

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΕΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

I found a shirt with a pretty design of fish at a thrift store. A young man with a charity organization asked me if my astrological sign were Pisces. I truthfully said it was not. I refrained from also saying truthfully that I did not believe in astrology. He then said I was committing stolen valor. I told him I would have to think about this. I do. I conclude that wearing fish instead of scorpions is not stolen valor. Stolen valor is falsely claiming military service. We all get born. Wearing the wrong astrological sign is not claiming military service I did not do.

**Willie Mays**

May 6, 1931 – June 18, 2024

Mr. Mays was one of the greatest players in baseball history. He began playing when baseball was segregated and so played first with the Black Barons of the Negro American League.

—Lisa

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The 150th Running of the Kentucky Derby was **May 4, 2024**.

Mystik Dan won in a triple dead heat.

The 149th Running of the Preakness Stakes was **May 18, 2024**.

Seize the Gray won.

The 155th Running of the Belmont Stakes was **June 8, 2024**.

Dornoch won.

The 69th Running of the Yonkers Trot (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **June 28, 2024** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Sir Pinocchio won.

The 99th Running of the Hambletonian (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) was **August 3, 2024** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Karl won.

The 130th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) will be **October 6, 2024** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

The 69th Running of the Messenger Stakes (1st leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) was **June 28, 2024** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York. Sweet Beach Life won in an upset.

The 68th Running of the Cane Pace (2nd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **August 3, 2024** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Legendary Hanover won.

The 79th Running of the Little Brown Jug (3rd leg of the Pacing Triple Crown) will be **September 19, 2024** at the Delaware County Fair in Delaware, Ohio.

Printed on August 12, 2024

Deadline is **September 15, 2024**

**Reviewer’s Notes**

Sorry for the delay. I was ill and in the hospital, and that takes precedence over fanac.

New Zealand in 2020 started as a hoax bid. But it had wings, and soon was for real. Which might have been a problem, since Kiwi-Fandom was not large enough to run a Worldcon. However, Covid stepped in and made the con virtual. And the “permanent floating committee”, the fans who run various operations of Worldcon, was of some help.

(Steve Francis said that if Louisville had won the Worldcon, all of us Louisville fans would have been drafted into conops.)

Chengdu was sponsored by the Chinese government. I think they considered it a SF festival with some Worldcon events tucked in. There were outside problems — the infamous last-minute 2000 voters, for example. And the political considerations. Ben Yalow and Dave McCarty have been banned from the Glasgow Worldcon.

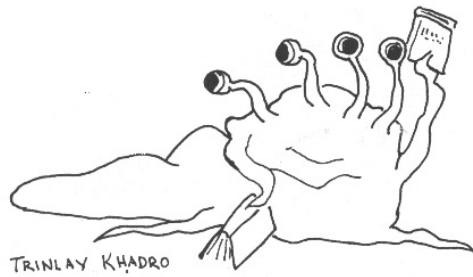
Some Worldcon bids seem to have been done on the basis of “this is great and we ought to do it”. So we have JeddiCon/PharaohCon (Riyadh/Cairo), which faced social problems, and whatever Kigala, Rwanda renames itself (it was the Uganda WorldCon bid). And some have other problems, as for example the Tel Aviv bid, which has the rockets’ red glare and the bombs bursting in air (or everything in the north of Israel).

Garth Spencer gave a local example of this. Some fans went to WorldCon and decided, “Hey, we can do this”. Soon, all Vancouver fandom was at war — and of course there was no con. Some people need better judgment.

— Joe

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



had not picked out any specific horse to follow. I studied them in the post parade but none of them stood out to me. I found myself watching the lead ponies, some beautiful palominos, one gorgeous solid white horse and a pretty pinto.

I watched the colts load into the starting gate. None of them gave the starters any special trouble and the gates opened without incident. I held my breath for those first rough seconds but the traffic jam cleared without incident. There was some close racing in the stretch which I don't think was as close as it looked to me. Had it been so at least one jockey would have claimed foul.

The finish was unprecedented in Derby history. The first three finishers hit the wire far too close for me to tell who had won. I commented to Joe that the stewards might need a magnifying glass for this one. It proved to be not so. It took the stewards perhaps two minutes to determine that Mystik Dan's nose was first under the wire. Forever Young and Sierra Leone were the next two finishers. Perhaps half a head separated those first three colts. It was the first time in Derby history that the first three finishers hit the wire that close together. But for me the best part of the race was that none of the jockeys or colts suffered serious injury.

The Preakness went to a gray colt named Seize the Gray so no Triple Crown winner this year. The Belmont was moved to another track besides Belmont Park and its distance shortened, which to my mind made it not the test of champions it was famed for. I didn't watch it.

Buy my books. (All available on Amazon.com for quite reasonable prices, except the Hugo-nominated *Heinlein's Children*, which can be bought from Advent Publishers, or from ReAnimus Press in electronic format.)

<https://www.amazon.com/stores/Joseph-T-Major/author/B01BMIC4MU>

<https://www.AdventPub.com/1531>

Advent Publishers  
P.O. Box 16143  
Golden, CO 80402-6003

<https://reanimus.com/store>

— Advt.

The sunken wreck of the *Quest RYS*, the ship on which Shackleton died on January 5, 1922 during the Shackleton-Rowlett Expedition, has been found in the Labrador Sea by the 2024 Shackleton *Quest* Expedition, sponsored by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. The *Quest* sank May 5, 1962 after a long and varied career.

Former *Alexiad* reviewer **Johnny Carruthers** died approximately May 30. He was found dead by his brother, who was supervising his care due to his emotional difficulties.

## MONARCHIST NEWS

On August 25, 2024, **HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent** will commemorate his eighty-second year of holding the title, the longest-held dukedom. The Prince was born **October 9, 1935** and succeeded to the title upon the death of his father **HRH Prince George** in an airplane crash.

He is currently 41st in line to the throne. His wife, **Katherine Worsley**, converted to Roman Catholicism, but it doesn't exclude Edward under the Act of Settlement. They have three children, **George, Earl of St. Andrews**, **Lady Helen Taylor**, and **Lord Nicholas Windsor**, and ten grandchildren.

## TRIPLE CROWN 2024

by Lisa

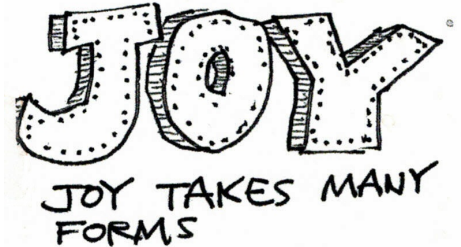
I had not been following this Derby as closely as previous Derbies because it came too close to my Easter. And so it was that I

outsiders.

Along the way they have to face attempts to kill them. And there seems to be no way for them to stop the rise of the people who had to destroy Earth in order to save it. Will they succeed or is the planet doomed? We'll see then this is to be continued.

## The Joy of High Tech

by Rodford Edmiston



Being the occasionally interesting ramblings of a major-league technophile.

Please note that while I am an engineer (BSCE) and do my research, I am not a professional in this field. Do not take anything here as gospel; check the facts I give. If you find a mistake, please let me know about it.

## The Development of Music and Instruments

Stop for a moment to consider how easily you can listen to music you enjoy today. The music may be stored as optical patterns on a CD and played over a home entertainment system (not too different from the older operation of playing a record, but more convenient and with higher fidelity and less noise). The music may be stored as a digital file on your computer, or even your smartphone. All you have to do is select what you want and play it. Now, think about how different things were in the past. There's a reason why, before commercial records, even music boxes were considered valuable objects. To possess something which could make music on demand was to be blessed. Or very wealthy.

Now, think about all the ways developed to reproduce music, through history. These go far beyond music boxes, though those can be quite elaborate and even the size of furniture. There are player pianos and player organs, as well as band organs. Most music boxes used cams, or pins in wheels. Player pianos and organs used paper rolls with holes punched in them, with a pneumatic system to detect the holes. Most band organs - which can range in size from a large cabinet to a large room - also use paper rolls. When finished any of these instruments can rewind automatically, and the band organs can store the roll in the appropriate slot. Some Wurlitzer band/carnival/carousel organs even used two paper rolls.

