



SOUTHERN

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UPDATE

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Musings of a Faned

We've got a great cover this month, by Mike Moon. I don't know how this one sat in my file for so long without me using it, but I've experimented with laying it behind the text, and I'm happy with the result. Unfortunately, other than the locs, that's the only content in this issue by anyone aside from me. Please, folks, if you read something cool, or even lame but noteworthy, and feel like spreading the word, send in a review! I got off on a wild tangent about how I approach SF this month, and hope that it'll be interesting and/or useful to someone out there. Or better yet, a point to start a great conversation. This weekend, I'll be day-tripping it to WhatTheHell?!Con, where I'll be joining some friends of mine for some steampunk costuming – we'll be doing a gang of train robbers. Hopefully, we'll have photos.

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All contents copyright their creators. This zine is free, either by direct email or www.efanzines.com. A letter of comment or other contribution will get you on my mailing list, as long as I remember to put you there. If I forget, bother me a second time, or however long it takes to add you. I haven't been printing this one, which leaves me free to use as many pages as I wish, and do things like color. It also lets me use all the contributions I can muster, so fire away!

Calendar of Events:

February 5-6:

DrakeCon (Rogers, AR – Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas. Anime and gaming convention.)

February 5-7:

What-The-Hell?! Con (Greensboro, NC – Guilford College campus, Duke and Dana buildings. Tom Smith, Flaming Faeries, European Medieval Arts of Arms, and a whole slew of webcomics folks and local authors and artists.)

AggieCon 41 (College Station, TX – College Station Hilton Hotel. Steven Gould, Ellen Datlow, Selina Rosen, Martha Wells. The oldest ongoing, college-run con in the South (or anywhere else) has finally moved off-campus. I had the pleasure of meeting some of the folks involved in this one at the Austin SMOFcon, and I give them my vote of confidence.)

Williamsburg Muster (Williamsburg, VA – Holiday Inn Patriot. Wargaming.)

February 12-14:

Katsucon 16 (National Harbor, MD – Gaylord National.)

Farpoint (Timonium, MD – Crowne Plaza Baltimore North. Felicia Day, Matt Frewer, Mira Furlan, Lee Arenberg.)

ConDFW IX (Dallas, TX – Crowne Plaza Suites Hotel. Elizabeth Moon, Jack McDevitt, Vincent Villafranca. Another good group of folks down in Texas. I recall them having good bheer at their room party at FenCon, and they seemed to have a good thing going.)

February 12-15:

SynDCon (Rockville, MD – Rockville Hilton. Gaming.)

February 19-21:

ConNooga (Chattanooga, TN – Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel. Lloyd Kaufman, Larry Elmore, Bella Morte, Radio Cult. I attended this multi-fandom convention last year and didn't have a very good time. You can find my con-report on it in last March's issue. I would like to say something positive about them, though – I've never seen a con that was more supportive of independent filmmakers.)

Furry Fiesta (Addison, TX – Crowne Plaza Hotel North Dallas. Tigerwolf, Kyell Gold, Michele Light. Furry convention with a theme of Space Cowboys.)

February 24-28:

PrezCon (Charlottesville, VA – Doubletree Hotel. Prezcon is a gaming con, styled as the Winter Nationals. Most notable among their tournaments is the Settlers of Catan Regional Championship.)

February 26-28:

SheVaCon (Roanoke, VA – Holiday Inn Roanoke Tanglewood. Peter Mayhew, Stephen Hickman, Spat! Oktan, Kevin J. Anderson, Rebecca Moesta Anderson.)

ConCave (Horse Cave, KY – Best Western. ~~You'll have to go through the convention to get a room, though~~, and they deliberately avoid an online-presence. It's worth taking the trouble to find someone who can put you in touch with the

con, though – I went the past two years and had a blast each time. The change in hotels has provided ConCave with enough rooms for everybody.)

March 5-7:

StellarCon 34 (High Point, NC – Best Western High Point. Timothy Zahn, Michael Stackpole, Aaron Allston, Doug Chaffee, Steve Long, Regina Kirby.)

CoastCon XXXIII (Biloxi, MS – Super 8 Biloxi. Nicki Clyne, David Drake.)

