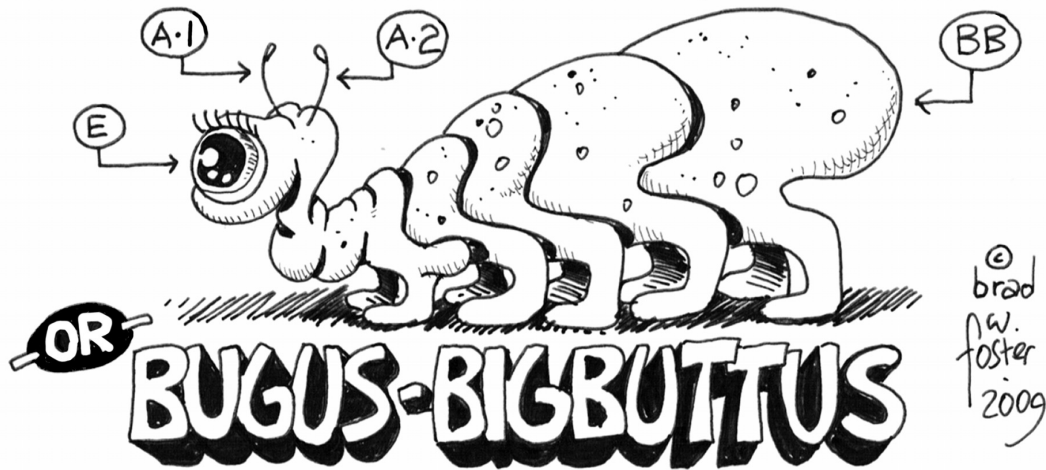


SOUTHERN
FANTASY
CONFEDERATION
UPDATE

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 15

MARCH 2010

Musings of a Faned

This issue's cover is another wonderful piece from Brad Foster! I always have fun running his work. Yes, this issue is late – last week, I had limited computer access, and spent my weekend at StellarCon, nominally working. I've tried to pull this issue together throughout the week, meaning to get it out quite a bit earlier, but I find myself a whole week late. My apologies. Life got in the way. We do, however, have quite a treat for you this time around, though – I got the Southern Fandom Classic Yahoo Group to provide their suggestions for the various Hugo categories, and I'm sharing some of mine. I hope those of you out there who can nominate (members of Aussiecon 4 and members of Anticipation) will do so. There's a lot of great work in the SF world, and it's always nice when we can honor it. We've also got a few new contributors this time around – Rich Dengrove with a review of a novel from before any of us were born, and Jennifer Liang with her tale of running a convention.

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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:

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 Kimono-san, 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 – Holiday Inn Koger Center. Rachel Caine, R. Cat, Steve Long. One of the better places to go to meet fans from both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.)

Conglomeration (Louisville, KY – InnPlace Hotel and Conference Center. Michael Z. Williamson, Scott Corwin, Sheila Lenkman, Steven Belledin.)

April 16-18:

PyrateCon (New Orleans, LA – The French Quarter. That's right, it's a festival that takes over the French Quarter. This year's theme is Search For Lafitte's Ghost.)

Game Con (Aberdeen, MD – Clarion Hotel. Featured events include Warhammer 40k tournament and a screening of the trailer for a fan-made Browncoats movie.)

T-Mode (Alexandria, VA – Hilton Alexandria Old Town. Todd Haberkorn, Christina Vee, Roland Kelts, Random, Geeks Next Door. Anime and gaming.)

KampingKon (Calhoun, GA – KOA Campground. Standard outdoors sorts of activities, gaming, and a Bat'leth tournament.)

Haven (Miami, FL. This event is listed on Warhorn, so it's clearly a gaming event, but no further information is provided.)

April 22-25:

Game Days (Timonium, MD – Holiday Inn. 80 hours of open gaming.)

April 23-25:

JordanCon (Atlanta, GA – Crowne Plaza Ravinia. Brandon Sanderson.)

Twilight Convention (Arlington, VA – Sheraton National Hotel. Kellan Lutz, Peter Facinelli, Bronson Pelletier, Kiowa Gordon, Christopher Heyerdahl, Michael Welch.)

April 24-25:

Dicehead SIEGE (Chattanooga, TN – Camp Jordan Arena. Gaming, gaming, and more gaming, in case the name didn't tip you off.)

April 30-May 2:

MTAC Odyssey (Nashville, TN – Sheraton Music City. I'll be darned if I can find anything about guests, which is odd for an anime convention. They do have a lot about their community, though, which I take as a good sign.)

Recon (Cocoa Beach, FL. I've got no further info, since the computers at work tag their website as malicious, and I just don't feel like chancing it on my machine at home after that kind of warning.)

Malice Domestic (Arlington, VA – Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel. Parnell Hall, Rhys Bowen, Mary Higgins Clark, William Link, Tom & Marie O'Day. Mystery convention.)

OutLantaCon (Atlanta, GA – Holiday Inn Select Atlanta-Perimeter. Cecilia Tan, Lee Martindale, Dariek Scott, Andrew Greenburg, J.M. McDermott, Eugie Foster, Kiernan Kelly, Kayelle Alen, J.A. Steel, Steve Berman, Greg Herren. Atlanta's con from the GLBTetc. Crowd. I've heard they have a great time down there.)

Anachrocon (Atlanta, GA – Wellesley Inn Atlanta Airport Hotel. A steampunk event gathering authors, artists, historians, and musicians.)