If music weren't important to us, would

## GOOD EVENING . . .

Review of *IN OUR STARS*

(*The Doomed Earth Duology Book 1*)

by "Jack Campbell" [John C. Hemry]

(Ace Books; 2024; ISBN 978-0593640630;

\$29.00; Ace Books (Kindle); \$14.99)

by Joseph T Major

Lieutenant Selene Genji has the terrifying experience of seeing the Earth destroyed by its ostensible defenders. She is an experiment, having non-human DNA, and it makes her stand out. Her ship is destroyed and she falls unconscious, ready to die.

Lieutenant Kayl Owen of the Earth Guard is distrusted — or, rather, his father was, for having lost a ship, and the attitude got passed down. A damaged hulk appears in space, and he gets sent on the investigatory party, where he finds that one crewwoman is still alive . . . even if she is a little strange.

And then Genji tells Owen that she's from the future, and the Spear of Humanity, the planetary defense, had to destroy Earth in order to save it.

The conversation is interrupted when a ship of nonhumans arrives in the solar system. They look mostly human. They are not trusted. Genji has some DNA from them.

Owen is sent to take Genji to Earth, in a fatal method. They escape, and the result is a Hitchcockian pursuit, with them listed as dead, then listed as wanted. They get help from a variety of people, some of whom can be trusted, and flee to a community of

so much energy and expense have been applied to making it readily available?

Every known culture makes music. Unfortunately, given that no-one today sings or plays the way the first musicians in their culture did, we don't know exactly how the earliest music sounded. Instruments have been recreated, and experts think they are true to the originals, but we don't really know. We don't even know if playing tunes on instruments or using the voice melodically came first, though the latter is most likely. What is known is that most cultures which developed writing also developed some form of describing music in writing. That is, they had some way of recording it. The oldest known actual musical notation comes from Syria. This may date back as much as 4300 years. (Whether instructors of the day insisted their students practice scales is unproven, but probable.)

Music is seen as important by just about everyone, everywhere, throughout history and well before. It is often considered mystical, mythical or religious, and still is used in parallel with formal worship ceremonies of multiple types.

As time passed the notation for music became more comprehensive, though musical development during the same period varied greatly between societies. Also, just having a dedicated notation for music didn't mean it sounded anything like what we listen to today. Even the actual function of music might be different from what we consider normal. The ancient Greeks, as one example, had detailed musical notation; though, unfortunately, no complete score survives. Attempts at recreation of how their music sounded seem strange to modern ears; at least to those familiar with European and many other types of music. Much of the music which the ancient Greeks performed was intended as accompaniment to dramatic recitations, rather than entertainment on its own or accompanying some other activity, such as dancing. The musical pieces were more like choral chants than what we think of as modern music. Much of it was literally reedy. It seems to have been intended to set the rhythm of the recitation. So, perhaps, it can be considered an early version of rap.

Sound is mathematical, and depends on physical ratios. It was apparently Pythagoras who first formally described the phenomenon that the frequency of a vibrating string is inversely proportional to its length. Likely, this knowledge was old even when he wrote it down. Pythagoras's musical scale consists of a series of perfect fifths, with the ratio of 3:2. This is known as the Pythagorean Interval or Pythagorean Tuning. More generally, the physical relationship between instrument and sound means that there is a corresponding mathematical relationship between size and pitch. Or length and pitch. This is universal. A modern octave covers a halving of wavelength, which is also a doubling of frequency. Though the ancients had no way of directly measuring the frequency of the sounds they produced, a good trained ear can hear this.

Even if they don't understand the physics behind the phenomenon. The name "octave" comes from the ancient Greek tradition of having eight notes in such a range. However, as mentioned above, even the Greeks had scales with other numbers of notes in what we call an octave.

There are bone flutes which may be as much as fifty thousand years old, and musical instruments in general are likely much older. Unfortunately, none found so far of such an age or older are intact enough for us to more than approximate the scale they are made to. However, the holes appear to be deliberately spaced, so they were likely made to some scale. Human hearing hasn't changed much, and the physics of sound hasn't changed at all. Flutes are complicated, and were likely preceded by percussion instruments. They were likely also preceded by other methods of producing multiple notes. Once bronze was developed, the selection of instruments included bells, some of which may have been tuned to — or at least selected for — a scale. How early did this happen? One tomb in China - built around 2500 years ago — has a set of 65 tuned bells, which range through five octaves. These are still played, though this requires at least five performers.

Bronze bells can last a long time, even if used a great deal. String instruments aren't as durable, and truly ancient specimens are unknown. Though there are ways of determining whether a type of instrument existed besides actually finding one. There is a nearly 4000 year old Indus Valley ideogram which appears to be a specific type of harp; which means that the instrument probably existed there well before that ideogram was invented. A French cave painting made about 17k years ago may portray a shaman playing a musical bow, an instrument still used in many parts of the world, including much of Africa.



From examining present examples of instruments used by current hunter-gatherer groups we know they have drums, shakers, rattles and such. Unfortunately, these are made of materials which are much less durable than bone flutes. Indeed, reed and bamboo flutes in ancient sites have probably decayed past recognition, and even bone flutes are not often found intact past about ten thousand years of age.

About three thousand years ago - perhaps due to multinational trade - music took off throughout much of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East. This included the range of types as well as the overall so-

phistication. The study of what was done when is fascinating, but the complexity of the topic is far beyond the scope of this missive.

Many animals make musical sounds. Birds spring immediately to mind. However, these sounds are usually instinctive (though the exact expression of that instinct can be influenced by environmental sounds; many birds are excellent mimics). These sounds have multiple purposes, including attracting mates, warning the flock of a menace, and claiming territory. These calls often sound quite musical to human ears.

However, not all sounds made by animals seem musical. Wolf pack howls, for example, are overtly discordant. Most likely because this carries further. Other packs know to stay away from that area. Of course, some music is deliberately dissonant.

Wax recordings - whether original cylinder or disc - were not meant to be archival. They were intended to allow transcription. Once that was completed, the outer part of the wax was to be scraped off and the next layer used. Remember, Edison marketed his early recorders as Dictaphones. They were meant to be used in an office, for aiding in the dictation of letters, memos and the like. Using them to preserve music was not an original consideration. We are fortunate that so many important recordings of voices and music actually survive. However, until the advent of laser scanning the choice was to preserve the physical recording as is, or possibly ruin it trying to make a digitization. Wax cylinders and shellac discs are fragile, and today many only have one play left in them... if that. Laser scans can even recover recordings made on Edison wax cylinders without risk to them.

We live in a most fortunate era for music lovers. Just about any performance made since the phonograph became widely used is available online or - at worst - through a specialty store. Laser scanning of old records greatly helps with this. Unfortunately, even if someone has a direct modern copy of an old performance it is likely a scratchy, popping, hissing mess of a digitization of an analog recording. Fortunately, today we can use computer software to remove most of this noise. We can also produce lossless copies of music, once it is presentable.

The earliest sound recordings were made solely mechanically. The energy of the sound waves moved a diaphragm attached to a needle, which in turn etched a wax-covered surface. This greatly limited both volume and fidelity. At that time there was also no easy way to duplicate recordings; each performance was unique. Because of this several recorders were often set up for each iteration. It is known that one concert was recorded on two early phonographs, set on opposite wings of the stage. If we could find both versions of this performance we could combine them to produce a stereo recording.

There is more recorded sound out there than most people realize. A man singing a folk song in Paris in April of 1860 was recorded using what was called a phonograph. The original idea was to study the

pattern made by the sound waves representing the words. This was not reconverted back into sound until 2008. The device looks much like the early Edison phonographs with a wax cylinder, except that the recording medium was paper previously blackened in the smoke of a burning lamp. This was wrapped around the cylinder. To make a phonautogram, a stylus made from a boar's bristle was pressed against the soot-covered paper. The stylus was connected to a diaphragm. The barrel was turned by a handle while the person being recorded spoke or sang.

As always, though, be on the lookout for frauds. Years ago I read a tongue-in-cheek article about a discovery involving some of the work of Alexander Graham Bell, who was a speech therapist as well as an inventor. He patented and used a device which was similar to the phonautogram. However, this used a needle to scratch away a layer of smoke on the outside of a glass cylinder, to produce a visual representation of voices for study. The joke article claimed a cache of these had been discovered and that software had been developed to recover the voices thus recorded using laser scanning, even compensating for how the glass cylinders had sagged during their long storage.

Now, this is close to what was done to recover the sounds from the phonautogram, except that this was a work of fiction.