Twilight Convention (Atlanta, GA – Westin Buckhead. Peter Facinelli, Kiowa Gordon, Bronson Pelletier, Daniel Cudmore, Christopher Heyerdahl, Michael Welch.)

March 6-7:

Arkansas Anime Festival (Bentonville, AR – Clarion Hotel and Conference Center. Vic Mignogna, Chris Ayres, Maria Vu, Wendy Powell.)

March 12-14:

Kawa Kon (St. Louis, MO – Crowne Plaza Clayton. St. Louis Osuwa Taiko, Amelie Belcher, Cindy Brown, Bunraku Bay Puppet Troupe, St. Louis Kimonosan, Three Rivers Okiya.)

Madicon 19 (Harrisonburg, VA – Festival Center, JMU. L.E. Modesitt, Jr., Alan Pollack, Jennie Breeden, PST Productions, 501st Garrison Tyrannus.)

MegaCon (Orlando, FL – Orange County Convention Center Hall D. Nichelle Nichols, Darth Maul, Billy Dee Williams, Jeremy Bulloch, Peter Mayhew, Brent Spiner, Kevin Sorbo, Levar Burton, Sonny Strait, Frank Cho, Darwyn Cooke, George Perez, Marv Wolfman.)

MidSouthCon (Memphis, TN – Whispering Woods Hotel and Conference Center. Kevin J. Anderson, Rebecca Moesta, Billy Tackett, Gail Simone, James Ernest, Lou Anders, Marc Gunn, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Lee Martindale.)

RevelCon 21 (Houston, TX – Holiday Inn Galleria. Relaxacon with heavy fan fiction zine presence.)

March 17-21:

IAFA 31 (Orlando, FL – Orlando Airport Marriott. Nalo Hopkinson, Laurence Yep, Takayuki Tatsumi, Brian Aldiss.)

March 19-21:

FantaSciCon (Chattanooga, TN – Country Hearth Inn. Cheryel Hutton, Kimberly Richardson, Mark Helwig, Rob E. Brown, Joe Dickerson.)

March 20-21:

MomoCon (Atlanta, GA – Georgia Tech Student Center. Jennie Breeden, Bill Holbrook.)

March 25-28:

Furry Weekend Atlanta (Atlanta, GA – The Hilton Atlanta. Kamicheeta.)

March 26-28:

Enlightenment XIII (Timonium, MD – Holiday Inn. Highly specialized boardgaming tournament. If they don't draw 25 people, this will be their last year.)

April 1-4:

Frolicon (Atlanta, GA – Sheraton Gateway. Adults only SF/kink con.)

April 9-11:

RavenCon (Richmond, VA)

Conglomeration (Louisville, KY)

April 16-18:

PyrateCon (New Orleans, LA)

Game Con (Aberdeen, MD)

T-Mode (Alexandria, VA)

KampingKon (Calhoun, GA)

April 22-25:

Game Days (Timonium, MD)

April 23-25:

JordanCon (Atlanta, GA)

Twilight Convention (Arlington, VA)

April 24-25:

Dicehead Siege (Chattanooga, TN)

April 30-May 2:

MTAC Odyssey (Nashville, TN)

Recon (Cocoa Beach, FL)

Malice Domestic (Arlington, VA)

OutLantaCon (Atlanta, GA)

Anachrocon (Atlanta, GA)

Twilight Convention (Charlotte, NC)

May 7-9:

Bloodlust Vampire Festival (Orlando, FL)

May 12-15:

Red Stick Animation Festival (Baton Rouge, LA)

May 14-16:

Mobicon 13 (Mobile, AL)

May 21-23:

JAMPcon (Chattanooga, TN)

FX International (Orlando, FL)

ImagiCon (Birmingham, AL)

May 28-30:

Animazement 13 (Raleigh, NC)

Timegate (Atlanta, GA)

Oasis 23 (Orlando, FL)

Rocket City Furmeet (Huntsville, AL)

May 28-31:
Balticon 44 (Baltimore, MD)

June 4-6, 2010:
ConCarolinas/DeepSouthCon 48 (Charlotte, NC)

August 5-8, 2010:
ReConStruction/NASFiC 10 (Raleigh, NC)

