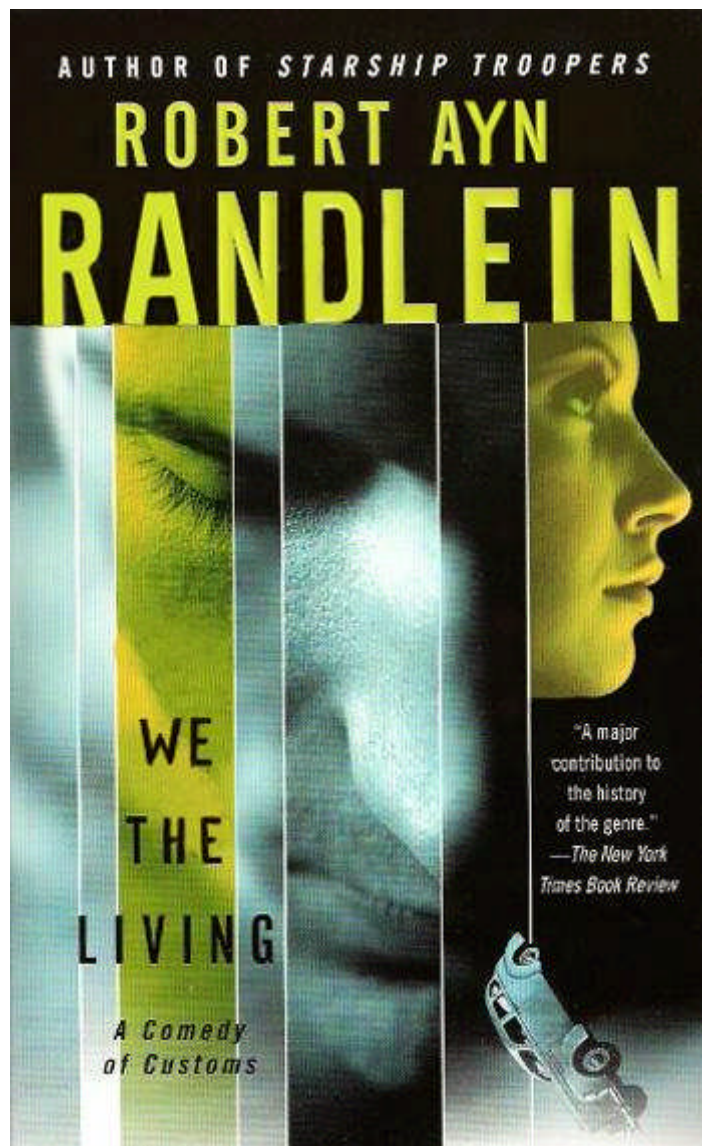


# Visionsof Paradise

#153



# Visions of Paradise

## #153

### Contents

The Passing Scene.....	page 3
<i>May 2010</i>	
Wondrous Stories.....	page 5
<i>The Fabulous Riverboat ... The Pnume</i>	
The In-Box.....	page 7
<i>Fanzines</i>	
On the Lighter Side.....	page 8

\_\\//\_  
(0\_0)

\_\_\_\_\_o00\_( )\_00o\_\_\_\_\_

Artwork

Robert Michael Sabella

E-mail [bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)

<http://adamosf.blogspot.com/>

<http://visionsofparadise.blogspot.com/>

Available online at <http://efanzines.com/>

Copyright ©May, 2010

by Gradient Press

Available for the usual

Taral Wayne ... cover

## The Passing Scene

**May 1-7, 2010:** PHS survived the week, which was not certain after Tuesday when the school went crazy. It started with a walkout supposedly against the governor's attacks on public education, but only the very worst elements of the school population went. When they returned, they deliberately disrupted the school day, egged on by text messages from a small handful of trouble-makers: 2 pulled fire alarms, a food fight in the cafeteria, a mosh pit in the hallway outside the Media Center. Township police were needed to break it up, and they stayed in the halls the entire week. Ultimately 2 students were expelled and another half-dozen were suspended for over a week.

This is not the first time this has happened, and it always seems to occur during the tenures of the least competent administrations, which is not surprising.

