page index in the back. Consider this a collection of supernatural reference works. Let us end with its opening words: “A procession of the damned. By the damned, I mean the excluded. We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded.” Some of that data – like ball lightning – is no longer excluded, by the way. ~ **M.L. Fringe**

In Our Book

Small Miracles
by **Edward Lerner**
Tor Books, \$25.99, 350 pp

In *Small Miracles*, Brent Cleary works for a nanotech company that makes nano body armor. His job is to accompany cops on their beat to demonstrate how effectively the suit protects the wearer from knife thrusts, bullets, even infection. A single successful demonstration can mean a huge order for the company. It's 2015; the US is involved in a 3-front war, and gasoline costs eight dollars a gallon, so we still haven't converted to metric. Talk about a bleak future!

When the ride-along goes FUBAR, Brent only survives because of the suit.

A year later, Garner Nanaotech is poised to make huge profits, all because Brent survived the unsurvivable in their product. Brent wonders *how* the nanites preserved him, and what mechanisms were in place to eliminate the nanites from his system once they did their job. As he begins to ask questions and conduct his own research, his best friend Kim is encountering design flaws that put the sales schedule at risk – which *must not happen*. Parallel stories of Darwinian survival evolve: that of the company, that of the nanites, and those of the individuals who are the unwitting makers of a changed future.

Lerner has co-authored three *Ringworld* prequels with Larry Niven, and several s-f techno-thrillers of his own, including *Fools' Experiments*, reviewed in *ConNotations* last year. He has an impressive array of short story publications, and his collection *Creative Destruction* is probably well worth tracking down. His official degrees are in physics and computer science, but his unofficial PhD is clearly in suffering bureaucracy ungladly. Almost all his villains are the self-serving weasels that infest corporations to subvert all work to their own nest-feathering. His descriptions of what goes wrong, how, and why are terrifyingly realistic. In an eerie way, his books are like sequels to *The Screwtape Letters* and the “Screwtape Proposes a Toast” by C.S. Lewis.

Small Miracles is a techno-thriller in good order with all the requisite elements of characterization, surprise twists, and dire consequences of hubris and greed – the classic and constant besetting sins. And yet, as I read it, I kept wishing it had been written by Isaac Asimov instead, for two reasons. Well, three. Third, it would mean Asimov were still alive, prompting readers to thought and laughter. But first, because he would have included more actual scientific information and source material in the narrative. If an author has advanced degrees or uncommon knowledge and sharp imagination, then good story-telling leaves the reader well informed and mentally alert. Second, because Asimov was essentially optimistic, and so he would have taken the story down very different paths to a qualitatively different conclusion. For example, just with the beginning, I can't imagine an Asimov protagonist being so stupid as to move *towards* a gas pipeline that has just been breached by guys about to win a group Darwin Award. Yes, the protagonist's unlikely survival propels all the subsequent action, but it is hard for me to respect either a character who would do that or the author who would contrive such a character. I think Lerner writes more from experience than from imagination, and he has yet to experience or imagine a successful alternative to the *Animal Farm* model of progression. I would love to read a book in which he does. ~ **Chris Paige**

Elfland
by **Freda Warrington**
TOR Books; \$25.99; 462pp

Ms Warrington has written seventeen novels. And this is the first published in the U.S. according to her back cover blurb. What a loss for the U.S.!

This is a rich, slow read about Aetherials who live among us, specifically those that live in Leicestershire, England (home of the author). Aetherials for all intents and purposes are elves. Gorgeous... well, ethereal *Lord of the Rings*-type elves. They live longer than humans and they can slip between our world and the Dusklands, but need a portal (The Great Gate) to go through the lands of the Otherworld, the heart of which is The Spiral Court. Some of them have magical abilities—abilities that are *usually* not spectacular or flashed in public. But many are exceptionally skilled as lyrical singers, wonderful gardeners or extremely good with animals. Ancient cyclical rituals performed by the aetherials among their human neighbors are seen as quaint leftovers from deep in Dark Ages.

This novel focuses on two families whose estates Stonegate (the dark brooding Wilders) and Oakholme (the

warm friendly Fox's) march side by side outside the village of Cloundcroft. These two families are caught up in tragedies great and small—the main one either keeping the Great Gate closed so a huge overwhelming evil is not released on the unsuspecting world (called Vaeth by Aetherials) or circumventing the current Gatekeeper's fear of this overwhelming evil and open the Gate—so the Aetherials can remain connected with their real world which is their heart and soul. A big faction of Aetherials feel the evil the Gatekeeper fears is imaginary.

The Wilders are: Lawrence Wilder, paranoid Gatekeeper or farsighted Aetherial (and millionaire jeweler of *albinite* a stone with Aetherial properties) his two sons Sam and Jon, their stepmother Sapphire—and oh yes, the mother who's gone missing, Ginny Wilder.

The Foxes are: Auberon (cute) and Jessica, mom and dad of Rosie, Matthew and Lucas. Auberon owns the house-building company Fox Homes and Jessica is a musician.

These characters are fascinating, complex creations. There are so many layers to them all. They are not simply flashy and magical (or just dark and brooding). And who loves who is a very tangled web. The tale is fascinating; the romance is heart-felt, tragic and very well-charted out. These are vibrant, alive characters in the “real world” of 21st century England and the mysterious and magical land of the Otherworld. And the juggling of their dual lives is absolutely compelling. I am sure this novel will be a “portal” for the rest of Ms. Warrington's rich oeuvre. ~ **Sue Martin**

The Marvel Encyclopedia
Consultant Editor: **Tom DeFalco**
Contributors: **Tom Brevoort, Andrew Darling, Matt Forbeck, Peter Sanderson, Michael Teitelbaum, Daniel Wallace**
Marvel, \$40.00; 400 pp.

This volume contains an introduction by Stan Lee, an update on the last decade, and the most incredible reproductions of some of the greatest artwork in the history of Marvel. The cover art by Brandon Peterson evokes the classic look of the Romita era. The thing is a work of art and that is without even considering the written content.