September 2-6, 2010:
AussieCon 4 (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia)

September 3-6, 2010:
Dragon*Con (Atlanta, GA)

***The Stoneholding* by James G. Anderson & Mark Sebanc (Baen: September, 2009)**

This looks to be a reprint, though it took some work to discover that. It seems it was first published under a different title in the mid-nineties, then possibly reprinted under the current title (though with a different series title) a few years ago. Needless to say, this is the first I've heard of it, so I'll treat it like any other new work I get hold of. I've been mostly focused on SF in these pages, though I'm not actually averse to epic fantasy (just some of its unfortunate habits, like stretching books close to a thousand pages without any sign of resolution on the horizon). *The Stoneholding* was only guilty of one of those bad habits – an abrupt ending that leaves little about the action of the book resolved, and little hint as to the immediate direction of the series as a whole (I can guess the general arc, just not how the conclusion of this book feeds into it).

That said, there was plenty to like about this, though much of it reflects my personal preferences. The main cast was kept small, rather than sprawling to the point of requiring scorecards (seriously, you'd need one to keep up with the *Illiad*). More importantly, those few characters who drew the story's focus were actually interesting enough to be worth the story's focus. They feel fully human, and make me care about what happens to them. To make it appeal to me even more, the main character himself, Kal, is a bard.

Now, I played Dungeons & Dragons starting in middle school and didn't stop until too much of my energy was going into conrunning to keep up with a regular game (and might play again at some point, but not until after the NASFiC). Back when I started, in 2nd edition, bards were much more playable, mixing a sampling of wizard spells, a few of the thief abilities, and a little bit of martial prowess. They also gave you a pretty good chance of being the one doing the talking for the party, since paladins required some insane stats to play (after that, your likely competition was a cleric or fighter with a particularly high charisma score). Bards were a lot of fun to play. Unfortunately, they were pretty severely under-powered in 3rd edition. They were still fun, but in the increasingly rigid party line-ups, there wasn't room for them. Most of the game was designed around the idea that a fighter, a rogue, a cleric, and a wizard would go

adventuring together. A druid could fill in for the cleric, a sorcerer for the wizard, and a ranger, paladin, monk, or barbarian could fill the fighter slot. But there was just no making up for losing the rogue. In a group with only three characters, a bard could fill in for two slots from the list, and in a party of five, they were almost universally the best fifth man. I confess to not having tried 4th edition, but it went so far as to remove the bard from the basic *Player's Handbook*. What can I say? I like the bards.

The digression into D&D serves a further purpose: it's about the best way to describe how this book felt to me. More specifically, it felt like a handful sessions of game under an exceptionally detailed dungeon master. I've sat around the table and had the sort of conversations that Kal and his companions did, taking up most of the time in a session without very much combat. The fights in the book even felt like they were correctly paced for D&D sessions, with perhaps one to three in a game session sized chunk of story. The real problem with that abrupt ending, though, is that it feels like the dungeon master had a big cliff-hanger planned (in this case, the major artifact that the players need to save civilization has been stolen by the evil empire), got to it a week ahead of schedule, and had to let the players start exploring the next bit of the campaign in the week before he went on vacation. Dude should have packed a one-shot for that week.

Maybe I'm being a little harsh here, but I really didn't feel like there was enough time to get into the new ideas introduced in the last quarter of the book to make them important, yet the theft of the Talamadh is too remote by the final chapter to have that weight that really makes me anxious to read the next book. Perhaps, when the series is complete, thematic elements will become apparent that would make this a really logical place to end the novel. Until then, though, the ending feels tacked-on and flat, like ending a story about one week with a direct, evenly-paced continuation into the next Tuesday's lunch, stopping with the main character paying the cashier and moving to sit down. Perhaps it would be an appropriate place to end a work of high modernism, but this is a novel of epic fantasy, and the first in a series, at that.

All that aside, though, I appreciated the level of care that went into the literature of this world, making sure that there were poems and songs and epics for the bards to perform, ancient languages known to few, and some known to no one at all, and a rich history on the scale of epochs for the action to unfold in. The setting manages to capture a Celtic feel without letting that mean generically Irish (in fact, it feels rather Scottish), and the rich maps in the front of the book hint at the future range of the action.