Twilight Convention (Charlotte, NC – Marriott Charlotte Executive Park. Peter Facinelli, Bronson Pelletier, Christopher Heyerdahl, Michael Welch.)

Vulcan Events (Tampa, FL – Doubletree Hotel Tampa Westshore Airport. Christopher Lloyd, Sally Kellerman, Gary Lockwood. Those last two are somewhat interesting – they’re the stars of “Where no Man Has Gone Before”, the second pilot of the original series [the one the studio accepted, and aired third], and this is their first East Coast appearance together.)

Tennessee Game Days (Nashville, TN – Opryland Hotel. Focus is on family strategy games and Eurogames.)

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)

Nebula Awards (Cocoa Beach, FL)

May 15-16:

WonderFest (Louisville, KY)

May 21-23:

JAMPcon (Chattanooga, TN)

FX International (Orlando, FL)

ImagiCon (Birmingham, AL)

JampCon (Chattanooga, TN)

May 28-29:

RAWR Party Con (Murray, KY)

May 28-30:

Animazement 13 (Raleigh, NC)

Timegate (Atlanta, GA)

Oasis 23 (Orlando, FL)

Rocket City Furmeet (Huntsville, AL)

Adventure Con (Pigeon Forge, TN)

Florida Battle Con (Orlando, FL)

May 28-31:

Balticon 44 (Baltimore, MD)

June 4-6, 2010:

ConCarolinas/DeepSouthCon 48 (Charlotte, NC)

HeroesCon (Charlotte, NC)

Rapier (Jacksonville, FL)

Hypericon 6 (Nashville, TN)

Hama-Con (Huntsville, AL)

June 11-13:

Anime Mid-Atlantic (Hampton, VA)

Sci-Fi Summer Con (Atlanta, GA)

OMGCon (Paducah, KY)

June 18-20:

Florida SuperCon (Miami, FL)

June 25-27:

Persacon (Decatur, AL)

Conterpoint / NEFilk 20 (Rockville, MD)

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)

August 17-21, 2011:

Renovation (Reno, NV)

Reviews:

***Darkship Thieves* by Sarah A. Hoyt (Baen, January 2010)**

Warren Buff

Having been around cons in the South for a little while now, I've been to the odd Baen Travelling Roadshow or twenty, and I've noticed that they've got a little bit of a talent for hyperbole when it comes to pitching a new book. So when I told Toni I'd gotten ahold of this one, and she said that I'd like it if I liked Heinlein (which I'm pretty sure she already knew to be true), I figured I'd withhold judgment until I'd read it. And while I'm honest enough (or at least, I like to think so) that I'd be able to disagree if I felt that way, I don't have such a sense of my own self-importance to call out a publisher in writing to do so, and you can hopefully infer that, in fact, I liked *Darkship Thieves* in much the same way that I like Heinlein. Now, if my old Logic professor, Dr. Auerbach, were to have his say, he'd remind us that in the strict sense, in order for the statement "If you like Heinlein, then you'll like *this*" to be true, only one of two things is necessary: either you don't like Heinlein, or you like *this*. Those of us who speak plain English, however, can see the implication of a causal relationship – that pitch tells us that if we like Heinlein, we will like *this* in much the same way and for many of the same reasons. And, since the point of a review isn't so much to tell stories about conversations I had at

cons, but rather to tell you something about a book I've read, I'll try to lay out just what those ways and reasons were.

I might as well start with Thena, who is pretty classically Campbell Competent (to use Scalzi's term). She can think and fight her way out of just about every bad situation thrust at her, and doesn't take losing as more than a temporary setback. She's proud without being arrogant. She oozes sex appeal and wields it as just one more tool to get what she wants. She's friendly, charming, and likeable, and yet, in spite of all this, she feels very real. Her desires and fears are familiar ones, even if her abilities aren't. And that's the difference between a Mary Sue and a character who is Campbell Competent – it's really hard to suspend disbelief for a Mary Sue, and harder still to relate to one. By and large, Heinlein's protagonists are the model of Campbell Competence (after all, he was Campbell's star writer), although they fell into a few recognizable stock types (the reluctant ubermensch, the cynical old sage, the redhead). Thena doesn't quite fit into one of Heinlein's types, though she has a lot in common with the reluctant ubermensch (Hamilton Felix in *Beyond This Horizon*, Lazarus Long at the beginning of *Time Enough For Love*). Her place as the product of a long series of genetic experiments, combined with the unexpected emergence of her psychic powers, provides a further echo of Hamilton Felix. Even her full name (Athena Hera Sinistra) has the feel of a Heinlein name. It's odd, yet recognizable, and uses different conventions from our own (in this case, the use of Greek deific names, while Heinlein uses tricks like reversing the order of the surname and given name for Hamilton Felix, and throws the curve of a man carrying the name of a family he married into with Manuel Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, who also goes by a diminutive of his given name). Thena is smug, sarcastic, and brave, yet gives the impression of being an open and honest narrative voice, much as Mannie did in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. She really does give the impression of being a character Heinlein would have used for a protagonist, while being distinct enough to have a fresh voice.