There is also a myth about recovering sounds from pottery which was finished by holding a brush or a small broom to the wet clay or glaze as the vessel rotated. Which is technically feasible, but not realistic.

None of those glass cylinders are known to have survived and any sounds recorded in the clay are swamped by ambient effects. Trials by the Mythbusters showed that even screaming directly at the broom would, at the very most, produce a muddy mess of amplified sound in which could barely be heard a distorted human voice.

Still, the hardware and software improve every year, so we might eventually be able to recover sounds from some intact pieces of pottery, under ideal circumstances. If such cylinders are discovered, recovering the voices from them is definitely feasible. Just keep an open mind, while also maintaining a healthy amount of skepticism.

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## WORLD CON BIDS

2027  
Tel Aviv  
August 2027  
Montréal  
<https://bid.montreal2027.ca/>

2028  
Brisbane, Australia  
Mid-August 2028  
<https://australia2025.com/>

Kigala, Rwanda

(The Uganda bid has moved.)

2029  
Dublin  
<http://dublin2029.ie>

2031  
Texas  
<https://alamo-sf.org/>

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## WORLD CON

2025  
Seattle  
Worldcon Seattle 2025  
August 13-17, 2025  
<https://www.seattlein2025.org/>

2026  
Los Angeles  
August 27-31, 2026  
<https://lain2026.org/>

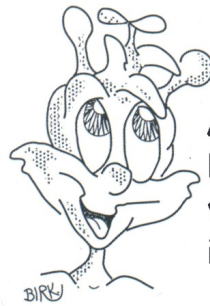
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## NASFiC

2024  
Buffalo, NY  
July 18-21, 2024  
<https://buffalonasfic2024.org/>

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## HUGO NOMINEES



Ah . . .  
It's Hugo  
voting time  
in Fandom!

### Best Novel

*Some Desperate Glory* by Emily Tesh  
(Tordotcom, Orbit UK)

### Best Novella

*Thornhedge* by T. Kingfisher (Tor, Titan UK)

### Best Novelette

"The Year Without Sunshine" by Naomi Kritzer (*Uncanny Magazine*, November-December 2023)

### Best Short Story

"Better Living Through Algorithms" by Naomi Kritzer (*Clarkesworld* May 2023)

### Best Series

*Imperial Radch* by Ann Leckie (Orbit US,

### Best Graphic Story or Comic

*Saga*, Vol. 11 written by Brian K. Vaughan, art by Fiona Staples (Image Comics)



### Best Related Work

*A City on Mars* by Kelly Weinersmith and Zach Weinersmith (Penguin Press; Particular Books)

### Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

*Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves*, screenplay by John Francis Daley, Jonathan Goldstein and Michael Gilio, directed by John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein

### Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

*The Last of Us: "Long, Long Time"*, written by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann, directed by Peter Hoar

### Best Game or Interactive Work

*Baldur's Gate 3*, produced by Larian Studios

### Best Editor Short Form

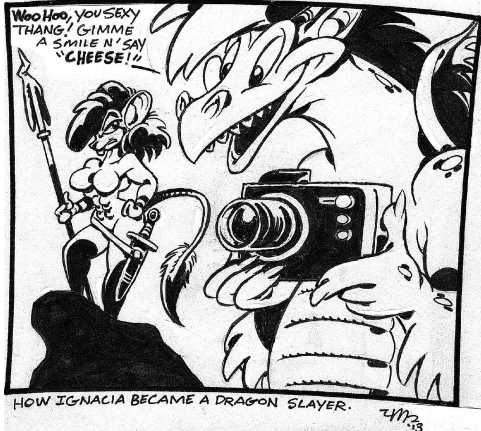
Neil Clarke

### Best Editor Long Form

Ruoxi Chen

### Best Professional Artist

Rovina Cai



**Best Semiprozine**

*Strange Horizons*, by the Strange Horizons Editorial Collective

**Best Fanzine**

*Nerds of a Feather, Flock Together*, editors Roseanna Pendlebury, Arturo Serrano, Paul Weimer; senior editors Joe Sherry, Adri Joy, G. Brown, Vance Kotrla.

**Best Fancast**

*Octothorpe*, by John Coxon, Alison Scott, and Liz Batty

**Best Fan Writer**

Paul Weimer

**Best Fan Artist**

Laya Rose

**Lodestar Award for Best YA Book**

*To Shape a Dragon's Breath* by Moniquill Blackgoose (Del Rey)

**Astounding Award for Best New Writer (sponsored by Dell Magazines)**

Xiran Jay Zhao (eligibility extended at request of Dell Magazines)

An unspecified nominee received 377 fraudulent votes, which the Glasgow Hugo Committee has disqualified. 1989 vote, anyone?

**NEBULA AWARD WINNERS**

Courtesy of File770.com

**NEBULA AWARD FOR NOVEL**

*The Saint of Bright Doors*, Vajra Chandrasekera (Tordotcom)

**NEBULA AWARD FOR NOVELLA**

“Linghun”, Ai Jiang (Linghun)

**NEBULA AWARD FOR NOVELETTE**

“The Year Without Sunshine”, Naomi Kritzer (Uncanny 11-12/23)

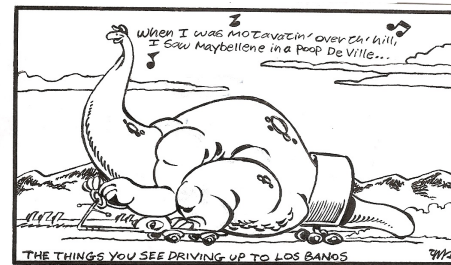
**NEBULA AWARD FOR SHORT STORY**

“Tantie Merle and the Farmhand 4200”, R.S.A Garcia (Uncanny 7-8/23)

**ANDRE NORTON NEBULA AWARD FOR MIDDLE GRADE AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION**

*To Shape a Dragon's Breath*, Moniquill Blackgoose (Del Rey)

**NEBULA AWARD FOR GAME WRITING**



*Baldur's Gate 3*, (Larian Studios)

**RAY BRADBURY NEBULA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING DRAMATIC PRESENTATION**

*Barbie*, Greta Gerwig, Noah Baumbach (Warner Bros., Heyday Films, Lucky-Chap Entertainment)

**OTHER SFWA AWARDS**

**KATE WILHELM SOLSTICE AWARD**

Jennell Jaquays (posthumous)

**INFINITY AWARD**

Tanith Lee (posthumous)

**KEVIN O'DONNELL, JR. SERVICE TO SFWA AWARD**

James Hosek (posthumous)

**DAMON KNIGHT MEMORIAL GRAND MASTER**

Susan Cooper

**N3F 2024 LAUREATE AWARDS**

Courtesy of File770.com



- Best Fan Writer: **Heath Row**
- Best Fan Editor: **Janice L. Newman**
- Best Non-N3F Fan Publication: *Spartacus*
- Best N3F Fanzine: *Tightbeam*
- Best Fan Web Site: [galacticjourney.org/](http://galacticjourney.org/)
- Best Novel: *To Spy a Star* by Jonathan Nevair
- Best Shorter Work or Anthology: *Simultaneous Times*, Vol. 3, ed. Jean-Paul L. Garnier
- Best Editor: (a tie) **Lida Quillen** (Twilight Times Books) / **Jean-Paul L. Garnier** (Space Cowboy Books)
- Best History of SF Work: **2023 First Fandom Annual “First Fandom Conversations”**
- Best None of the Above: **Best example of how not to run fan awards: The 2023 Hugo Awards**

**Taral  
1951 — 2024**

Furry artist and fanwriter Taral Wayne died July 31. His death seems to have been sudden. He had suffered from myasthenia gravis, which required special mobility accommodations.

Steve Baldasarra had come to bring him some things. When he did not answer the door or telephone, Steve got the manager to open the door. Taral was on the couch, unresponsive. Paramedics were called and they pronounced him dead.

He had contributed reviews to *Alexiad* and wrote for other places, as well as a drawing furies. He will be missed.

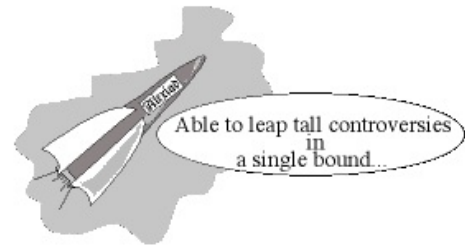
Saturday we were at the Panera coffee shop. I got up to leave and started having problems. I couldn't stand up properly and had memory issues.