***Time Travelers Never Die* by Jack McDevitt (Ace, month 2009)**

Last month, on the trip to Chattacon, I took a tremendously winding path through the mountains of western NC and eastern Tennessee, wishing to avoid the official detour around the rockslide on I-40, and unaware of the rockslide on US 64. It wasn't strictly necessary – the official detour would have taken me up into Virginia, and I wasn't too thrilled about being on I-81 with its regular traffic and all of the I-40 traffic, but it would have been faster. In taking my unorthodox route, and the further detour it required, I got to see some absolutely gorgeous

scenery in the mountains, and I think it was worthwhile. If you'll pardon me, this review contains a rather lengthy detour into theory, which I will demarcate with an additional blank line before and after it, which I hope will help explain my thoughts on McDevitt's novel. Feel free to skip it if you have no interest in my ramblings about what makes good SF.

Somewhere along the line, fandom as a community has failed to come to agreement on some rather important, and seemingly related, questions. This is fine – it would get pretty boring pretty quickly if we all agreed completely, but it seems important to acknowledge the questions, and think about their potential answers. I'm not talking about the full-contact sport of defining fans and fandom – I've already said plenty about that in other places. I want to look at what we consider worthwhile in our science fiction.

There's a very simple question at the root of this: What is good science fiction? Well, a whole range of answers come out of the woodwork quickly, and they're fairly similar to the answers you'd find in discussions of literature as a whole, with a few additions. Some proponents want SF that's entertaining, literary, advances an acceptable moral position, or grounded in solid science. None of these positions will drive you head-long into a specific sub-genre (though some sub-genres are much less likely to provide satisfaction on some criteria). I'm not going to spend much time on the qualifier of SF that advances an acceptable moral position, as I don't tend to be bothered by simple disagreements, and can be fascinated by the thought process behind decisions that I would never make. I will merely say that I don't tend to enjoy SF which advances a moral position I find *reprehensible*, of which there aren't all that many (though I've heard of SF that might fail on this requirement). I will leave it for others to decide what makes literature moral.

That leaves us with three major criteria, which can be reduced to the questions: What makes SF entertaining, What makes SF literary, and What makes SF hard? The last is probably the easiest to address, in that hard SF has rather clear goals. Hard SF must rely upon science. In the strictest sense, this could be taken to mean that everything in a hard SF story must be completely possible under the current understanding of scientific reality, and that some aspect of this must help drive the plot of the story. Other ideas of hard SF could include stories which subtly and importantly change some aspect of reality as we understand it, or postulate one particular answer to a current unknown, while still adhering to known science in other respects. Further, I would argue that stories based upon a principle from the social sciences often have a high degree of hardness to them – the distinction between the ideas of *hard* science fiction and *hard science* fiction isn't of much interest to me. Hardness seems to be the most readily quantifiable quality we're looking for, and the least subjective – folks generally can read a work and come to some agreement over whether it's very hard, kinda hard, or plays fast and loose with the laws of physics so badly you just have to call it soft.

So now we're left with the hard ones, and the ones that are more likely to cause massive dissention among fans. What makes SF literary? Well, what makes fiction in general literary? There are a few writers who are so beloved of

our old college English professors that we can't help but think of them as literary – Shakespeare, Joyce, Yeats, and just about anyone who can clearly be shoved into a literary movement. These writers tend to be united by an attention to form, a deeply psychological approach to characterization, highly stylistic language, an emphasis on themes, intertextuality, and a notion that literature is art. Looking at SF, we can find similar traits in a number of writers – Dick, Vonnegut, Bester, Bradbury, Moorcock, Ellison, Le Guin, Tiptree, Gibson, etc. There are plenty more, but my point is to provide a broad base from which to discuss literary SF. There is an unfortunate tendency in literary fiction (in general) to focus on the less pleasant aspects of the human experience, leading its detractors to claim that it obsesses with Why Life Sucks So Very Much. This is not a necessary trait of literary fiction, nor of literary SF, and some very literary works can in fact be upbeat – take, for instance, Zelazny's *Doorways in the Sand*, or Smith's *Norstrilia*, both of which play in literary territory without ever invoking more human suffering than a pulp adventure novel. Yes, there are plenty of examples of suffering in literary SF, but these are present in many simple works of entertainment, too. Life is hard and brutal for Fleming's James Bond, but Bond is hardly the stuff of high literature. What literary SF often lacks is a tidy and satisfying conclusion (*Norstrilia* and *Doorways in the Sand* have the distinction of not just being upbeat, but also tidy and satisfying). For the master of tidy, satisfying conclusions, check out the capers of Carl Hiassen, who tends to end his novels by killing all of the truly evil characters (as per Shakespearean tragedy) and partnering off all of the truly good characters (as per Shakespearean comedy). This is fun stuff, and nothing to be ashamed of or avoid, but it is deeply unrealistic, and this can lead to its exclusion from works of Serious Literature. In the simplest terms, literary SF is the stuff that reminds us of our literature classes – and our enjoyment of it will be largely dependent on how well we liked those.