While this is the 70th anniversary of Marvel, for all intents and purposes the creation of the Fantastic Four really started their emergence as a dominant force in comics. There are several special features in addition to the character and team entries. First there are decade highlights for each decade since they exploded back onto the superhero scene in the sixties. Then there are the major

In Our Book (Cont’d from page 13)

events that have happened in the last few years so those of us who are behind in our reading can understand the current storylines.

I encountered characters that I hadn’t even remembered until seeing their names in print again. Most teams have at least a page dedicated to them and heroes have from a third page to Spiderman’s six pages (granted the last two are mostly art but still...). Most of the supporting characters have a sixth of a page with some treated as heroes including black info box; a good example is the Parkers.

Just for fun I followed several of my favorite characters through cross references and team affiliations just to see where it took me. I only had one “dead end”, Lockheed the dragon. Guys who or what is the “Sword”? Other than that , Wow! I have been reduced to the state of drooling fan-boy.

If you are a fan of Marvel comics then this is something you will love.

Very Highly recommended. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

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

Mercy Thompson is a walker, a person with the ability to turn into a coyote at will. She is the heroine of a series of novels, *Moon Called, Blood Bound, Iron Kissed* and *Bone Crossed*

This graphic novel collects the first four issues of the comic book series originally published by Dabel Brothers Publishing. *Homecoming* is an origins story telling us how Mercy came to the Tri-City area, met Adam Hauptman and came to work for Zee as a VW mechanic.

The illustrations are beautiful and the story does a lot to explain the relationships in the books. I hope to see more in this graphic series. Established fans will enjoy learning how Mercy came to know Adam, Zee and Stefan the vampire, while those who are new to the Mercy Thompson universe will definitely want to get the books to learn more. Highly recommended. ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Time Conquers All
By P.G. Hultstrand
AZ Publishing Services LLC, \$14.95,
233 pp**

This book is a time travel romance set in an alternate history timeline in Asia in the 1500s. The scenarios involves a group of Vietnam era soldiers who find themselves stranded in the past and build themselves a small country, Alare, near Nepal. It involves their relationship with a nearby country Laie and their commander’s inexplicable psychic connection with the princess Tamea of

Laie. Laie is suffering from internal conspiracies and the danger of an external invasion by Nepal. They need Alare and its mysterious weapons to enhance their chance of survival. A royal wedding is planned either between the Princess Tamea and Commander Walker’s younger brother or the Queen and the Commander. This is derailed by the instant and incendiary attraction between the Commander (or Prince as he styles himself) and the Princess. Things are speeded up by assassination attempts and eminent invasion.

Further the princess has visions of future warfare involving Walker and of herself encountering him in the future after the war. She knows his mind in ways that make him uncomfortable. Their relationship is difficult. Her power of communicating with animals is also important to the story. Her Tiger guardian patrols the palace and birds spy on the Nepalese for her.

The characters are well sculpted and believable. The plot is complex and interesting. I enjoyed the book. A sequel is due out soon. It can be had from Amazon Marketplace and directly from www.azpublishingservices.com. ~ **Gary L. Swaty**

**The Ghosts of Blood and Innocence
by Storm Constantine
Tor, \$16.95, 460pp**

This is the end of a truly epic story. It began in 1990 with the first 3 books, and she picked back up in 2003 with the second set of three books. I can’t always recommend that it’s worth your time to go back that far, but this time...it is. Really it is.

There has been a general decline of humanity by the usual route: infertility and rampant pollution. Nothing new there. But there spontaneously appears a mutation that signals the end of humanity and the birth of Wraeththu. The Wraeththu spread across the globe quite rapidly because this mutation is not by birth but by design – from the first freakish mutant come all the rest. The biology of the change is vague but involves blood and sex and only young boys. Rather vampire-ish. But the author colors it more as a rite of ascension and a spiritual and emotional bonding. Nothing I found distasteful.

The new race is superior to humanity in every way. They are all androgynous, beautiful, intelligent, with better (more fun!) sex organs, and enhanced physic abilities. They clash, of course, with the remains of humanity for resources but also because they are responsible for the extinction of humans by taking all their boys. Different tribes spring up all over the globe, with different characteristics and culture. And this is a bit hard to swallow – within the first generation they create a new culture, practically a new

language, and change the landscape. And, they all but forget their human roots. One new tribe, nurtured by the mysterious Thiede – who seems to be even more different and more powerful psychically – begins to grow and take control of smaller, less developed tribes. Their culture is one of harmony, tolerance (including humans), love and spiritual evolution. In another part of the world, another tribe is also growing and controlling lesser tribes but their culture is less nice. They are little different in intent than the humans they despise. They are a warrior race – interested only in conquering. These two major tribes are destined to clash.

The epic begins with two young human boys and their inception into Wraeththu hars. Both are destined for greatness but the author throws everything at them thru five books. The two are destined to be great lovers, separated, love others, and eventually find each other again – but will their great love survive all the pain, cruelty and abandonment? One goes mad for a while when he believes his love is dead. And behind all the drama is the hand of Thiede directing.

Behind all this drama are very interesting developments in this new race – not the least of which is procreation. Quite a different experience from humans. One of the interesting aspects of it is that only the most spiritually (psychically) developed har are able to conceive a child. However, the ramifications of that reverberate through all the books as separate individuals discover for themselves what really happens at the moment of conception. This concept was fascinating to me. While the author was purposely vague about the mechanics, that was alright – after all, it was all new and unknown to our characters.

Which is what I loved best about this epic – the inception and growth of a new race that literally knew nothing about itself. They didn’t understand their own biology, how to create a child, or the limits of their new abilities. I can’t recall another story about this topic.

Anyway – to the titled story of this review: The last book puts all our main characters in supporting roles and focuses on second-generation har. Along the way we have also discovered that human females can be incepted but the results tend to be rather different. There is a hidden community of this ‘second’ race of Wraeththu – rather like Shangri-La. And we are now aware that there are other players in the universe. Powerful, shadowy figures carrying out an eons-old conflict and using Wraeththu as playing pieces – again, an old plot device but the prose is so good I enjoyed it.