They took me to the hospital. I had a lot of problems, the least of which was a urinary tract infection.

I had a EEC scan. I hadn't had a stroke. I had a blood transfusion and two iron infusions. I was released after three nights.

They let Lisa sleep in the room. She was a comfort and I can't thank her enough.

## Letters, we get letters



From: **Nic Farrey** . . . . . May 14, 2024  
[fareynic@gmail.com](mailto:fareynic@gmail.com)

Thanks as always Joe - liked the Gotham story of course (apart from Martha Wayne being called "Margaret" on p12, but no matter...)

Oops.

And thanks of course for reporting the FAAns and Corflu news...  
 Good arrers!

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** . . May 14, 2024  
[darrells@comcast.net](mailto:darrells@comcast.net)

As for the viability of the Uganda worldcon bid vs. the Chinese one, I see a profound difference. The Chengdu bid was backed by the Chinese government, which spent millions of dollars to build a new venue for the occasion, and I don't know how many millions on promotion. Of course China is in the midst of an aggressive campaign to make themselves world leader in just about every field. The amount spent is peanuts compared to what they have invested in other places, such as their Silk Road Initiative, but it is still far beyond the resources of any other conceivable worldcon bid. I doubt the Ugandan government has that kind of money to throw around or the interest in doing so. This could even be a scam like the Zagreb bid. A Yugoslav fan told me that the time that they had no intention of winning, but as long as they could convince their government they were trying to bring this important cultural event to Yugoslavia, they all got expenses-paid trips to conventions all over the world.

**There was a poem in *Alternate Worldcons* about the few Fans who made it to the Zagreb Worldcon in the middle of the civil war.**

Is there even a Ugandan fandom? In any case, unless the Ugandan government does decided to invest in the worldcon, the vote will depend on fans elsewhere, most of whom will be voting for a convention they are not going to be able to attend. How often do you think they will want to do that? Uganda still does have a kill-the-gays law which is certainly going to discourage votes from some sectors. All that is needed to defeat the Ugan-

dan bid is a plausible bid in a civilized country. I think Brisbane can do it.

**There is an active "Afro-futurist" community. Their prozine has something like thirty or forty editors.**

As for Riyadh, is that still on? You don't list it, I see. Unless Mohammed Bin Salman wants to buy it as a vanity project, I can't see much hope for that one either. I once heard Catherine Asaro give a talk in which she described her adventures attending a scientific conference in Saudi Arabia. They really were not used to the idea of a woman being a speaker, and in order to get into the country she had to follow quite a strict set of rules, and dress in the Arabian fashion, which meant an ankle-length black gown, her hair completely covered, etc. I don't remember if she was required to wear a veil. But there were a lot of rules about where she could go unaccompanied, etc. I can't imagine many women from western countries would care to attend.

**They moved the bid to Cairo (PharaohCon) and then delayed it when they couldn't get permits.**

What impresses me most about this year's Hugo nominees is how few of them I've heard of (either titles or authors) and how few appear in venues I actually see. This is a long way from the days in which the short fiction appeared in magazines or anthologies that everybody saw. I can remember when all the nominees were in four or five major prozines and a handful of anthologies like *Orbit* or *New Dimensions* which usually had Book Club editions. The award nominations have always been a matter of exposure in the right places, which is one reason why I have never felt any personal stake in this. My career has gone through different channels, so stories published in *Black Wings* or *Interzone* or *Penumbra* simply do not count, any more than my 50-year career retrospective (two volumes, from PS Publishing) would ever register on the Hugo radar. I have long since gotten used to this. The closest I ever got to a Hugo nomination was back in the '80s when some of the readers of Marty Cantor's *Holier than Thou* decided to nominate me as best fan artist, for my cartoons. This was a joke. I don't think it got very far. But it was an early example of block voting. Nowadays the nominees are from such scattered sources that block voting must be the way it is done. Tordotcom readers vote for their candidates. We can see that a lot of Chinese fans have voted for Chinese authors and editors. The days in which stories from *Asimov's* or *Analog* are going to get nominated are probably over. I certainly feel completely unqualified to vote on this ballot. (I've actually heard of three of the novelists.) Everything is niche-markets these days and I seem to be reading and writing in different niches than the Hugo voters.

**And as another example of a niche, the AH writers didn't get *Hurry Up Living* on the ballot even though it was a great example of a Marfin Padway type.**

As for the definition of "woke" (Heath Row), I agree will Bill Maher on this. Woke began well, but it has mutated into something strange and useless, even dangerous. It used to mean "aware of issues relating to social justice." Now it can mean petty bullying (or major bullying) pretending to be righteousness. This is why it is usually used a negative term these days, and it gives so many politicians something to run against and scare the rubes with. I also repeat (or paraphrase) another big if Maher's advice to the Left: "When it starts to sound like an Onion headline, stop." Just listen to the way people talk. You rarely hear "woke" used in a positive sense anymore, even by liberals. It has come to mean hypocritical, intolerant excess. The term "political correctness" has gone the same way, and is never used except ironically.

I am glad you had a good experience with the recent solar eclipse. One friend of mine from the Washington area drove up to Eerie PA to see it, and when he got there, it was cloudy. In Philadelphia it was overcast for much of it, so that the very thin crescent (about 90% eclipsed) was only visible for a few seconds through thick clouds. You didn't even need glasses for that. But I had a good pair of eclipse glasses with me, which proved very handy when it cleared up. I saw about the last half of the eclipse quite clearly.

From: **Tom Feller** . . . . . May 14, 2024  
[tomfeller@aol.com](mailto:tomfeller@aol.com)

Thanks for sending the e-zine.

The eclipse was a bust in Nashville, because of cloudy skies. However, Anita and I had our "experience of a lifetime" in 2017 when we saw the eclipse for that year in the comfort of our own back yard.

**There was the French astronomer Guillaume le Gentil who went to Mauritius to observe the 1761 transit of Venus. His ship was still at sea when the first one happened, so he couldn't make precise observations. He stayed there several years for the second transit in 1769 but when it took place a cloud covered the Sun. So he went back to France — where he found he had been declared dead («J'ai été là-bas, M. Baggins.»)**

Sorry to hear that you haven't been feeling well.

From: **Bruce Gillespie** . . . . . May 14, 2024  
[gandc001@bigpond.com](mailto:gandc001@bigpond.com)

Thanks, as always, Joseph. I'll send on the PDF of the next SFC as soon as it is ready. Also held up by many mundane barriers.

From: **Trinlay Khadro** . . . . . May 14, 2024  
[trinlayk@gmail.com](mailto:trinlayk@gmail.com)

The Children's book in Random Jottings is *Paddle to the Sea*, it also had a short film reflecting the book very closely.

Growing up walking distance from Lake Michigan in Indiana, the film and the book were a regular feature of my elementary school days.

It may have overlapped Indiana history lessons and geography at different grades. I recall an assignment of tracing the trip on maps of the lakes and canal system.

Available from Amazon for \$16.99 hardback and \$10.49 paperback. Very moving book.

From: George W. Price . . . May 24, 2024 4418 N. Monitor Avenue, Chicago, IL 60630-3333 price4418@comcast.net

April Alexiad (#134)

I saw only a little of the solar eclipse, as I did not want to bother getting the necessary equipment and taking the time to assemble and use it. Also, my vision is already very bad, and I didn't want to risk making it any worse.

I have a small hand-held telescope – no tripod – so I used that to focus the solar image on a piece of paper lying on a windowsill. And of course I wore my darkest sunglasses. That was good enough to get a small image – maybe half an inch across – showing the sun almost completely occulted by the moon. Even that was almost too bright to look at.

\*\*\*\*\*

Expounding on sand in "The Joy of High Tech," Rodford Edmiston notes that, "Until very recently, most commodities were fired clay over a cast iron core." This reminded me of a story, whose author and title I have long forgotten (but I think it might have been Asimov in Analog, maybe in the 1970s or 1980s).

Many thousands of years in the future, archaeologists are excavating the scant remains of our civilization. Almost everything – metal, plastic, wood, paper – has long since corroded away. However, where our cities used to be they are puzzled to find myriads of oddly-shaped ceramic objects with no apparent use.