As for what makes SF entertaining, I'd reckon there's even more variation than in what makes it literary. Humor, action, mystery, and engaging characters can all contribute here. Contrary to the attitudes of the literary SF purists, entertainment needn't be dumb. Much military SF is written with an intensely precise attention to detail, but in a rock-'em sock-'em style that conveys the heroics of its protagonists. The reader needn't be given a blow-by-blow of how a rail gun works, though the writer will likely have it in mind when one is firing. But I've already touched on one of the key traits of entertaining SF – it provides a satisfying conclusion. The bugs are routed in *Starship Troopers*. The mystery is solved in *Caves of Steel*. Paul Atreides defeats Baron Harkonnen's schemes and becomes emperor at the end of *Dune*. (I hope none of these come as a huge surprise to anyone reading this.) *Dune* leaves some issues of the plot unresolved, but not the major points of its action; this allows for sequels, but doesn't require a reader to go off in pursuit of them to understand the work. Entertainment frequently includes setting up reasonable expectations for the reader, and delivering something resembling them. It can also be done by setting up reasonable (or even unreasonable) expectations, but leaving a subtle trail of information as to why they will not be fulfilled, then overturning the original expectations with some degree of excitement – the twist ending, after all, is a noted feature of horror storytelling, and the stories are no less entertaining for it.

Entertaining SF functions by not confusing or bogging down the reader, by keeping a steady pace, and by employing expectation values which can either be fulfilled or overturned (but not ignored entirely).

So what makes *great* SF? I'd suppose that for the average reader, it's some combination of hard, literary, and entertaining SF. A story which excelled at being only one of these, or was good at being two while ignoring the third, would likely be good SF (or, if it ignored hardness entirely, perhaps even great fantasy or great literature). But to really be great SF (and not just great literature), I'd want an SF story that was aware of the science behind its ideas (even if it were perhaps a little fast and loose at times), was worthwhile as literature (even if it wouldn't be all that likely to make it into a standard literature survey course), and was pretty darned entertaining (even if it had bits that were a little slower than the rest). So what makes the cut for me? Well, for a few examples, let's go with *Dune*, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, and *Lord of Light* (my girlfriend would disagree on that last count, but this is my article, right?). And yes, I'm aware that I've chosen mid-60s Hugo winners as my three candidates. It's kinda my favorite era of SF. There are bits of all three which aren't perfectly in line with hard SF, literary SF, or pure entertainment, but they all do a decent job of fitting the bill. Feel free to argue with me about my choices, too – even if we disagree, it'll at least make for interesting conversation.

Well, we're two and a half pages into this review, and I'm finally ready to mention Jack McDevitt's *Time Travelers Never Die*. I'd read another of McDevitt's novels a few years ago, and was eager to read this one once I got ahold of it. The title promised me that this would be a time travel story, and ever since my metaphysics class, I've been interested in how different authors work with time travel in fiction. Even setting aside the physics of how it's accomplished (and there are a number of ways proposed to work it into the extant laws of physics), there's the issue of causality. A time travel story has to either be careful to avoid paradoxes or give in and propose a many-worlds scenario. McDevitt takes the hard road of avoiding paradoxes. If strict causality is to be preserved, all events must have a single direction of causality – that is, no event can cause an event in upstream in its own causal chain, even if the event is downstream in time. I cannot go back in time and leave myself the hints that will allow me to build the time machine which will allow me to go back in time to leave myself those hints.... Bill and Ted can, however, resolve to use their time machine later to go back and place the keys they'll need in a convenient location, and then find the keys, which they can use, so long as they later do actually go back and put the keys in the convenient location. (McDevitt employs a similar loop involving unlocked doors.) The idea, and the keys, simply must exist outside of the causal loop.