Because of the ten-plus years between the first three books and the last, the author’s increasing proficiency in her

craft is obvious. The first three were pretty good but, at times, a little heavy-handed. The last three were wonderful. Her character development is superior and the plotting is intricate. My only complaint is that the last book felt a bit rushed. She used a bit too much exposition to bring all the plot threads together. And I would’ve liked at least two books of the second-generation hara.

But, in all, I completely enjoyed the whole series. I do think it stands alone in the field and for that reason alone, you should read it. ~ **Catherine Book**

**Dark Time: Mortal Path Book One
by Dakota Banks
HarperCollins, \$7.99, 320 pp**

Looking at the cover, I did not have great hopes for this book. Once I started reading it, however, it grabbed me and wouldn’t let go. It starts in 1692 in our girl’s mortal life and comes through to the modern-day when she is mortal again (you’ll just have to read the book to understand that!). If the concept that Ms. Banks is using in her book has been used before, then I have never come across it before—and I am an avid reader! I enjoyed this book and highly recommend it. I eagerly anticipate book two. ~ **Nyki Robertson**

**A Touch of Dead
The Complete Sookie Stackhouse
Stories
by Charlaine Harris
Ace, \$23.95, 208 pp**

This book collects all the Sookie short stories that have appeared elsewhere. Stories include *Fairy Dust, Dracula Night, One Word Answer, Lucky* and *Giftwrap*.

Each story shows a little snippet of Sookie’s life that gives insight into Sookie and the others in her life. If you haven’t read these in the various collections you really need this book. And even if you did read them elsewhere, this book is the perfect addition to the series giving us all five stories in one place. Perhaps my favorite of the five is *Dracula Night* and the new side of Eric we see. Recommended ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

**Elric In the Dream Realms
Chronicles of the Last Emperor #5
by Michael Moorcock
Del Rey Books, \$16.00; 418 pp.**

Much of this is made up of a novel “The Fortress of the Pearl” published in 1990. Even though almost everything here was previously released, the collection does have some new stuff to recommend it. The treatise for a new series *Earl Aubec of Malador* has never

before been seen in print. The introduction to the Taiwan edition of Elric is intriguing. The artwork by Michael Wm. Kaluta is gorgeous. However, the biggest reason for obtaining a copy is the forward by Neil Gaiman.

As this is the fifth volume of this series it isn't for beginners; but if you are familiar with Elric, this is a great addition to your library.

Highly recommended for Elric fans. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Strip Mauled
edited by Esther Friesner
Baen Books, \$7.99, 407 pp

Not a bad price for 21 stories about were-wolves and the like living in suburbia. This anthology is a follow up to *Witch Way to the Mall*, so the cover shows a well-endowed witch serving tea to a pixie, a were-wolf, and an even more well-endowed vampire.

Friesner introduces the stories with a truly funny essay that commences, "Alas, poor were-wolves, forever doomed to be Avis to the vampires' unassailable fang-hold on Hertz, Pepsi to their Coke, Burger King to their McDonalds!" The next two pages are full of alliteration and airy persiflage – a refreshing change from all the angst and hard-bitten cynicism that have inundated the SF genre. Most of the stories that follow are pleasant diversions. The emphasis is on humor, and even if it isn't laugh-out-loud-until-you-cry, I prefer this book and organic apples to a flu shot this season.

K.D Wentworth's "Special Needs" is about a cub scout meeting for young weres in training that gets invaded by a pushy Mundane mom and her hapless son. I liked this one best: all the developments were properly presaged, details were in place, and it portrayed the essentials of personalities and types.

Lots of the stories represent the struggle to retain human semblance and self-direction under provocation, and all of them are set in the deceptively familiar blacktop-and-mass-production here and now. But the characters come in all sorts and sizes. There's the cop with a pixie companion in "Imaginary Fiend" who discovers that an obvious threat may not be the greatest danger. There's the U.S. Customs attorney who, in "Howl!" has to contend with a sly and smarmy adversary by day and midlife crisis at home, which proves to be ...transformative. In "Where-Wolf," Kevin is a suicide hot-line volunteer with an unusual challenge. In other stories, there are house moms, teens, retail workers, kids running amok, and strange neighbors. And "Enforcement Claws" is cathartic for anyone who has run afoul of their Home Owners' Association.

Ironically, Friesner's collection reinforces the very stereotypes she laments in her introduction. These weres have nothing of the glamour, danger, or sex-appeal of their rivals, the vampires. But they do seem to have more fun, *and* better family lives. Perhaps that's because vampires are inherently hierarchical whereas wolves are family and pack oriented; they survive through a carefully negotiated interaction of individual responsibility, cooperation, and coded ethics.

FurCons should get copies of this anthology to give out as prizes. And in the good news department, editor Friesner is putting together the next *Chicks in Chainmail* anthology, to be titled, *Chicks Ahoy!* I'm guessing *pirates*. ~ **Chris Paige**

Darkness Calls
by Marjorie M. Liu
Penguin, \$7.99, 320 pp

This book started out a little choppy (I thought) but do persevere, because the story is worth it. Ms. Liu creates vivid characters that you care about and weaves a good story for them. The demons living as tattoos on her body are not a new theme, but I like the way Ms. Liu did it. They do not reside in the same place on her each time, so she ends up wearing long sleeves, pants and gloves to cover the "tattoos" so people won't notice they've moved around. Anyway, I enjoyed this book enough that I am going to find the other book "*The Iron Hunt*". All-in-all, I recommend this book. ~ **Nyki Robertson**