The author has established early on that these people are absolute masters of nuclear transmutation – they have no waste disposal infrastructure because all wastes are immediately transformed into energy or useful materials. They need no sewers or landfills.

The archaeologists never do figure out what the mysterious artifacts are. Just in case the reader hasn't tumbled, the last page has an illustration of a toilet.

\*\*\*\*\*

Edmiston also notes that sand comes in many variations of fineness and coarseness. Indeed so. When I was a child, circa 1940, we would go to Chicago's Lake Michigan beaches. The 57th Street Beach had fine-grained soft sand that was very good for wading (I hadn't yet learned to swim). But a couple of miles south, at 75th Street Beach, the sand was much coarser – not quite pebbles, but

close – and wading with that stuff underfoot was not nearly so comfortable.

\*\*\*\*\*

C. D. Carson's letter announces the availability of Blast, a booklet on nuclear power and wastes. Heath Row mentions it also.

Ah, if only Jerry Pournelle were still alive! He'd have some very interesting comments on that subject. I once heard him give a talk at a Worldcon – in the 1980s, I think – in which he said that disposing of nuclear power waste was really quite simple, and we need not hide it away for eternity.

All we have to do is set aside a square mile of desert, and at the center build a warehouse large enough to hold several centuries of waste. That need not be very big. The casks of wastes are brought in and stored by remote-control machinery, which is no big problem. No one need come near the casks while they are being handled, nor after they are in place.

Around the perimeter of this square mile of desert, Jerry said, we put up an ordinary cyclone fence, and hang signs on it every hundred feet or so reading, "If you cross this fence you will die." That's it.

Some years later, Chemical and Engineering News (the house organ of the American Chemical Society, to which I belonged) ran an article on the subject. I sent in a letter describing Pournelle's plan, and they printed it.

A few issues later C&EN ran a reply from a reader saying, "Not in my desert you don't!"

I manfully resisted the urge to send a response saying, "Very well, we will avoid the square mile which is your personal property." Of course I knew he didn't mean it that way. But I found it telling that this fellow had anointed himself as guardian of all our deserts. Now that's the Progressive mentality in full bloom!

And, in all honesty, Jerry's idea probably would not work so well in our age of terrorism. We would need a battalion – or even a regiment – of guard troops around that square mile to fend off the crazies and fanatics who would try to steal those casks to use for terrorism or extortion or to kill infidels, even if it means suicide for themselves.

SF writers tended to ignore jihadis.

From: Taras Wolansky . . . . . June 1, 2024 twolansky@yahoo.com

Thanks for the April 2024 Alexiad.

Joe: I always thought Poul Anderson's The Man Who Counts a lousy title. (What is he counting? Yes, I get the play on words.) It made sense as part of an issue of Analog — I guess it would still have been Astounding at the time — but not as a freestanding book title. I've always assumed that it was marketing genius Donald Wollheim who renamed it War of the Wingmen.

In a fantasy novel by Mercedes Lackey, when a young thief is brought into the Heralds, he becomes a reformed character. In real life, when the LAPD brought in underrepresented minorities by waiving certain criteria relating to criminal associations, the result was the Rampart scandal.

His Companion wouldn't let him. It was like being a Lensman with a personal Arisian. (I think that was why Grant liked them.) Besides, they expected that Skif would get in trouble.

Review of The Real Special Relationship by Michael Smith: Given the heavy penetration of British intelligence by Soviet spies, I'm not sure if the close relationship between British and American intelligence during and after World War II was a benefit or a detriment.



Not after the dismissal of Philby and Blake.

Heath Row: My mother gave away all my "Tom Swift, Jr." books. I think I had about 28. Just about the only thing I remember from them is that, on an adventure in the Amazon, Tom has chicken with chocolate sauce, which seemed like a good idea to me as a kid.

At Balticon, restrooms were rendered all-gender merely by changing the signs on the doors. There was no rearchitecting involved. My impression is that, however the rooms were labeled, men continued to use the men's room, and women continued to use the ladies' room.

Robert Kennedy: We are required to praise men who transition for their "courage". There's an episode of South Park about this.

Darrell Schweitzer: "I just think that the state should stay out of private, personal matters." The Biden administration is currently promulgating new standards which will require men who claim to identify as women to be admitted to women's locker rooms, to battered women shelters, to women's athletics, etc. The brilliant gay writer, Douglas Murray, suggests the elite push for transgenderism has to do with them seeking a basis for patting themselves on the back and feeling superior to other people, especially because many elites were slow to accept gay marriage.

FDR admired and emulated Mussolini. This was before the war, of course.

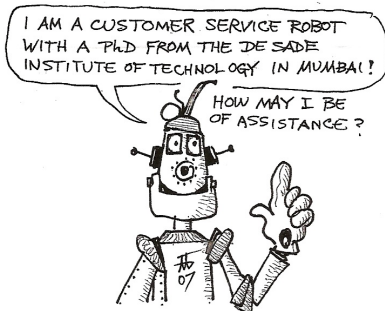
One might argue that the Italian Fascists had a better record on the Holocaust than the FDR administration. The FDR administration treated German Jews as "enemy aliens", and sent them back to Nazi Germany. It also went to great lengths to keep Jewish refugees out of

the Western hemisphere. Meanwhile, the Italian Fascists, forced to kowtow to Hitler's bizarre prejudices, nonetheless resisted sending Italian Jews to the death camps.

George W. Price: On the subject of alien invaders who turn out to be relatively backward, aside from having mastered interstellar flight, I recall an entertaining story by Campbell author Christopher Anvil, though I do not remember the title. One cute touch I remember is that the aliens call machine guns, which they've never seen before, "stitching guns".

### *Pandora's Planet (1972).*

Richard Dengrove: Jack Campbell's *Corsair* in *Rendezvous with Corsair* is not a pirate ship in spite of the name. It's the name given to a Syndicate warship, hijacked by Syndicate Marines and Alliance Navy POWs working together.



From: **John Hertz** . . . . . May 31, 2024

It occurs to me that, by virtue of your street address, you are the Newer Christy Minstrels.

Many of us human beings seem to live in a culture of complam. Ome saus or does nothing except to protest. Some time ago Ted White said, "Disagreement is the blood of fanzines." When I learned that, I wrote, "I disagree."

Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Buddha both said, "Don't worship me. Don't even make images of me." In Islam that stuck.

My grandmother helped to invent Smokey the Bear. Among the events of 2001 he changed to "Only you can prevent wildfires."

I'm a bothist. I want SF cons that are *inter alia* literary.

From: **C. D. Carson** . . . . . June 3, 2024  
Post Office Box 1035, Fort Worth TX 76101  
[publius@lunarcc.org](mailto:publius@lunarcc.org)

Thank you for your perseverance in fanzining. Herewith are some scattered comments of mine on recent numbers.

Whole Number 130 — **Edmiston** The Marine Air Terminal at LaGuardia Airport, New York, has reversed its role, and is being used to receive passengers who come by boat to embark on landplanes. This comes about because, as anybody who has tried it knows, access to LGA by transit is poor, and coming from Manhattan by taxi is subject to unpre-

dictable delays.

The flying boat briefly had a leading role in perhaps the most ambitious aviation effort of all time, the US military Aircraft Nuclear Propulsion program. One of the great drawbacks of the planned X-6 aircraft (essentially a B-36 airframe with nuclear jet engines, although several other designs were studied) was its need for elaborate ground-handling facilities. To improve the power-to-weight ratio, the shielding around the reactor was considerably less than necessary to make it safe to approach, even after shutdown; a combination of distance (inverse-square law) and "shadow shielding" (also planned for space vehicles propelled by NERVA nuclear-thermal rocket engines) kept the radiation dose rate in the crew compartment to tolerable levels. The hangar that was built in Idaho resembles a submarine pen: it was planned to poke the nose of the aircraft through a thick concrete wall in order to unload the crew. The Navy realized that a flying boat could use the water for shutdown shielding, meaning that it could operate out of almost any seaport, whereas the Air Force would be limited to a very few specially-equipped bases. An attempt was made to purchase one or more of the 150-tonne Saunders-Roe "Princesses" for conversion, but it proved that the mothballs had not done their job, and the airframes had become unsound. I have found no evidence that the Hughes Hq was considered even for a moment.

There was a story about a nuclear-powered bomber. For recreation the pilots and crew had set up an elaborate model steam train setup. I can't remember the title.