Thena is hardly the only character who feels like a Heinlein character. Kit, her love interest and sometimes partner in her adventures, is similarly Campbell Competent, though he still grieves from the loss of his wife. He proves his worth by being able to beat her in combat repeatedly without harming her, including fighting in zero gravity, while also having the knowledge to instruct her in repairing his spaceship when he is too blind to handle it himself. Only one other character proves up to the challenge of a fight with Thena – the villain of the piece. Meanwhile, Kit has enough complexity to be a well-rounded supporting character – his angst over his wife's death, his own complicated genetic background, his relationship with his family, and his friendship with Doc Bartholomeu are all explored in enough detail to keep the reader's interest without distracting from the main story – that of Thena. Doc Bartholomeu himself plays a fairly Heinleinian role: that of the cynical sage (Jubal Harshaw in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, for instance). In typical Heinleinian style, Doc Bartholomeu is substantially older than those around him, yet mysteriously competent, and serves to advise both Kit and Thena.

The novel's structure, too, feels Heinleinian. The story is divided into three distinct adventures, and a denouement that concludes with a smirk. Roughly, these three adventures are Thena's escape from her father's ship following an apparent mutiny and the subsequent introduction of Kit, her time learning the culture of the hollowed-out asteroid Eden, and her return to Earth to rescue Kit. I see this three-adventure structure

as typical of Heinlein's novels, and quite possibly a result of publishing his novels serially. While *Darkship Thieves* has been published as a complete work, it retains this structure, and gives the reader partial resolutions of tension that allow for new developments in the plot before the big payoff. Thematically, *Darkship Thieves* remains rather Heinleinian as well, with those who are more fit prospering in space, the society of Eden showing the marked individualism (and plural marriages) of many of Heinlein's future civilizations, and a focus on the struggles of the elite in both of the novel's societies.

So yes, I thoroughly enjoyed *Darkship Thieves*, and I found that I did so in the ways I have enjoyed Heinlein, and for the reasons I have enjoyed Heinlein. While I've not read nearly as much Heinlein as many of my friends, I hope that I've read enough to have an understanding of his general style. Specifically, I've read much of his middle period, while I've been lax in pursuing his juveniles and later works. I can't accurately say how this compares to the juveniles, though it does compare favorably with at least the works I've named specifically in this review.

***Journey To Mars* by Gustavus Pope (1894)**

by Richard Dengrove

Who? What? Where? I'm not going to pretend that Gustavus Pope was a great writer. Nor am I going to even prescribe that you search the used book sites for *Journey to Mars*. However, I suspect you might want to know something about it. The reason is that I bet his *Journey to Mars* inspired Edgar Rice Burroughs' Munsey serial "Under the Moons of Mars" (1912) and the novel adapted from it, *A Princess of Mars* (1917). They inaugurated Burroughs' famous Barsoom series.

Burroughs never said, so we can never know for sure. However, the timing is right: Burroughs was nineteen when *Journey to Mars* was published. In addition, I hear the novel was very popular at the time, being published in both the U.S. and England. Thus, Burroughs could easily have read it.. Also, there are just too many similarities between Burroughs' plot and Pope's. Some have argued that they are similar only because they reflect the times.

I have to admit this is true for several similarities.

1.) In both, the villain tries to force the heroine to marry him. I admit a typical Victorian and Post-Victorian Melodrama.

2) Also, in both, the hero saves the heroine from a fate worse than death. Again typical.

3) In both, the Martians are basically human beings of different colors. This was more than a matter of convenience like it is in *Star Trek*. It was also a matter of ideology. In the decades before H.G. Wells, humans were considered the height of reason, and extraterrestrials would have to be very much like us.

However, other similarities between Burroughs and Pope cannot be explained by the time. Burroughs could only have borrowed them from Pope. Consider these.

1.) In both, Mars' is ruled by nobility and kings.

2.) In both, a princess takes a fancy to the Earthling hero. In Pope, it is Princess Suhlamia and, in Burroughs, it is Deja Thoris.

3) In both, the Earthling hero is an American military officer. In Pope, he is Lieutenant Frederick Hamilton of the Navy; and, in Burroughs, he is Captain John Carter of the Confederate Army. It is true Carter had been mustered out. However, he was still addressed as captain.

4.) In both, the villain is a king. In Pope, it is Prince Diavojahr, of Sundor-Luzion, who tries to force Princess Suhlamia to marry him. A fate, of course, worse than death. The force he used is pretty bad too: he threatens to crucify her boyfriend Lieutenant Hamilton.

In Burroughs, Sab Than, prince of the city of Zodanga, captures Deja Thoris, and threatens to conquer her city of Helium unless she marries him.

5.) In both four different colored races inhabit Mars. In Pope, there are red, yellow and blue human-like races. In addition, a fourth more peculiar race, giants with golden skin and purple hair who resemble the statues of Greek and Roman gods..

In Burroughs, there are three races; only these are similar to those on Earth: white, black and yellow. Also, he has a fourth peculiar race.. They are green, very tall, and sport tusks and two sets of arms.

6.) In both, life on Mars is threatened with destruction at some point. In Pope, a comet is driving the Moons of Mars to crash on its surface and kill off all life.

In Burroughs, the oxygen of Mars depends on a generator a mad scientist runs. When the mad scientist dies, the plant stops manufacturing oxygen. This, Burroughs deals with in a peremptory way, and I suspect his motive was to include all the elements of Pope's novel.

7.) In both, there is mind reading. In Pope, Lieutenant Hamilton and his companion, the Maori John, learn to speak Martian through Ascopion, a telepath. Like a lot of wonders in Pope, he mentions telepathy just once, and then you do not hear any more about it.

In Burroughs it is John Carter who has telepathy, at least when it comes Martians. In addition to learning the one Martian language from it, Carter uses telepathy a few more times. So, in this, I have admit he differs a bit from Pope. The element is there, though.