Demon Ex Machina
by Julie Kenner
Berkley, \$14.00, 309 pp

This is the fifth book in the Kate Connors series, after *Deja Demon*. Kate has all the typical suburban mother problems, juggling car pools for her teenage daughter and play dates for her toddler son. Kate is also a demon hunter pulled out of retirement who is juggling a husband who wants to learn to fight demons, a teenage daughter determined to be a hunter like her mom not to mention a dead husband who has come back to life possessed by a demon. The story moves along quickly, the plot advances, we learn more about the characters and their dilemmas and the problem of the day is solved. All together a satisfying entry in the series. My only quibble is Kate keeping secrets from her husband, yet again, after deciding not to and reaping the consequences of doing so before. I would have thought she would have learned that lesson at least two books ago. Recommended. ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

Quatrain
by Sharon Shinn
Ace Books; \$24.95, 369 pp

This is a compilation of four novellas, each set in a different universe utilized in previous novels. So this is a must for fans of Ms. Shinn. The first novella "Flight" is set in the world of Samaria and since Samaria is the land of the angels—"Flight" has a couple of meanings. A women's flight from her established, safe life, the flight of a young women wanting to be the lover of an angel of questionable tendencies and the flight of angels—literally. What I really enjoyed about this tale is that it dealt with a woman named Salome who was not a bright, young thing - all firm curves and alluring appearance. It's about a woman with experience and laugh lines. But still robust. Angels come by the farm where Salome lives and works and one of them is the current Archangel, Raphael—a wonderful gorgeous blond angel with a very selfish bent. And Salome and he have history. Which he doesn't hesitate to remind her of—and the great love of her life—the angel Stephen. Stephen whom she loved whole-heartedly and then was betrayed by his apparent love for her sister Ann. But of course—appearances are deceiving and Stephen never loved Ann but always Salome. So this is their tale of reuniting—with an undercurrent of rescuing Sheba, Salome's niece, from making the same mistake Salome did with the Archangel Raphael. The second novella, "Blood," is placed in the novel "Heart of Gold," where the Gulden and the indigo people live in an uneasy truce in a sort of steampunk/Biedermeier-flavored world where cast and status is everything. Kerk Socast is a gulden man adopted by a gulden family of higher status, Brolt Barzhan. He works for and respects Brolt—but he wants to find his mother who disappeared (his father is dead). He seeks his mother in the warrens of the inner city and there he meets a blueskin woman; an indigo named Jalciana Candachi with whom he becomes friends with in small cautious increments. The details of their burgeoning friendship and the results of his search are the focus of this tale. It's a wonderful romance filled with the great details of this fascinating world. The third novella is "Gold" set in the world of "Summers at Castle Auburn." Oooh and this is all about the world of the Alora, the elusive elf-like people of the deep woods. In this story, Crown Princess Zara is sent to Alora for safe-keeping during a war. The mysterious and aloof Alorans live very close to the earth and have little to do with mortals. They are wonderfully elf-like: magical,

ethereal, tall with long flowing hair, makers of fine hand-made crafts and creatures of ritual and dance. Zara is fascinated, but not happy with the less than castle-like accommodations she is given at her Uncle Jaxon's house. She is a bit of a spoiled princess, but intelligent. Beguiled by the spell the Alorans cast over mortals, especially mortals they wish to stay in Alora, Zara finds herself absorbed into the Aloran world, slowly forgetting her life before, eventually forgetting her family. But, Orlain, the down-to-heart soldier who brought her to Alora and with whom she has had a long-lived easy relationship proves the catalyst for releasing her from enthrallment. For finally, when the war ends, Orlain risks his heart for Zara and brings her home. The fourth and final novella takes place in Gillengaria of the "Twelve Houses" series and concerns a young Senneth, the fire-wielding mystic. Here, she is still a lone wanderer and her travels have taken her to a small town where she extinguishes a fearsome blaze—and the townsfolk are at once grateful and uneasy that a mystic is in their midst. Senneth's adventures get more intense as the town is beset by a rash of destructive fires that are believed to be Senneth's work. But Senneth finally discovers the real culprit behind the fires—and before she is severely punished—the King's Riders make an appearance—and here, Senneth first meets her lover Tayse. I love Shinn's tales. They don't end on a miserable note. There is tension and sometimes terror, but it all ends well and for me, that's very satisfying. These were all excellent example of Shinn's craft—her ability to describe and pull us in with her well-rounded characters and stories. This collection is a perfect gift/lure for a friend as an introduction to Shinn's very rich worlds. ~ **Sue Martin**

Merlin's Dragon: Doomraga's Revenge
by T.A. Barron
Philomel, \$19.99, 256 pp

Sequel to *Merlin's Dragon*. Merlin, Rhia and Basil, the dragon, embark on a mission to save Avalon. Dark forces are afoot and problems break out across the land. At first they seem unrelated, but as Merlin and Basil investigate it soon becomes apparent that there is one force behind all the trouble and unless it is stopped Avalon will be lost. Once again Barron delivers an exciting novel of Avalon and Merlin. Recommended. ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

In Our Book (Cont'd from page 15)
Frostbitten
Kelley Armstrong
Bantam, \$26.00; 338 pp.

Another in the highly popular “Women of the Underworld” series. Elena, female werewolf, wife to Clay, and now next in line for pack Alpha, has to follow a trail to Alaska and discovers more problems there than just finding a wayward mutt. Someone is killing people and it looks like rogue werewolves.

Kelley always puts simple little reminders that these characters have lives outside of what they are currently doing. Notes about the kids and the rest of the pack makes it seem more like she is reporting on real people who just happen to be supernatural in nature. Her attention to detail is something that, for me at least, makes her books so enjoyable. Unfortunately it also makes it impossible to go beyond the basic description without revealing spoilers. So be warned this is a short review.

Very highly recommended. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Tainted
by Julie Kenner
Ace, \$7.99, 320 pp

This is the first in a new series from Julie Kenner. The Blood Lily Chronicles deals with some of the same good vs evil themes of her Kate Connor demon hunter and her high school Beth Fraiser vampire series, albeit in a somewhat darker tone.

Lily is having a bad day, she went out to kill the man who attacked her sister and woke up in another girl’s body about to be sacrificed by a demon. Having lived a less than saintly life as Lily, when she is given the chance to redeem herself she accepts. Her mission is to prevent the ninth gate to hell from being opened but Lily, now in April’s body, learns that not all is what it seems.