I've said plenty in the past about airships (did you get a copy of the guide to lighter-than-air for writers that I based on my standing-room-only Chicon presentation in 2012?), so I will limit myself here to observing that satellite weather maps change everything.

130 — **Letters** — **Schweitzer** My main opinion on the subject of "gender" is that one of the stupidest and most pointless human interactions I have ever seen was, thirty years ago perhaps, between a couple of children. One asked the other, "are you a boy or a girl?" The reply was, "a girl?"

The first child then responded, "no you're not!"

In a hundred years, if am any judge, all this present controversy will seem as incomprehensible as the O.P. Riots. People who feel out of joint with the world flail about until they catch some small ripple in the social fabric, and so magnify it into a great and threatening-seeming wave. I have seen this phenomenon described as "you go through the door that's open". The reaction is often stronger than the impetus, and the actual changes that are accomplished are small and slow.

Singular "they" is a long-attested usage (you'll find it in Shakespeare), but usually it refers to an indefinite person. Nobody seems to have yet figured out how to use it for an individual, without weird and ambiguous switching back and forth between singular and plural verbs and adjectives. Personally I find the pretensions

of people who think their life experiences are so novel as to need special language rather foolish — unless perhaps they are astronauts. But let them be foolish!

The trans-people and their opponents seem to feel very strongly and think very much (if not very deeply) about things I find myself mostly indifferent to. If lives weren't at stake, I should be perfectly happy to leave them to it. Unfortunately, the drumbeating of the anti-trans campaigners has stirred up quite a bit of violence. Ordinary, if somewhat horse-faced, women are actually being assaulted for daring to use public restrooms, and God help PCOS sufferers. I fear this is exactly the point: to contribute to a climate of fear and distrust, in which repression will be greeted with relief.

When one of those "bathroom bills" was proposed here, I called my Legislators to ask them, with all the real and urgent problems we had, why was their priority making a criminal out of my grandmother? Grandma, if the line for the "ladies'" is too long, has no compunction about going into the "mens'". She's a hundred years old, and why should she waste any of the time she has left in such a trivial way? And to whoever may say, "that's not what this legislation is about", sorry! The more arbitrary searches and detentions you allow in the law, the more you will get.

(**Comment JTM**) Considering that women in prison are sexually abused by guards of both sexes almost as a matter of course (rape by violence, or coercion to exchange sexual favours for privileges or to avoid other kinds of abuse, it really makes no difference), concern about the considerably more remote prospect of rape by transgender cellmates seems contrived. Rape, it has been observed, is motivated far more by power and the desire to exercise it than by sexual attraction or desire. The job of gaoler attracts persons of low moral character who like nothing better than to exert power over the helpless. If you want to make rape of women in prison less frequent — not that men fare much better — you must commit fewer women to prison.

As it happened I was referring to other prisoners committing the rapes.

Indeed, the whole emphasis on remote and largely hypothetical harms, over proximate and ongoing ones, reminds me strongly of anti-nuclear-energy agitation. Ralph Nader told people in Cleveland, then often blanketed by smog to the extent that drivers had to use their headlights in the daytime, that an accident at the Davis-Besse nuclear plant would devastate their city and leave the survivors to envy the dead. Of course there was never the slightest scientific warrant for such a claim. (The East Ohio Gas Company disaster of 1944 somehow never came up.) Another resemblance is in the sudden wild shifts of viewpoint: the breeder reactor is undesirable because it produces plutonium, and in the next breath, useless because it doesn't produce enough plutonium; one and the same person is alternately an ineffectual 'failed male' and a dangerous predator.



130 — **Letters** — **Price** Franco's "Falangism" was certainly aligned enough with Fascism to get him support from Mussolini, both political and military. The material support he got from Hitler, extending even to Type VII-A U-boats, can reasonably be seen as field-testing of the products of German re-armament, but Fascist Italy had enough of its own military irons in the fire that sending legions of Blackshirts was a real commitment. The notional core value of Falangism was of course national unity, whereas the Republicans fought each other constantly (a tendency which Stalin actively encouraged); and after Franco's victory, he seems to have allowed this principle to limit his ferocity towards defeated enemies.

The dictator who may deserve more attention is Portugal's Salazar. The "*Estado Novo*" seems to have been significantly better for most of the people, at least of mainland Portugal, than any government they'd had in memory. It was eventually overthrown without a great deal of violence, once rising standards of living and education had eliminated the extreme tensions between social groups that had made repressive and arbitrary government seem like the only viable option. Perhaps the most distinctive common feature, as between Franco and Salazar, is that they mostly avoided starting pointless wars and destroying their countries into the process.

**Whole Number 131** Speaking of the Puerto Rico NASFiC, what ever happened to it? I voted, so I should have been a Supporting Member and received publications, but I never heard a single word from them.

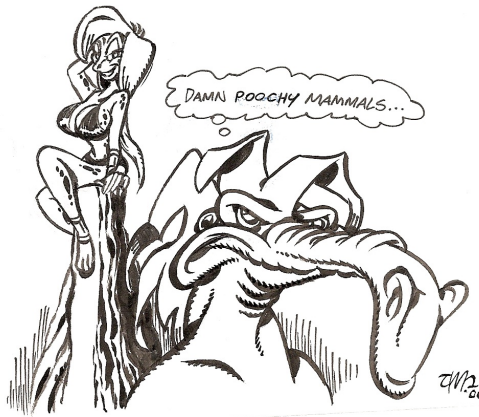
**Aside from being a disaster?  
Fewer attendees than voters, no  
dealers' room, and so on.**

I very much want to rehabilitate the NS *Savannah* with a more modern nuclear power plant, to return to its original purpose as a mobile exhibit of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and a pathfinder for future commercial nuclear-propelled ships. This seems definitely needed in a world where "de-carbonizing transport" is a matter of constant discussion. Renovating the SS *United States* (currently a hulk) with nuclear engines is another appealing prospect. And if I had control of either vessel, of course I would bid to hold the Worldcon on board!

**The last time they did that, it  
didn't go well, except for Phil  
Foglio's *The Capture***

The annular eclipse last autumn, which I saw from my back porch here, gave me occasion to make a joke about the dark side of the Sun, which is ordinarily turned away from the Earth. One so rarely has reason to refer to Pythagorean central-fire astronomy. The timing of the 8 April total eclipse allowed me to dial in to the aNONradio OpenVoIP hour (a conjunction of two services of the SDF Public Access Unix System which occurs 13 times weekly), using a telephone extension I hurriedly rigged out to the back porch. You can download the audio of my live narration at:

<http://anonradio.net/live-from-the-zone-of-totality-2024-04-08/>



My favourite Nevil Shute (Norway) book is of course his autobiographical *Slide Rule*, the description of passing through a squall front in the St Lawrence valley aboard the R.100 standing out as uncommonly vivid, but I thought *Trustee from the Toolroom* a fine piece as well.

**Trustee from the Toolroom was  
the first Shute I ever read.**

A Harry Potter event with the author's name expunged? Seems as though her publishers are eager to keep making money, and not eager for the troubles brought by her habit of stirring up controversies for no obvious reason. I don't trust the SNP as far as I can throw their party leader, but referring to Scottish independence campaigners as "real-life Death Eaters" shows a certain detachment from *terra firma*.

131 — **Edmiston** I am in the habit of describing the flasks in which spent nuclear fuel is transported from power stations to reprocessing plants as "tougher than a main battle tank". An advertisement for one model specifies that "Excellox 3 flasks have a wall thickness of 3-5 inch steel and a 7/8 inch lead liner" (that's 90 and 190 millimeters). Now, the steel might not be face-hardened like proper armor, but even if you managed to pierce it with an anti-tank munition, the deformation of the lead would absorb a great deal of energy.

**Whole Number 132** Only a few years ago, marchers under swastika banners, for instance in Charlottesville, Virginia, were chanting "Jews will not replace us", and occasionally murdering people such as Heather Heyer. This was officially regarded as legitimate political expression and free speech which must not be interfered with. Less-violent protests against the cavalcade of atrocities in Gaza, beginning with a policy of collective retribution which makes Lidice look like a Sunday-school picnic, are now treated as dangerous anti-Semitism which must be stopped — and never mind that hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews are turning out every week to protest the same thing. ("Anti-Semitism", incidentally, is a word which I detest, and won't use if I can avoid it, because it was coined in the 19th century as a "modern, scientific" substitute for the good old-fashioned *Judenhaß*.) I'm afraid the difference in attitude

is very much related to whether the protestors are more likely to support police violence or oppose it.