This is not to say that Pope's and Burroughs' novels are not very different. They couldn't be more different. Pope aspires to greatness. He wants to show us he is witty, deep and knowledgeable. Unfortunately, he blows it with his stereotyped melodramatic plot and stock wooden characters. They were not really above hack work. The good are all so upright and the bad are all so dastardly. So Victorian are his characters, in fact, that,

except for the advanced technology, it sometimes gets hard to tell Mars from the Earth of his day.

For many moderns, his comments are also his Waterloo. They find the long descriptions and opinions he writes with every turn of the plot a crashing bore. I didn't find them so. For me, his comments were sufficiently eccentric to find them interesting. They were not deep as he probably believed: they concerned topics of interest at the most fashionable dinner parties. However, he put his own spin them. .

I don't know about vegetarianism, which he doesn't explain in too much detail. However, he explained his feminism with some detail, and he was a cultural and social feminist if not a political one. Another topic of interest at the best dinner party tables was the virtues of monarchy. After a scandal ridden period, Mark Twain decided, at one point, monarchy was better than democracy. Pope wasn't too sure: his own spin was it can be the best form of government and the worst depending on the king's character.

In addition, Pope was a Fundamentalist, which, in those days, could be fashionable; but he put his own spin on it too. While he believed, with the Bible, that God destroys nations, and planets, because of their decadence, at the same time, he subscribed to the Nebula Hypothesis, which science accepted at the time.

Also, he put his own spin on views about race. To us, he is troglodyte; for his time, he was quite enlightened. I doubt he would have been out of step then because he believed some races were inferior, and race mixing leads to decadence. In the case of Mars, mixing between the Martian races and the 'Plutonians' from the asteroid belt. He was not out of step either in having Lieutenant Hamilton's Maori's companion act like a buffoon. Where he was out of step is that, on closer inspection, the man is just pretending; and, at least on one occasion, he saves the Lieutenant's life. In addition, Pope was out of step in claiming that this inferiority does not mean that the different races do not deserve a decent life. He is 100% behind the welfare state, which, at the time, was a pipe dream.

Some of Pope's spin, however, is part of the plot. His views on magic, for instance, Despite his pretensions to being scientific, he is very enthusiastic about magic. I am sure that magic was a topic of conversation at society's dinner tables. With magic, he includes the nascent, very popular Positive Thinking movement, which is supposed to prosper on Mars. However, his magician, unoriginally named Thaumatur, uses old fashioned magic, invocation of spirits, to move the plot along.

Having examined Pope's plot, character and views, I make these judgements. Pope's plot, characters and science are mediocre. The opposite of the impression of depth he meant to give. However, his commentary has some depth to it. It certainly is his own.

Next we compare Pope to Edgar Rice Burroughs. By contrast, Burroughs excels in attaining his objective: namely, getting published in the Munsey magazines. He does this by providing his readers with an escape. One way is Burroughs' Mars differs greatly from the everyday world of his readers. It is oriental and barbaric. Also, it is a world of kill or be killed. Exhilarating as long as you are facile at sword play, flying the Martian floating ships, and generally.

By inference, his objective, I suspect, unlike Pope, includes no commentary whatsoever. In the style of action adventure, he hid himself, and his feelings. We get only glimpses of Burroughs' political, social and scientific views. And they are woven into the plot. The object is to lose ourselves in the action, which we do.

To make things more rousing, Burroughs' characters differ like night and day from Pope's. His heroes are not goody goody and his villains not baddy baddies. When Sab Than forces Deja Thoris to marry him, and she is honor bound to be his wife, the earth man hero John Carter has a simple solution: he kills Sab Than. I imagine this would never have entered the gentlemanly Pope's mind. In fact, Burroughs is completely unconcerned about morality. I bet he figured his readers wanted to escape from the stultifying morality of 1911. One way is his Martians go around naked. Quite a scandalous idea then, although some wags were shocking society then by talking about it.

In addition, while Burroughs science is probably no more valid than Pope's, his attitude toward science and magic is different. I suspect he considered invoking spirits and positive thinking too high society for his readers. Such airs may have been what his target audience was escaping from. Instead, Burroughs writes only science fiction. Everything that happens is supposedly scientific if only by the company it keeps. It is true he borrows shamelessly from the magical, mystical, wildly popular philosophy Theosophy. However, it was not Theosophy for intellectuals or for idiots, but Theosophy for fun.

Having compared Pope's and Burrough's novels, it is completely obvious Pope influenced Burroughs' plot, characters and setting. This does mean that the two novels are not completely different. Despite his objective, Pope's novel is more commentary while, because of his objective, Burroughs' novel is a very exhilarating action adventure.

Hugo Recommendations:

I'll start this section off by giving my own recommendations, with brief commentaries, followed by a large number of emails discussing the subject from fans around the South.

Best Novel:

The City & The City by China Mieville

Julian Comstock: A Story of 22nd-Century America by Robert Charles Wilson

Time Travelers Never Die by Jack McDevitt

Haze by L.E. Modesitt, Jr.

Soulless by Gail Carriger

I've run reviews of all of these, so I don't feel a need to go on at length. I will simply say that these are the best novels I've read from 2009 (with the exception of *Soulless*, which is on my stack, but the reviews I've seen indicate it's of the proper caliber, and I think a steampunk novel on the ballot would stimulate the right kind of interest in the Hugos). If you only have one slot to fill and are just looking for a recommendation, take *Julian Comstock*, which is my current favorite, should it make the final ballot.