There are some surprising twists that I won’t spoil. The story moves along quickly and I am eagerly awaiting the next book, *Torn*, which comes out in November, quickly followed by the third, *Turned*, in either December or January. Recommended ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

Skin Deep
by Mark Del Franco
Ace Books, \$7.99, 292 pp

In an alternate reality, the boundary between faerie and the mundane world dissolved more than 100 years ago. 1914 was the year, not of the commencement of The Great War, but of the Treaty of London, recognizing High Queen Maeve as sovereign of Tara. Now the fey are as bureaucratic as the mortals. They get triple use out of Laura Blackstone, PR director, undercover druid SWAT agent,

and high level intelligence agent. Juggling three separate identities, complete with different appearances maintained by glamours, becomes a problem when three seemingly separate missions all converge. At least two of her identities are under direct, deadly attack. Too many people and dark fey have reasons to want her removed from the playing field for Laura to readily deduce her enemy. But adversity forces its own brand of clarity, and Laura at least finds self-knowledge in the rubble of diplomacy’s failures. ~ **Chris Paige**

The Bell at Sealey Head
by Patricia A. McKillip
Ace Books; \$14, 277 pp

McKillip is so good at writing fantasy—and this novel is a perfect example. Set in an unnamed land, the tale revolves around a magical manor called Aislinn House that overlooks the sea near a village called Sealey Head. The house is a portal/reflection of a castle in another land ruled by rigid magical ritual carried out by a young princess named Ysabo. At the novel’s beginning, only one person can see this other world, and it is a young maid named Emma, who has made friends with Ysabo.

The bell at Sealey Head which has never been actually *seen*, rings just as the last rays of the sunset burn out. Theories abound as to its significance. (Of course many think it is the last sound a sinking ship made centuries ago).

The ancient owner of Aislinn House, Lady Eglantyne is close to death and so her heir has been called to Sealey Head. Miranda Beryl is a haughty society lady from the nearby city of Landringham. She comes with a huge entourage of friends, some of whom stay at the House. Others stay at the Inn at Sealey Head closest to the house.

Visitors are rare at the Inn, until they get notice that Miranda Beryl and her followers are going to need rooms. The Inn’s current residents are: Judd Cauley who runs the place, his blind father Dugold, the twins Pandora and Crispin and the baby Dulcie. Gwyneth the writer who lives up in the attic is fascinated by the bell and longs to discover its meaning.

Not only does Miranda Beryl and crowd show up, but a wandering scholar named Ridley Dow arrives in the village, also fascinated by the bell.

The heart of the mystery of Aislinn House is an ancient curse laid by a nasty wizard. And why the curse was laid and how it’s broken is brought to a tense, tight conclusion. Overlaid on the unraveling of the curse are the many tangled threads of affection in this tale and who will end up loving who is a compelling element.

A dear, sweet fantasy. ~ **Sue Martin**

Grave Secret
by Charlaine Harris
Berkley, \$24.95, 320 pp

The long awaited sequel to *An Ice Cold Grave*.

After the disturbing events in North Carolina, Harper and Tolliver make their way to Texas to visit their two younger sisters. On the way they stop to do a simple job - determine how family patriarch Rich Joyce died. But the job turns into more than they expect when Harper finds that family employee, Marshia, died from childbirth complications. As they try to put the case behind them and reconnect with their young sisters they find themselves drawn into their own family’s dysfunctional past and a mystery that has haunted Harper for years.

This book is more character-driven than plot-driven. We get glimpses into Harper and Tolliver’s unpleasant past and the still, in many ways, dysfunctional family. In some ways, the ending felt like a series conclusion but I hope I am wrong. I still find Harper and Tolliver and the assorted secondary characters they meet to be a compelling read. In fact, I read this book beginning to end in one sitting. Highly recommended and I can only hope for more to come. ~ **Stephanie L Bannon**

Gamer Fantastic
Edited by: Martin H. Greenberg & Kerrie Hughes
Daw Fantasy, \$7.99; 312 pp.

This volume contains a forward by Margaret Weis. I love gaming (*obviously I have a reason to write the gaming column*) and I love the fact that this was edited by someone who loves gaming too. The thirteen stories, memorial to Gary Gygax, introduction and forward combine to make this one of the best collections of short stories I’ve read this year.

“The War on Two Fronts” shows the dangers and necessity of losing oneself in video games. “The Gods of Every Other Wednesday Night” shows what happens to your characters when you aren’t playing. “Griever Madness” gives insight into the ultimate LARP. Weis’ introduction gives incredible insight into how she started in the business. And Ed Greenwood’s homage to Gary Gygax was wonderfully heartfelt and poignant.

Highly recommended. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

Retribution
by Jeanne C. Stein
Ace, \$7.99, 296 pp

Retribution is the latest in the Anna Strong, Vampire series.

Anna Strong is a newly turned vampire struggling to find a balance between humanity and her new vampire life. With her partner out of town, her family abroad and her former mentor an enemy, she doesn’t have anyone to turn to for help when young vampires start showing up dead, drained of their life force. But it gets personal when her shape shifter friend is found dying after asking a favor, and her former teacher asks for help

Anna can’t say no, but she then finds herself a target of a powerful witch, out to get her as well as her friends.

Anna Strong lives up to her name, both tenacious and vulnerable with charm, brains and a well written character that keeps you reading well past your bedtime. This is a series that lovers of vampire fiction will want to collect. ~ **Pam Allan**

The Mermaid’s Madness
Jim C. Hines
Daw Fantasy, \$7.99; 342 pp.

The second in the series about fairytales after the book ends. This is the story of what really happened when a mermaid fell for a human. This version didn’t have a “happily ever after”. In this version he betrays her love and she kills him. She goes mad from this and becomes very paranoid as part of it. When she declares war on the humans and attacks Queen Bea, the princesses set out to stop her and save Bea.

As with the “Stepsister Scheme” this was a rollicking good adventure and a quick read. I am looking forward to “Red Hood’s Revenge”.