I look forward to the new Danish coinage of Frederik X, and to the succession coin (a Danish tradition). They are not expected before the end of the year, leaving me to wonder (as in the case of the new British and Commonwealth coinages) why the Mint wasn't at work on the new dies long since. Perhaps it's considered bad luck.

All this *ex post facto* controversy over the Chengdu Worldcon is strange to me. It could be, for instance, that Dave McCarty acted in good faith as he saw it, trying to prevent Chinese fans from being arrested or unpersoned for contact with unapproved opinions; I don't know, and I scarcely care. I was certain from the Start that, meaning no ill-will at all to Chinese fans or fandom, little good would come of holding a literary convention in a country where literature is subject to strict censorship, and I told everyone who would listen to me (all three of 'em) exactly that. So, at the Washington Worldcon, I voted for Winnipeg. From what I could tell, very few bothered to do likewise. Certainly the eventual Winnipeg NASFiC was beyond poorly attended.

**Actually many did. But at the  
last moment 2000 fans from China  
joined.**

I have *Hawai Mare Oki Kaisen* ("*War at Sea from Hawaii to Malaya*") on LaserDisc. This is the Japanese propaganda film which made the career of Tsuburaya Eiji; when American forces captured a copy, his miniature re-creation of the Pearl Harbor attack was taken for the real thing by the OSS. As propaganda, it seems quite diffident. Nothing like *Why We Fight*, much less Goebbels' bombast.

132 — **Letters** — **Spencer** The term "politically correct" originated in the Soviet Union under Stalin, where there were two answers to most any question. One of them was right, and the other one wouldn't get you dragged away by the NKVD. I resent the way it has been watered down by people with no sense of proportion.

"Stay woke", on the other hand, is an old watch-word, although I probably shouldn't try to carry it back to the "Wide-Awakes" of the Presidential campaign of 1860, who paraded through the Streets night after night, carrying flaming barrels of tar, in support of Lincoln. It just means, keep awake, keep paying attention, don't take what you hear about what's going on at face value.

132 — **Letters** — **Wolansky** I take economists' projections of the future with Lot's wife. There is little doubt that, unless the climate suddenly changes to drop a great deal more rain on the American Great Plains, wheat farming there will mostly have to end within perhaps 20 years, because the fossil water used for irrigation is close to depleted. (There are much larger saline aquifers, but the cost of desalted water from such sources, even when offset by sales of minerals, would be much too high for agriculture.) The economist looks at the dollar value of the grain harvest and con-

cludes that this will make no meaningful difference to the overall position of the USA, because of its other highly productive business sectors and Ricardo's Theory of Comparative Advantage. This I regard as a grand misconception.



132 — **Letters — Price** The distinctive anatomical character, by virtue of which one might identify Japanese-American women from behind by the shape of their legs, is known to the Japanese as “daikon legs”, referring to the large white radish which figures prominently in their diet. The term is not considered complimentary.

**Whole Number 133** Deepest condolences to Lisa.

I recently purchased a nearly—unused laser printer for a measly \$60. It only prints up to “legal” size, and only duplexes up to “letter”, but that’s good enough for most of what I want to do. I soon had to spend another \$60 on a cartridge, but it’s supposed to be good for some hilarious number like 30 000 pages, and I buy my paper at estate sales for next to nothing. Between that and old postage stamps at 80% of face value, I feel comfortable sending out mailings, for now at least.

It’s part of my notional political platform that bears should be issued drivers’ licenses if they can pass the written test. Certainly they couldn’t do any worse than the drivers on the road today. As my father puts it, “Why are these people trying to kill me? I don’t even know them!”

133 — **Edmiston** For me, the feature distinguishing hand-drawn and machine-generated animation is basically Stylistic. In hand-drawn animation, every detail costs to put in, so the details that get in are generally ones which are important somehow. This may mean that they advance the story, but equally they may help to set the scene or create the atmosphere. The cost of adding additional detail to machine-generated animation is almost nil, so it rapidly mounts up to visual noise, which for me tends to make the result unwatchable.

133 — **Letters — Price** Keith Henson, who may well be the strangest man I know, told me about a paper he co-wrote on the origins of war in pre-agricultural societies which has some fascinating (and extremely

dark) implications. In summary, healthy young human males consume a lot of calories. Hunter-gatherers have little direct control over their food supply. As a result, if two bands are living in an area, and when scarcity comes, they fall to fighting each other, as long as only the young men fight, then there will be more calories left over for the children and pregnant and nursing mothers, and both bands will probably survive. If they choose not to fight, the likelihood is that both groups will starve and their populations will collapse.

**Special Note:** You should have received a sample copy of my pro-nuclear-energy publication blast. Whoever wants one may have it by writing to me (address above). Just be clear on what you are requesting, and make sure your mailing address is legible. If multiple copies are wanted, please enclose \$1 for each copy beyond the first, to help offset my costs of printing and postage.

From: **Richard Dengrove** . . . June 23, 2024  
[richd22426@aol.com](mailto:richd22426@aol.com)

I am moving to 8056 Sleepy View Lane, Springfield, VA 22153. My address from now on.

Reviewers Notes. Science Fiction is now for the masses. We’re going to have to get used to that.

Black Boomerang. Nobody’s absolutely honest. We make decisions about more and less honest and more and less delusional.

Heath Row. I remember Tom Swift, Jr. in the ‘50s was into atomic inventions, and, in the ‘70s, going to other galaxies. In short, head and tails above a mere Tom Swift.

Robert Kennedy. Just a passing through. I read where a famous male/female golfer was 100th among female golfers. He should have stayed in the male leagues.

Me to Lisa. No, I’m not pro-Hesbollah. They shouldn’t have done what they did to those Israelites. However, the Israeli strategy of making life impossible for Gazans hasn’t defeated them. Hesbollah troops are underground. It may have saved Israeli lives not going after them but it hasn’t defeated them either.

Taras Wolansky. In short, people who invest in waterfront property are fools in the long run

“The Somber Streets of Gotham.” It sounds a little like Bonny and Clyde.

#### WAHF:

**Heath Row, Lacy Thomas**, with thanks.

**Lloyd G. Daub**, with various items of interest.

#### MARXISM

From *The New York Times*, October 12, 1961

Leonard Marx

Leonard Marx, 74, famous mathematician, died yesterday at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospi-

tal in Los Angeles after a heart attack. Dr. Marx was the son of Samuel Marx and the former Minnie Schoenberg of New York.

His mathematical career began when students from the CCNY mathematics department recognized the young math whiz during a visit to his grade school. Marx later said, “If I hadn’t had the math scholarship, I would have ended up delivering suits for ‘Frenchy.’” [his father]

Marx’s accomplishments included significant advances in number theory and practical work in calculating the relativity experiments of the twenties, particularly the stellar displacement observed during solar eclipses. Later, he turned more to administrative matters, becoming the director of the calculator department of the Manhattan Project. Los Alamos director Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer acknowledged that “Leonard could get more work out of those women than anyone else.”

Far from being a remote “brain”, Marx was known as a fun fellow. His colleague Dr. Richard Feynman has described playing the drums as backup to Marx’s piano playing, and Princeton colleagues remember well his concerts with Einstein. He would entertain at parties with ethnic imitations, being an Italian gangster or a German huckster with equal fluency. He was a Grandmaster at bridge.

Marx is survived by his daughter Minnie Allen, his ex-wife the former Betty Karp, five brothers, television star Mr. Manny Shean, Mr. Arthur Marx, Dr. Julius H. Marx, M.D. of Los Angeles, Mr. Milton Marx, and Mr. Herbert Marx, President of Marx Engineering & Manufacturing. The funeral will be October 13.

*The New York Times*, September 30, 1964

Death Stills the Melody of an Angel  
 Adolph Marx, 75

Musical genius Adolph Marx died Monday at Mount Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles after heart surgery. Born in New York on November 23, 1888 to tailor Samuel Marx and the former Minnie Schoenberg, Marx’s musical genius was recognized at an early age. He dropped out of school to pursue a musical career, at first playing in the streets, but later being dragged by his brother, Leonard Marx (later Dr. Leonard Marx, the mathematician and Manhattan Project administrator) into more formal music lessons.