Best Novella:

Shambling Towards Hiroshima by James Morrow

I was surprised that this was only novella-length, but since it was, and I deeply enjoyed it, it's on the nominations ballot.

Best Related Work:

The Book of Swords by Hank Reinhardt

I seriously recommend you check back to Chris Hensley's review of this one, if you didn't read it. Hank was passionate about blades, and this was his life's work. Please consider it.

Best Graphic Story:

Scott Pilgrim Vs. The Universe

Captain Britain & MI-13: Vampire State

Grandville

These are all brilliant, and I'll have a hard time picking a favorite if they each make the final ballot.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long:

District 9

Star Trek

Moon

Avatar

Up

It was a pretty good year for SF films, and all of these would be worthy additions to the Hugo ballot. There are other options, too – it was just that kind of year.

Best Fanzine:

Journey Planet

Challenger

Banana Wings

Askance

For the fan categories, I'm borrowing a trick from Guy Lillian and only listing four choices – my fifth could have been you. If you can't guess from this list, I really like fat, generalist zines with a mix of fannish and sercon content. Here's hoping several of my choices make the ballot.

Best Semiprozine:

Clarke's World

New York Review of Science Fiction

I'm not as much of a semiprozine guy, but I really appreciate what these two zines do.

Best Fanwriter:

Guy H. Lillian, III

Taral Wayne

Chris Garcia
Lloyd Penney

Guy and Chris are still two of the most entertaining writers every time I read their essays and stories, Taral has been putting out a wealth of great fanwriting this year, and Lloyd Penney continues to claim the title as a letterhack. There's loads more great fanwriting going on, so I won't be surprised if a slate with very little in common with my own is on the ballot.

Best Fanartist:
Brad Foster
Taral Wayne
Alan F. Beck
Ditmar

Brad and Alan have been good to me with illustrations, Taral continues to produce at his ordinary volume and quality, and Ditmar, who should probably be on the ballot most years, *really* ought to make it for Aussiecon 4. Here's hoping.

And of course, this isn't just *my* zine, so here come the diverse voices of the Southern Fandom Classic Yahoo Group:

Joel Zakem:

While I have not been keeping up in my reading, I did enjoy James Morrow's *Shambling Towards Hiroshima* (which, according to Locus, should be listed as a novella rather than a novel). Jonathan Strahan's *Eclipse Three* had some strong stories including Caitlin Kiernan's "Galapagos" (Novelette), Maureen McHugh's "Useless Things" (short) and Karen Fowler's "The Pelican Bar" (short), though, to me, the Fowler is probably more mainstream than fantasy or SF.

In the fanzine category, I really like Dave Locke's *Time & Again* and Chris Garcia's *Drink Tank*.

John Purcell:

Well, Warren, since I just e-mailed in my FAAn Awards ballot yesterday, my thoughts about recommended zines are very clear. Personally, I see nothing wrong about giving egoboo to deserving souls for producing some damn fine fanzines, writing, and artwork in the past year - and past year alone! I so cannot stand the "voting for him/her since I know the name" whether or not that person contributed significant work in the calendar year under consideration. With that caveat out of the way, here's a brief listing of zines, writers, and artists whom I believe deserve to be on the Fan Hugo short-list (I can't do the fiction stuff because I'm so sorely out of touch with all of THAT material) and in no particular order:

Fanzine: *Relapse*, *eI*, *Banana Wings*, *Chunga*, *Askance* (hey! how'd that one sneak in there?), *Trap Door*, *Challenger*. Yeah, I know; that's seven instead of five, but there are a lot more that could sneak onto the ballot.

Fan Writer: Taral Wayne (he's been so damned prolific), Curt Phillips (say who?), Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, John Hertz (he's a fine fan writer, no doubt, and a DUFF 2010 candidate, too)

Fan Artist: Taral Wayne (he's just so damned prolific), Kurt Erichsen, Marc Schirmeister, Brad Foster, Dan Steffan, Bill Fischer (my "Figby" cartoonist; I mean, why the hell not?).

Like I said, these are listed in no particular order, but all are fine, fine people and fanzines and really do deserve a proper wave of accolades to wash over them. Some of these folks probably haven't a bath since 2008!

Curt Phillips:

For fanzine I like *TIME & AGAIN* too, but then I write a column for Dave so I'm more than a little biased. I think *CHALLENGER* certainly deserves another nomination and I also think John Purcell's *ASKANSE*. Claire & Mark's *BANANA WINGS*, and Randy, Andy, & Carl's *CHUNGA* are leading the pack of great zines these days. Another zine that I think should have some recognition is Robert Lichtman's *TRAPDOOR*, but it's an annual zine. Is it eligible for the HUGO? [*Warren: Yes, since it's had four or more issues. Note that Argentus is also annual, and has been on the ballot at least the past two years.*]

PLEASE, fandom; resist the current Internet based block voting effort by *STARSHIP SOFA*, a podcast that seems interested in following John Scalzi's execrable example in campaigning for a Hugo. Such efforts debase an already tarnished award.

PLEASE also consider Jack Vance when nominating for Best Non-fiction for his autobiography, and also Robert Silverberg for his. Both are deserving works.

BEST FANWRITER? I haven't a clear choice this year. I'll be very interested to see what names turn up. Probably more Internet and blog-driven weirdness, I suppose. I'll note that Eric Mayer has been doing some nice articles in *TIME & AGAIN* (which you can read at efanzines.com).