Highly recommended. ~ **Bob LaPierre**

The Storm Witch
by Violette Malan
Daw, \$15.00, 312 pp

The Storm Witch continues the novels of Dhulyn and Parno.

Dhulyn Wolfshead and Parno Lionsmane are members of the Mercenary Guild and veterans of numerous battles. They are also bonded partners whose bond can only be broken by death. They have returned to their Mercenary house to clear themselves of charges but when old friends are taken hostage, they are forced to trade their services for their friends’ release. As they reluctantly set sail, Dhulyn believes that Parno will die at sea based on her vision. But even her visions cannot prepare them

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for the trials with the ocean nomads, a telepathic people who share the gift with the Crayx, an intelligent and virtually immortal group of sea creatures. When the magic of the Storm Witch, a powerful spirit from the past who has taken possession of an 11-year-old princess, turns the waters of the Long Ocean deadly, the waves part the two partners and place them at opposite sides of an incipient war.

There is plenty of action, great world building, and fully developed and fascinating characters. I found I couldn't put it down. This is series Fantasy lovers and collectors will have to have. Long may the series run. ~ **Pam Allan**

Bitter Angels
by C.L. Anderson
Random, \$7.99, 448 pp

Each chapter is about one character. There are about 5 main characters and the chapters go around between them, mostly. It was really kind of an annoying book to read because it skipped back and forth between characters rather choppily with no flow or even logic to it! Neither Mom nor I liked this book. I do not recommend this one. ~ **Nyki Robertson**

Wolfbreed
by S.A. Swann
Ballantine, \$15.00, 382 pp

Wolfbreed appears to be a debut novel. When a monk discovers a lair of werewolf young, he unleashes a secret weapon for the Teutonic Order, the Church's most powerful weapon. Trained to serve as instruments of God against unbelievers, they sneak into villages in human form and are virtually unstoppable. Only one –Lilly - has escaped the brutal order. Uldolf is too young to remember the massacre of his family and village. When he finds the beautiful injured woman in the woods, he and his adopted family take her in, not knowing that if their humanity cannot defeat the darkness and death in her soul, they will learn to know it too.

Steeped in the world of the dark ages, it is dark and visceral. The world comes alive with simple, conflicted, characters and draws you in to the story. This is a must read, a blend of paranormal thrills, historical intrigue and spiritual questioning that may change your view of fantasy as a genre. ~ **Pam Allan**

Wings
by Aprilynne Pike
Harper Teen, \$16.99, 290 pp

Wings is a debut novel. Laurel was a shy homeschooled girl left as a babe in a basket at her parents' door, and adopted when no parents could be found. When her folks moved to Crescent City, she found herself in a public high school feeling like a freak. She found a friend in David who brought her into his group and had begun to settle in when she developed a growing bump between her shoulder blades. Afraid, she confided only in David. The two searched for an answer. But the truth was far beyond their concepts. A trip to the woods of her old home introduced her to a new world, her heritage, and a battle to save the woods and its gate to Avalon.

This is an exceptional debut Young Adult novel. No stereotypical characters here; the cast is fully realized as is the unusual world view that emerges. The search for identity is so beautifully drawn that even your aging reviewer became involved with the protagonist and the story. I am looking forward to reading more from this talented author who has definitely raised the bar on young adult to Narnia levels. Even if you are on Medicare, you will want this in your library. ~ **Pam Allan**

Heroes At Risk
by Moira J. Moore
Ace, \$7.99, 328 pp

Heroes at Risk is the sequel to *Heroes Adrift*. In a realm beset by natural disasters, only the magical abilities of bonded pairs hold the land together. Now bonded pair Lee Mallorrough and her source, Shintaro Karish return to High Scape after a rough assignment, to find the City besieged by people stealing the ash of "lucky " individuals to use for ritual magic, and even the living are being murdered for their remains. Pairs are being sent to far places by an indifferent hierarchy. Will Taro be next? What has taken over their world and will they survive? What we have is an entertaining romantic fantasy to pass a pleasant afternoon with interesting protagonist, a fast paced plot, with mayhem, magic and romantic tension/ Enjoy. ~ **Pam Allan**

The Age of Ra
by James Lovegrove
Solaris, \$7.99, 441 pp

Lovegrove is also the author of twenty books including *Worldstorm* and *Provender Glead*. The Ancient Egyptian gods have defeated all other pantheons and divided up the earth into warring factions. Lt. David Westwynter has escaped being a prisoner of war, and stumbled into Freegypt, the only place to have remained free of the gods influence despite being under frequent attack. He encounters the followers of the Lightbringer who has vowed to rid mankind of the gods' influence. As the world stumbles toward the apocalyptic battle, Westwynter finds more to the Lightbringer than he dreamed. This is military scifi in the sense of J. G. Ballard, with fascinating world building and characters that you care about. A master craftsman - if you liked Ballard, you'll love Lovegrove as he brings the sub genre into the twenty first century. ~ **Pam Allan**

On the Edge
by Ilona Andrews
Ace, \$7.99, 326 pp

On the Edge is written by the author of *Magic Strikes*. The Edge is a strip between the mundane world of the Broken, and the Weird, where magic works in a warrior society ruled by aristocrats. The edgers, with some magic, are not accepted in either world. Rose Drayton has the strongest magic in the edge, but works an off-the-books job to survive and raise her two brothers. When Declan, a blueblood noble from the Weird shows up, Rose doesn't trust him but they must join forces to destroy the alien beasts that want to destroy the Edge and everything in it. The author has come up with a fast-paced action fantasy romance that doesn't fail the reader. This has the potential for a popular series that I look forward to reading. If you like the work of Patricia Briggs, you'll love this. It's time to head for the bookstore. ~ **Pam Allan**

Ariel
by Steven R. Boyett
ACE, \$7.99, 389 pp

Ariel is a reissue of the 1983 debut novel by the author of *Elegy Beach*. It is five years after the change. Technology is dead. The world as we know it is gone, and magical creatures roam the earth. Pete Garvey has been roaming the deserted cities and towns scavenging for his needs until he meets an injured unicorn. He nurses her back to health and they become familiars; but unicorns are

rare and the power of their magic is sought by people who crave the power in the unicorn's horn. Pete and Ariel are pursued by bounty hunters, both human and inhuman with no care for human or unicorn life. After friends are murdered, they decide to journey to New York to confront the necromancer who will stop at nothing to claim Ariel's power. Part post-end of the world as we know it, part fantasy, and all adventure with magic and some of the best drawn characters coming of age. Ariel is a fully drawn character as real as Pete. This is a wonderful example of what a post apocalyptic novel can be. This is a keeper, one that every fantasy lover should have in their library. Go Get it and enjoy. ~ **Pam Allan**

Canticle
by Ken Scholes
Tor, \$25.99, 381 pp.