Marx soon found his metier as a harpist, being accepted after a blind audition into the New York Philharmonic. He added to his luster by taking on several demanding pieces and became known for his proficiency.

The great accomplishments of his art came in the wake of a tragic personal incident. In 1933, Marx was sent to the Soviet Union as a good-will ambassador, in the wake of American recognition of the Russian government. In Germany, however, he was pulled off the train by SA stormtrooper thugs after a border guard reported his name to them, and was beaten so severely that he spent almost a year in the hospital afterwards, and never spoke again.

In his isolation, Marx’s only release was his music, and he poured his heart and soul into it, becoming the greatest harp player of his era.

His return to the stage in 1936 was marked by the plaudits of his peers and the applause of the spectators.

In the fifties, Marx extended his career to the new medium of television. Several of the renowned "Young People's Concerts" were brightened by his playing.

Another feature of his music was the playfulness with which he approached the material. Particularly after losing his voice, he accompanied the music with a gallery of facial expressions and contortions. Director Leonard Bernstein said "I could tell when the tone was off when Marx twisted his face into that gargoyles look." He used this talent to greater extent in his solo concerts, often driving an audience to hysterics by walking completely around the harp while playing, or by chasing a female accompanist around the stage. Serious music critics conceded that during these antics he adhered to playing the music itself as written.

Marx released a number of albums on the Columbia label during his career. His valedictory, released last year, was *His Voice Is Stilled But His Harp Speaks*, a two-disk LP album containing over forty of his best pieces.

Marx is survived by three brothers, his wife, the former Susan Fleming, and four children. Funeral plans are private.

*Locus*, October 1977

Dr. Julius H. Marx, M.D., well-known fannish letterhack, died on August 19, 1977 in Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles, at the age of 86. Born in New York City in October of 1890, Julius studied medicine at Columbia, moving west after the First World War to practice in the booming town of Los Angeles.

His fannish career did not begin until comparatively late in life. During the PacificCon of 1946, Dr. Marx was on call for medical emergencies and was called to the con hotel for what turned out to be a false alarm. While waiting for a cab home, he read what happened to be available, which turned out to be a bundle of fanzines left by an unidentified fan.

Over the next few weeks, faneds across the country were delighted and astounded to receive bizarre, pun-filled exuberant locs from a heretofore unknown fan. Dr. Marx was invited to attend the meetings of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, and in spite of his well known comment "I don't care to belong to any club that will have me as a member," became one of the first LASFS Saints and a mainstay of the club for as long as his health held up.

From his always-funny column in *Quandry*, "Julius and Me", to his almost-risky writings about sex, love, and marriage collected by Advent:Publishers under the title *Memoirs of a Mangy Lover*, Julius's fannish writings were a perpetual source of joy and lightness. As Bob Tucker said in the introduction to his Eightieth Birthday one-shot, *Marks of Strain and Strain of Marx*, "I can't imagine Fandom without Julie."

Dr. Marx is survived by two ex-wives, a son, Arthur, a daughter, Melinda, and a grand-

son, as well as two brothers. Three other brothers, including famed Manhattan Project administrator and mathematician Dr. Leonard Marx, predeceased him.

DYING IS EASY,  
COMEDY IS HARD!

AND WHEN I SAID:  
"BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS,"  
THERE WAS THIS MAD  
DASH FOR THE EXITS!



*Army Times*, 29 April 1977

Colonel Milton Marx, 1892-1977

Milton Marx, Colonel (ret) USA, Army Investigative Service, died at the Eisenhower Medical Center in Palm Springs, California, on 21 April 1977. Preliminary indications place the cause of death as heart failure.

Colonel Marx was drafted into the US Army in 1918, spending the war as an instructor. After the war, thanks to a recommendation by his commanding officer, he was transferred to the Regular Army, where he was attached to the Investigative Service. He remained in this arm throughout his career.

In 1929 Marx was sent to OCS, emerging with a commission. He was subsequently attached to the office of the Military Attache to Yugoslavia, where he reportedly engaged in military intelligence duties. During the Second World War he served in the Provost Office of SHAEF, and, due to his knowledge of the German language, was chief detective investigator for the Allied Military Government of Germany, during which time he acquired the nickname of "Gumshoe". In 1952, Colonel Marx retired from the service to take up a post as Vice-President of Marx Engineering & Manufacturing, the company founded by his brother Herbert, where he served until his final retirement in 1962.

Colonel Marx's awards included the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with Oakleaf Cluster,

and the Army Commendation Medal with two Oakleaf Clusters.

Marx is survived by two brothers, his wife, the former Helen von Tilzer, and their son and daughter. The funeral was 24 April.

*Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1979

Herbert Marx, Prominent Industrialist, Dies.

Herbert Marx, industrial titan of the aerospace parts industry, died of lung cancer early Friday, November 30, at Eisenhower Medical Center in Palm Springs. Born in New York City on February 25, 1901, Marx showed an early mechanical aptitude. As his late brother, Los Angeles physician Dr. Julius H. Marx, complained, "Herbert kept hidden the flaws of our car until we gave up and sold it to him, when it began to run perfectly. And then he leased it back to us at five dollars a night -- the low-down thief!"

With the postwar boom in flying, Marx began building and improving aircraft engines. He soon found it necessary to incorporate, and founded Marx Engineering & Manufacturing, which has grown into a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Los Angeles. The company's first big contract was to provide parts for the U.S. Navy's dirigible *Los Angeles*, built in Germany. Marx said later on "We underbid the contract and took a big loss on the zeppelin, but what we lost on that we earned back a thousand times over, since we got more contracts based on our reliability." For his work on the *Los Angeles*, Marx gained the nickname of "the Zeppelin Man", often shortened to "Zep".

The company continued its growth during World War Two and afterwards in the aircraft parts business. His then wife, the former Barbara Blakeley, (now Mrs. Frank Sinatra), urged the company to enter the space industry, and ME&M became a significant subcontractor to Grauman and North American.

Marx stepped down as President and Chairman of the Board of the company in 1970, handing over to his son Timothy. He is survived by his sons Timothy Marx and Thomas Marx. Memorial services are scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday at Wiefels and Sons Mortuary, Palm Springs. The body is to be cremated.

From *The New York Times*, July 18, 1966

Mannie Shean

Mannie Shean, 80, died yesterday in Los Angeles of liver cancer. Born in January 1886 to Samuel Marx and the former Minnie Schoenberg as Manfred Marx, Shean took his stage name from his uncle, Al Shean of the famous vaudeville team Gallagher and Shean. He began performing in vaudeville with his uncle at the age of twelve.

Gradually, Shean moved from vaudeville to Broadway. His breakthrough performance was in "N'Everything", a review written by his uncle, appearing on Broadway in 1920. Shean was teamed there with his future wife, Daisy Moller, whose wit and looks endeared her to

the young comedian; they were married within the year.

Their breakthrough came with "Give Me a Thrill" in 1924, where he appeared with Daisy as the winning suitor who wins her hand. Noted critic Alexander Woollcott made Shean's career with his striking description, "Surely there should be dancing when a great clown comes to town, and this man is a great clown."

Shean also saw the potentials of film, and shortly after the closing of "Give Me a Thrill" starred in the silent film "Humorisk" (1925), but his real triumphs did not come until after the development of sound. "Cracked Ice" (1933) took on the rising tide of fascism, with Shean and Daisy playing the president of a small, threatened, country and his pompous, yet loving wife. They reversed the positions in "Peace and Quiet" (1937), where Daisy, a horse-breeder, has to save Shean's Turntable Medical Clinic.

After the war, it appeared his career had been blighted by the poor performance of "Diamonds in the Sidewalk" (1950) (Coincidentally, it was the first screen appearance of Marilyn Monroe). Fortunately, Shean began to appear in television shows at that time. After several stunning guest stunts with Milton Berle, Red Buttons, and other variety hosts, he was offered his own show.

The preview of "Highway to Heaven" in 1956 revealed an old talent to a new audience. "Deputy Seraph" Shean used his comedic and acting talents to appear as dozens of angelic helpers, offering comfort and assistance to despondent and troubled people all over the country. The show became an immediate hit, and was only canceled in 1960 due to Shean's tiredness with the TV format.

His wife, Daisy, died in 1965; Shean is survived by his three brothers Dr. Julius H. Marx, Colonel Milton Marx, and industrialist Herbert Marx. Funeral plans are indeterminate at this time.

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