McDevitt handles causal consistency with an interesting tactic: his characters are afraid to create a paradox because one of the researchers who first developed time travel died of a heart attack while attempting to create a paradox. When Shel attempts to violate this principle, he winds up falling into the ocean, ruining one of his time travel devices. Interestingly, the story is not focused on the scientist who developed time travel, but on his son, Shel, and Shel's best

friend, Dave, who begin using the devices after Shel's father disappears. Shel's first goal is to find his father, who he suspects has gone back to talk with some historical figure, getting himself stuck in the process. Shel and Dave's early adventures consist of meetings with historical figures they know Shel's dad admired, which gives McDevitt a chance to portray the ideas and attitudes of some extraordinarily interesting people. When Shel finally does find his father, he doesn't wish to return to his own time, preferring to continue his life in the Renaissance.

It is during this segment that I stumbled and lost my suspension of disbelief. In the Library of Alexandria, Shel and Dave are blindsided with some thoroughly modern paperwork. I got up at the end of the chapter to get some water, thinking to myself how absurd that was, and that they wouldn't really have had membership paperwork in Alexandria, only to catch myself being too stodgy and realize that McDevitt was playing the absurdity for laughs at the librarians' expense.

The encounters with historical figures and visits to important events are justified with a degree of elasticity in the timeline – the time travelers postulate that so long as they don't attempt to contradict a matter of historical record, they can move as they please. Frequently, they consider taking some action that will change things, only to decide not to at the last moment. In order to reduce their risk of running into paradoxes, the two have resolved not to go to their own future and research themselves. Eventually, Shel violates this rule, and much of the rest of the action stems from his discovery of his own impending death.

McDevitt has managed a balance here that puts *Time Travelers Never Die* in range of greatness. While the mechanism of time travel is never explored, McDevitt has made sure to address the fundamental problems of causality and paradox which any exploration of the subject must either confront or avoid, and has thrived in his choice to take the hard path of a single timeline. He manages to allow his characters to discuss these issues to the degree that any actual time travelers would without crossing over into the realm of metaphysics dissertations. In his attention to the ideas and attitudes of many important historical figures, in the pertinent quotations heading each chapter, and in his characters' preoccupation with copying lost manuscripts from the Library of Alexandria, McDevitt achieves a literary feel without becoming off-putting and stodgy. And in the bravado Shel and Dave gain from their new-found power, he manages to make an adventure in time travel entertaining without veering into the realm of alternate history. I am thoroughly impressed with *Time Travelers Never Die*, and will be including it on my Hugo nomination ballot.

Rebel Yells

News and Notes from all over

Jeff Thompson got us started:

Happy New Year, my friend! I hope that you had a happy holiday season. I've been busy adding a new chapter to my upcoming book *House of Dan Curtis: The Television Mysteries of the Dark Shadows Auteur*. The book was 90%

finished, but I uncovered some exciting new information that deserved its own short chapter.

I really enjoyed SFCU #13 and its reviews. Tell me, what is Creation/Twi Tour here in Nashville (29-30-31)? Thank you for including the Famous Monsters hyperlink!

I'm not sure what exactly the Creation/Twi Tour there was, but the one in Atlanta seems to be a media con (using the same model Creation's been using for decades) themed around the Twilight films. Anything beyond that, I'm not sure.

Tom Feller sent us a brief note:

Thanks for the update. A group of us from the local Sherlock Holmes club saw the new movie and then we adjourned to our house for coffee and dessert. Overall, we liked it.

Tom

Glad to hear the film has the approval of the aficionados.

Dear Warren,

Liked your Southern Fandom Confederation Update, and, as always have plenty of comments.

My first concerns the use of beer at ChattaCon to get the generations mingling. It must have been a very affable crowd. In my experience, it would usually take something stronger than beer to get the generations mingling. Both the older and younger generations usually have that much baggage.