Canticle is the second volume of *The Psalms of Isaak*. Nine months ago, the Androfrancine order passed into the hands of Rudolfo, General of the Wandering Army, and Lord of the Ninefold Forest Houses. His wife, Jin Li Tam is carrying his heir. Rudolpho and Isaak have begun to compile the available knowledge into a new Great Library. As a feast begins to celebrate the incipient birth of the heir, the hall doors fly open and invisible assassins slay all the guests. At the same time, on the keeper's gate which guards the Named Lands from the Churning Wastes, a figure appears with a message for Petronus, the Hidden Pope, no longer extant. This is truly epic fantasy. Powerful, inventive, subtle and fast-paced with a richly detailed world filled with complex characters [including the mechanoservitors] and multigenerational intrigue. Storytelling at its best. This series will be a classic and a collector's prize. ~ **Pam Allan**

At Empires Edge
by William C. Dietz
Ace, \$24.95, 310 pp

At Empires Edge is by the author of *When Duty Calls*. In the far distant future, the Uman Empire has spread to the stars and beyond, but on one planet, the remnants of a race of violent shapeshifters is kept confined. Sometimes one escapes. Jak Cato is a Xeno cop. He is bioengineered to see through the alien disguises, He is returning a fugitive shapeshifter when things go awry and he only escapes death with the rest of his unit because he is drunk. Now he has to find who betrayed them, recapture the

In Our Book (Cont'd from page 17)

prisoner and exact revenge. He'll have to be the hero he never was.
Fast-paced, full of action, this is military Sci Fi that will definitely keep you hooked for an afternoon. Military Sci Fi fans report for duty. ~ Pam Allan

Grand Junction
by Maurice G. Dantec
Del Rey, \$18.00, 570 pp

Grand Junction is the sequel to Babylon Babies.
On October 4, 2057, most electronics are destroyed by unknown viruses and billions of people are killed. Twelve years later, the survivors are in a dark age. Jungle law rules and Grand Junction is the last bastion of reason and faith. Then a second wave of viruses is unleashed striking humanity and stripping language and thought.

Here also lives a guitar prodigy named Link de Nova who finds the power to fight the enemy for the survival of humanity and will do so with radios, rifles, and rock and roll.
Dantec takes the reader on a wild ride mixing rock and roll, the Three Stooges, the Art of War, and metaphysics into a delightful cocktail. This English translation from the French is worth the price. You may end up re-reading multiple times over the years. ~ Pam Allan

Flight of the Renshai
by Mickey Zucker Reichert
Daw, \$25.95, 578 pp

This begins the third trilogy in the Renshai Saga.
Bearn and its allies are faced with mysterious pirates, the vanguard of an army sent from across the sea. When they attack the ship carrying Prince Arturo and his Renshai guards, all hands are presumed dead. The enemy has raised prejudice against them, forcing them from the Westlands. Saviar, Subikahn and Calistin must make their stand in a world where they are unwelcome. Without them, Bearn may fall to the approaching "pirate" army.
Epic Fantasy with a Nordic base filled with characters that are mythic yet believable and fast-paced action with honor beset by intrigue. Here we have everything one can ask of Epic Fantasy. Long may the series reign. You'll want them all. ~ Pam Allan

Ice Land
by Betsy Tobin
Plume, \$15.00, 350 pp

Ice Land is the second novel by the author of Bone House.
Warned by the Fates of an impending disaster, Freya sets out to find the necklace that is said to have the power to alter history. Meanwhile Iceland is on the brink of war as Christianity threatens the old ways of Iceland's people.
In the middle of it all are two star-crossed lovers whose destiny draws them together as the world tries to tear them apart.

Filled with history and mythology of Iceland, built on its Nordic base, Tobin has written an epic adventure of forbidden love, jealousy, faith, and magic beneath a smoldering volcano. Tobin has written a contained novel of history and the human condition. I loved it and look forward to see more her work and expect to more awards on her way. If you appreciate the subtle pen of Patricia McKillips you have lots here to love. ~ Pam Allan

Answers to Trivia

- 1. William Tuning
- 2. Hugo Gernsback
- 3. 1965
- 4. Prostitution
- 5. Forrest J. Ackerman
- 6. Fannish activity prior to Jan 1, 1938.
- 7. Any of numerous large-scale aggregates of stars, gas, and dust that constitute the universe, containing an average of 100 billion solar masses and ranging in diameter from 1500 to 300,000 light years. OR: A star system held together by an envelope of dust and gas that may form a tail that streams away from the sun.
- 8. 1979
- 9. The Dalek Master Plan (Space Security agent Bret Vyon){Dr. Who}
- 10. Amazing Fantasy #15, 1962
- 11. George Reeves
- 12. A celestial body moving about the sun, usually in a highly eccentric orbit, consisting of a central mass surrounded by an envelope of dust and gas that may form a tail that streams away from the sun.

FARPOINT MEDIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.farpointmedia.net

Club Listings

ACROSS PLUS - So you live in North Phoenix and are interested in anime? Well there is a club out there available for you people.