The following week was AP testing, with Statistics on Tuesday afternoon followed by Calculus Wednesday morning. Overall, my students were positive about the outcomes, which was reassuring.

Thursday afternoon over a dozen sophomores were working in my classroom and the adjacent Math Lab, and several of them said how nice it would be if I could return to tutor next year. I would not mind doing so, as well as mentoring the teachers taking over my courses, but I doubt either the principal or the math supervisor want me around, since I am considerably more respected and popular with teachers and students than they are, and neither of them likes that. I made the joking comment to my students that I will never be as popular as I am this year, and they all agreed with me.

**May 8-14:** This was my busiest week at school of the entire year, with Indian Culture Club show rehearsals every night until about 7:00, and the show itself Friday. I enjoyed the four days of practices, watching the kids pull together from somewhat rough beginnings on Monday (which follows the individual groups practicing on their own for two months), but improving steadily during the week. I could not have wished for a better director than the club's president Neelam, who was incredible with her take-no-prisoner attitude which accepted no excuses for laziness or striving for less than perfection. The fact that she pushed herself even harder than she pushed the kids set the ideal example for them.

We got our new ICC tee shirts the day before the show, so we all wore them Friday to publicize it. When the kids were not wearing their Indian outfits as part of the show, they continued to wear the shirts, as did I all evening.

The show's highlights included:

- Vikas and Ankit did a hilarious Abbott-and-Costello routine as the emcees. The finale, in which Vikas invited Ankit to the prom (which was my suggestion), then turned him down for a "hot chick" was classic;
- the ensemble dances are always rousing, and this year's scene from the classic Bollywood movie *Lagaan* was particularly good. Now I am anxious to see that movie;

- the Senior Dance is the traditional finale, and it always amazes me how well the boys learn to dance as the week of rehearsals go on. Priyal and Vasu were the best dancers, but the other boys were decent as well. The girls, of course, were all outstanding;
- besides her direction, Neelam did an outstanding job as the finest dancer in the entire troupe, especially in 2 classical Indian dances as part of her dance academy group.

The Indian Culture Club show is always one of my favorite parts of the school year, and I really enjoyed the role I played in helping the kids prepare for it. I will miss working with ICC more than any other extracurricular activity which I do. They are a wonderful bunch of kids.

**May 19-23:** I attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual GlaxoSmithKline scholarship luncheon with four of my students, including Hua. The luncheon was good, and I took the tour with the students while the guidance counselors and a teacher from our sister school across town went home immediately after the luncheon. It must have looked to the students as if they only attended for the free food! I thought that was a bit rude, which is partly while I stayed for the tour even though I went on it last year as well.

Saturday we attended a massive rally in Trenton against the governor's attempts to break up the teachers' union, as well as his plan to make public employees saddle most of the hardships from the state's budgetary problems. What is especially frustrating is that the public employees' pension has not been funded by the state legislature 8 of the past 10 years, in spite of the state supreme court telling them twice it was illegal and ordering them to make the payments. While there has been no attempt to force the legislature to do so, the governor is demonizing public workers throughout the state and trying to force them to take pay cuts to ease the overall state budget crisis. He has also made rattling noises about attacking retire workers' pensions and medical benefits. Meanwhile, he is insisting that the private sector and millionaires must not shoulder *any* of the burden.

35,000 people were at the rally. Its goal was to influence the legislature that if we can get that many people to march on Trenton, consider how many voters we can influence to vote them out of office if they give in to the governor's goals? We'll see if it does any good.