Of course, the gap is greater between both generations and Robert Wilson's Julian Comstock. My first thought was that it should be set in an alternate 19th Century not the 23rd. Also an alternate 18th Century. George Washington chose to become king of America and the constitution, per Alexander Hamilton, made Senators Senators for Life. Or did we get the German Prince who was the transvestite as our king? Either way, it would credibly set the stage for Julian Comstock. On the other hand, there is nothing strange about the novel being set in the 23rd Century. In science fiction, the past is always being made into the future, and the future the past. Look at Lemuria.

Of course, we don't have to know those worlds for an entertaining novel; they could be worlds we just don't see. In Mieville's *The City and the City*, technology prevents people from seeing people in another world. Come to think of it, I have a third idea for a world we don't know as well: the world's in our mind.

Among the worlds we don't know is the Steam Punk world. In your review of the Sherlock Holmes flick with Guy Ritchie, you point out the 1999 film Wild Wild West was Steampunk. I didn't see it. However, I know that the 1965-69 TV series with Robert Conrad and Ross Martin had a number of episodes that could be considered Steam Punk. The first Steam Punk?

One last thing and it has to do with this world: thanks for complimenting my zine in your comment to my letter.

Yours,
Rich D.

I think part of Chattacon's trick is that there are a lot of folks around 40 who attend, which I've noticed most conventions don't seem to have. They grew up hanging out with the oldschool fans, and they're still young enough that they're not quite our parents. Also, the fans around 40 seem to be throwing several of the better parties. It goes a long way. Minor point about The City and The City – there's no technology involved in keeping people from seeing each other; it's all in their own habits. Also, it's not that the people they don't see are in another world, but in another nation which happens to occupy the same space. The first steampunk, if we're going to get into trying to pin it down, could be said to be 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. As for when we started a subgenre of throwing back to that style, it would be hard to pin down (has it ever left entirely?).

Now, a series of notes from Joy V. Smith:

Warren,

My short story, Mooving Out, is up at [Every Day Fiction - The once a day flash fiction magazine.](#)

Joy

Warren,

I enjoyed the cover. He's certainly prepared to have fun! And thanks for the calendar of events; there are lots of places to have fun!!

I enjoyed the book and movie reviews. The City & The City certainly has an interesting premise. I was aware of the title, but not interested until this review. I saw Sherlock Holmes, btw. One of the things I liked about it most was Dr. Watson. Nice change from the one in the Basil Rathbone movies. (I looked at a few during a recent TV marathon.)

Good selection of LOCs with news, and thank you for the music background re: Lloyd's LOC. We didn't have any snow, at least not at our place, but we did have a number of freezes (we'll be disposing of Cuban tree frog corpses for a while--

which is a good thing--and doing a lot of pruning later). We checked the well boxes after an early freeze and discovered that the pressure gauge was spewing water. The pump guys came and fixed that and said--A drip (from the kitchen faucet) isn't enough; you have to let it run. So we did, and we wrapped the well tank and boxes in two blankets and some rugs. No problem after that--and the freezes got harder. (A hard freeze here in mid-Florida is when the temp drops below freezing for several hours.)

Thanks for another enjoyable issue.

Appreciatively,
Joy V. Smith
Joy

Warren,

If you're interested, my Hal Colebatch interview that ran in the May 2009 issue of Expressions is #4 in the nonfiction category of the Preditors & Editors poll:
<http://www.anotherealm.com/prededitors/votenonfiction09.htm>

Joy
My other blog (media tidbits and more)
<http://pagadan.livejournal.com/>

Thanks, Joy! Glad to hear that I've sparked your interest in The City & The City. It was a fine read. As for hard freezes, we had a bit of that this past weekend, when we got nailed with five inches of snow, plus some ice. I still ran a NASFiC meeting downtown, but it was rough driving in that.

And of course, here's Lloyd Penney:

If you list e-mail addresses, please list penneys@allstream.net.

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January 18, 2010

Dear Warren:

About time I got to this one, hm? Thanks for the latest SFC Update, Vol. 1, No. 13. Hey, we've all seen this guy in the hallway at one con or another, or maybe in the gaming room...or maybe some of us look just like this? I'll bet some people are thinking that Kimm Antell has come uncomfortable close to the mark on this one.