Guy Lillian:

Hugo recommendations in the fan categories --

Fanzine: *ASKANCE*, *ALEXIAD*, *ARGENTUS*, *STEAM ENGINE TIME*

Fan writer: James Bacon, John Hertz, Joe Major, Chris Garcia

Fan Artist: Charlie Williams, Marc Schirmeister, Kurt Erichsen, Alan White

Note that I only name four of the five nominations I made in each category. The fifth may well have been YOU.

FILM nominations are easy -- we had a wonderful year. *AVATAR*, *DISTRICT 9*, *MOON*, *STAR TREK*, and *SURROGATES* -- a good, consistent little SFer -- won nominations from me, but there were also *WATCHMEN*, *TERMINATOR SALVATION*, *UP*, *CORALINE*, *PANDORUM*, even *2012* and *KNOWING*. Good year.

NOVEL -- I believe Warren mentioned *THE CITY & THE CITY*. Paolo Whosis' *THE WIND-UP GIRL* is getting great press, too.

Someone I should have mentioned for fan artist: Ditmar, the great Australian. Nice fella, too.

And I hope people look at *Challenger*, since it's so much fun to take Rosy to those great before-&-after parties.

Rich Lynch:

Short form dramatic presentation:

The Alec Baldwin Hulu commercial that was first shown during the 2009 Super Bowl. A finer one minute short science fiction production may not exist. Also nominating in that category the "Space Oddity" episode of CSI.

Guy Lillian, again:

I also loved the "Road to Multiverse" episode of FAMILY GUY. Just priceless, especially when they put a real dog and a real baby on the screen.

Laura Haywood-Cory:

Laura the pro says here's the list of Baen's eligible titles.

Larry Correia is eligible for the John W. Campbell award, for *Monster Hunter International*.

Novels

Honor of the Clan – Julie Cochrane & John Ringo

Eye of the Storm - John Ringo

The Tuloriad – John Ringo & Tom Kratman

Fledgling - Sharon Lee & Steve Miller

Longeye – Sharon Lee & Steve Miller

Contact With Chaos – Michael Z. Williamson

In the Stormy Red Sky – David Drake

Storm from the Shadows - David Weber
Torch of Freedom – Eric Flint & David Weber
Diamond Star - Catherine Asaro
Overthrowing Heaven – Mark L. Van Name
The Stoneholding – James G. Anderson & Mark Sebanc
Monster Hunter International – Larry Correia
Dragon's Ring – Dave Freer
Cobra War, Book One: Cobra Alliance – Timothy Zahn
One Good Soldier – Travis S. Taylor
Exodus: The Ark – Paul Chafe
1635: The Tangled Web – Virginia DeMarce

Anthologies, for choosing novellas, novelettes and short stories – readers have to nominate one or more stories from these individually, they can't nominate the entire book:

Man-Kzin XII – Larry Niven, creator
Witch Way to the Mall - Esther Friesner, ed.
Strip Mauled – Esther Friesner, ed.
Grantville Gazette V - Eric Flint, ed.

Best Related Work (nonfiction):
The Book of Swords – Hank Reinhardt

Best Editor, short form:
 Eric Flint
 Esther Friesner

Pro Artists:
 Clyde Caldwell, Bob Eggleton, Steve Hickman, Tom Kidd, Todd Lockwood,
 David Mattingly, Kurt Miller, Alan Pollack, David Seeley

Short fiction list of Hugo-eligible titles from *Jim Baen's UNIVERSE* magazine, compiled by Paula Goodlett. These are split between the Novella, Novelette and Short Story categories, as defined here:

Best Novella. A science fiction or fantasy story of between seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) and forty thousand (40,000) words.

Best Novelette. A science fiction or fantasy story of between seven thousand five hundred (7,500) and seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) words.

Best Short Story. A science fiction or fantasy story of less than seven thousand five hundred (7,500) words.

JBU editors are Eric Flint and Mike Resnick.

AUTHOR, TITLE, WORD COUNT

Ed Lerner, "No GUTS, No Glory," 1780
 L.E. Modesitt, Jr., "Astralis," 2000
 Jay Lake, "Leopard," 2200
 Marissa Lingen, "Why I Live in the Silver Mine," 2200
 Maya Bohnhoff, "The Resident," 2300
 Paula Stiles, "The Queen of Sheba's Diamonds," 3100
 Chet Gottfried, "A Thousand Worlds, A Million Adventures," 3500
 Nancy Fulda, "In the Halls of the Sky-Palace," 4500
 Mike Resnick, "The Blimp and Sixpence," 4700
 Lezli Robyn, "Johnny So Long At The Fair," 4800
 Susan diRende, "Unpronounceable," 5000
 Sarah Edwards, "Katie Birch," 5000
 Carl Frederick, "Food For Thought," 5600
 Mary Lowd, "Life With the Tumblers," 5900
 Naomi Kritzer, "The Good Son," 6300
 Robert Ortega, "Round-Trip Coach," 7000
 Thomas Mays, "Dreams For Sale -- Two Bits," 7300
 Michael Barretta, "Cathedral," 7900
 Steve Eley, "Mouse Suits," 8300
 Bud Sparhawk, "Primrose Rescue," 8600
 Graham Edwards, "Riding the Drop," 8800
 David Brin, "Gorilla, My Dreams," 9400
 Kristine Kathryn Rusch, "Corpse Vision," 10,700
 Abra Staffin Wiebe, "Salvaging Scottwell," 11,300
 Gary Kloster, "Adam, Unwilling," 11500
 Garrett Vance, "Riders of the Three-Toed Horse," 11,900
 Sarah Avery, "New Jersey's Top Ghost Tours," 12,600
 John Lamshead, "Storming Hell," 12,700
 Kristine Kathryn Rusch, "The Blitz Experience," 14,000
 John Barnes, "Things Undone," 17,200
 Matthew Rotundo, "Canaan," 17,300
 Bud Sparhawk, "Primrose and Thorn," 18,200
 Mike Resnick, "If the Frame Fits," 18,600
 Ed Lerner, "Calculating Minds," 20,400
 Bud Sparhawk, "Winds of Mars," 22,600
 David Gerrold, "Ganny Knit a Spaceship," 39,200