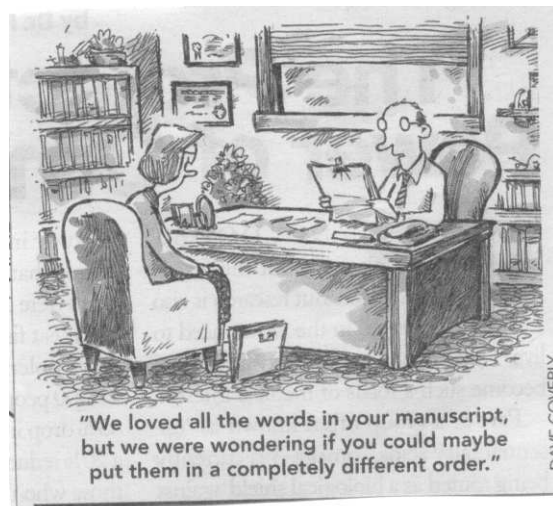
After we returned home from the rally with Alan and Denise, who are both retired teachers, we went to Applebee's for supper. It was not the birthday meal Jean would have liked, but Sunday Mark & Kate came to visit, and we all went to Charley Brown's for Jean's real dinner.

**May 25-29:** I was the speaker at the annual *National Honor Society* induction, and it turned into another ego-fest, more indication of how popular I have become since announcing my retirement. The NHS advisor told me how much the students all love me and talk about me all the time. The English lead teacher thought my speech was wonderful. The president of the Board of Education told me that the former ass't superintendent said I was the best teacher in the district. The NHS president who introduced me raved about how much she loves me as a teacher, and two seniors mentioned me in their inductions of new members. The next day the juniors told the sophomores that my speech was wonderful.

The speech was definitely **not** wonderful, but it did have humor as well as a message about how

important it is for the NHS members to be role models. But am I crazy to be giving up all this popularity for retirement? Possibly...

The three day Memorial Day weekend gave me a chance to catch up on the pile of mail sitting on my desk. Sunday we went to Rick & Barb's house for a barbecue. We do not see them nearly as much as we used to do, which is too bad. Rick is not planning to retire for at least another two years, but afterwards we should be able to spend more time with them.



## Wondrous Stories

After rereading and enjoying Philip José Farmer's first *Riverworld* novel **To Your Scattered Bodies Go**, I was anxious to reread the second novel in the series **The Fabulous Riverboat**. This was a totally different type of novel than its predecessor. **Bodies** was primarily concerned with examining the sociological and theological implications of all of humanity being resurrected on a huge world in which everybody lives on the banks of a near-endless river. The protagonist Richard Francis Burton spent the novel examining many of the societies which have arisen in the strange afterlife. What he learned was that humans brought most of the same ills and evils with them as those which tormented people on Earth, such as repressive dictatorships and slavery.

**The Fabulous Riverboat** is mostly set in one society where Samuel Clemens is striving to build a Mississippi-type riverboat to seek the headwaters of the river. Like Burton, Clemens has been contacted by a mysterious stranger who tells him that he is a renegade among the so-called Ethicals who created the riverworld and resurrected all of humanity. The stranger has some plan to overturn the other Ethicals, and it includes Clemens and his riverboat. During the novel Clemens encounters others of The Twelve, the minions of the renegade Ethical. They include Joe, a towering Neanderthal who has become Clemens' best friend and protector.

The building of the riverboat is a massive undertaking, especially on a world where violence and greed are as prevalent as on Earth. The society where Clemens lives is surrounded by others who threaten their security, including one ruled by a Japanese warlord and another by a black

racist striving to build a totally-black society. To complicated matters, Clemens is not sole ruler of the society he has named Parolando, but shares power with King John Lackland, the Norman ruler of 12<sup>th</sup> century England who is every bit as evil as his legend.

**The Fabulous Riverboat** is a well-plotted adventure about Clemens' struggle to build the riverboat. His allies include Joe, legendary swordsman Cyrano de Bergerac, and World War I flying Ace Lothar Van Richthoven (brother of the famous Red Baron). One of the strengths of the *Riverworld* series is that it enables Farmer to use many historical characters in roles different than their true lives, and he makes those characters very interesting. He is also a strong plotter who manages to make the novel an absorbing page-turner while not ignoring the philosophical questions raised in **To Your Scattered Bodies Go**.

I recommend **The Fabulous Riverboat** as strongly as I did its predecessor, even though it is a completely different type of novel. For some reason I never read the two concluding novels in the series, **The Dark Design** and **The Magic Labyrinth**, so they have now moved to the top of my list of novels to be bought and read as soon as possible.