Across Plus is a social club that discusses anime, video games, manga, other animation, and the Japanese culture. We meet at Bookman's on 19th Ave and Northern on Sundays at 7:00pm until 9:00pm. In general, we explore anime, manga, and other styles of animation, creative educative demonstrations, participate in interactive discussions, attend local Arizona conventions, and make cosplay.

We are willing to gain any new members out there who are interested. Our members are very friendly, respectful, and fun. We welcome any and all.

For more information, contact Todd Miles at acrossplus@westernsfa.org

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

AERIAL MIRAGE JUGGLERS. Meets Wednesday 7-10pm in Encanto Park, 15th Avenue, south of Encanto. No dues, everyone welcome. All levels skill exchange in many areas of object manipulation Dave Davis <aerialmirage@gnernds.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

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

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

CENTRAL ARIZONA SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY, INC. (CASFS) The non-profit corporation that puts on CopperCon conventions, SmurfCons, HexaCons, occasional regional cons, and publishes Con-Notations. Best described as SF/F generalists with a strong bent towards literary SF/F. Guests welcome - meets at 8pm on the last Friday of each month in January thru September and the second Friday in October, November and December at Denny's, 2360 W Northern Ave in Phoenix, AZ. For information: write PO Box 62613, Phoenix, AZ 85082-2613 or email info@casfs.org Web www.casfs.org

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

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

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

A GATHERING OF PLAYERS- Find Your Adventure Our club is running into our sixth year. Join us for games and adventure set in the Dungeons and Dragons realm. We offer Living Forgotten Realms and Pathfinder Society. We welcome both new and experi-

enced players. Visit <http://www.warhorn.net/> gathering, to see what we have coming up. If you have any questions email us at agatheringofplayers@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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Club Listings (Cont'd from page 19)

Harry Stine Memorial Rocket Launch every October. Visit www.sssrocketry.org for membership information, directions to the launches and meetings, and to read the monthly newsletter, "Newton's Minutes."

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

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

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

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

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

USS LEONIDAS The Leonidas is a member of Region IV of STARFLEET International. The chapter is an opportunity for those that share a love of Star Trek to have fun and help the community at the same time. The Leonidas stresses uniforms or other costumes to have the ability to participate actively in various events as they present themselves but they are not required.

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

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

LepreCon 36 (May 14-16, 2010) Phoenix Marriott Mesa, 200 North Centennial Way, Mesa, AZ Ph: (480) 898-8300, Room Rates \$99 S/D/T/Q. www.marriott.com, online boking code is "leplepa". Guests: Artist GoH Charles Vess, Author GoH: George R.R. Martin, Local Artist/Author GoH: James A. Owen. Memberships rates:\$35 until December 31, 2009, \$35 Jan 1 thru April 15, 2010, \$45 at the door. Web site at www.leprecon.org/lep36 or email lep36@leprecon.org for more information.

RandomCon 2010 (July 9-11, 2010) Windemere Hotel and Conference Center, 5750 East Main St. • Mesa, Arizona 85205 • Ph: (480)985-3600 • Toll Free: (800) 888-3561 Room Rate: \$59 S/D/T/Q and includes breakfast and free Internet. 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. **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 through December 31, 2009, \$20 From January 1 to June 30, 2010 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. Memberships also available at Imperial Outpost, 4920 W. Thunderbird, Glendale, AZ 85306. Check our web site for updates or contact us at info@westernsfa.org

CopperCon 30 (September 3-6, 2010) Windemere Hotel, 5750 East Main St., Mesa, Arizona 85205, Ph: (480)985-3600 • Toll Free: (800) 888-3561 Room Rates \$59 S/D/T/Q. <http://www.resortmesa.com/> Rooms include Complimentary gourmet deluxe breakfast buffet served every day and fresh baked cookies served every evening. The hotel has 114 rooms so there is a good chance we can have the entire hotel for ourselves. Guests: TBA. Memberships rates: \$30 until December 31, 2009, \$35 Jan 1 thru April 30, 2010, \$40 May 1 thru August 23, 2010. Please check the web site at www.coppercon.org or contact us at info@coppercon.org for more info.

CASFS Business Report November 1, 2009

November meeting (Denny's 2360 W. Northern Ave. in Phoenix.) – Moved to November 20. It is a notified meeting because it has been moved
CopperCon 30 — Chairman Mark Boniece - The CopperCon Hotel is the Windemere 5750 East Main St. Mesa, Arizona 85205 Ph: (480)985-3600 Toll Free: (800) 888-3561 Reservations by phone ONLY. Our rate is \$59 Single/Double/Triple/Quad

Rooms include: FREE Deluxe Continental Breakfast Daily freshly baked cookies. Given the low rate reserve your room now or you might be disappointed. Mark expects to announce guests soon. Membership rates are \$30 until December 31, 2009, \$45 at the door.

CopperCon 31 — Chairman Nyki Robertson -Hotels are being analyzed. Windemere likely.

CASFS Shed inventory – Now that we have completed the shed inventory as of June 17th, we are proceeding with the inventory of items stored by CASFS members at other locations.

CASFS Book Social — The Book Social is held in the Coffee Shop of the Bent Cover on the West side of 28th Drive North of Cactus Road in Phoenix at 7 p.m. December 15, 2009 - *Quarter Share* by Nathan Lowell, January 18, 2010 - *Turncoat* by Jim Butcher.

Financial Planning Committee – Work has been completed. The language in the procedures has been updated and made consistent throughout.

Minutes Backlog – Gary Swaty's task of opening *The Big Scary Box* is still on hold. Work will begin very soon. Susan Uttke's minutes are in hand and Gary Swaty's minutes are current.

By-Laws – Two By-Law revisions submitted. The first passed to require a member to have physically attended 9 of the previous 12 meetings to be eligible for the Board changing Article III Section 1 B 2 - to read "2. Be an Active Member of the Society who has physically attended nine of the previous twelve meetings; "

The second change was tabled for revision after discussion.

ConNotations Funding – CASFS members voted to continue the hard copy edition of ConNotations in 2011. They also voted that CopperCon should end with the necessary \$5000 in its account to make this possible.

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 _____