 Laura the fan points out that we have several excellent Southern fanzines that deserve to be nominated, not the least of which is Guy Lillian's *Challenger*. Don't forget Uncle Timmy's *Revenge of Hump Day* as well.

Rebel Yells

News and Notes from all over

First, we heard from Joy V. Smith:

Warren,

Lovely cover. Are those manga eyes? What a variety of cons! There's something for everyone. I enjoyed both book reviews. Interesting comparison of *The Stoneholding* to Dungeons & Dragons. (Sorry about the dearth of bards in today's games!) And I really enjoyed your discussion of SF in the *Time Travelers Never Die* review. Lord of Light is one of my favorite books, btw. (It's still in my library though I've culled other books I like 'cause otherwise there'd be no room in my house.) And I'm glad to see that McDevitt addressed the problem of paradoxes, etc.

Re: LOCs. The Steampunk references were interesting because we're having a Steampunk discussion in the Ricasso Press forum on SFReader Forums. And I'm glad that Lloyd's still enjoying his job--and to see that it's a recent report, 'cause some LOCs can be pretty old by the time a zine comes out.

Cute artwork for the Moon Princess bid flyer. Thanks for another fun issue.

Appreciatively,
Joy V. Smith

Joy
(My blog includes helpful house hints & publication news)
<http://pagadan.blogspot.com/>

The eyes in the cover drawing are indeed in a manga style. Mike Moon is the guy behind Catgirl Island, which you can check out at www.catgirlisland.net. Lloyd tends to send his LOC pretty close to my mailing deadline, which works, since I'll take a LOC right up until when I sit down to put together the final copy. Very glad to see things have been looking up for him.

And speaking of Lloyd Penney:

1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

February 18, 2010

Dear Warren:

Once again, it's the big catch-up, so here are words of so-called wisdom on SFC Update, Vol. 1, No. 14.

Greetings, fellow steampunk fan! I should send you some of the photos taken this past summer at the South Simcoe Railway, a hobby railway northwest of Toronto. Then again, you might have seen some of them in The Drink Tank or in Exhibition Hall. I am finding that as much as I like steampunk, it's the costuming aspect I really like. The few novels I've read are a little too thick to get through. I could easily watch old episodes of The Wild, Wild West and Legend.

Great SF is quite subjective, but if I was new to the genre, and wanted to find the best out of almost 90 years of modern SF, I'd check with various best of lists, pick up any Hugo- and Nebula-winning novels, and definitely ask existing readers of their opinions. It might take me years to get those lists, let alone read the books on them, but I think I'd get the gist of the best of SF.

For Jeff Thompson, Creation Conventions of California is touting their Twilight Tour all over North America. Most fans won't touch anything with the name Creation on it, but Twilight fans will grab anything they can. This Tour was to come to Toronto, but it has been moved to Ottawa. I have a couple of friends who will be horrified with this news, but they are big enough Twilight fans to go to Ottawa just to see what's on the Tour.

Toronto has a light dusting of snow on the ground, and we haven't had more than an inch or so on the ground at any point this winter. However, it's been many years since we've received even close to what Washington got with its two major storms.

My loc...Avatar is the biggest box office movie of all time, and I still haven't seen it. I think I might wait for the DVD anyway, or rent it later.

Done for the moment...gotta get back to the routine. See you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

*I'd be glad to have some of those photos – they'd make for nice fillos. I know that I've picked a rather subjective subject to tackle in the matter of great SF, but I hope that laying out the range I'm looking for it in will serve as a guide both to understanding my reviews and to new readers who might want to know what it is that gets fans excited. I know the lists can take a while to read through – that's part of why we started the Hugos & Hops nights. I'm convinced you ought to see **Avatar** in 3-D in the theater – it really is technically impressive.*

And, once more, we heard from Rich Dengrove:

Dear Warren,

I liked issue 14, and, of course, I have some comments.

About your comments on my letter, first, you say that old people around forty mix with people your age at Chattacon; so the old and young can mix. Forty? An old fart like me has to regard that as young. People of forty are in swaddling clothes. In point of fact, I know a handsome, fit, fun loving fellow who is forty. He is the idol of a lot of women in their twenties. They see no difference between their age and his. On the other hand, maybe he is old. Unfortunately for them, he is married with children, and trying not to blow it.

Next, you say that I got Mieville's *City and the City* wrong. There is no alternate space or time hocus pocus with the two societies who don't know about each other. It's just that their respective cultures prevent them from doing so. I don't think I read you wrong originally. On the other hand, if what you say is the case, it adds to my list of ways societies can coexist without knowing it. In fact, it adds a neat way indeed.