\*

**The Pnume** is the fourth and last of Jack Vance's *Planet of Adventure* series of novels (the others being **City of the Chasch**, **The Dirdir** and **Servants of the Wankh**). While the first three novels in the series were mid-level Vance not on the level of either his *Alastor* or *Demon Princes* series, the last novel is not only the best of the series, but top-notch Vance fiction.

It begins with Reith, the Earthman stranded on Tschai, kidnapped by the Pnume and taken to their underground city. He manages to escape, and observes Pnume citizens who exhibit strange behavior in which they avoid looking directly at each other, submerging all personal desires for their roles as part of the group. Reith captures a young woman and forces her to help him flee. The very act of her reading a map stolen by Reith traumatizes her since she is convinced she will now be punished as a blasphemer.

Reith manages to reach the surface with the girl, but she has never seen anything other than the underground. Once he is free, the girl expects Reith to abandon her to die, but he feels obligated to protect the girl since he tore her away from the only life she knew and where she felt secure. **The Pnume** is about their changing relationship as they flee Pnume agents, and Vance succeeded in showing his characters' relationship develop much better than I expected. Along with all the color of Tschai and its exotic inhabitants, **The Pnume** was a fine conclusion to the *Planet of Adventure* series.

## The In-Box

Many of the zines below are available at <http://www.efanzines.com>

**Alexiad** / Lisa & Joseph Major / 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, KY 40204-2040 / Very regular reviewzine concerned with sf, nonfiction, horse racing, royalty and candy! The April

issue has an appreciation of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels

**Argentus** / Steven Silver / 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 / Hugo-nominated genzine. The current issue has a long discussion of "Six Silent Clowns," Ben Turpin, Mabel Normand, Fatty Arbuckle, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, and Charlie Chaplin. I have not seen a single movie with those actors, but this article convinced me to look up several of them.

**Askance** / John Purcell / A regular online genzine which covers both the sercon and the faanish sides of fanpubbing, and succeeds very well at it. The current issue contains articles by Arnie Katz, Taral Wayne, Chris Garcia, Lloyd Penney and yours truly.

**Beam** / Nic Farey / 3345 Cape Cod Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89122 / A strong genzine with articles by James Bacon, Claire Briarly, Curt Phillips and Chris Garcia. Good stuff.

**Celtic Seasons** / Rita & Richard Shader / 2593 Chapparal Drive, Melbourne, FL 32934-8275 / Fascinating glimpses at Scottish history and culture. Recent issues discuss Celtic Christmas customs and the Quakers.

**Challenger** / The Zine Dump / Guy H. Lillian III / P.O. Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092 / available at [www.challzine.net](http://www.challzine.net) / One of the finest genzines being published, a Hugo nominee yet again. Contributors in the recent issue include Cheryl Morgan, Craig Hilton, Steve Silver, Richard Dengrove, Greg Benford and Mike Resnick.

**Chunga** / Andy Hooper, Randy Byers, carl juarez / 1013 North 36<sup>th</sup> St., Seattle, WA 98103 / Another fine traditional fanzine. The recent issue includes an excerpt from Steve Silver's "Six Silent Clowns" about Ben Turpin, and Ted White discussing Donald Westlake.

**The Drink Tank** / Chris Garcia / Hugo nominee, the most regular online personalzine, putting VoP's monthly frequency to shame. The most recent issue is devoted to the music industry, one of my major interests, while the previous issue discussed the Arthur C. Clarke Awards year-by-year. Fascinating reading.

**eI** / Earl Kemp / One of the finest fanzines being published, especially for people interested in the history of f&sf. The current issue is an extensive examination of the career of editor and publisher William L. Crawford.

**File 770** / Mike Glycer / 705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 01016 / Another Hugo nominee filled with fannish news and reviews. Check the daily blog <http://file770.com/> for updates.

**For The Clerisy** / Brant Kresovich / P.O. Box 404, Getzville, NY 14068 / This zine filled with interesting book reviews has become irregular, which is too bad since it is one of my favorites.

**It Goes on the Shelf** / Ned Brooks / 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 / Another irregular zine filled with book reviews, but when it appears it is definitely worth the wait.