I know of at least one Toronto fan who makes an annual pilgrimage to ChattaCon every year...if you see Emma Duncan at the con, tell her Lloyd says hello, and it will freak her out. One thing I've noticed up here is a sudden rash of furrycons. Most years, it was Camp Feral in Algonquin Park, the enormous provincial park north of here, but this year, there are new furrycons in Toronto, London and Montreal.

Movies...the Golden Globes were handed out last night, with awards for Avatar (pushed Star Wars out of the way for third best box office ever), and Sherlock Holmes, and others. I have heard that people have been trying to see Avatar for weeks without luck. We haven't seen either movie, and we're not exactly rushing off to do so. However, I expect Avatar will be around for a little while yet.

The local... Thank you for your support, Joy and Rich. I'm still at the Law Society of Upper Canada, and it's still a good place to work. Looks like the work flow will continue, and take me to the end of my contract in April. Yvonne is still working, but has started classes at a local college, taking a course that will train her in being a law clerk.

My loc...it's cool, not cold, and we are relatively snow-free here. I will take it and run... The number of announced steampunk cons and SF cons with substantial steampunk content continues to grow. There are contingents forming to go to cons in Parsippany, NJ and Dearborn, MI, and while we won't be going (we're cutting out out-of-town cons this year, just to save a little cash), we will be watching and listening for reports.

I'm an old journalism student, so I prefer to be informed, but when a lot of the information is about friends and acquaintances who have passed on, it does get depressing. A couple of nights ago, I learned about the passing of Takumi Shibano, one of Japan's top fans, and a dedicated translator of English SF into Japanese. Yvonne and I had met the Shibanos on several occasions, and they were wonderful folks. His passing hurts the fannish community in Los Angeles to the core, and we mourn his passing.

I hope we'll have happier news next time around, so we'll see you then.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

I don't believe I ran into her, but I hope she had a wonderful time. We seem to have a steady stable of furry cons down here – I don't believe I've noticed any turning up new or dying off lately. Today, I saw that Avatar has taken over the top slot on both the domestic and worldwide gross lists. It's still only at #21 on the inflation-adjusted list, but that's higher than any film in the last decade, and it's still going strong. Thanks for passing along the sad news about Takumi

Shibano. Chaz Boston Baden has set up a memorial site at <http://shibano-san.sciencefictionleague.org/> using phpBB.

Along those sad lines, I regret to pass the news that we've lost Mandy Pack. She was 45. I wish I had more to give y'all on that, but it's basically all that's been passed along. Hopefully we'll have more next issue.

WAHF: Toni Weisskopf, who reminded me that she had a flyer she wanted me to run. Check the next page!



Fly Me to the Moon

The Moon Princess Bid for DeepSouthCon 50

Huntsville, Alabama
June 2012



Why: We've chosen to bid for a DSC to be held in Huntsville because the first DSC was held there in 1962, and we think it's only fitting that it come full circle for number 50. Huntsville's also centrally located and a fun place to visit – it's the Rocket City! Huntsville already has a fine annual convention in Con*Stellation, hosted by NASFA. This, however, would be a one-time, independent con, with a committee drawing from all over the South. If we win the vote, to held next June at DSC 48 in Charlotte, NC (ConCarolinas), we plan a traditional DSC (with perhaps a new twist or two) that has an emphasis on Southern hospitality and the science in science fiction.

How: Only with your help! Come to our bid parties at conventions (we'll let you know where). Help us spread the word! Pre-supporting memberships are available for \$20 at the parties or write to us at the address below. You can also visit us on our website or Facebook, and message us via Twitter.

Who: The Moon Princesses are: Julie Wall, Toni Weisskopf & Linda Zielke.

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http://twitter.com/DSC50_HSV

DeepSouthCon 50 in Huntsville Bid Supporter Registration Form

Name: _____ **E-Mail:** _____

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Additional Names (same address): _____

Number of Pre-Supports: _____ @ _____ **Each Total Amount:** _____

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Total Amount: _____ **Date Received:** _____ **Received By:** _____