After that, you discuss my comments on Steampunk. *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* Steampunk? Isn't Steampunk Victorian science fiction or fantasy written after Victorian Times? I think traditionally it is. On the other hand, my experience with Cyberpunk, from which it evolved, is that Cyberpunk did rifts on contemporary technology even if stories were dated into the far future.

About your review of McDevitt's *Time Travelers Never Die*, science fiction is beloved, even among scientists, as a literature of ideas. Of course, with such a literature, you have to remember Spinoza's dictum: behind each idea is an emotion. And you have to make sure to add that emotion to your writing like McDevitt apparently did in his novel. On the other hand, sticking to the straight and narrow of science is not necessary in science fiction, as long as the wonders are associated in some way with science.

Here is another comment about McDevitt's novel. I basically cannot see how you can have time travel that is not travel into alternate timelines, as closely they may approach ours. Otherwise, not only will changes in historical events produce contradictions; so will changes in the slightest little thing, e.g., electrons. Ray Bradbury was right that killing a dinosaur in the Mesozoic would create a contradiction; maybe even determine the last Presidential Election. Also, changing history would change things in the present, including our memories of the past and our presence in the present

Yours,
Rich D.

Forty's that odd point of being neither old nor young, and perhaps it's tricky to mix with either the youth or the older generation. Then again, maybe it's a good point from which to mix with both. I do think I see that at Chattacon, as well. I'm not the only person who hangs out with folks long since grey. I'm not certain that an arrangement like Mieville presents is actually possible, but it does intrigue me. It made for a good novel, if nothing else. I think Verne's writings in general are crucial to steampunk – it's his World of Tomorrow that the steampunks are looking back to.

As for the possibility of time travel without alternate timelines, consider it this way: you go back and do the things you did, because you have always been back there doing the things you did. You just didn't know it yet. If we don't bother trying to figure out free will, we can tolerate a causal loop. The travel doesn't change anything, because the traveler has always been a reality in his own past. It's a tricky idea, but I think it still works, and I think it's somewhat close to the premise of the novel.

WAHF: Tom Feller, Robby Hilliard, Tera Fulbright.

I'm New at This, Don't Hurt Me

Jennifer Liang

In a couple of weeks, I'll be chairing my second convention, JordanCon II. How on earth did I get here?

My path to fandom is different, I think, than most. I started off on the internet, discussing Robert Jordan novels on various forums. After a time, my efforts focused around Dragonmount.com, which is now the most notable Wheel of Time fansite. I took a staff position there focusing on community building. Eventually, we got the hankering to start meeting each other in person, and that's where conventions came in.

A couple of us agreed to meet at Dragon*Con in Atlanta for a day and check it out. I was instantly attracted to the programming tracks. An entire roomful of people with the same obsessions I have? Sign me up! But there wasn't a Robert Jordan track yet. My then fiancé suggested I email the convention and ask if I could start one up.

I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

Inexplicably, despite not having any kind of experience at that sort of thing, my proposal was accepted and I was off. It was rough at first, figuring out how to run a programming track on the fly-- but I was lucky enough that Dragon*Con gave us room to grow. After a few years, it stopped being an impossible mountain to climb each year and became a great weekend.

And then the questions started: "When are you going to start a WoTCon?" I heard this every year-- both from friends, acquaintances and people who just can't get enough Wheel of Time. I demurred for years, not believing that such a thing was feasible. But I looked into it anyway, and quickly realized that it actually was feasible and that if it was going to be done, I'd be the one to do it. Oh, and it would be called "JordanCon", because "WoTCon" is a stupid name.

At this point, Jordan's health was pretty poor and it was clear that if we did the convention, we'd have to do it without him as a headlining guest. The convention would be small, and we'd have to provide amazing programming. Luckily, we had experience doing this from Dragon*Con. I called on one of my WoT track volunteers, Aubree Pham, to be Senior Director of Programming.

That was 2007. We set our first convention for April 2009, and then Jordan died. A couple people asked me if I intended to go on with the plans for the convention. There was no question in my mind that the answer should be a resounding "Yes!" Even if we just a one-off as a tribute to the author, we felt obligated to go through with it.

And thus began one of the most stressful years of my life. I think the only thing that compares was the semester I spent student teaching at an inner city school in Atlanta--and that was only four months. This was just over twelve months of worry and headache, trying to promote an extreme niche convention during the beginnings of the economic downturn. We still ended up with somewhere in the neighborhood of 250 people attending. The Jordan family was very supportive, turning out in force for the weekend. The publisher, Tor Books, was also extremely supportive. I mean, Tom Doherty came uninvited; It doesn't get more supportive than that.

So with my second convention coming up in a matter of weeks, do I have any advice to pass along? Yeah, a couple of things:

First, have a business plan. JordanCon has a four year plan, and if all goes the way we expect, we'll stabilize financially with somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 attendees. Don't be afraid to focus on your strengths--I know programming really well, so that's what we focused on. We don't have an Art Show, we don't have a Consuite. Not that these aren't important, and we do plan to have them eventually. We just admit that we don't know how to run these yet and are waiting until we're a bit wiser before we add those to our show.

If I had it to do over again, I'd spend a year fundraising before starting-- Not having reserve money gave me more headaches than I care to count.

Communication is key-- We use Google Docs for our internal communication. And above all, be passionate about your convention--You will be sacrificing a considerable amount of time and energy to it. Make sure it's worth it.

I really don't think there's One True Way to work your way up to chairing a convention. Just be willing to learn as you and to forgive any mistakes you make initially. As long as they have a good time, I've found fans to be incredibly forgiving of hiccups both large and small.