**The Knarley Knews** / Henry Welch / 1525 16<sup>th</sup> Ave., Grafton, WI 53024-2017 / A bi-monthly

genzine with columns and a large lettercol.

**Littlebrook** / Jerry Kaufman and Susanne Tompkins / 3522 N.E. 123<sup>rd</sup> St., Seattle, WA / Irregular genzine. The latest issue has an article by John Berry and Jim Young discussing fantasy/horror filmmaker Val Newton.

**Lofgeornost** / Fred Lerner / 81 Worcester Ave., White River Junction, VT 05001 / Personalzine with a penchant for international travel. Fred dominated the annual FAPA voting for "best serious writing" and deservedly so.

**Opuntia** / Dale Speirs / Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7 / Reviews, articles, and letters. Dale is one of the most underrated researchers and writers in fandom. This zine is always filled with interesting stuff.

**The Reluctant Famulus** / Tom Sadler / 305 Gill Branch Rd., Owenton, KY 40359 / Long-running genzine dominated by a regular cast of contributors (Gene Stewart, Alfred Byrd and yours truly), as well as a lot of writing by Tom himself.

**Steam Engine Time** / Bruce Gillespie and Janine Stinson / P.O. Box 248, Eastlake, MI 49626-0248 / The recent issue is dominated by Bruce and his friends selecting their favorite books/movies/music of the past year and decade, as well as articles on *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, A. Bertram Chandler's *John Grimes* and George Zebrowski on writers/editors.

**Trial and Air** / Michael W. Waite / 105 West Ainsworth, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-5336 / Certainly the most gorgeous genzine being published. The most recent issue was dominated by tributes to sf and fans who died in the past year.

## On the Lighter Side

A devoted wife had spent her lifetime taking care of her husband. Now he had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months, yet she stayed by his bedside every single day. When he came to his senses, he motioned for her to come near him. As she sat by him, he said, "You know what? You have been with me all through the bad times.

When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you gave me support. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. You know what?"

"What dear?" she asks gently.

"I think you bring me bad luck."

\*

A somewhat advanced society has figured how to package basic knowledge in pill form.

A student, needing some learning, goes to the pharmacy and asks what kind of knowledge pills are available. The pharmacist says, "Here's a pill for English literature." The student takes the pill and swallows it and has new knowledge about English literature!

"What else do you have?" asks the student.

"Well, I have pills for art history, biology, and world history," replies the pharmacist.

The student asks for these, and swallows them and has new knowledge about those subjects.

Then the student asks, "Do you have a pill for math?"

The pharmacist says, "Wait just a moment," goes back into the storeroom and brings back a whopper of a pill and plunks it on the counter.

"I have to take that huge pill for math?" inquires the student.

The pharmacist replied, "Well, you know math always was a little hard to swallow."

\*

A man is dining in a fancy restaurant and there is a gorgeous redhead sitting at the next table. He has been checking her out since he sat down, but lacks the nerve to talk with her. Suddenly she sneezes and her glass eye comes flying out of its socket towards the man. He is totally amazed to witness this, but reflexively reaches out, grabs it out of the air, and hands it back, completely embarrassed.

"Oh my, I am sooo sorry," the woman says as she pops her eye back in place. "Let me buy your dinner to make it up to you."

They enjoy a wonderful dinner together, and afterwards the woman invites him to the theatre followed by drinks. After paying for everything, she asks him if he would like to come to her place for a nightcap...and stay for breakfast the next morning.

The next morning, she cooks a gourmet meal with all the trimmings. The guy is amazed!! Everything had been incredible! "You know," he said, "you are the perfect woman. Are you this nice to every guy you meet?"

"No," she replies, "You just happened to catch my eye."

\*

A girl from the South and a girl from the North were seated side-by-side on a plane.

The girl from the South, being friendly and all, said, "So, where ya'll from?"

The Northern girl said, "From a place where they know better than to use a preposition at the end of a sentence."

The girl from the South sat quietly for a few moments and then replied, "So, where ya'll from, bitch?"

\*

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

\*

Six-year old Angie and her four-year old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church.

"Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked.

Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."

\*

A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"